The Concept of Representation in China's Official Ideology: Morphology and Practice

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Abstract

While acknowledging the existence of non-democratic forms of representation, political scientists have shown little interests in understanding conceptions and practices of political representation beyond liberal democratic institutions. This dissertation offers a Chinese perspective in the study of representation through unpacking the dominant ideology in China — the official ideology of the Communist Party of China (CPC).

Instead of trying to fit the Chinese case in the shoes of Western political thought, I adopt the problem-based approach to political theory (Warren 2017) and identify the definition and maintenance of connection between the representative and the represented as the key problem for representation. This problem involves three issues: how the connection is defined, how the connection is maintained, and how the connection can be evaluated. Taking advantage of insights of both Pitkin's (1967) etymological approach and Saward's (2010) constitutive approach to representation, I propose differentiation and actualization as two analytical tools for addressing these issues.

Based on a morphological analysis (Freeden, 1996) of the CPC's ideology and Confucianism as cultural adjacency, I present mass line representation (MLR) as a distinct form of representation in the Chinese context. MLR differentiates from other forms of representation in its unique perspective on the representative relationship. The representatives are expected to follow the principle of "from the masses, to the masses" in representing the needs of the mases and justifying the decisions made. MLR is a form of substantive representation that emphasizes the representative's ability and judgement to include the masses in the decision-making process.

In practice, the CPC's ability to provide competent and virtuous representatives is crucial for the actualization of representation in the Chinese context. Three challenges in the reform era — declining belief in the CPC's ideology, influx of liberal ideas, and corruption — further undermine the Party's ability to maintain its claimed representative connection. Three generations of CPC leadership in the post-Deng era, Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao, and Xi Jinping, offered their respective responses to these challenges with their ideological development and institutional innovations. Their strategies in actualizing representation in the China have brought the practice of MLR closer to meeting its own normative ideals: informative inclusion and consequential responsiveness.

For my wife, Li Xu, and my lovely daughters, Norah and Sherry.

Acknowledgements

Ten years ago, I made the decision to resign from my position as lecturer at the Party School of Wenling Municipal Committee, Communist Party of China, and embark on my doctoral study at the Department of Political Science at SFU. My inspiration for undertaking this journey began with a question that arose from my work in Wenling: why are practices of democratic deliberation in Wenling deemed non-democratic by political theorists? Ten years later, I am relieved and delighted to present my answer as a conclusion of this arduous and rewarding journey. I am deeply indebted to numerous individuals who have made this dissertation possible and have greatly contributed to the extraordinary experience of this journey.

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BLC	Bureau of Letters and Calls
CCDI	Central Commission for Discipline Investigation
CCPC	Congress of the Communist Party of China
CDI	Commission for Discipline Investigation
CPAS	Chinese Public Administration Society
CPC	Communist Party of China
LCL	*Labour Contract Law*
MLR	Mass line representation
NCCPC	National Congress of the Communist Party of China
NGO	Non-governmental organizations
NPC	National People's Congress
PC	People's Congress
PLRC	Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee
PPCC	People's Political Consultation Conference
RLV	*Regulation of Letter and Visit (Xinfang Tiaoli)*
RMRB	Renmin Ribao (People's Daily)
WRJI	War of Resistance against Japanese Invasion

Chapter 1.
Introduction

Empirical political scientists have recently investigated representation in non-Western contexts, claiming that non-democratic (in the sense of liberal democracy in Western societies) countries are also responsive to the interests and demands of their citizens. Malesky and Shüler (2010), for example, find that some representatives in the Vietnamese National Assembly are actively seeking discourse with or interest representation of their constituents. Manion (2014) reports similar behaviors in China's local People's Congresses. Evidence of responsiveness in China also exists in local governments, as demonstrated by various field experiments in testing government official's responsiveness to citizens' demands (Chen et al. 2016; Su and Meng 2016; Wang and Liu 2020; Qiaoan and Teets 2020).

However, such evidence of responsiveness cannot be interpreted as political representation in non-democratic contexts. The common criterion adopted in these findings originates from Piktin's (1967) famous definition of substantive representation — the representatives' "responsive[ness]" to the interests of the represented (210). As Pitkin (1967) acknowledges, it is the "conviction" of liberal democracies that "free and genuine" elections are "necessary to ensure systemic responsiveness" (234, underscore as original). Dahl (1971) has made it clear that citizens' formulation and expression of preferences in free and fair elections are necessary for governments to be responsive to them over a long period of time (2-3). From this perspective, without democratic elections as mediating mechanisms, responsiveness of parliament and governments in Vietnam and China could hardly be recognized as Pitkinian substantive representation.

We can, of course, call the responsiveness identified by empirical political scientists authoritarian representation, as they usually do when they identify democratic practices in non-democratic countries. But this does not take us any further for two reasons. First, evidence provided by empirical political scientists is selective and scattered around different institutions and locations. As O'Brien (2009) notes on studies of local People's Congresses, regional and institutional variations in the findings reported do not offer a full picture of the political system in China (132-133). What is the role of representation in the political system, and why is representation also expressed in the

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form of responsiveness? Second, simply connecting responsiveness with representation does not offer an account of representation without democratic institutions. Without democratic elections and deliberations, is representation still an institution for the formation of preferences and public reason?

Wang Shaoguang (2019 [2014]) differentiates between representational democracy, which "emphasizes content and substance" of representation, and representative democracy, which "emphasizes form and process" of representation (232). Instead of focusing on the democratic procedures in electing representatives and holding them accountable, representational democracy focuses on the delivery of outcomes that reflect the needs of the people. He contends that China is an example of representational democracy, with party cadres representing the needs of the people by practicing the mass line approach (*qunzhong luxian*, 群众路线) theorized by Mao Zedong. The mass line approach requires cadres to actively go to the masses and learn about their needs, which are then reflected in policy outcomes designed by party leaders.

Wang's representational democracy is an interesting perspective in understanding representation in China. However, it underrates the role of representation in democracies by limiting its function to the selection of representatives. As will be discussed in Section 1.2, representation is a channel for interest expression and collective will formation in democracies. Moreover, his discussion of representational democracy does not address the ideological foundation and institutional arrangements that justify and support the practice of the mass line approach in the Chinese context.

What is the function and mechanism of representation in China and how can we approach it? This dissertation provides one answer to this question by examining the theory and practice of the mass line approach in the Communist Party of China's (CPC) ideology and argues that it presents and theorizes mass line representation (MLR) as the unique conception of representation in China. I draw on three literatures, and attempt to demonstrate their complementary value in answering such question: the scholarship on western democratic theory, theories and methods in the study of ideology, and the literature on contemporary Chinese politics. Instead of explaining the Chinese case with theories of representation developed in western contexts or emphasizing the institutional differences between China and liberal democracies, this dissertation weaves together

ideological, cultural, and institutional histories and their contemporary developments to offer a comprehensive ideological and political study of the concept of representation in Chinese political thought and institutional practice of representation in contemporary China.

This dissertation aims at delivering three outcomes. First, it provides a comprehensive review of the place of representation in the development of China's official ideology and Chinese politics since the founding of the CPC. As discussed earlier, the existing literature on representation focuses on specific institutions or eras and fails to provide a conceptually specified account of representation and its evolution through the historical course of the CPC's ideological and political development. In unpacking the concept of representation in China's official ideology, I trace the historical and cultural roots of its formulation and show how the concept expresses different tenets with the CPC's shifting strategies, institutional innovations, and policy priorities in responding to challenges it faced since 1949. In other words, the dissertation pursues an understanding of representation nested in the ideology and political practices of China, with the intention of offering insights to specialists in democratic political theory, the study of ideology, and Chinese politics.

Second, in developing a conception of representation based on its ideological and institutional contexts, the dissertation offers a foundation for conversation with theories on political representation in liberal democratic contexts. Instead of interpreting the Chinese case through a Western lens, I propose a Chinese theory of representation that is comparable to different conceptions of representation developed by political theorists with focuses on democratic institutions and their justifications. Finally, the dissertation develops an analytical toolkit that not only enables the examination of political concepts in different cultural contexts, but also aims to assist cross-cultural conversations about such concepts and their ideological homes.

To achieve the three objectives, I follow the problem-based approach to political theory (Warren 2017) in my investigation. I argue that the study of MLR needs to take one step back from engaging directly with various forms of representation, as well as democratic/non-democratic justifications and support for them. Instead, we need to ask: how does the political institution, process, or practice that theorists have identified as central to representation address the key problem of representation and contribute to a

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system of representation? The problem-based approach to representation reconciles the potential antagonism among different conceptions of representation and encourages theorists to investigate the possible complementarities between democratic and non-democratic forms of representation in the system of representation. Conceptions of representation actualized in different venues are better viewed as expressing a division of labor that solve different problems of representation and contribute to overall representation in the political system (Mansbridge et al. 2012; Kuyper 2016; Warren 2017).

What is the key problem of representation? Pitkin's (1967) semantic and conceptual study defines representation as "making present *in some sense* of something which is nevertheless *not* present literally or in fact" (8-9, italics original). Following this basic definition of representation, the key question of representation is then how to ensure that the things not literally present are made present. As Young (2000) put it, "the major normative problem of representation is the threat of disconnection" between the representative and the represented (132). This entails that in the representative relationship, the represented has to be included in the sense of having opportunities to provide input in representation and influence the decisions of the representative. Therefore, the key question of representation could be put in another way: how is the connection between the representative and represented maintained and strengthened?

I suggest that there are conceptual, institutional, and normative layers of any acceptable answer to the key question. First, from the conceptual perspective, what are the things to be made present and how are the things made present? Each conception of representation should provide an answer to this two-part question. Theoretical works on representation so far have given us powerful analytical tools for understanding the conceptual and institutional aspects of representation. Current research on representation belongs to two major streams: the Pitkinian school (the standard account) focusing on variances among different forms of representation and the constructivists' approach focusing on the processes of representation. While neither speaks sufficiently about non-democratic forms of representation, the standard and the constructivists' accounts of representation provide valuable insights as to how we can approach two analytically separate moments that are closely related in the conceptualization and practice of representation, which I refer to as differentiation and actualization.

Differentiation speaks to the conceptual aspect of representation. It suggests that the adding, removing, configuring, and connecting of various conceptual components of representation together produce distinct conceptions of representation. Actualization speaks to the practice and institutional aspects of representation, where meanings of representation are temporarily determined in the performative actions of representation and contestation among competing claims of representation. Different institutional and cultural backgrounds support and mediate the expression of specific meaning of representation.

Second, in the practice of representation in political reality, how do institutions function to ensure the correspondence between the representative and the represented that transfers the things to be represented correctly to the representative? This dissertation focuses on the actualization of MLR in China. With roots deep in the CPC's ideology, MLR showcases a distinctive conception of representation that is independent of democracy-centric conceptions of representation. MLR defines the relationship between the representative and the represented as blood and flesh tie (*xuerou lianxi,* 血肉联系) between the representative and represented, which is a "distinctive feature of the Communist Party of China" and a distinctive feature of MLR (Jiang 1989). Three features of mass line representation stand out when compared to its western counterparts. First, MLR heavily relies on the reason and judgement of the representative to include the represented and make policy decisions. Second, party building, most notably party discipline and party education, becomes the most important institution to ensure that representatives are motivated and capable of understanding the needs of the masses and how to promote their welfare. Third, unlike political parties in liberal democracies, the CPC plays a leadership role in representation, meaning that it offers directives to representatives and holds them accountable.

Finally, which normative criteria are proposed to access the legitimacy and quality of representation? The conceptual layer of the question is essential because it provides initial answers and expectations regarding institutions and normative standards involved in a conception of political representation. Each valid conception of representation should come with an account of normative criteria to be used in judging whether practices of representation are consistent with this conception of representation. In dominant Western conceptions of representation, normative assessment of practices

of representation is imbued with democratic values. For academic analysis, this has the effect of blurring the distinction between assessment of representation and assessment of democratic representation. To understand democratic or non-democratic forms of representation, we first need to be certain that representation is out there by examining whether practices of representation correspond to the conception of representation. If our concern is primarily with representation, discussion of whether representation is democratic or non-democratic is not always necessary.

The rest of this introduction consists of five sections. The first section reviews two dominant approaches to understanding the concept of representation — the Pitkinian school and the constructivists' approach. The second section considers the relationship between democracy and representation and how democracy provides institutional and normative supplements to representation. The third section outlines the structure of arguments in this dissertation. I take advantage of two analytical tools provided by Pitkinian theorists and constructivists — differentiation and actualization — and investigate how MLR is differentiated and actualized in Chinese political settings. The fourth section briefly notes some methodological issues in this research. I conclude the introduction with a brief note on the contributions of this dissertation.

1.1. Understanding representation

Conceptual debates on representation showcase two approaches to understanding this concept: the Pitkinian approach focusing on forms of representation and the constructivists focusing on processes of representation.[1] In providing a short review of the two approaches here, this section argues that despite the disagreements between the two, both offer differentiation and actualization as two valuable conceptual tools in responding to the question: what is representation?

1.1.1. Pitkinian approach

No words will overstate the importance of Pitkin's book *The Concept of Representation* (*the Concept*) for both empirical and theoretical studies of the concept.

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[1] This is a very fuzzy categorization of current studies on representation as many theorists won't neatly fall into one category.

Her 1967 summary of four views of representation — formalistic, descriptive, symbolic, and substantive — quickly became the major theoretical and classificatory guidance for political scientists on representation. Pitkinian theorists followed this approach by proposing new forms of representation that deepened our understanding of different possibilities in political representation. For example, Mansbridge's (2003) review of four forms of representation — promissory, anticipatory, gyroscopic, and surrogate — provided a new lens for interpreting the relationship between representative and the represented. Later, she developed the selection model of representation in which narration and deliberation, instead of monitoring and sanction, provide alternative sources of accountability (Mansbridge 2009). Similarly, Young (2000) highlighted the importance of deliberation in the representation of disadvantaged groups.

In addition to discussing forms of representation, Pitkinian theorists also explore variance within different conceptual components of representation. For Pitkin, representation describes the relationship between things being "made present" by the representative and the represented. The legislature makes characteristics of the nation present through condensation or miniature; political leaders stand for certain aspects of the people through symbol making; representatives make the interest of their constituency present through either acting for and responding to their expressed will or by supporting policies that advance public welfare.

Pitkinian theorists have also gone further to include things that Pitkin did not discuss in *The Concept* and, in doing so, have extended the boundary of Pitkin's work on representation in three ways. First, they have introduced new elements to Pitkin's definition of representation. For example, in addition to the representation of perspectives (Young 2000) and discourses (Dryzek and Niemeyer 2008), political theorists have also investigated the possibility of representing environments (Monaghan 2013), nonhuman beings (Black 2003), and future generations (Leib and Ponet 2012). The emergence of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (Grant and Keohane 2005; J. Rubenstein 2007), citizen representatives (Brown 2006; Stephan 2004; Warren 2008), self-appointed representatives (Montanaro 2012), and community-based organizations (Levine 2016) provide options for interpreting the relationship between representative and the represented beyond electoral institutions.

Despite their undeniable contributions to the study of representation, Pitkinian

theorists have sold her classic volume short in two key ways. First, their readings of Pitkin are partial and selective, ignoring the subtle theme of supporting a single and basic concept of representation. Yes, Pitkin's major focus is on the principal-agent relationship, in which the agent acts somewhere between trustees and delegates under the authorization of principals and held accountable by them. But it is not her intention to say that the complex principal-agent relationship is the only legitimate perspective on representation. Rather, her approach to the concept of representation offers a guide for theorists to understand representation in unfamiliar contexts.

More importantly, the explosion of forms of representation overshadows the distinctive and dichotomous responses to the key problem of representation in democratic and non-democratic terms. Can we accept a citizen representative or representative of specific environment without credentials from democratic elections? Although western theorists have been seeking the support of democratic institutions for these new forms of representation, the intention of this dissertation is to look at non-democratic side of representation and examine how representation is formulated and practiced without democratic institutions. We can then assess whether representation can fulfill its conceptual expectation in practices beyond liberal democracy.

1.1.2. Constructivist approach

An appreciation of increasingly consequential political realities has led to challenges to the standard account of representation. Its emphasis on elections predetermines the nature of representatives (Rehfeld 2006, 3) and fails to accommodate non-elected representatives (Urbinati and Warren 2008).[2] To address these concerns, normative theorists have advocated a constructivist turn in the conceptualization of representation. As Disch (2011) insightfully observed, the constructivist turn has its root in Pitkin's idea of symbolic representation. Compared to substantive representation in the principal-agent model, symbolic representation involves symbol-making (symbolic commitments) that resonates with the constituency (Bishin 2009). Saward (2006, 2010) advances a specific form of symbolic representation, the representative claim, in which

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[2] Lord and Pollak (2013; cf. Pollak 2007) summarize three problems of the standard account of representation: aggregation of interests; suppose direct relationship that does not work well in large communities; and the over-emphasis on elections.

the making, receiving and consequent acceptance or rejection of representative claims defines the way constituents are represented. Constructivist conceptions of representation detach representation from specific institutional arrangements.

Saward's conceptualization of the representative claim (2006, 2010) constructs the representative relationship as the giving and acceptance of claims. However, it is not clear why actors make or accept a claim and how they make sense of their respective actions. Saward suggests that we can shift from studying the role of representatives to their subject positions (Saward 2014). Instead of taking roles such as delegate or trustee, representatives choose their social positions for different audiences, which determine the roles that they can play in the representative relationship. For example, a representative can represent one constituency in a descriptive way and another one in a more substantive way as a trustee. The roles that the representative can take are defined by the "relational and changeable array of such resources" provided by the social position she takes (Saward 2014, 727). In this way, Saward not only explains how representatives "shape-shift," but also the internal dynamics of their change of roles in front of different constituencies.

Saward's observations direct us to a dynamic understanding of the representative relationship. Indeed, the shape-shifting representation is by far the least democracy-centric conception of representation in recent western theorizations, as the representative relationship is constructed by the relative social positions of the represented and the representative. Rather than providing institutional or moral requirements, democracy becomes one of the sources that both sides can utilize in the representative relationship and thus partially defines the exact form it takes.

Despite their successful detachment of representation from democratic institutions, constructivists nevertheless look at democratic values or systems for legitimacy (Saward 2010; Näsström 2015). Are there any non-democratic justifications for political representation? Constructivists' account of "acceptance" as the criterion of legitimate representation sheds light on this question (Rehfeld 2006; Saward 2010). Weber's (1947) descriptive account of legitimacy states that people may trust an authority for three types of reasons: tradition, charisma of ruler, and legality. Schmidt (2013) further distinguishes three types of legitimacy: input participation, output

effectiveness, and throughout inclusiveness in interest consultation.

1.1.3. The key problem of representation

Pitkin's (1967) basic definition of representation as "making present" of something that is not "literally" raises a series of questions for representation (8-9). Dovi (2018) has listed what she calls the "key components of representation," which I believe captures the basics in Pitkin's definition:

1. Some party that is representing (the representative, an organization, movement, state agency, etc.).

2. some party that is being represented (the constituents, the clients, etc.).

3. Something that is being represented (opinions, perspectives, interests, discourses, etc.).

4. A setting within which the activity of representation is taking place (the political context).

5. Something that is being left out (the opinions, interests, and perspectives not voiced).

The five components, or five questions, should be addressed by most conceptualizations of representation to provide a clear and valid ground for discussion. There is, however, one key element missing in Dovi's list — how is the "something being represented" made present by "some party that is representing?" This question speaks to the mechanism of representation and directly addresses the key problem of representation, whereas the five components set the scope of representation.

The problem concerning the mechanism of representation is best captured by the paradox of absence and presence inherent in representation. The represented must be both absent and present in the representative relationship to satisfy the basic meaning of representation. This paradox is best illustrated in Pitkin's (1967) analysis of the mandate and independence debate (153). From the mandate perspective, if the represented is fully absent, leaving all decisions and actions to the representative, there is no representation since nothing is made present. Similarly, from the independence perspective, if the represented is fully present, taking all duties in decision-making and acting for themselves, there is no representation either since no representative is

needed. Therefore, for representation to take place, the relationship between the representative and the represented should be somewhere between the extremes of the mandate and independence views.

The conflict between absence and presence is resolved by looking at the something that is being represented. In her substantive view of representation, where objective interest is made present, Pitkin suggests that the paradox is only pertinent to the representation of people, since disagreements over the nature of the objective interest may arise between the represented and the representative (155). Presence of the represented is mediated as the objective interest and validated through the expression of "not object[ing] to what is done in his name" (155).

However, the non-objection criterion has two problems. First, taking an individualistic view, as Runciman (2007) claims, Pitkin's non-objection criterion is unclear as to whether "the objections of individuals can be equated with the objections of a group of constituents as a whole" (99). That is, do objections of individuals terminate representation whenever they are raised? Runciman suggests that objections are "decisive when they constitute a plausibly competing claim" to the representative's claim to act for the represented (107). The focus of representation is shifted from the relationship between the representative and the represented to representatives' competing claims of representation, moving from an individualistic theory of representation to a group theory of representation. Second, in majority systems, objections by a minority could be easily overruled, leaving it with little or no representation in the political system. To address this, political theorists have proposed improving the representation of minority groups through inclusion of different voices and perspectives (Williams 1998; Young 2000) and limitation of the influence of dominant groups (Dovi 2009).

It should be noted here that Pitkin's substantive view of representation is but one response to the key problem. The descriptive view, for example, conceives representation as a resemblance of demographic composition between the legislature and citizens (Pitkin 1967, chapter 4). Therefore, the prescription of the descriptive view of representation to the key problem is that the represented are made present descriptively when the legislature is constituted, that is, proportionally to their demographic distribution proportional within the whole nation. This answer, in turn,

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derives from descriptive representation's scope — who is represented, who is the representative, what is represented, etc. That is, the answer to the key question of representation is based on the interpretations of components of representation. This dissertation adopts this approach to perform an anatomy on MLR as a non-democratic conception of representation and examines how MLR provides its answer to the key question of representation.

Constructivists offer a different perspective on the paradox of absence and presence. In emphasizing the procedural and performative aspects of representation, the unity of absence and presence is achieved in discursive processes of representative claims, where the acceptance of a claim indicates both presence of certain interests and absence of others (Saward 2009; 2010). The constitutive capacity of representatives calls the responsiveness of the representative to the represented into question. Hence theorists need to place more attention on systemic features of the political system and mobilization of constituents (Disch 2011; 2012). This is not to say that the Pitkinian and constructivists' approaches are incompatible. Rather, as I argue in this dissertation, the two approaches should be considered as complimentary to each other, as they emphasize different moments in representative processes.

1.2. Democracy and representation

This dissertation accepts Warren's (2017) problem-based approach to understanding political systems. For a political system to be democratic, it must solve the problems of "empowered inclusion, collective agenda and will formation, and collective decision-making" (43). There are many institutions (e.g., election, deliberation, representation) within a political system that perform one or more of the three democratic functions. However, none of them are "inherently democratic" because they can also support non-democratic systems (45). When combining them together, we can better understand how each institution promotes or undermines the three democratic functions and identify institutional equivalents that produce more democratic outcomes. Representation, while serving all of the three functions (empowering inclusion, forming collective will, and collective decision-making), requires the support of other institutions to make the process more democratic.

1.2.1. Democracy and the key question of representation

The re-alignment between democracy and representation is accompanied with two benefits that representation can provide to democracy.[3] Representation makes mass participation and collective decision-making in modern democracies possible through the mediated inclusion of citizens, especially minority groups, and formation of representative bodies (Plotke 1997; Williams 1998; Young 2000; Warren 2017). More importantly, in addition to inclusion, representation empowers citizens through elections and deliberations, which foster citizens' autonomous judgement and reflexivity in opinion formation and public deliberation (Urbinati 2000, 2006; Dryzek and Niemeyer 2008; Warren 2017). As Urbinati puts it, representation "is a comprehensive filtering, refining, and mediating process of political will formation and expression" (Urbinati 2006, 6).

As discussed earlier, in Pitkin's substantive view of representation, the responsiveness criterion relies on democratic institutions to make sure that representatives are ready to response to the represented. When we consider representation at the system level, as "institutionalized arrangement … operating in the complex ways of large-scale social arrangements," the representative system also needs to "promote public interest and be responsive to the opinions" (Pitkin 1967, 221, 225). Democratic (free and genuine) elections, Pitkin argues, are "necessary to ensure systemic responsiveness" (234-235). With democratic elections, the represented are empowered in the selection of a representative they trust and sanction of a representative that fails to meet their expectations (Plotke 1997; Mansbridge 2009). Moreover, democratic election is an important institution for the formation of public opinion and judgement (Urbinati 2006)

Yet this claim has two drawbacks. First, the majority rule inherent in the voting system silences and excludes the voices of minority groups (Young 1990, 2000) and the territorial-based constituencies contribute to downplaying interests based on ethnicity, gender, etc. (Rehfeld 2005). Second, non-elected representatives, by definition, are not subject to electoral authorization and accountability. Innovations in democratic

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[3] Representation was considered to be incompatible with democracy by theorists of participatory democracy (e.g., Pateman 1970; Barbe 2003). Plotke's (1997) claim that "the opposite of representation is not participation" started the democratic rediscovery of representation (19). For a review, see Urbinati and Warren (2008).

institutions such as democratic deliberation offer alternatives to electoral incentives. Young (2000), for example, considers representation as a dynamic process that moves between two moments — authorization and accountability. Democratic deliberation in the public sphere, where minorities are also engaged, is important for citizens to form reasoned judgements on the actions of the representative and hence promote positive connections between the representative and the represented.

Democracy also provides normative standards to evaluate representation. In addition to electoral authorization and accountability, political theorists also consider other democratic credentials for non-elective representatives. They argue that representation in democratic society should be equal (Näsström 2015; Pogge 2002; Zakaras 2010), inclusive (Dovi 2009; Plotke 1997; Young 2000), and deliberative (Kuyper 2016; Mansbridge 2003, 2009; Urbinati and Warren 2008). Framing the question from the lens of representative claims, Saward (2009) claims that non-elective representatives could be assessed from the vantage points of authorization — their position in and connection to formal institutions — and authenticity — representation of interests without pressures and compromises in electoral institutions and government. Authenticity is the "apparent and constant responsive consent" given through the claim-making and accepting processes in a "reasonably open democratic society" (Saward 2009, 21, 15).

The institutional support from democracy helps to solve the key problem of representaion by providing constant authorization and accoutability to representatives. The selection and sanction mechanisms offered in democracies ensures the connection between representatives and the represented. Moreover, election and deliberation offer different channels for public opinion formation. On the other hand, democracy also provides normative criteria to assess democratic forms of representation. In studying non-democratic forms of representation, the focus is on how the key problem of represenation — potential disconnection between the representative and the representative — is addressed institutionally and normatively.

1.2.2. Missing opportunities

For the purpose of my analysis of representation in China, current research on representation suffers from two drawbacks. First, as mentioned, current conceptions of

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representation heavily rely on democratic values or institutions, making it hard to accommodate representation in non-democratic contexts. Exclusive attention to democratic representation overshadows the explorations of representation in non-democratic contexts. As Schweber (2016) notices, "[g]enuine political representation is not limited to any particular political system or formal institutional setting, and an evaluation of representative practices must be sensitive to cultural as well as institutional variations in the expressions of political practice" (383).

Pitkin warned us against this tendency at the very beginning of her book. Representation, she writes, could be considered as a "complicated, convoluted, three-dimensional structure in the middle of a dark enclosure," and all the meanings of representation provided by political theorists are "flash-bulb photographs of the structure taken from different angles" (Pitkin 1967, 10). With the metaphor of a black box, she vividly illustrates that representation is a complicated concept with different and sometimes competing meanings. By engaging with representation in western democracies almost exclusively, theorists are presenting limited aspects of this complicated structure and hence fail to acknowledge the complexity of representation.

Saward (2014), among others, implicitly suggests that representation exists in non-democratic contexts when he claims that a shape-shifting representative could be an "elected politician, a transnational government political actor, a social movement leader or dissident, a religious leader, a business or labor leader, or an artistic figure with a public profile…" (735). However, it seems that all the representatives are subject to democratic legitimations as "the complex political play of claim and reception … requires that we draw on different traditions of thinking about democratic legitimacy" (Saward 2014, 733). He contends that the representative claim has provisional democratic legitimacy when evidence shows "sufficient acceptance of claims by appropriate constituencies under reasonable conditions of judgment" (Saward 2010, 145). It seems that when coming to the legitimacy issue, the diversity of "cultural backgrounds" and "social structures" that determine how representation shifts lose their charms in shaping the forms of legitimacy. This should not be the case. If representation obtains different forms in different contexts, it is very possible that legitimacy also takes on meanings that do not meet Pitkin's or Saward's democratic standards (even if some aspects of legitimacy are retained across contexts). If we can assess democratic legitimacy of

representation in non-democratic contexts, we should also be able to evaluate the "non-democratic legitimacy" of representation in liberal democracies.

Another problem of current research on representation lies in the intentional or unintentional blurring of the distinction between conceptions of representation and practices of representation. Pitkinian theorists implicitly suggest a one-on-one relationship between meanings and practices of representation. When talking about substantive representation, we are invited to think about a representative relationship where the representative is acting for the interests of the represented in the legislature. Constructivists have reminded us that this is not exactly the case. Representatives "shape-shift" among various roles in front of different constituents, creating shifting meanings and dynamic forms of representation within this particular representative relationship (Saward 2014). Similarly, from the perspectives of the represented, there are very likely different readings of the representative, regardless of the meaning and form of representation that the representative tries to convey in her claims.

While constructivists avoid contentions about a rigid correspondence between meanings and actions of representation, they have missed actions beyond claim-making and claim-receiving that are integral to representation — speaking for, acting for, and standing for the represented. Representation could be considered as claim-making, but behind the claims made by representatives and the represented, there are what Pitkinian theorists have identified as various conceptions and practices of representation behind and beyond the claims. Representation extends to the subsequent decisions and policies that representatives make, whether it is noticed by the represented or not. To better guide empirical studies, the relationship between meanings and actions of representation should be carefully unfolded.

Moreover, current studies of representation demonstrate the disjuncture between flourishing normative conceptualizations of representation and the monolithic definition of representation as responsiveness that is applied in empirical studies. The normative and empirical divide in research on democracy is well documented by Sabl (2015), who suggests that, to bridge the division, normative theorists and empiricists could learn from each other while retaining a distinct division of labor in studying democracy. The same applies to the study of representation, where theorists propose various forms of representation and expand the scope of representation to non-political domains and

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empiricists take the responsiveness criteria as the golden rule in assessing the quality of representation (e.g., Miller and Stokes 1963, Achen 1978, Bafumi and Herron 2010; for a review, see Powell 2004).

Related to the first problem, one reason for the disjuncture is ignorance of the institutional and cultural backgrounds in which specific conceptualizations of representation are situated. Theorists tend to assume that such information is self-evident in their formulations of representation. Pitkin, for example, acknowledges that she, together with many theorists, has "thoughtlessly" equated representation with democracy (Pitkin 2004). In addition to institutional conditions, theorists also fail to specify other units of representation that are integral to its meanings. Various forms of representation identified by Mansbridge (2003) are implicitly based on democratic electoral systems and hence the representatives in those cases are legislators. Spelling out these elements clearly in various conceptualizations of representation would better reveal their empirical and normative implications and facilitate better assessment of varied forms of representation in political realities.

1.3. Organization of chapters

The democratic-centric approaches to the concept of representation shed light on some core features of substantive representation, and are thus crucial to our understanding of the normative problems to which representation is addressed. However, this contribution remains insufficient for our overall understanding of representation in non-democratic contexts. In examining conceptions of representation in China, this dissertation maps mass line representation (MLR) through the lens of two analytical tools revealed in the Pitkinian and constructivist approaches — differentiation and actualization — and investigates how the key problem of representation — connection between the representative and represented — is resolved conceptually and practically in the Chinese context. To this end, arguments in this dissertation unfold in four parts. The first part includes Chapter 2 and 3 and focuses on conceptually developing differentiation and actualization from a careful reading of Pitkin and Saward. Building on this theoretical and methodological foundation, the second part switches to conceptual analysis of representation in China. Chapter 4 outlines the ideological and cultural foundation of MLR. Chapter 5 provides a conceptual analysis of mass line theory

and MLR through differentiation and demonstrates the conceptual response of MLR to the key problem of representation. The third part focuses on the actualization of MLR in the Chinese context. Chapters 6, 7, and 8 review strategies for performing MLR from the three generations of Chinese leaders — Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao, and Xi Jinping — with a focus on their institutional innovations. In Chapter 9, the last section of this dissertation, I turn to normative assessment of MLR and further elaborate on differences between MLR and current western conceptions of representation.

Chapter 2 argues that differentiation, as a process of identifying various views of representation in different contexts, is the forgotten land of Pitkin's (1967) influential book on representation. *The Concept* is mostly read as demarcating clear forms and mechanisms of representation that impose fixed identities on representative relationships. An elected representative, for example, is authorized to act for the interests of her constituents and is held accountable to them through electoral cycles. But from the perspective of differentiation, this is but one snapshot of the representative relationship that favors the election element. An elected representative is also a claim-maker, a symbol, a set of descriptive characteristics, etc., from different perspectives and in varied contexts. Each instance of representation features the combination of all possible meanings of representation in a given context. Instead of drawing boundaries and privileging one side of the binaries, differentiation acknowledges the polysemy of representation and identifies conceptual morphologies beneath different conceptions and forms of the concept. Following Michael Freeden's approach to the study of ideological morphologies (1996), I argue that meanings of a concept are defined by its internal and external morphologies, and further circumscribed by the sematic field (ideologies and cultural restraints) within which the concept is situated.

Chapter 3 discusses formulations of actualization drawing on the constructivist account of representation. From this perspective, representation is unchained from its institutional shackles with the advancement of an event-based understanding of this concept, where identities, roles, interests, and preferences are mobilized, constructed, and performed (Saward 2010; Disch 2011). As an event, it is the performing, claiming, and rendering of various forms of representation that matters for representation as a concept. In this process, meanings of representation are also contested, disambiguated, and actualized. The actualization of the meanings of representation does not entail a

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single and fixed meaning for the representative relationships constituted; nor does it guarantee the acceptance of the meaning that the representative wants to construct. There are no fixed roles for the representative and the represented. In different institutional contexts, a representative is some combination of delegate, trustee, claim-maker, and interlocutor, whereas the represented are authorizers, claim-recipients, and communicators.

Chapter 4 turns to the ideological and cultural backgrounds of mass line theory and mass line representation. Situated in Mao Zedong's influential work on communism, mass line representation is mutually defined by core concepts in Mao Zedong Thought — contradiction, practice, and class. The mass line approach requires the cadres and representatives to actively engage with the masses to understand their needs and go back to them to give account of the decisions they made. Moreover, Confucianism, as a key Chinese cultural restraint, offers concepts such as *minben* (people first, 民本), harmony, and moral cultivation in understanding theory and practice of representation in China. However, the connection between Maoist tradition and Confucianism was not made clear until Hu Jintao took office.

Chapter 5 unpacks MLR as a form of representation advocated in CPC's ideology. Based on my analysis of conceptual components of representation, which include the representative, represented, mechanism of representation, and venue of representation, I present the conception of MLR in two scopes. At the national level, the CPC as an abstract entity represents the Chinese national through its portrayal of the Party as the leader for national rejuvenation. At lower levels, MLR is a form of substantive representation that emphasizes the representative's ability and willingness to practice the mass line approach and include the masses in the decision-making process. Mao devised party building — primarily party discipline and education — as the institutional support that facilitates the representative's reason and judgement in building and maintaining the representative relationship.

Chapter 6 to Chapter 8 compare the actualization of mass line representation in China under the third generation of leadership. Chapter 6 focuses on Jiang Zemin's strategies in performing MLR in the midst of three challenges to the CPC's rule — decline of faith in the Marxist tradition, pluralization of Chinese society, and corruption. The three challenges in the reform era created both crisis for the CPC and for

representation in China. Jiang was ideologically bold in marginalizing the concept of class in the CPC's ideology while practically defensive in drawing a boundary between the Chinese political system and western democracies. He further institutionalized the mass approach and the Bureau of Letter and Calls system to promote the practice of MLR.

Chapter 7 examines Hu Jintao's responses to the challenges. Compared to Jiang, Hu was more open to liberal democratic institutions and included them in his institutional innovations. Hu responded to the crisis of CPC's rule with the introduction of Confucian notions in the CPC's ideology. He further created room for local governments to experiment with democratic elections and deliberations. Hu's democratic experiments brought the contestation between two forms of representation — Pitkinian substantive representation and MLR — to the stage and potentially undermined the practice of MLR. Chapter 8 turns to Xi Jinping's confidence doctrine. In asking the CPC and the Chinese people to be confident in the CPC and the Chinese political system, Xi returned to strengthening the practice of the mass line approach through his anti-corruption campaigns.

Chapter 9 discusses normative considerations in the conceptualization of representation. I argue that each conception of representation offers normative standards in assessing its performance in political reality. MLR focuses on informative inclusion and consequential responsiveness whereas Pitkin's notion of substantive representation focuses on empowered inclusion and responsiveness. This chapter evaluates MLR by both its own criteria and the criteria of substantive representation. While institutional innovations from Jiang to Xi improve the performance of MLR according to its own standards, they still fail to bring MLR closer to meeting the liberal criteria.

1.4. Methodological notes

In studying the use of representation in the Chinese context, I start by preparing analytical tools based on classic texts on representation in the western world. From a close reading of Hanna Pitkin's (1967) *The Concept of Representation* and Michael Saward's (2010) *The Representative Claim*, and with additional guidance from related

articles and books, I develop an analytical framework to investigate representation across cultures that features two aspects: differentiation to bring conceptual clarity to forms of representation and actualization to understand the formation of meanings of representative practices.

In approaching representation in China, I focus on three types of sources. First, writings of the CPC leadership. This large range of influential writing by and since Mao Zedong enables construction of an ideological morphology of the CPC's interpretation of representation over the past century. Second, I consulted a wide range of scholarly works on representation in China and Chinese politics more generally. These provided crucial references and checks on the arguments by Chinese leaders, and contextual information on interpreting the development of CPC's ideology. Third, Chinese media sources provide complementary evidence to political writings and public speeches, and allowed for cross-checking interpretation of ideas behind them.

Some materials used in this dissertation are available only in Chinese. For the parts that I quoted, I translated them into English by myself. In the case of speeches delivered by Chinese leaders at major conferences (e.g., National People's Congress, National Congress of the Communist Party of China, etc.), I relied on the corresponding English versions provided by *China Daily* for my translation.[4] The texts from the five volumes of *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* (Mao 1965a; 1965b; 1965c; 1965d; 1977) and Confucian classics (*the Analects* and *Mencius*) are available in English. I used the translation found in the English version of these texts. When translating organization names, I followed their official English names, available on the relevant organization's website. When the English name was not available, I followed commonly used translation practices in academic literature.

1.5. Conclusion

This dissertation furthers the conversation between Western and Eastern conceptualizations of representation by analyzing the performance of mass line representation in contemporary Chinese political thought. Instead of setting and

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[4] *China Daily (中国日报)* is the state-owned English-language daily newspaper in China.

defending boundaries for mass line representation, this project accepts the diversity and complexity of the concept of representation. I argue that theorists should step back and examine how different conceptions and practices of representation use a combination of shared and distinctive normative requirements to address and provide legitimacy for political actors' efforts to address the key problem of representation: how to maintain and strengthen the connection between the representative and the represented. Two analytical tools derived from the Pitkinian and constructivists' approaches — differentiation and actualization — guide the conceptual and contextual analysis of representation.

This research contributes to current studies on representation in three ways. First, based on two major approaches to the concept, it sorts out an analytical framework that helps us to understand representation as a complex and polysemic concept, as well as myriad practices that are labelled as representation. Taking advantage of Pitkinian theorists' careful delineation of different forms of representation, differentiation starts with conceptual morphologies and presents meanings of representation as infinite possibilities to be disambiguated in political processes. Drawing on constructivists' perspective on the dynamic interactions in representative relationships, my concept of actualization connects meanings of representation with practices of representation. Second, with careful analysis of the CPC's theory and practice of mass line representation, the dissertation presents an alternative to democracy-centric conceptions of representation. If we accept that representation is possible beyond liberal democracies, unpacking MLR into conceptual components, theoretically locating it in the CPC's ideology, and assessing it with relevant normative standards reveals a picture of MLR more consistent with Pitkin's objective of a three-dimensional portrait of representation.

Finally, in introducing MLR as a conception of representation, this research facilitates communications among different conceptions of representation from various contexts by creating a common ground for discussion and comparison. Representation is a complex concept, and its complexity does not merely come from its entanglement with democratic institutions. Understanding how representation is conceptualized and actualized in non-democratic contexts provides us with an alternative lens for appreciating the multiplicity of meanings of the concept.

Chapter 2.
Differentiation: Pitkin's Under-Developed Theme

Current studies on the concept of representation seem to be undertaken within two roughly distinguishable approaches: 1) the so-called standard account with Pitkin's classic book on representation, *The Concept of Representation* (*the Concept*), as the pivot; and 2) the constructivists' account that builds on the critique of the standard account of representation. Yet differences and antagonism between the two approaches, as I argue in this dissertation, are over-stated. The standard account and the constructivists' account of representation are two analytically separate moments that are closely related in the conceptualization of representation. In this chapter, I focus on Pitkin's review of four forms of representation — formalistic, descriptive, symbolic, and substantive — and uncover differentiation as one theme that was repeatedly highlighted by Pitkin but was at the same time neither fully developed nor taken seriously by her readers.

Differentiation is the adding, removing, configuring, and connecting of various conceptual components of representation that together express distinct conceptions of representation. Pitkin's standard account of representation pursues this goal through identifying different forms of representation, as well as respective contexts where these forms of representation situate and gain their respective meanings. In doing so, differentiation offers a conceptual foundation for addressing the key question of representation. However, this theme is under-developed by Pitkin and is ignored by both empiricists and theorists, whose primary focus is on the forms of representation Pitkin developed. To follow this under-appreciated theme, I elaborate on Pitkin's emphasis on the complexity of representation and highlight her attention to this complexity by employing a morphological analysis of her theory. However, Pitkin does not specify the interaction among components of representation or how context shapes the meanings of representation. I argue in this chapter, and show in subsequent chapters, that Michael Freeden's morphology of ideologies provides one conceptual complement to these issues.

This chapter unfolds the idea of differentiation in five sections. After a review of the sprout of differentiation in *the Concept,* the second section examines critiques of

Pitkin's study, which, I suggest, have largely missed the diversity and possibility that Pitkin embedded in her book. The next section picks up the traces planted by Pitkin and develops it into the idea of differentiation. After that, I propose an analytical framework for understanding the differentiation aspect of representation based on Michael Freeden's work on ideological morphology. A few words on the application of this framework to the analysis of representation in contemporary China conclude this chapter.

2.1.   Revisiting *The Concept of Representation*

As discussed in the introduction, political scientists have different readings of *the Concept*, and of Pitkin's contribution to the field. Empirical political scientists embrace the theoretical support for empirical studies and theoretical questions derived from two forms of representation elaborated in the *Concept*: descriptive representation and substantive representation. Political theorists, on the other hand, follow Pitkin's lead in identifying more forms of representation and question the limits of her approach. Both empiricists and theorists, however, ignore one important but under-developed theme in the *Concept*: the complexity and diverse possibilities for representation.

The problem is that political scientists cherry-pick through *the Concept* and ignore the wide range of possibilities that Pitkin identified in her work. Studies on group representation tend to highlight only a limited number of characteristics such as gender and race to be included, leaving other perhaps equally important attributes in a less politically salient position. If women deserve more representation, how about transgender? If black Americans want or deserve more voice, how about Latinos, Asians, etc.? This recalls the question Pitkin posed for descriptive representation: who should decide what characteristics are to be represented in which ways? Even if inclusion of all the descriptive characteristics is possible,[5] it would create more problems in the politicizing and radicalizing identities, by bringing salience to certain identities out of multiplicity of identities that individuals have (Klandermans 2014).

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[5] This is theoretically undesirable as representation would be unnecessary in this case and technically impossible considering the limited number of seats in the legislature.

Studies on substantive representation share the same problem. In tackling the mandate-independence controversy, Pitkin suggests that the mandate view and the independence view set the limits "of what we are willing to recognize as representing (or a representative) and what no longer qualifies … But within the limits … there is room for a variety of views on what a good representative should and should not do" (166). In this stream of research, empiricists pin representation down to the mandate end of the spectrum and ignores various possibilities for representation in between the mandate and independence conceptions of representation.

A more subtle and perhaps more detrimental treatment of *the Concept* is the establishment of rigid connections between different views of representation and practices of representation in the real political world. When talking about elected representatives, both empiricists and theorists are not hesitant to single out the responsiveness defined as central to Pitkin's in substantive representation, then bind it almost naturally to democratic institutions (e.g., Miller and Stokes 1963, Achen 1978, Fafumi and Herron 2010). Mansbridge (2003) is less dogmatic in understanding representative relationships when she proposes four alternative views of representation that gives new roles to representatives and the represented. Yet those views of representation are still embedded in democratic elections, which render representation legitimate and accountable.

The generalization and simplification of Pitkin's book and political reality ignores the complexity and possibility of representation as a concept and political practice. As a concept, representation has multiple meanings, and each could more or less apply to elected representatives. If we limit ourselves to the familiar forms of representation identified by Pitkin and Mansbridge, a representative relationship based on democratic elections could be descriptive, symbolic, substantive, promissory, and anticipatory, etc. As political practice, elected representatives could play more roles than are typically associated with the label "elected" (Saward 2014). In different contexts, he could be citizen representative (Warren 2008), or self-appointed representative (Montanaro 2012), or even some forms of representation not yet adequately theorized by scholars.

We are missing the full picture of representation, which Pitkin wants us to be aware of, if we just focus on the overt theme in *the Concept* and ignore the under-developed theme of the book — a general definition of representation that is open to the

complexity and possibility of the concept. In investigating the meaning of representation, Pitkin follows J. L. Austin's ordinary language philosophy and studies various uses of the word family of representation. She acknowledges that different applications of representation in political and non-political contexts will present very different pictures of the concept. These variations, however, are "controlled and discoverable" through the single basic meaning of representation: "making present *in some sense* of something which is nevertheless *not* present literally or in fact" (8-9, italics original).

The four forms of representation discussed in *the Concept*, then, are four general uses of the concept that contribute to the reconstruction of the meaning of representation through their application in political and non-political contexts. Pitkin's lengthy discussion of substantive representation does not entail that, as empiricists take it, acting in and being responsive to the interests of the represented is *the* meaning of representation. It is, rather, one use (or multiple uses) of the basic meaning of representation in contemporary world. Using the metaphor of a three-dimensional object in a dark box, Pitkin suggests that any particular theorization of representation can capture only "partial views of the complete structure" (11). In order to reconstruct the complete picture of this complex concept, it is important to examine the context in which the concept of representation is used. This context justifies this specific application of the basic meaning of representation with "assumptions and implications imposed by that context" (11).

To briefly recapitulate here, both empiricists and theorists present a narrow reading of Pitkin's book, focusing on one or several forms of representation but ignoring the complexity and possibility of the concept. Moreover, following Pitkin's methodology in studying the concept of representation, we should focus on how the concept is used in the context we are examining, rather than applying Pitkin's forms of representation rigidly to interpret new forms and practices of representation. With the abundant information provided in *the Concept*, it is not surprising that readers will have different interpretations of the book. The next section will review critiques of Pitkin's work.

2.2. Critiques of *The Concept*

The wide acceptance of *the Concept* on representation is accompanied by reflections and critiques of four forms of representation identified in the book. This

section reviews criticisms of Pitkin's work from Lord and Pollak (2013) and constructivists, which I believe offer good representations of disagreements on *the Concept*. By doing that, I intend to show from a different perspective that they again mispresent the plurality and various possibilities of representation, as well as subtle differences in four views of representation, developed in *the Concept*. Critiques reviewed here, like proponents of Pitkin's conceptualization of representation, fail to pay due attention to the "hidden" theme in Pitkin's book.

2.2.1. The standard account and substantive representation

In arguing that both the standard account and constructivists' conception of representation fail to address challenges posed by EU, Lord and Pollak (2013; cf. Pollak 2007; Lord and Pollak 2010) summarize three problems of the standard account of representation, with Pitkin as its advocate. First, the standard account assumes a directional relationship between the representative and the represented, which is embodied by the authorization and accountability processes through elections. For Lord and Pollak, electoral mechanisms are inherently flawed in managing the aggregation of diverse and sometimes conflicting interests. Hence the second problem is that for the standard account of representation to function properly, a moderate and relatively heterogenous constituency or objects to be represented are necessary. Finally, the standard account, with election playing a crucial role, limits representation to formally elected legislative assemblies. Representation in modern liberal democracies, they argue, is both formal and informal, with "who is entitled to authorise the respective representatives and the scope/reach of the decisions made" as two major distinctions (Lord and Pollak 2013, 519).

While Lord and Pollak capture certain pitfalls of the standard account of representation, they are not doing justice to Pitkin's work in five respects. First, despite the fact that the substantive forms of representation are Pitkin's primary focus, it would be wrong to take *the Concept* as developing only one conception of representation. Rather, as I argued earlier, this book comprehensively reviews of four main categories of uses of representation, each with many subtle variations within its respective categories. Substantive representation is just one category of representation that most closely resembles the standard account of representation. Therefore, Pitkin provides one

possible theorization of the standard account, but her work does more than that in providing three other views of representation and a general framework in understanding representation.

Second, Pitkin's substantive representation is not exactly the same as the standard account of representation, as least not what Lord and Pollak describe as a principal-agent relationship characterized by periodical authorization and accountability through elections. For Pitkin, substantive representation does not always involve elections, not even any formal authorization or accountability mechanisms. When reviewing the uses of substantive representation, Pitkin put together a chain of examples of representatives who "act for" the interest of others, e.g. natural gas corporations, Formosa, etc. They are called representatives not because they hold positions in the government or the legislature, but because that their role "is to speak for, act for, look after the interests of their respective *groups*" (116, emphasis added). To use Pitkin's example, a congressman or congresswoman formally elected in California cannot be said to be authorized by or held accountable by the Taiwan Government or people when he or she advances the interest of Taiwan in the Congress. What matters in substantive representation is the interest of the representative group that the representative advocates, promotes, and defends in his or her actions. However, taking care of others' interests does not necessarily involve representation. It makes little sense to say that parents represent their children when taking care of them. For Pitkin, when representation is involved, the children, as the represented, should be present in some sense to make representation happen.

Third, Pitkin is determined to draw identifiable boundaries between different views of representation, including formalistic representation and substantive representation. She emphasizes that substantive representation applies to a specific context distinctive from other forms of representation, including formalistic representation. Substantive representation is relevant "where one man's actions are to be ascribed to others" (142). For Pitkin, we are literally talking about two different things when drawing connections between authorization or accountability through elections and substantively acting for others. Even though the two are often intertwined in liberal democracies, it is wrong to consider them as the same dimension of representation. While election may be present in some variations of substantive representation, the

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purpose is not to formally authorize representatives or hold them accountable. In fact, Pitkin expresses her skepticism about the role of elections in substantive representation. For her, election and re-election do not necessarily mean good representation. "A representative may be unjustly voted out of office, defeated in spite of the fact that he has been an excellent representative" (165). "But the standard he will be judged by as a representative is whether he has promoted the objective interest of those he represents. Within the framework of his basic obligation there is room for a wide range of alternatives" (166).

Fourth, the problem of interest aggregation does not trouble Pitkin as much as Lord and Pollak suppose. Pitkin does struggle over three types of interest to be presented by the representatives: individual, local or constituency, and national. Yet like the dilemma of being a trustee or delegate, choosing only one type of interest to represent, imposes unnecessary restrictions on the choices available and forces us to choose among only three given options. Instead of debating which interest is more important, Pitkin is very flexible in switching the perspective of the question. She seems to acknowledge that a representative could take up several different roles when representing substantively. As representative of a constituency, his or her "obligation is to that constituency's interest" (216). But in the case of representing the whole nation, the representative should also "look after … the national interest" (216). That is, in shifting the perspectives on how we conceive "who is representing what," Pitkin's creatively solves the puzzle. Somewhat like Saward's (2014) notion of "shape-shifting," representatives here are also able to shift their roles depending on interest of the object (constituents or the nation) they are representing. One major difference here is that, for Pitkin, the interest is objective and is not mobilized or constructed.

Pitkin acknowledges that, situated in a network of constituents, political parties, and other members of the legislature, a representative faces a wide range of interests that she may need to respond to. To which interest should the representative be responding? Pitkin suggests that one way to look at the problem is to move up our analytical level from examining individual representatives to the public level. As a group of representatives, the representative system "must look after the public interest and be responsive to public opinion" (Pitkin 1967, 224). Pitkin is not clear on how the wide range of interests represented by individual legislators could add up to a public interest. She

argues that in the political process, the national interest could be "created" through the reconciliation of local interests (218). Common practices in liberal democracies provide another alternative to this problem. Political parties and candidates, when competing for seats in the legislature, are offering policy packages that they aim to defend and promote in the legislature. In effect, those policies become interests of citizens when they vote for a particular party and candidate. This is the top-down approach of interest aggregation. Moreover, we should not consider representation as merely a one-to-many relationship where one representative puts the representation of all interests on her shoulder. Rather, it is also a system of representation with possibilities of many-to-one and many-to-many relationships, where constituents' interests left behind by one representative could find substitutes from another representative.

Finally, Pitkin does not exclude informal ways of substantive representation. It is true that when talking about political representation, what she has in mind is mostly representation in formal institutions or the legislature. Legislators are considered as the representatives in the political realm for Pitkin. However, she also acknowledges that substantive representation, as acting for others, could also take place in informal settings. Substantive representation, Pitkin suggests, "can account for certain ordinary ways of speaking about representation where activity for others is involved, but activity without the formal arrangements of authorization and accountability" (115). Again, remember the boundary Pitkin drew for substantive representation — what defines substantive representation is whether the interest of the group being represented is furthered by the representative, in a manner at least somewhat responsive to the overt requests of group members, not processes and results of formal institutional practices.

With this understanding of substantive representation, Pitkin goes much further in suggesting that unattached interests could also be represented substantively. That is, in addition to representing human beings, inanimate objects such as the whole nation could be represented as long as their interests are made present (156). Obviously, in this case, there won't be any formal authorization mechanisms in action. National leaders, for example, are elected with various claims about their national mandates. However, their being authorized to act for the whole nation does not mean that they are the legitimate representatives of national interests. As suggested earlier, packages of policy options provided by successful candidates in national elections does not always

equal to the objective interest of the nation. Hence, implementation of those policies could hardly be considered as representing the nation substantively. According to the definition of substantive representation, the representative acting for the objective interest of the nation (which, as argued by Pitkin, could be identified in political processes) is the substantive representative of the nation, regardless of her being elected to do so or not.

2.2.2. Constructivists and symbolic representation

Constructivists build their conceptions of representation as a dynamic process based on critical readings of *the Concept*. Yet two different attitudes toward Pitkin's work can be identified among constructivists. Noticing major problems of Pitkinian theorizations of representation, Michael Saward, on the one end, aims to provide a distinctive alternative to the standard account of representation. Lisa Disch, on the other end, considers Pitkin as the forerunner of constructivist conception of representation and builds more constructively on what Pitkin has done.

While I will discuss more in depth Saward's criticisms of the standard account of representation in Chapter 3, it is worth noting here seven limitations of the Pitkinian theorizations of representation identified by Saward (2010, 9). These seven limitations can be summarized under three major headings. First, the orthodox conceptions of representation ignore the dynamics, or the constitutive aspect, of representation, where representatives interact with the represented through making, receiving, and contesting of representative claims. The standard account answers what representation is by identifying forms and typologies of representation, without sufficient attempts to understand representation as an activity, through which roles and interests of representation are contested and determined.

Second, the standard account of representation is limited in scope, failing to engage with political reality. For Saward, theorists conceptualize representation in formal institutions at national legislature with electoral mechanisms as the indispensable element of representation. In real world, there are many non-electoral forms of representation at national or local levels that are under-theorized. Third, the standard account of representation has a "strongly and overtly normative orientation" that limits "interpretive depth and … rich plurality of representative practices" (9).

While I agree with Saward's last two points, his first point on the standard account is not convincing. As argued earlier, reading *the Concept* as advocating a particular form of representation misses the under-developed theme of the book. Pitkin does offer four views of representation and spends more time spelling out the substantive form of representation. However, there is nothing wrong with understanding what representation is through typological studies. Instead, it is, as I argue later in this Chapter and Chapter 3, an integral part of our investigation of representation, without which the dynamics of representation are intangible to us. The problem of studying forms of representation is not in the forms per se, but in the dogmatic application of the forms of representation, considering a representative relationship as an exemplar of only one form of representation.

Unlike Saward, Disch (2011, 2012) is more appreciative of Pitkin's contribution to the constructivist conception of representation, noticing Pitkin's acknowledgement of the potential constitutive moments in political representation. In discussing the formation of national interest from local and individual interest claims, Pitkin admits that "[t]he national unity that gives localities an interest in the welfare of the whole is not merely presupposed by representation; it is also continually re-created by the representatives' activities" (Pitkin 1967, 218; c.f. Disch 2011, 107). For Disch, Pitkin here is advocating her mobilization conception of representation, where the representative process also forms demands and interests, not merely responding to them (as some empiricists understand substantive representation). While Disch is right to argue Pitkin is aware of this constitutive dimension of representation, I contend that this "creation" of interest does not go beyond Pitkin's conception of substantive representation. One unavoidable topic in representation is the aggregation of interests when we move up from representation of local interests to representing a national interest. Pitkin (1967) suggests that competing "initial-interest-claims" from localities could be reconciled in the political process at the national level, which creates an "final-objective-interest" of the nation (218). The final-objective-interest gives an extra layer to existing local objective interests to which representatives must respond, according to the definition of substantive representation.

Perhaps Pitkin's symbolic representation is closer to the constructivist conception of representation. Symbolic representation involves activities that Pitkin termed as

"standing for." It is distinct from activity in descriptive representation, where the activity is the source of information, and "acting for" in substantive representation, where the activity is taking care of constituents' interest. Symbols such as the cross of Christianity and the national flag for the nation evoke non-rational emotions and attitudes of individuals through concrete referents (cross and flag). Therefore, "the only criterion of what constitutes a symbol is in people's attitudes and beliefs" (110). There are no rational or universal standards to judge whether a symbolic representative is a good one or not. As long as the symbol is accepted by or believed in by someone, symbolic representation exists.

Pitkin here sounds very similar to Rehfeld (2006) and Saward (2006; 2010), who propose acceptance as the general condition of legitimacy of political representation. But we should refrain from labelling Pitkin as a constructivist. On the one hand, symbolic representation is only one of several views of representation examined by Pitkin. Considering her as constructivist fails to acknowledge her contributions regarding other forms of representation and the study of representation more generally. On the other hand, Pitkin has strikingly radical constructive tendencies, as revealed in her treatment of symbolic representation.

The radicalization of a constructivist aspect of Pitkin is based on her understanding of symbols and symbolic representation. First, Pitkin emphasizes the arbitrariness of the connection between a symbol and referent. There is no rational or natural link between the cross and Christianity, or between the national flag and the nation; these links had to be constructed intentionally over time in highly specific ways by particular actors. Second, symbolizing is the process of bringing determinate and definable meaning to the symbol, from its vast possibilities as to what it can evoke and suggest to finite and exact referent (Pitkin 1967, 97). This meaning reduction process is, based on the first point, arbitrary, leaving room for human intervention, interpretation, and manipulation. Third, from the definition of symbolic representation, as long as someone accepts what the symbol refers to, this reducing of possibilities could successfully establish a representative relationship based on "standing for." The maker of this symbolic connection herself does not even need to believe in this alleged connection between symbol and referent. The only thing she needs to do is to make other individuals believe and accept the connection she has established.

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Finally, individuals accept the connection not because of their logical reasoning or scientific knowledge about the symbol or the referent. Pitkin insists that "emotional, affective, irrational psychological responses" drive the acceptance of symbols (100). Therefore, the symbolizing process is subject to "manipulating affective responses and forming habits" (101). Unlike Saward's claim-makers, the symbol maker cannot be held accountable for what she does to garner acceptance of the symbolic connection, be it persuasion, deception, or the use of force. A monarch or dictator, Pitkin claims, "may be more successful and dramatic than an elected member of Parliament" in establishing a resonance between the governor and the governed (106).

The blatant acceptance of manipulation is not yet the most radical but at same time insightful aspect of Pitkin's symbolic representation. Pitkin further discusses two ends of symbol-making that resemble the delegate and trustee divide in substantive representation. If symbolic representation is based on the acceptance of or agreement on the symbol, there could be two ways to achieve it: "adjustments at the ruler's … [and] at the subject's end" (106). The ruler/representative could adjust their strategies and attitudes to accommodate opinions or emotions of the ruled/represented (favoring the ruled/represented). The agreement could also be achieved through the ruler's/representative's education and manipulation of the ruled/represented (favoring the ruler/representative). At the extreme end of the latter, there is fascist representation, where the represented is molded to zealously agree with and follow the Führer. Unlike substantive representation, in which representation disappears at either end of delegate or trustee views, symbolic representation still exists in both extremes since the sole criterion for symbolic representation is the acceptance of symbols, no matter how the agreement is achieved. Leaders, Pitkin suggests, could "exploit" the "nonrational or emotive element" that is critical for symbolic representation (107).

Despite attacks mounted on fascist representation, Pitkin is very comfortable in including fascist representation as a form of symbolic representation. Concluding paragraphs of her chapter on symbolic representation review critiques of fascist representation. Ernest Barker, as an example, states that fascist representation is "inverse representation" where the represented "represents or reflects the will or the leader" (109). Pitkin's responses are very intriguing. She does not deny that fascist representation is an unusual and distorted form of representation. Instead, she reminds

us that symbolic representation is merely one instance of representation and there are still many other forms of representation. The mistake Barker made is that, when talking about the representation of wills, he moves beyond the realm of symbolic representation and is discussing another form of representation. Pitkin does not merely present four types of representation but stresses the distinctive boundary of each view of representation that is defined from the conceptualization of this view of representation. It is very likely that a representative relationship could be interpreted from perspectives of multiple forms of representation. Yet criticizing one perspective for this relationship with another perspective misses the point: as long as the representative relationship qualifies as one form of representation, attempts to delete this form of representation from the relationship could not be justified based on criteria derived from another form of representation.

As Disch has argued, there are elements of the constructivist conception of representation in Pitkin's substantive representation, as well as symbolic representation that resembles Saward's representative claim. The key theme of *the Concept*, however, is the clarification of four distinctive views of representation—formalistic, descriptive, symbolic, and substantive. Underneath this widely accepted reading of this book is an underdeveloped theme, the acknowledgement of the polysemy and complexity of the concept of representation and a framework to investigate possible uses of representation. I call this framework differentiation and will focus on it in the remainder of this chapter.

2.3. Differentiation: the under-developed theme

So far, I reviewed *the Concept* through the lens of how this book is understood and used by scholars of representation. Two themes of the book are revealed. The mostly acknowledged and widely accepted theme is the insightful collection of four major forms of representation, each carefully reviewed and disambiguated by Pitkin. Both empiricists and theorists, standard account theorists and constructivists, draw extensively from this visible theme. An under-developed theme in Pitkin's work focuses on the complexity and diversity of the concept of representation. From this perspective, Pitkin's primary contribution to the study of representation is an analytical aspect to approach this concept: differentiation. Differentiation offers conceptual responses to the

question of how the absent is made present through representation. From this perspective, the four views of representation identified by Pitkin provide four answers to this question.

In defining the scope of her book, Pitkin states that it is both a conceptual analysis of the concept of representation through analyzing the use of representation ordinary language and a study of political thought that reviews how the concept is accepted by political theorists. The result of her investigation is presented in *the Concept* as four major forms of representation: formalistic, descriptive, symbolic, and substantive representation. This is the visible and highly accepted theme in Pitkin's work. But in laying down the foundations of her research project, Pitkin endeavors to create an overarching theme and weaves all four forms of representation together. This theme of *the Concept* largely evades the attention of scholars on political representation. In the reminder of this section, I try to uncover this theme and discuss two components of differentiation that Pitkin covered — complexity and morphology — and how it contributes to our understanding of representation as a concept.

2.3.1. Complexity

Representation is a complex concept. This is partly evidenced by the debates around four views of representation summarized in *the Concept*. Yet there are additional layers of complexity that Pitkin identified on top of forms of representation. The four forms of representation are merely large bunkers for different and sometimes subtle variations within particular views of representation. For example, depending on the balancing of control between representative and the represented (the degree of manipulation from representative), symbolic representation could display different interpretations of the same symbol and diverse justifications of the acceptance of the symbol. Hence it would be a mistake to take one variation of a form of representation as the only possibility of that form of representation. Lord and Pollak's (2013) election-based substantive representation does not cover all possible conceptions of substantive representation. One question here may be that in the concluding chapter of *the Concept*, Pitkin herself also binds periodic elections (democracy) to representative government. This is not to say she accepts election-based substantive representation as the only possible form of representation. In fact, Pitkin is very careful in maintaining the

complexity of the concept. In her paragraphs on representative government, she stresses that her account is based on what representation "means in English … what it is for us, in our [English] world" (225). There are still other possibilities in the concept. Over 30 years later, she acknowledged that democracy and representation have developed and are experiencing an "uneasy alliance," and even in the English world, there are different ways that substantive representation could happen (Pitkin 2004). Her analysis of representation in *the Concept* is in itself a contextualized understanding of the concept; it could evolve within the English context while possessing similar or different meanings in other contexts.

Following that, another layer of complexity is that there is no superiority or exclusiveness among forms of representation. Each variation of representation is valid and plausible considering how it is used in different contexts. The four views of representation and its subtle variations that Pitkin elaborated in *the Concept* are all "persistent and plausible because it is founded in the familiar, valid, ordinary, unproblematic uses of some word in the 'represent-' family" (225). This is because the starting point of Pitkin's work is not promoting certain views of representation (though it could be argued that she did this in the concluding chapter). Rather, her goal is to "disclos[e] the meaning of representation through "identifying … the context for which it is correct and exploring the assumptions and implications imposed by that context" (11).

Pitkin's intention here is largely ignored by the interpreters reviewed above. Exclusive focus on one form of representation imposes a rigid understanding of representative relationships. When talking about elected legislators, scholars mostly talk about substantive representation in a way that excludes other forms of representation. Moreover, such readings of Pitkin introduce a binary thinking that is rejected by constructivists (Saward 2019). A representative relationship could never be labeled as a certain form of representation in binaries such as black or white, good or bad, democracy or authoritarian, etc. Unlike Saward, Pitkin does not go so far as to argue for the "liminality" of representation. What she suggests is that different forms of representation exist and are equally important in political life.

This leads to the third layer of the complexity of representation — the coexistence of forms of representation. At some point in her argument, Pitkin seems to hint that different forms of representation could be found in the same representative

relationship. When substantive representation is not possible and agreements on the interest[s] to be represented cannot be reached:

> To the extent that this happens in practical political life, we seem then to fall back on descriptive representation; we choose a representative who shares our values and commitments and prevent the irresoluble conflict. Failing that, we can retreat to symbolic representation; we can let ourselves be influenced by emotional ties in spite of our doubts about whether our interests are being served. Or, failing even that, we can cling to our formal and institutional representative arrangements even when they seem devoid of substantive content. We can continue to obey, although we feel abused, or continue to remove a series of accountable representatives from office, although none of them serves our interest. (213).

There are multiple facets of the election-based representative relationship. When substantive representation fails, we can rely on forms of representation to confidently characterize the relationship as entailing representation. Of course, when talking about different forms of representation in the same relationship between representative and the represented, different mechanisms and implications apply. It would be a mistake to assess a symbolic representative on how she promotes the interest of the represented. When this happens, we are no longer talking about symbolic representation but are moving to the realm of substantive representation.

2.3.2. Morphology

In *the Concept*, Pitkin provides a general definition of representation: "the making present *in some sense* of something which is nevertheless *not* present literally or in fact" (8-9, original italics). This basic definition of representation, while guiding Pitkin's investigation of different forms of representation, also opens the possibility of considering Pitkin's work on representation as essentialist (Lord 2013; Lord and Pollak 2013). This is not helpful. As Castiglione and Pollak (2019) acknowledge, Pitkin's approach to representation is "far from an attempt to get to an essentialist meaning" (21). As discussed earlier, the primary focus of Pitkin in *the Concept* is to identify different theories of representation within their respective contexts. Pitkin's "black box" metaphor perhaps better illustrates this point. She suggests that the concept of representation could be imagined as "a rather complicated, convoluted, three dimensional structure in the middle of a dark enclosure" and there various theories of representation are "flash-bulb photographs of the structure taken from different angles"

(11). Despite maintaining a basic meaning of representation, Pitkin's treatment of the concept is very flexible in allowing different interpretations of every aspect of this definition. Depending on these interpretations, representation could embrace different and sometimes conflicting meanings.

What is more interesting in the basic definition of representation, however, is the idea that different views or conceptions of representation are the result of tweaking the meanings of various components of the definition. If we expand this definition, we will get a simple formula: someone (the representative) makes present in some sense of something or someone else (the represented) that is not literally or actually present. As discussed in the Introduction, understanding representation in this way offers a conceptual tool in understanding representation in terms of two elements: the scope of representation consisting of analyzing its five components; and the mechanism of representation focusing on the key question — how the something of the represented is made present. Pitkin maintains that subtle differences in interpreting those components of representation may lead to variations in the meanings of representation. In summarizing her views on substantive representation, she acknowledges that the basic definition — "acting in the interest of the represented, in a manner responsive to them" — sets only the boundary of representation as "acting for" (209). There are a variety of possibilities within this boundary, depending on our interpretations of:

> … what is represented … the nature of interests, welfare, or wishes … the relative capacity of representative and constituents … the nature of the issues with which the representative must deal. (210).

That is, when talking about representing unattached interests where the representative is conceived as more capable of knowing such interests, we are in a position closer to a Burkean trustee than delegates with less autonomy in actions. Responsiveness, in identifying how representatives should represent substantively, specifies the mechanism of representation as "acting for" in Pitkin's understanding.

The problem, however, is that when talking about representation, theorists rarely pay due attention in specifying the two elements of specific types of representations, as if most of them are given. This is obviously not true. Even when talking about a specific variation of representation, how representative and the represented reach agreement on the interest to be represented varies depending on the setting and number of

represented. Substantive representation in formal institutions may be regulated by elections, but this is not true for substantive representation of unattached interests, e.g., the whole nation, environment, or future generations. There are also variations in conceiving representation as one-to-one relationships, one-to-many relationships, and many-to-many relationships (Golder and Stramski 2010).

More importantly, when we shift our emphasis on certain components, for example, from symbols to interest in what is represented, we are switching to a completely different form of representation. Even if we are still discussing the same representative relationship, like Baker on fascist representation, we may be travelling between different forms of representation without even noticing it. This is the conceptual trap that scholars easily fall into when talking about representation, especially with the increasing number of forms of representation identified by theorists. We may easily enter a conversation on representation where we think we are talking about the same form of representation but have different conceptions of representation in mind.

This is where the clarity on the scope and mechanism of representation in our analysis becomes pertinent. When talking about systemic representation, it is no longer adequate to ask for formal authorization, accountability, or interest aggregation because formal institutions no longer function as expected in situations where nonelectoral representatives are included in the system. A deliberative framework that assigns normative responsibilities to different venues of representation is perhaps a more appropriate approach to representation at the system level (Kuyper 2016). Similarly, the conversation on aggregation of interests becomes meaningless when moving down to the micro-level where representation is examined as a one-to-one relationship. Without specifying the scope of our study or paying due attention to the components of representation, we may easily travel between different views of representation that lead to unnecessary confusions and unintended misunderstandings of a representative relationship (Pitktin 1967, 109).

In addition to scope and mechanism of representation, Pitkin also emphasizes the role of contexts in the formation of meanings of the concept. The key to reconciling conflicts and contradictions in different views of representation lies not only in distinguishing differences in interpreting components of representation, but also in specifying how contexts shape the meaning and use of representation. In Pitkin's words,

what is needed is to examine each "correct definition" of representation "by identifying the context for which it is correct and exploring the assumptions and implications imposed by that context" (11).

The context where representation is used, for Pitkin, has at least two roles. The first role is a justification for the legitimate use of the concept of representation. Therefore, though trustee and delegate views of substantive representation are in contradiction with each other regarding what representation entails, there are not necessarily dilemmas in accommodating the two views as acceptable forms of representation. Each is appropriate for some contexts where it is articulated and used. Context also provides methodological guidance in assessing different forms of representation. Without an understanding of the context in which specific forms of representation are used, it is arbitrary to determine whether it could be categorized as representation and, if applicable, how good the representation is.

What Pitkin presents as differentiation is under-developed in *the Concept*. Differentiation, as the process of analytically constructing different instances of a concept, accepts that it could have complex and conflicting meanings, each as an equally acceptable definition of the concept. One approach to differentiation is to study the anatomy or morphology of constitutive components of the concept. Based on that, we can then have a clearer understanding of the mechanism of representation in different conceptions of representation. However, this theme is underdeveloped in Pitkin's work. First, Pitkin confuses differentiated meanings of representation with instances of representation.[6] In *the Concept*, Pitkin makes it clears that her work is both an analysis of the ordinary uses of representation and a review of different views and debates on representation from a political theory perspective. The latter is captured in the theme of differentiation. Borrowing from Pitkin's "black box" metaphor, each view of representation is a slice of the three-dimensional object. Depending on our respective understanding of its components, we will end up with different shapes of this view, be it a line, a triangle, a rectangle, etc. Yet, it is not true vice versa. When moving to the realm

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[6] An instance of representation is a phenomena, event, or process in political life that is considered and accepted as representation by participants or observers. It usually can fit into one or more identified conceptions of representation. For Pitkinian theorists, a common instance of representation is the relationship between legislators and their constituents.

of actual usage of representation, Pitkin tends to term instances of representation as particular views of representation. For example, the representation of the national assembly of the nation, is where descriptive representation is labelled.

Such rigid identities contradict what differentiation aims to achieve, because we cannot claim that this line, this triangle, this rectangle is this view or the three-dimensional object of representation. What we have as a line, a triangle, a rectangle is merely a reflection of the view of representation in political reality mediated by the institutional, cultural and ideological contexts. Such contexts render our perspectives on the slice of three-dimensional object a legitimate and contestable understanding of the object. There are, however, more possibilities than the labelled identities for any instance of representation.

Second, the morphology of concepts is still a very vague notion in Pitkin's book. There are some details to be sorted out for it to be considered as an effective approach in analyzing complex concepts. On the one hand, what are the relationships among components of the concept? Pitkin's basic definition of representation merely indicates possible components of representation, without going into much detail on how the interactions among those components create distinctive views of representation. On the other hand, how does context shape the meanings of the concept? We are given the impression that contexts affect the meanings of representation, but are left alone in figuring out what contexts are referring to in each form of representation and how that context contributes to that view of representation. And despite Pitkin's careful attention to the impact of contexts on different forms of representation, Pitkin's work still falls victim to the prominent theoretical context of her times, when discussions on representation are directed to the legislature. The four forms of representation Pitkin investigated are more or less associated with respective identities in the elected representatives or the legislature.

We shall not blame Pitkin for this. In fact, all of us are in a similar situation as Pitkin since we are, in a sense, differentiated products of socialization who fail to see all possibilities of the concept. To correct this, the only thing we can do is to expose ourselves to different views and try to understand how those views are articulated, developed, and accepted in specific contexts. This is exactly the purpose of this project — presenting a different perspective on reading the concept of representation.

2.4. Approaching differentiation with conceptual morphology

Differentiation is the adding, removing, configuring, and connecting of various conceptual components of representation that together expresses distinct conceptions of representation. In temporarily pinning down the meanings of the conceptual components, differentiation presents a conception of representation with a distinct interpretation of the relationship between the represented and the representative, especially of how something of represented is made present by the representative. Differentiation accepts the complexity and multiplicity of a concept and tries to distinguish different instances of the concept without tying them to specific identities. In the previous section, I showed the basic components of differentiation from the lens of *the Concept*. This section shifts the perspective to the notion of difference to present a more balanced understanding of differentiation. After that, I move on to discussing the morphology of concepts as one appropriate method for differentiation.

I borrow the concept of difference from Iris Marion Young's (1990; 2000) "politics of difference." Young's primary concern is the essentialist or substantialist reading of difference that reduces individuals to the domination of rigid and oppressive group identities. The essentialist difference imposes unity of group identities and suppresses other identities not recognized by the group. Difference then becomes exclusion due to the unification or polarization of "particularity and multiplicity of practices, cultural symbols, and ways of relating in clear and distinct categories" (Young 1990, 169). Moreover, the essentialist difference introduces a binary thinking that always comes together with normative superiority of identities. "The making of difference," Young (1990) argues, "always implies a good/bad opposition … the naming of an inferiority in relation to a superior standard of humanity" (170). When we simply group individuals with their cultural, ethnic, or sexual backgrounds, we are following the essentialist difference that brings normative judgement of superiority and inferiority, as well as binary inclusion and exclusion to those groups. This ignores and silences differences or possibilities within that group, where individuals in the group with other equally important identities are forced to accept the given label.

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As a substitute for the essentialist difference, Young proposes a relational understanding of difference. Difference is not about fixed identities given to a group. Rather, it is constructed in the interactions among individuals that bring particular identities to a salient position. There are no fixed group identities, no fixed groups, and no fixed group members. Each group, when formed in relationship to other groups, still maintains dissimilarities and flexibilities among individuals. As Young (2000) put it, "[t]here is no collective entity, the group, apart from the individuals who compose it" (89). Conceptualized in this way, differences among groups are no longer rigid labels given to a group from the dominant social structure. It is instead the result of interactions among individuals, which gives salience to certain identities in forming a group. This group so formed does not have any fixed binary borders in preserving differences among individuals and the potential overlap of groups.

In her proposal, Young actually moves down from the group level to the individual level and considers individuals as bearers of different identities. Differences emerge when individuals interact with each other. Depending on the context of interaction, e.g., who is involved, different group identities will be compared and differentiated. A group does not bear any identity until individuals with similar identities (who still bears other identities) form the group. Also, Young's relational understanding of difference separates difference from identities. Whereas identity is the attribute we used to describe a group or an individual, difference is the collection of identities that gains relative salience in the relationship among individuals. Finally, the relational understanding of difference detaches difference from normative judgements. There is no good or bad, superior or inferior group identity. It is merely a process of human interaction that recognizes the co-existence of multiple identities.

While largely agreeing with Young's account of the politics of difference, I use the concept of difference in a slightly different manner. For Young, difference is attached to group identities and is the result of interactions among individuals. This is how difference is formed and becomes noticeable. Without certain identities, we cannot tell that A is different from B in those aspects. Group difference is subject to structural inequalities and sometimes dominant socialization process embedded in existing social relationships. Individuals do not have full control of who we are as all the possibilities are

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limited by the social network in which we are in constant interactions with others. Similarly, value judgements are also inherent in this process.

In maintaining that group differences are the result of interaction of individual identities, Young does not realize the root of the problem lies in identity itself. Of course, identities become salient in human interactions. But these identities already carry structural and cultural inequalities and dominations that limit the possibilities for individuals. That is, identities are differentiated, and, as Young argued, normatively classified as superior and inferior, in the social, political, and cultural structure before individuals form different groups and group identities. While individuals choose their identities in relation to other social positions, such interactions have already been mediated by potential social and political dominance and inequality.

To address the problem, we need to reverse the relationship between identity and difference. Rather than a consequence of identity comparison, difference should be considered as the source of all identities in political reality (Deleuze 1994, Chapter 1). It is inherent in the object and presents all possibilities of the object. When talking about identities of an individual, we should incorporate all possible identities for that individual. Expression or actualization of the possibilities are mediated by the context where they are expressed or actualized.

Returning to the concept of representation, we can say that each instance of representation embodies the difference of representation, meaning that there are infinite possibilities in the interpretation of this representative relationship. The context where this representative relationship takes place limits or expands the possibilities and limits our ability to identify and interpret all alternatives. This opens the door to differentiation, the process of identifying possibilities of difference through sorting out the interactions among components of representation and mutual influences between the possibility and the context it dwells in.

While Pitkin's method is unclear in understanding conceptual components of representation and how these components interact in different contexts, much of what we need to achieve in this regard is provided by Michael Freeden's (1996) morphological approach to the study of ideology. Unlike the Marxist account of dominant ideology, Freeden contends that ideologies are the actualizations of political thinking created and

shared by individuals and groups. As Freeden (1996) puts it, "ideologies are the factual counterparts to the counterfactuals of much political philosophy" (40). An ideology is better understood as a structure of morphological patterns and configurations of political concepts. Instead of examining the abstract and evaluative permutations of concepts, the location of concepts in the semantic field and their relationships with each other in their actual usage are crucial in the interpretation of ideologies. Ideologies bridge the infinite possibilities of combinations of political concepts, on the one hand, and the determinate and decontested meanings in their actualizations, on the other hand, by creating specific patterns of conceptual configurations. That is, ideologies convert "the inevitable variety of options into the monolithic certainty which is the unavoidable feature of a political *decision*" (Freeden 1996, 76-77, italics in original).

The flexibility and indeterminate nature of ideologies partly originate in the essential contestability of concepts. Borrowing from W. B. Gallie's term "essentially contested concepts," which refers to epistemologically unavoidable and culturally created disputes about meanings of concepts, Freeden traces the structural causes of indeterminate meanings of concepts. For Freeden, main political concepts consist of both ineliminable and quasi-contingent features (1996, 61-62). By introducing the ineliminable feature of a concept, Freeden steers away from the essential and intrinsic meanings of concepts, as well as their abstract and evaluative analysis. "The feature is ineliminable merely in the sense that all known usages of the concept employ it" (62). Yet reducing concepts to their ineliminable features deprives "defining attributes" of concepts and hence "could be dispensed with as a specific political concept" (65). That is where the quasi-contingent features of a concept come into play. Quasi-contingent features are those that "while individually dispensable, occupy categories that are not" (66). To illustrate this point with Freeden's table example, while a table may be white or blue, or any other colors, the category color that specific instances of color occupied is necessary for the table.

Concepts are further fleshed out in the idea-environment they locate. Freeden distinguishes logical and cultural aspects of adjacency. Concepts logically adjacent to the ineliminable component of a concept are inevitably included in the substantiation of the ineliminable component. The concretization of a concept through logical adjacency restrains the potential options of meanings of the concept and introduces more options

for the "indeterminate and pluralistic structure" of the logical adjacency (69). For Millite liberalism, democracy is one logical adjacent concept that could be derived from Mill's core concept of individualism, where individuals are portrayed as capable and deserve the freedom of making choices. On the other hand, the inclusion of democracy as a logical adjacent concept helps to direct "the core concept of liberty in the direction of equating rulers with the people" (154). Core and adjacent concepts interact with and inform one another to provide any ideology with a specific shape and field of meanings.

The choices among logically entailed concept groups are further constrained by cultural adjacencies, which together with human agency, creates the non-rational aspect of a concept. Cultural adjacencies remove incompatible and contradictory logical connections from the ineliminable components and add new components that are not logically entailed but are considered legitimate in ordinary usage of the concept. Mill's understanding of democracy and representative government, for example, has a strong elitist tendency for his considerations on the tyranny of the majority, which is partly influenced by his knowledge of Alexis de Tocqueville's work on democracy. In short, "the embryonic, skeletal, 'thin' ineliminable part of the concept exerts an organizing control over the kinds of relationships it attracts. These eventually constitute its full, concrete, comprehensible, and operational version" (75).

Ideologies are "combinations of political concepts organized in a particular way" and present a morphology of core, adjacent, and peripheral concepts (75). Like morphology of concepts, core concepts of an ideology, mediated by logical and cultural adjacent concepts, exert organizing control over the ideology. Millite liberalism, for example, is based on the interactions among core concepts such as individualism, liberty, and development, and further fleshed out by its adjacent concepts such as democracy, equality, and education. Flowing from the core and adjacent concepts, Mill continues to develop policies and doctrines aligning with his thought such as free trade, equality of women, to name a few. Those are peripheral concepts of Millite liberalism that reflect the converging points between political and social realities and their manifestations in political thinking. Extending the essential contestability of concepts, ideologies reduce the indeterminacy of political language through their morphologies, which assigns meanings and significance to concepts in the semantic field. Decision-making, as one main mechanism in political processes, attempts to decontest the

concepts and maximize the determinacy of their meanings (76-77).[7] The belief and reasoning behind political actions could be identified within an ideology by "a particular route (among many possible ones) from the core, through adjacent concepts, to the perimeter one, as well as by the reverse movement" (81).

The ideological morphology prepares the methodological ground for comparative study of political theory, or as Freeden prefers, political thought. For Freeden, comparative political thought should not search for "universal normative ethics" but should, instead, aim at "the understanding and decoding" of diverse political thought through analyzing the "inevitable features of the political and of the patterns of political thinking" (Freeden and Vincent 2013, 8). To use Freeden and Vincent's example, normative theorists' preference to decontest legitimate support of a regime as "quasi-contractarian consent" ignores the varying criteria for and pattern of thinking related to allegiance and loyalty, let alone the possibility of alternative conceptualizations of legitimate support in different contexts (11).

Making sense of Feeden's morphological analysis offers a valuable tool in analyzing complex concepts in different contexts without being blind to the normative and ethical domination of particular contexts. Its focus on flexible components of a concept and the interaction between the concept and context makes it perfect for clarifying the differentiation entailed in representation. As a conceptual tool, conceptual morphology offers a good starting point for analyzing concepts and political discourses with its focus on decontestation and idea-environment, as well as the impact of historical and cultural contexts on meanings of concepts. It navigates through the difference of a concept with a structural framework that retains the plurality and possibility of concepts.

2.5. Cross the bridge?

Pitkin's seminal book on representation presents two themes: a visible and highly acknowledged theme on different forms of representation in English world and a under-developed theme on approaching the difference of representation. This chapter discussed both with a focus on the latter. Difference in the concept of representation is

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[7] Total determinacy is never truly attainable due to ambiguities of words and deliberate use of indeterminate statements.

all the possibilities expression and actualization of representation. I propose approaching difference through differentiation, a process of distinguishing possibilities that difference entails. Michael Freeden's ideological morphology, with minor adjustments, works well for this purpose.

With the tools ready, we are prepared to cross the bridge that Pitkin subtly identified but did not show us how to cross, that is, how to study the concept of representation beyond the English world. Instead of transplanting Pitkin's conceptions of representation, I approach the concept of representation in contemporary Chinese political thought by not asking "what is representation?" but rather, how the concept of representation and the political phenomena resembling representation — often with different names — are understood by Chinese scholars. More importantly, I focus on the key question that needs to be answered before we can name a concept and practice representation — how the connection between representative and the represented is maintained and strengthened. In this project, I trace the concept of representation and its various components in the Chinese political and cultural contexts throughout the history of its use by the Communist Party of China (CPC). To this end, I take advantage of Freeden's morphological analysis. However, it is not enough to study how the concept is theorized in Chinese political thought; understanding representation in China also requires examining how it is used by the CPC, the government, and Chinese society. This goes beyond the scope of differentiation and demands a complementary conceptual tool — actualization. I will develop this tool in the next Chapter.

Chapter 3.
Actualization: Another Story of Representative Claims

The previous chapter examined Pitkin's classic book on representation from the perspective of difference. As the inherent property of representation, difference is the collection of various possibilities of meanings that the concept could take on in different contexts. While Pitkin's work contributes to the differentiation of representation, it too readily and rigidly binds differentiated meanings with political reality, ignoring the making of representation, or the playing out of the conceptual aspects of representation in specific institutional and cultural contexts. Following Pitkin's arguments, we can confidently say that "this is electoral representation and that is non-electoral representation; this is democratic representation and that is authoritarian representation." However, that is, at best, an oversimplification of the connection between meanings of representation and representation in practice. A representative relationship classified by Pitkinian theories as electoral representation is never merely electoral representation. There will always be other possibilities that are ignored with the labelling of identities.

What is missing from Pitkin's conceptualization is the actualization of representation, that is, the making of representation in the dynamic interactions between the representative and the represented. Mediated by institutional and cultural contexts, this process clarifies meanings of representation for both parties through performative actions of the representative and judgement of the represented. This thread of research is best developed by constructivists. Michael Saward and Lisa Disch, among others, emphasize the constitutive aspects of representation and reject the static characterizations of representative relationships using predefined categories. This chapter will review constructivists' contributions to our understanding of representation. I argue that the constructivist approach has its problems in analyzing representation as a dynamic and interactive process of claim-making and claim-receiving. Like most political theorists, constructivists largely develop their conceptions of representation in democratic institutions and require democratic legitimation, although they acknowledge

representation could travel beyond cultural and institutional boundaries. Based on the work of Saward and Disch, I propose actualization as another story of the making of representation. Actualization, on the one hand, shifts the conceptual focus of difference to political reality and explains the creation, contestation, and elimination of meanings of representation in performative actions. On the other hand, actualization connects the conceptual aspect of representation to the practical aspect of representation and examines the connection and interaction between meanings of representation with practices of representation in institutional and cultural contexts. Actualization does not dismiss difference. It is only the process of bringing certain possibilities to a more salient position that gives us the impression that there are fixed identities for instances of representation.

I will elaborate my position in four steps. The first section identifies three problems of Pitkinian representation through the lens of constructivists: static meanings, rigid applications, and thick normative orientation. After that, I review how constructivists address these problems through readings of Saward and Disch. The next section considers problems of the constructivist conception of representation by identifying weaknesses in Saward's formulation of the representative claim. In an attempt to understand constructivist representation from the perspective of actualization, section four proposes an alternative story of actualization by examining the relationship between difference, actualization and representation in political life.

3.1. From Pitkin to Saward: what has changed?

Pitkin's work on representation provides valuable insights into the meanings of political representation through the lens of differentiation. This theme, as discussed in the previous chapter, is underdeveloped in *the Concept* and fails to provide a clear connection between the meanings and practices of representation. As constructivists criticize, Pitkin's four views of representation offer static conceptions of representation that fail to bridge how meanings of representation are created and accepted in particular instances of representation in political life. This section reviews three pitfalls of Pitkin's work from the constructivist lens: static meanings, rigid applications, and thick normative connections.

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Despite his arguments against typologies, Michael Saward (2010) provides a useful typology in identifying major issues of the standard account of representation — Pitkin's substantive representation — that he intends to address with his version of constructivist conceptualization of representation: the representative claim. He presents the standard account of representation as following the presence approach and the constructivist conception of representation as the exemplar of the event approach. The presence approach considers representation as an existing institutional fact that can be disambiguated from other facts present in the world through clearly delimited and generally accepted definitions. Pitkin's basic definition of representation — making something absent present — draws the boundary for answering the question "what is representation?" and offers guidance for distinguishing variations of the concept. Following this approach, Pitkin (1967) and Mansbridge (2003), among other theorists, categorize different types of representation to reflect the complex presence of the concept of representation in political life. As discussed in Chapter 2, their work contributes to the differentiation of the concept. However, without a proper tool to connect it to instances of representation, differentiation does not sufficiently explain how specific meanings of representation are accepted by parties involved in the representative relationships. According to Saward (2010), the presence approach has three major issues: static meanings in conceptualization, rigid applications in political life, and thick normative orientation that engages normative standards too early in the conceptualization of representation in political reality, without fully examining the complexity of political practices. I will examine each in turn.

3.1.1. Static meanings

If we recall the review of Pitkin's work on representation in Chapter 2, the most widely accepted reading of *the Concept* highlights four views of representation — formal, descriptive, symbolic, and substantive — with an emphasis on substantive representation as the dominant meaning of representation in the English-speaking world. In his book, Saward follows this interpretation. He suggests that in studying the concept of representation, Pitkin answers the question: "what is representation?" and "giv[es] us the best meaning of representation" through surveying existing uses and conceptions of the concept (2010, 15). Saward acknowledges that while this is a valid and fruitful

approach, it presents a static view of representation by identifying types of representation and binding them to particular instances of representation.

From Saward's perspective, Pitkin's approach is limited in its search for *the* definition of the concept. On the one hand, it treats representation as "a phenomenon that is accepted as factually present according to certain definitional criteria" (26). If we re-examine Pitkin's conceptual components — representative, represented, things being represented (and the way it is represented), and the venue of representation — from this perspective, we may find Saward's points convincing. Substantive representation, for example, tells us what counts as substantive representation through fleshing out and reducing uncertainties in the four components. With this definition, we can confidently label a representative relationship as substantive representation when the representative is advancing and responding to the interests of her constituents. The underlying assumption here is that there are fixed and identifiable meanings for these conceptual components. If we say that Donald Trump is substantively representing the interests of the Americans, we are assuming that these interests, as well as meanings of Donald Trump and the Americans, exist out there and are knowable to parties involved in this representative relationship.

However, this is not always the case. Interests, for example, are diversified in a plural society and are subject to debates and contestations in political processes. More importantly, with the classification of representation into different types (meanings), Pitkinian theorists are prone to "think that representation has a definite and located presence in the world" (39). This introduces institutional exclusiveness where certain types of representation can exist in pre-defined institutional settings and not in others. Substantive representation, again, is always conceived to be exclusively attached to democratic elections. That is, it does not exist where democratic elections are missing.

This is not to say that we should discard the presence approach. Instead, Saward tells us that we can and should do more to appreciate the complexity of representation in political reality by uncovering the constitutive aspect of representation. Identity construction is at "the very heart of political representation" as representation can only happen when some aspects of the represented are selected and portrayed by the representative (16). Allocating fixed identities to the representative and the represented ignores the internal dynamics of the representative relationship. Hence,

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constructivists invite us to go one step further and ask more "how" questions concerning the meanings of these conceptual components.

> It is less about pinning down meaning, more about asking how meanings are generated and contested; or, again, how something absent is rendered as present. How is the impression of presence constructed, defended, and contested? What determines the success or failure of the effort to construct such an impression? In short, the how rather than the what questions are the ones that are pressing … (39)

For Saward, it is more important to understand the process of how certain meanings become prevalent in an instance of representation. Representation has many meanings and types, as Pitkin has explored. But one representative relationship does not have a fixed meaning simply because it is located in particular institutions. When representation is constructed through the interactions among representatives and the represented, meanings of representation also become less ambiguous and indeterminate. Institutions matter in this process, but do not confine the possibilities of representation to a single and dominant meaning.

3.1.2. Rigid applications

As discussed in the first chapter, one problem of Pitkin's conceptualization of representation is that it fails to separate the meanings of representation and instances of representation. Hence each representative relationship, from this perspective, has a fixed identity that suppresses other possibilities in this relationship. Saward is also aware of this pitfall. He argues that Pitkinian theorists often "slide from thinking 'representation means this' to 'representation is embodied in this institution and not that one' (39). Unlike different approaches to the meanings of representation, here we are talking about representation as practices in political reality and how the presence approach fails to capture the complex and dynamic representative relationships. Saward is careful in making this distinction when he argues that the meaning of representation "is implicated in invocation and enactment … [and] is the product of a performance" (42). Pitkinian theorists rarely notice this difference and tend to develop different views of representation that have respective one-to-one correspondences in practices (e.g., Pitkin 1967; Mansbridge 2003). Legislators, for example, are depicted as substantive representatives by Pitkin or as anticipatory representatives by Mansbridge. However,

they have many more roles in various representative relationships, and these roles showcase different meanings of representation.

Two problems ensue from here. First, the presence approach covertly introduces exclusive identities into a representative relationship, thus blocking our appreciation of the expression and contestation of other possibilities. Through the lens of the presence approach, each component of the representative relationship is given a fixed identity. In substantive representation, for example, the representative is a delegate, a trustee, or somewhere in between the two ideal typical roles, depending on how she perceives and acts for the represented. Also, a representative's activities — acting for the represented — are confined to the legislature at mostly national levels (Saward 2010, 18). Moreover, the rigidity of the presence approach does not stop at the conceptual components level. As Saward puts it, the presence approach tends to drift from "thinking 'representation means this' to representation is embodied in this institution and not that one'" (39). When Pitkin provides clear definitions for each view of representation without distinguishing meaning and practice, it appears to be natural that each view of representation has an identifiable correspondence in specific institutional contexts, which in turn, embodies this view of representation only. That is, despite that fact that we have different forms of representation — descriptive, symbolic, elected, substantive, surrogate, etc., — most of them are confined to the national legislature. While Mansbridge (2003) acknowledges that representatives can have different roles, she also confines these roles mostly to electoral institutions and the forms of representation she and other theorists uncovered so far. Therefore, in addition to understanding how the meaning of representation is constructed, one task for constructivists is to explain how particular meaning(s) of representation prevails in a representative practice, considering that the meaning(s) are enacted and performed.

Another problem that accompanies the presence approach is the binary thinking that it introduces. "Writings on political representation are replete with binary distinctions: formal versus informal, self-authorized versus democratically authorized, trustee versus delegate, legitimate versus illegitimate, and liberal versus discursive." (Saward 2010, 41). Binary thinking exacerbates the first problem because with binaries, we are creating stereotypes and boundaries that limit our conceptual ability in coping with the rapidly developing political reality. Saward provides two reasons for this point. First, with

binaries, we may fail to see certain combinations of binaries or may "downgrade unduly their relevance" (41). With the democratic and non-democratic distinction, for example, political theorists' attention is solely placed on democratic representation. With a two by two grid of two binaries, we are prone to exclude some combinations as theoretically unsound or practically impossible. Second, theorists fail to acknowledge that between the two ends of the binaries, many possibilities come from various permutations of "degrees" of binaries involved (41). Saward (2019) further elaborates this idea as "liminal representation," which embraces flexible and dynamic meanings of representation by discarding clear categorizations of binaries.

While the rigid binding of meaning to an instance of representation is largely assumed by Pitkinian theorists, it should be noted that binaries and binary thinking do not necessarily contribute to this tendency. When creating binaries, theorists generally acknowledge that there is a spectrum of possibilities between the binaries they have identified. Pitkin, in proposing the mandate and independence dilemma, for example, is clear in noting that representatives are sitting between the two extremes. What is problematic about binaries and binary thinking is that it creates a conceptual trap that invites us to choose between the two ends, disregarding the plurality and complexity of a concept. A trustee is a trustee and cannot be a delegate. Saward reminds us that we should look at dynamic interactions within the representative relationship to find out how a representative becomes a trustee or delegate before simply labelling them so. This is a process of meaning contestation and disambiguation, where possibilities of representation are reduced, and meanings of representation become more determinate in that context.

A more subtle flaw in this binary logic is a zero-sum mentality. By proposing two options, theorists are forced to pick one end, or somewhere between the two ends if we consider it as a spectrum. Once a choice is made, the opposite option becomes impossible. This is not true, at least not for a complex concept like representation. We shall never consider representation as either this, or that, or that, etc. It inevitably entails difference, where multiple meanings are differentiated, contested, and expressed in the process of actualization. Representation is this, and that, and that, etc. The determinacy of meanings of representation does not entail a fixed identity of the representative

relationship. Determinacy is temporary and contingent, whereas difference *per se* within representation is eternal.

3.1.3. Thick normative connections

Another problem of the presence approach is thick normative orientation embedded in the conceptualization of representation. Specific views of representation often come with criteria to determine whether a representative relationship qualifies as this view of representation and criteria to judge whether a representative is doing a good or bad job. However, the distinction between the two sets of criteria is not always clear. Descriptive representation looks for the resemblance of descriptive attributes; symbolic representation looks for the making and acceptance of symbols, and substantive representation looks for the responsiveness of the representative.

For constructivists, normative criteria, like meanings of representation, should be developed from within the process of representation with a focus on the dynamic interactions between representatives and the represented. As Saward (2010) writes, in conceptualizing representation, "more empirically sensitive process of analysis and interpretation is called for rather than an assumption that there is one best answer from political philosophy to questions about representation" (32). This is not to say that normative judgements are not important. Instead, their relevance and importance should be built on the examination of the process of representation. Normative criteria developed with static meanings of representation also faces a logical conundrum if we more closely examine conceptual components of representation in the standard account. The "responsiveness" criteria in substantive representation, for example, supposes that all conceptual components — the representative acting for the interests of represented, the represented with knowable interests and preferences, interests or preferences of the represented that are available to the represented, and the venue of representation (mostly in the legislature) — exist before the formation of the representative relationship. However, when we accept that those components are subject to portrayal and construction in the process of representation, the responsiveness criterion is not so straightforward, because the representative could very well be responding to the interests mobilized or created by herself (not the true interests of the represented) (Disch 2011; 2012). Therefore, for constructivists, it is relatively less important to look at what

the representative does in the representative relationship. Political theorists should direct more attention to whether the represented recognize and accept what is done in their name (Rehfeld 2006; Saward 2010; Disch 2012).

Moreover, the standard account of representation also assumes that there is a superior judge external to the representative relationship to decide whether this relationship meets the criteria set out in the definition of representation. In the extreme, this judge could become "self-appointed adjudicators" whose role is different from the efforts to determine "conditions under which representative claims might be accepted as democratically legitimate" (Saward 2010, 42). Considering the constructed process of representation, different actors (representative, represented, audience, observers, etc.) may have different understandings depending on their location in the relationship and relevant contexts. Therefore, constructivists urge "a shift from a 'legislative' to an 'interpretative' frame, whereby the theorists are more modest in his or her claims and stands" to acknowledge the impact of locations and contexts on the assessment of representation (16). In this way, actors in the representative relationship deserve more attention as they (mostly the represented) are tasked to determine whether representation is legitimate or not.

3.1.4. Another reading of Pitkin

So far, I have reviewed three pitfalls of the presence approach, with Piktin's standard account as an example. For constructivists, Pitkinian theorists ignore dynamic interactions underneath the process of representation, which leads them to present rigid typologies of representation that appears to be disengaged from political realities. The constructivist approach appears to be a drastic departure from the presence approach in five ways. First, the constructivist approach encourages us to examine dynamic interactions in instances of representation. It should be noted that by proposing a different perspective, Saward does not reject the standard account of representation. Instead, he urges us to "look more widely than this" to understand how meanings and normative criteria are debated and finalized in the claim-making and claim-receiving processes (Saward 2010, 39).

Second, constructivists carefully distinguish between the meanings and instances of representation. The acceptance of general definitions of representation

does not entail the inheritance of labeling representative relationships with fixed identities. Each instance of representation comes with possibilities in meanings. Third, following the separation of meanings and practice, constructivists further clarify the connection between the two. With all the possibilities at the initialization of representative relationships through claim-making, the multiplicity of meanings is reduced, and meanings become more determinate in the dynamic interactions among representatives, represented, and observers. Fourth, constructivists propose that political theorists shift their roles in the assessment of political representation. Instead of being a judge, Saward suggests that an interpretative role is more suitable for theorists considering the difference in context and location between observers and parties directly involved in the representative relationship. Finally, when we leave the job of judge to the represented and audience, multiplicity of normative criteria arises as individuals will resort to different sources in assessing their representatives based on various understandings of the representative relationship. Yet the plurality of criteria does not dismiss the desirability of consistent standards when examining representation at the system level.

As Saward constantly notes, we should be aware of the detrimental effects of binary thinking in the conceptualization of representation. Instead of creating unaccommodating rivalries, there are, as I argue, possible alliances between the constructivist approach and the Pitkinian approach. On the one hand, the standard account of representation is only one form of representation that does not fully unveil the pillars of Pitkin's work. In my discussion of Pitkin in Chapter 2, I have noted that in addition to providing a basic definition of representation, Pitkin has shown us the differentiation of the concept through carefully unpacking variations in formulations of conceptual components and specific meanings of these components in different contexts. These efforts, as Saward acknowledges, could become resources for both the representatives and the represented in their interactions. I shall return to this point in section 4. On the other hand, despite Saward's disagreement, Pitkin and the constructivists are addressing the same "how" question: how should we approach the concept of representation? Saward suggests that we should "locate a 'key' for exploring … shifting and multilayered dynamics" of representation (15). This is exactly the road Pitkin has taken, though the key for her is the basic definition with four conceptual components. Saward, similarly, starts his exploration with components of claim-making.

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3.2. Representation through constructivists' lens

With the three problems of the presence approach in mind, Saward develops the event-based approach as an alternative in understanding the concept of representation. Similar to Pitkin, Saward also starts with a basic formulation of claim-making and receiving with a frame of its components, though the contents and focus of these components differ. Corresponding to the three problems of the presence approach, this section reviews the event-based approach at three levels: 1) the meaning level that outlines basic formulations of the constructivist approach; 2) the practice level that delimits the formation of meanings of representation in a political system; and 3) the normative level that rethinks the relationship between normative and interpretative studies of representation.

3.2.1. Meanings of representation

Pitkin structures her book around five key conceptual components: the representative, the represented, the mechanism of representation, the thing to be represented, and the venue of representation. Saward (2010) proposes similar components to understand the dynamic and constitutive aspects of representation: maker, subject, object, referent, and audience. Echoing Pitkin, Saward also suggests that there is a "general form of representative claim" that guides our understanding of representation as claim-making and claim-receiving processes:

> A maker of representations ('M') puts forward a subject ('S') which stands for an object ('O') that is related to a referent ('R') and is offered to an audience ('A') (36).

Despite the similar approach between Pitkin and Saward, we find a constructed-ness of representation with Saward's components and formula. Saward adds three elements to this formulation: a temporal and spatial dimension, conceptual distinctions among components, and possibilities in readings of the components. First, instead of reading representative claims as possessing a rigid institutional existence, Saward asks us to trace the developmental processes of the making and receiving of claims, scaling up our analytical scope to acknowledge that claims are situated in an interconnected network of representation. At many places in his book, Saward (2010) has reiterated that through the constructivists' lens, representation is "a multisided process of claim-making and the

reception and judgment of claims" (2). Within one cycle of a representative claim, the maker offers a claim at a time T_1. The claim is then reviewed and either accepted or rejected by would-be constituents at a later time T_2. The temporal feature of representative claims also extends to a sequence of claims that together constitute an instance of representation, which is "an ongoing process of making and receiving, accepting and rejecting claims" (36).

Claims offered by the maker also trigger responses in social spaces connected to where the maker and audience are located. That is, where there is a claim made, there may also be more counterclaims challenging or assessing this claim. As Saward puts it, "there is no representative claim that cannot be 'read back' or contested or disputed by its targets, recipients, or observers" (54). Such connection and contestation weave into a broader network or system of representation that further scales up our analytical scope. Representative claims from actors at different locations and levels create a multiplicity of instances of representation that "adds up to … systemic character and quality of democratic representation across that society" (163). Like the study of deliberative democracy, we also need a "systemic" approach to understand representation as a complex concept actualized in a variety of venues and contexts (Mansbridge et al. 2012; Kuyper 2016). While Saward does not shed more light on this topic, the micro foundation he lay down with his articulation of the representative claim is enough to topple our conventional understanding of representation from the perspective of the standard account.

Second, compared to Pitkin's conceptual components, Saward's components offer clear developmental stages of the same conceptual component in the claim-making and receiving processes. For the representative, Saward distinguishes between the maker of representative claim, subject of representation, and the representative. Claim-makers are not necessarily subjects of representation as a maker could always offer someone or something else as the subject of representation. Subjects of representation (would-be representatives) are not necessarily representatives as it is up to targeted constituents to decide whether they accept or reject claims made. For the represented, Saward distinguishes between audience and constituency, with further types based on claim makers intention (intended audience and constituency) and claim receiver's responses (actual audience and constituency). All these roles will change and become

less ambiguous as a representative claim moves between T_1 to T_2 in a claim-making and receiving circle (Saward 2010, 48).

The most important distinction is the separation of object from referent. The referent in a representative claim is the thing being represented, whereas the object is "an interpretation of a referent" (49). Decreus has questioned the necessity of including referent in the framework, as he sees the notion of the referent is incompatible with the constitutive approach to representation. He writes, "if the subject-object relation or the audience refers to something 'out there', already existing in reality, to what degree can representation, then, be constitutive?" (Decreus 2013, 37). Here Decreus ignores an important aspect of the constructivist approach, that is, various possibilities of conceptual components. The thing being represented has a multiplicity of identities and it is up to the claim-maker to find the most suitable portrayal of the referent as the object of representation. An ethnic group, for example, is only one identity of the group of people it refers to. Claim-makers have to consider carefully and strategically how to constitute this group to maximize their odds of being accepted by would-be constituents. Therefore, "A must portray B, and adjust himself or herself or itself to some selective version of B, an activity that goes to the very heart of political representation" (Saward 2010, 18). It is the separation of object from referent that prepares the foundation for constructed-ness of representation.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Saward insists that each component in his formulation of representative claim has indeterminate meanings that are subject to strategic manipulation and contestation in the back and forth of claim-making and claim-receiving processes. As discussed above, the object-referent distinction captures the possibilities of the referent. For the maker and subject of the representative claim, Saward looks at the standard account of representation. Different forms of representation identified in the standard account, he argues, could be seen as "resources" of representation (71). Delegate, trustee, surrogate, etc. are all possibilities for the claim-maker or the subject that could be actualized in different contexts when a representative claim is made. "The would-be representatives can play different roles at the same time, or switch between roles, or blend supposedly different ones in one action or claim" (71). The flexibility in playing different roles for both representative and represented is crucial to the dynamics of the constitutive aspect of representation.

3.2.2. Practices and meanings

Saward laments that the indiscriminate use of conceptions and instances of representation in the presence approach creates rigidity in understanding practices of representation. However, despite his attention to cultural and institutional contexts in the making of representation in political life and theoretical investigations of representation of nature, women, and parties, Saward's analysis of components within the representative claim does not offer much illumination as to how the representative claim dynamically connects meanings with practices.

The constitutive aspect of representation is not limited to a new dynamic approach to understand meanings of representation, but also addresses how, in claim-making and receiving, different meanings are contested and disambiguated in the construction of representation. The expression of meanings of representation is limited in two ways. First, cultural backgrounds and institutional contexts where the representation is situated limit possibilities of representation through excluding its incompatible meanings. Cultural codes provide shared meanings among actors in the representative relationship that restrict "the types of subject-object links that can plausibly made in a given context" (75).[8] The audience, on the other end, is also subject to the impact of cultural influence in judging and responding to claims they received. Similarly, institutional settings channel the expression of representative claims with incentives embedded in electoral and other institutions. Different electoral systems, for example, will limit the plausibility and strength of certain claims (87-89).[9] It should be noted that the limit on possibilities imposed by culture and institutions does not lend a single and fixed meaning to representation. Because of the range of possibilities in components of the representative claim and the changing nature of culture and

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[8] Cultural code is an interesting intersection among Saward's constructivist conception of representation, Pitkin's contextual reading of representation (as well as Freeden's cultural adjacency), and Alexander's performative study. I will return to this point later in the discussion of the performative aspect of representation.

[9] One example offered by Saward could better illustrate this point. Single Member Plurality systems "appear to provide a stronger basis upon which leaders may make claims to clear or decisive leadership of political communities" (88).

institutions, there will always be possibilities in the claim-making and claim-receiving process.

Second, the incentive to become a representative of some type drives makers of representative claims to strategically phrase their claims in ways that they deem will give them the best chance to receive positive responses from their audience. Claim makers do not simply and straightforwardly offer their portrayal of their intended constituency. There will always be an aesthetic dimension of representation where representative claims are performed. Representation, for Saward, is "something largely generated by the making, the performing, of claims to be representative" (66). The "inevitable" performance in a representative relationship puts claim-makers in an advantageous position where would-be representatives can carefully rehearse and articulate their claims (68).

Here Saward's critique of the issue of the standard account turns against him too. If we accept that claim-receiving and claim-acceptance are key stages of representative claims, the would-be representative's skillful performance could very well condition acceptance by offering selective images to the audience. Despite his awareness of possible manipulation in the representative relationship, Saward is confident that the audience will "most certainly" be able to judge the "precise character and impact of a given performance" with the normative criteria he has laid out. I will turn to this topic in the next section.

Saward's pause on the topic of manipulation is later picked up by Disch, who carefully reviewed the distinction between manipulation and education proposed by Mansbridge (2003). Echoing Saward's constitutive conception of representation, Disch (2011) argues that instead of getting muddy in pondering potential manipulation of representatives, we should look at whether expressions of explicit and implicit objections from the represented are facilitated in this process. Drawing on empirical studies of political communication, she further argues that normative theorists' concern with manipulation in political representation is "overblown" because representatives' capacity to prime or frame issues is susceptible to the competitive discourses in democratic societies (Disch 2019, 173). Yet she acknowledges that claim-makers can exploit the coordination of issue interpretation because citizens rely on common frames of reference (e.g., perspectives from social groups) in their opinion formation (179). To put

it simply, claim-makers' control of the representative process is not manipulation. This, however, does not deny the possibility of constituted coordination. I will return to this topic in section 3.

Compared to his detailed discussions regarding how his theory of representative claim facilitates the understanding of representation from theoretical and practical perspectives, Saward is less clear in clarifying the connection between meanings and practices of representation. He does acknowledge that there are electoral and non-electoral representation and elective and non-elective representative claims. However, this leaves several crucial questions unaddressed. Is there a one-to-one relationship between claims and types of representation? Do elective claims create electoral representation if these claims are accepted by would-be constituents? Understanding this relationship is important for the constructivist conception of representation since if this is true, how could the dynamic process of representative claims create rigid meanings for the representative relationship? More attention to this topic will help us better understand the constructivist conception of representation.

3.2.3. Normative considerations

For constructivists, the normative criteria proposed by Pitkinian theorists are too inflexible to assess dynamic processes of representation. As a substitute, different versions of constituents' acceptance of representative's performance, actions, and claims become their focus. Rehfeld (2006) creatively suggests that representation is legitimate when the audience recognizes that the representative relationship matches the rules they use for assessment.[10] These rules are completely context-dependent and vary in different societies and among different potential constituents. From a different perspective, Disch (2011) proposes "reflexivity" — constituents' capacity to express objection to representation — as the normative standard for substantive representation. Saward's account of legitimacy, while following this general thread, emphasizes the citizen's perspective in the assessment of democratically legitimate representation.

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[10] For Rehfeld, audience refers to groups the representative claims to represent, which is roughly equal to Saward's intended constituency.

There are two preconditions to Saward's account of legitimacy. First, following Weber's categorization of legitimacy, Saward pursues perceived legitimacy that is contextualized and endogenous to the claim-making and claim-receiving processes. On the one hand, different constituents may have different criteria to judge representative claims. On the other hand, legitimacy "equates to provisional forms of legitimation over time" to cope with the shifting nature of claims (Saward 2010, 143). Second, Saward only broadly circumscribes criteria for democratic legitimacy of representation. Even by limiting the context to democratic standards, "there can be no single or stable set of gauges or filters to be used as measures of democratic legitimacy" considering that representative claims are deeply rooted in cultural and institutional practices (147).

With all the focus on the constitutive aspect of representation, Saward's formulation of democratic legitimacy of representation is not surprising. Representative claims are provisionally legitimate when "*there is evidence of sufficient acceptance of claims by appropriate constituencies under reasonable conditions of judgement*" (145, original italics). Two points deserve our attention here. First, Saward adopts citizen perspectives and argues that the ultimate judge of democratic legitimacy is the intended and actual constituency. Political theorists, like the audience, can still contribute to the assessment of representative claims through interpreting different components and judgements of claims. But they should refrain from making "first-order judgements" with "universal criteria" (146). Second, Saward intends to detach democratic representation from democratic institutions when he specifies "reasonable conditions of judgement" as open societies instead of democratic societies to accommodate representative claims beyond electoral institutions (154-156). Using the example of Aung San Suu Kyi, Saward further contends that representative claims in closed societies are not "automatically less legitimate in democratic terms" (156). These two points together shed light on investigating democratic legitimacy in non-democratic contexts.

The strongly context-driven approach to democratically legitimate representation that Saward offers here opens the door to conceptualizing a broader range of politically legitimate representation. The overemphasis on western liberal democratic criteria in assessing political representation confuses the difference between democratic representation and representation *per se* and gives us an illusion that representation can only be democratic. When talking about legitimacy of representation, we should first ask

whether claims of representation are legitimate or not. Only when we are confident that there is legitimate representation, in this rather inclusive sense, can we go one step further to assess or interpret whether representation is democratic or not. Chapter 9 will further discuss the difference between legitimate representation and good or normatively acceptable representation.

3.2.4. Are problems solved?

According to Saward, the presence approach to representation is susceptible to three pitfalls: static meanings that fail to capture dynamic interactions in representative relationships, rigid connection between meanings and instances of representation, and overtly strong normative orientation in meanings of representation. Overall, his event approach, the making and receiving of representative claims, overcomes these problems but also generates others.

Contextualization and the use of micro perspective are two keys to open the dynamic and indeterminate aspects of representation. When investigating representation by examining different components of representative claims, we see a multiplicity of possibilities in the meanings of representation that are disambiguated and determined in the interactions among would-be representatives and would-be constituents. Moving up the analytical scale to varied cultural and institutional contexts eliminates some possibilities but not the dynamic and indeterminate nature of representative claims. Yet the event approach is not flawless. For example, how are meanings made in the claim-making and claim-receiving process? Are there other possibilities of legitimacy in political representation? Are the presence approach and event approach incompatible? I will turn to these questions now.

3.3. Presence and event

So far, I have reviewed the constructivist conception of representation, with a focus on Saward's distinction between the presence and event approach. From the constructivist perspective, the presence approach — with Pitkin's substantive representation as an example — conceives representation as a fixed institutional fact and engages static normative considerations. The event approach proposed by

constructivists looks beneath the representative relationship and examines patterns of interactions among would-be representatives and would-be constituents. In addition to highlighting potential impacts of political performance in the claim-making and claim-receiving processes, Saward is very careful to unpack an understanding of representation capable of travelling in different cultural and institutional contexts. Admittedly, the event approach bridges the meaning and practice distinction that Pitkinian theorists have overlooked. However, it is not without problems. Moreover, the line drawn between the standard account and the constructivist account of representation should not be taken as another binary that stifles our conceptual capacity.

3.3.1. What went wrong for constructivists?

Saward's representative claim offers a new perspective to understand the formation of representation at three levels: the action level that presents representation as dynamic interactions among different parties in a representative relationship; the meaning level that investigates the disambiguation of meanings of representation and reduction of possibilities; and the normative level that extends democratic representation beyond democratic institutions. In this process, constructivists generate three problems: a disconnection between meaning and practice that fails to show how representative claims constitute meanings of representation; an inattention to the multiplicity of constituents and audience that overlooks the complexity of interest or preference formation, which I consider as one fundamental existential dimension of representation; and an equation of legitimate forms of representation with democratic forms. I will discuss each in turn.

First, the constructivist approach to representation, while theorizing a dynamic claim-making and claim-receiving process, fails to show clearly how meanings are decontested and determined in this process. That is, when a claim is accepted by targeted constituents and a representative relationship is established, shall we label this relationship substantive, descriptive, symbolic, or simply representative claim representation? Saward is not silent on the relationship between constructed representation and forms of representation, but nor did he make his point clear on this topic. In placing his theory of the representative claim against the standard account of representation, Saward (2010) insists that the representative claim, the making,

receiving, and contestation of claims, is "prior to" representation "as institutional fact" conceived in the standard account. This creates the predicament of constructivists — how could the dynamic process of the representative claim, with different possibilities in its meanings, create a static meaning for this instance of representation in the same process?

We cannot take Saward's assertion at its face value. If we consider the representative claim as a prelude to various forms of representation following the acceptance of the claim, there is no way to reconcile contradictions between the dynamic processes and static conceptions of instances of representation. While Saward does not explicitly claim that this is a possibility, his discussions on elective and non-elective representation seem to indicate a one-to-one relationship between meaning and practice — that is, an elected representative makes electoral claims and an unelected representative makes non-electoral claims (Saward 2010, Chapter 4).

This could not be a correct reading of the constructivist conception of representation as it labels representation with fixed identities and patterns of actions. Saward listed three types of non-electoral representative claims: "deeper roots" claims based on tradition, "expertise and special credentials" based on expertise on a subject, and "wider interests and new voices" claims such as surrogacy for wider interests or self-representation (95-120). There is no reason that an elected representative cannot make any of the three types of non-electoral representative claims. There is even less reason to believe that claims made by elected representatives won't be received by their critical audience as belonging to one or more categories of non-electoral representative claims. Moreover, the discussion of elected and unelected representative claims is very likely located in a temporal sequence after claims are accepted at T_2 and after a representative relationship is established. This is when we can tell whether a claim-maker can be an elected representative or not.[11] Therefore, representative claims cannot be merely the prelude. It is part of representation that the claim-making and receiving processes exist throughout the life cycle of representation.

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[11] It should be noted here that elected and unelected representative is only one identify from a lot of possibilities for the subject of representation.

We are left to conclude that the representative claim cannot operate as standalone theory capable of fully explaining representation in practice. Saward's further elaboration of the performative aspect of representation as "shape-shifting representation" may give us an illusion that claim-making or performance is all that representation is about (Saward 2014). Yet this cannot be true. There will always be more activities than claim-making in instances of representation that are integral to representation and are not covered in the representative claim framework. For example, when a claim-maker offers to act for the interests of her would-be constituents, her would-be constituents won't judge her based solely on her claims about these activities. Her activities of actually promoting their interests will be crucial evidence for at least part of the audience, who take substantive representation as the recognition rule to determine whether or not to accept the claim. These representational activities, which are indispensable to the standard account of representation, are largely invisible in the constructivist conception of representation (Fossen 2019).

Speaking of representation as contestations of claims fails to capture how the roles constructed in this process are performed — not in the aesthetic sense, but as actual activities in this instance of representation. If the standard account of representation is indispensable for a full picture of representation yet is unlikely to put them in a simple temporal sequence, how should we understand the relationship between the two? I will take up this topic in the next part of this section.

Second, despite Saward's claim that representation is a two-way street, the representative claim still downplays the importance and complexity of the audience. For Saward, representation is more than unidirectional representation, where the represented plays a passive role in the representative relationship. He argues that while representatives are framing would-be constituents through selective portrayal, the represented also plays an active role in "choosing or accepting representatives" (Saward 2010, 47). However, compared to the superior role of the claim-maker, who can strategically perform her claim and frame her constituents, the represented is considered as a largely homogenous single group that unanimously, or overwhelmingly, decides whether to accept the claim-maker as their representative for the issue in question.

This understanding of constituents ignores their multiplicity behind the constituted homogeneity (in the sense of accepting claim-makers' framing) in two ways. On the one

hand, considering variations among constituents, it is reasonable to assume that not all of them will accept the same claim. This introduces a crucial question for assessing representative claims: is there a threshold or institutional setup, like elections, to determine whether claimed representation is legitimate or not, or whether the representative relationship still holds between the claim-maker and those constituents accepting the claim? Saward does not offer an answer.

On the other hand, even among constituents accepting the claim offered, the reasons for their acceptance, or the recognition rule as Rehfeld (2006) calls it, will be different. That is, even when the claim-maker wishes to portrait herself as a substantive representative who will advance my interest, I may find her personal characteristics attractive and choose to accept her as my representative. In this case, considering the plurality of societies and groups, from the individual constituent's perspective, a representative relationship encompasses a multiplicity of possible meanings of representation. This is so even though these diverse individuals' perceptions of the representative relationship all make sense for them with reference to the same term, representation.

The inferior status of the represented in representation is also exemplified in the debates on the relationship between representative and represented. Theorists debated whether the representative is manipulating, coordinating, or educating the represented, with the representative as a manipulator, coordinator, and educator, and the represented as manipulated, coordinated, and educated (Mansbridge 2003, Disch 2019). The representative always has a more favourable status and can strategically exploit this advantage. It is not my intention to engage in this debate. From a performance perspective, as I will discuss in the next section, successful performance is naturalized with the aid of this power difference.

To clarify what is at stake here, it is helpful to put this debate in the larger context of interest or preference aggregation. Most often, representation is a one-to-many or many-to-many relationship, where aggregation of interests and preferences is unavoidable. I argue that the distinction between representative and represented exists because we are used to a top-down approach to aggregate the difference among the represented.

Both majoritarian mechanisms (e.g., elections) and interest or preference containers (e.g., representative claims) are examples of a top-down approach in interest and preference aggregation, where options are predetermined by the institution or the representative and offered to the represented for comparison and decision. Frequently accompanied by this approach is the discussion of accountability, on how to hold representatives accountable for their options offered and eventually acted upon. It is in this context that we are concerned about the potential influence of the representatives on the content of the options and on the choice of represented. An alternative to this top-down approach is offered by Young (2000), who conceives representation as operating in dual-track: deliberation as the mechanism for interest aggregation and then the decision is passed onto the representative, who then takes her discretion in fulfilling the decision made by her constituents.

Finally, in modern western political theory, the normative assessment of representation is predominantly driven by the assessment of the democratic legitimacy of representation. Political theorists have argued that representation in democratic societies should be consistent with, and perhaps promote, standard democratic values such as equality (Näsström 2015; Pogge 2002; Zakaras 2010), inclusion (Dovi 2009; Plotke 1997; Young 2000), and democratic deliberation (Kuyper 2016; Mansbridge 2003, 2009; Urbinati and Warren 2008). Kuyper (2016) slightly deviates from this tendency in arguing that only a representative relationship where coercive decision-making is involved demands democratic legitimation. My point is that equating legitimate representation with democratically legitimate representation confuses the distinction between representation and democracy. If a representative is open to equal, free, and inclusive deliberations, we can say that there is quality democracy following the criteria laid out by normative theorists. However, this does not entail good representation. For substantive representation, as suggested by Pitkin, we need to look for the responsiveness of the represented, whether she is promoting the interest of the represented.

Saward is inspiring in detaching democratic evaluations of representation from democratic institutions and acknowledging the difference between democratically legitimate representation and politically legitimate representation. However, representation with democratic legitimacy is not all there is to legitimate representation.

The acceptance of the claim-maker as representative does not entail a license for the representative to do anything she wishes. Depending on the type of representation, constituents, audience, and observers use certain criteria to determine whether the behaviour of the representative counts as representation. Hence one contribution of normative political theorists' studies of different types of representation is the development of corresponding normative standards to determine whether claims of representation qualify as specific types of representation. This dissertation proposes a new form of representation in non-western perspective, mass line representation in contemporary China, and provides a set of criteria in Chapter 9 to assess whether mass line representation qualifies as representation.

3.3.2. Rethinking the relationship between presence and event

The dichotomy of presence and event approaches to representation, as well as constructivists' praise of representation as event and depreciation of representation as typologies, should not lead us to build rivalries between the two approaches or to label them indiscriminately as to how well they capture the nature of representation. This is exactly the binary thinking that Saward cautions us against. Again, the problem with binaries is not in the distinctions they create, but the zero-sum mentality that usually comes with them, forcing us to choose one end of the binary. What is the connection between the two approaches then? As I have discussed, the event approach cannot offer a standalone explanation of representation without the support of the presence approach, which provides details on activities of representation and specifications on the roles of parties in the representative relationship. Nor can the event approach be merely a prelude to the presence approach, as the claim-making and claim-receiving process exists throughout the life span of representation.

Borrowing from Pitkin's metaphor of representation as a three-dimensional object in a dark enclosure, I argue that the presence approach and event approach are two perspectives on the same instance of representation (as a three-dimensional object). As depicted in Figure 3.1, the presence approach captures the vertical dimension of the three-dimensional object that presents a shape of representation in a fixed temporal and spatial location in the representative relationship. I call this the difference section of representation. When examining this dimension of representation, theorists will see a relatively static image of representation, from which different types of representation are identified. However, we should not consider this dimension of representation as presenting a single and fixed type of representation. It still encompasses a multiplicity of meanings and depending on the perspective and location of the observer, different meanings and types of representation could be created or become salient. The provisionally static meanings of representation do not create a single fixed identity for representation. Instead, meanings are always changing and shifting with different slices of the three-dimensional object. Different parties involved in the instance of representation, depending on their cultural backgrounds and social locations, will have different readings of the same representative relationship at a given time in the actualization processes of representation.
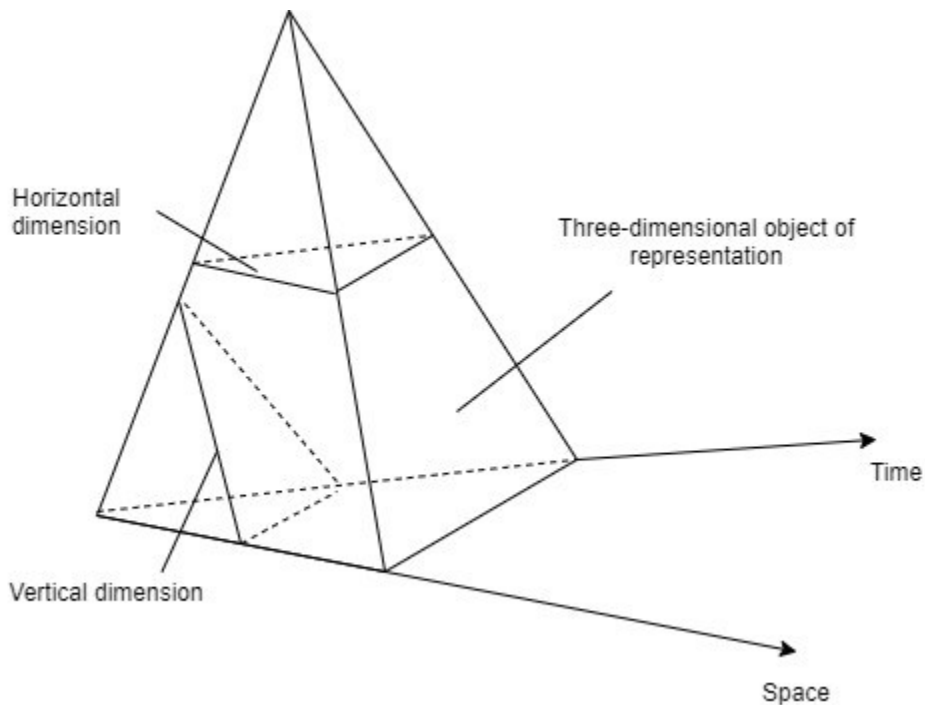
Figure 3.1: Three-Dimensional Object of Representation

The event approach, on the other hand, captures a horizontal dimension of the three-dimensional object and presents a shape of representation that highlights the temporal and spatial sequences of representation. I call this the actualization dimension of representation. When examining this dimension of representation, theorists will see a dynamic process of representation, where meanings of representation are constantly created, contested, and eliminated in different institutions and venues of representation. The creation, contestation, and elimination of meanings throughout the life span of representation rest on various intersections of the difference dimension, where meanings are provisionally settled through actualization. In this actualization of meanings, two things — differentiation and actualization — accompany the behavioural expectations of parties in the representative relationship and the normative standards used to judge activities of the representative.

Combining the presence and event approaches gives us a better picture of representation in political reality. When we observe a representative relationship at a given time and examine its components, the presence approach (vertical/differentiation) presents us with different meanings and possibilities of representation, some of which become more salient and accepted by actors in representation through the actualization of representation. If we observe representation as a process from within a period, the event approach (horizontal/actualization) gives us an ongoing process of meaning creation, contestation, and elimination. Differentiation in the presence approach does not stifle this dynamic process. Instead, with a better understanding of different possibilities of representation, theorists are better equipped to examine why and how certain meanings become temporally salient in the representative relationship.

3.4. Difference and actualization

In chapter 2, I discussed difference as inherent to the concept of representation. Salient and fixed identities of representation are the disguises of different possibilities of the concept that are suppressed from expressions. How can such possibilities become relatively stable identities? To answer this question, I will turn to another analytical aspect of representation: actualization. Based on the constructivists' insights on the constitutive aspect of representation, actualization refers to the creation, contestation,

and elimination of meanings of representation in the dynamic interactions among parties of representation (representative, represented, audience, etc.). In this process, the multiplicity of possibilities of representation is constantly reduced and meanings of representation become less indeterminate. However, the competing claims envisioned by Saward will not necessarily make this happen. It is through political decision-making, e.g., the vote or the final acceptance of a claim, that "competition over the control of political language" establishes "monopolies of meaning, however fleeting they may be" (Freeden 2005, 119).

The temporary settlement of contestations among meanings and concepts is never conclusive. There will be representative claims and counter claims throughout the representative process. With the disambiguation of the meanings of representation, respective roles and codes of actions, as well as normative criteria for the assessment of the representative relationship, are simultaneously decontested and accepted by parties of representation. Parties in the representative relationship temporarily have clearer but very possibly different conceptions of representation, which set their expectations on both the scope and mechanisms of representation. Actualization, presented as interactions among representatives and the represented, is mediated and supported by cultural and institutional contexts, performed by the representative, and judged by the represented.

Cultural contexts, or cultural codes, influence our understanding of representation both conceptually and in political practices. The impact of culture on the concept of representation is acknowledged by both Pitkin and Saward. For Pitkin, it is captured vaguely in her use of context and account of how different forms of representation situate in their respective contexts. The major cultural context that Pitkin's work is based on, however, is the use of representation in the English-speaking world, which is not fully spelled out in *the Concept*. Saward is clearer on this point in noting that cultural codes set "limits or parameters for the aesthetic possibilities" of representative claims (Saward 2010, 75). Culture facilitates the claim-making and claim-receiving in instances of representation by providing resources for the claim-maker to take advantage of crafting claims, and channels how claims are interpreted and consequently accepted or rejected by would-be constituents. Conceptually, Freeden shows how culturally adjacent components intervene in the unlimited interpretation of logical

adjacency and are accepted as legitimate components of the ideology (Freeden 1996, 70-71).

3.4.1. Formulations of actualization

Both presence and event approaches outline different components of representation as the starting point of investigating the concept. In the discussion of actualization here, I will use Saward's representative claim framework for its nuance concerning different names for the same actors at different stages of the representational process. This will avoid confusion about the subtle variances among the meanings signified by the components of representation. However, this discussion of actualization does not entail that conceiving representation as claim-making and claim-receiving processes is the only approach to actualization. Indeed, actualization is also difference, with a multiplicity of possibilities in its interpretations. From a theatrical performance perspective, actualization could be understood as the scripts and performance by actors on the stage. What matters here are the key elements of actualization — the materiality signified by the components of representative claims (or components of theatrical performance).

I have already discussed what Saward says about the representative claim and how representation becomes constitutive through the internal dynamics of the maker-subject-object-audience relationship. There are four points to clarify on actualization. First, actualization is an ongoing process, and determinate meanings of representation are temporal. Saward's account of the relationship between representative claims and presence of representation as institutional facts is somewhat misleading. On the one hand, claim-making and claim-receiving do not disappear when certain meanings are accepted in a given instance of representation. Actualization in an instance of representation only vanishes when this instance of representation is terminated, either by fulfilling its task or by the institutional limits, where certain meanings of representation cannot be actualized. On the other hand, the determination of meanings is temporary, changing in and between political decision-making cycles. When the constituents are forced to make a decision (choose a representative, assess representation, etc.), some meanings of representation will become more salient and clearer.

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Second, actualization does not eliminate difference. On the contrary, actualization materializes difference by bringing differentiated possibilities into the contestation over meanings, which in turn, may differentiate and create new possibilities. As the consequence of a specific representative claim, its acceptance (of a claim offering substantive representation) does not eliminate other possible meanings of representation in this instance of representation. There is always difference. What happens is that, at the moment of decision making, certain meanings are disambiguated and determined through contestations, whereas other meanings are temporarily eliminated and suppressed. Therefore, a more determinant answer to the questions of representation arises.

Third, actualization does not create fixed identities. One pitfall of the presence approach is the rigidity in binding particular forms of representation to corresponding instances of representation, giving each representative relationship a fixed identity. Actualization expresses differences in the contestation of possibilities and reflects the fact that different identities of representation may prevail at different times and locations of representation. Finally, actualization does not simply make meanings visible. When meanings of representation become more determinate in the actualization process, corresponding codes guiding the actions of representatives and standards for assessing the representative relationship are also set up. When I decide to accept that my representative is representing my interest substantively (determination of meanings of representation in decision-making), I am also expecting that she will protect and promote my interest (action guidance). More importantly, theorists' conception of substantive representation provides responsiveness criterion for me to judge whether my representative did a good or bad job in next decision-making cycle (standards of judgement).

3.4.2. Cultural and institutional contexts

What are cultural codes? This is a broad topic and here I shall provide two interpretations pertinent to my discussion on political representation. Freeden considers culture to be "social practices, institutional patterns, ethical systems, technologies, influential theories, discourses, and beliefs" (Freeden 1996, 69-70). In his discussion of cultural adjacency, Freeden primarily focuses on the influential theories of which main

authors of ideologies are aware. For example, in the formulation of the ideological morphology of Millite liberalism, Freeden carefully unpacks J. S. Mill's utilitarian inheritance and his assimilation of Tocqueville's concern about tyranny of majority (Freeden 1996, 154-157, 160-161). Moving to the practical end of culture, Alexander (2006) emphasizes the importance of cultural congruence in successful social performances. The less complex a society is culturally, the more likely the message conveyed through performative actions will be broadly interpreted as the performer expects. I will discuss this point in the next section.

Culture and institutions are two major elements mediating the actualization of representation. They do so by constraining and incentivizing certain expressions of representation and facilitating the reception of particular meanings of representation. For Saward (2010), representation is cultural because culture constrains the plausibility of specific types of representative claims (75). Different institutions, similarly, provide "considerable differences between repertoires of claim-making," which offer incentives for the claim-maker to maximize the likelihood of acceptance in different systems (87). This is because the representative claim is a two-way street, offered by the claim-maker and received and responded by targeted constituents and audience. "A political claim, is nothing if it is not heard, seen, or read by its intended audience, those whom it is meant to attract and convince" (76). The reception and interpretation of the claim is unavoidably limited by the localized cultural and institutional context the receiver is accustomed to. The same event is very likely to have different interpretations across different cultures (Chabal and Daloz 2006). It follows that cultural diversity in a society or group also affects the actualization of representation. In a homogenous society, meanings of representation are more stable since the representative and the represented intuitively follow the same cultural codes in claiming and receiving representative claims. In a culturally fragmented society, it is relatively harder to maintain consistent interpretations of representative claims and consequently stable meanings of representation.

To say that actualization is mediated and supported by cultural and institutional contexts does not exclude meanings of representation that could not be actualized from other cultural or institutional settings. Actualization does not exclude possibilities. Claim makers could always offer any claims they choose to their intended constituents. The point here is that receivers of the claim will have different interpretations that may go

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against the wishes of the claim maker. Therefore, claim makers strategically ignore certain possibilities to increase the chance of their claims' acceptance.

Culture and institutions are not fixed facts that remain the same over time. Each claim made and received in actualization, while shaped by given cultural or institutional contexts, may reinforce or weaken certain aspects of the cultural or institutional codes. The impact is far from enough to create a drastic cultural shift but can still contribute to incremental changes.

3.4.3. Performance

Saward (2010) maintains that performance is inevitable to representation as representation is "largely generated *by* the making, the performing, of claims to be representative" (66, original italics). In highlighting the performative aspect of representation, he further elaborates that gap between the diversity of the represented and the general image the representative offers, representation has to rely on creative performance to create "identities and fealties that are experienced as real" (70). The successful or good performance depends on whether it is perceived as authentic or not, whether it "looks like a performance at all" (69). Despite the superficial emphasis on the importance of performance, Saward does not offer much explanation of how performance is connected to representative claims and other factors that influence the claim-making and claim-receiving process.

First, what determines a successful performance? In social performance theory, successful performance depends on the fusion and re-fusion of elements of performance — actors, audiences, means of symbolic reproduction, *mise-en-scène*, and social power (Alexander 2006, 29-90). The scripts for performance should be carefully crafted to connect actors with audiences; the quality of the performance (the skill of the actor to put scripts into action, or *mise-en-scène*); access to appropriate and sufficient means of symbolic production (venue, equipment, technology, etc.); actors performing effectively to blur the distinction between performance and reality; audiences need to be attracted to the performance in the sense that their cultural and social differences are translated to a more widely shared sphere. The fusion of elements of performance is mediated by cultural differences. In a complex society, where cultural and social fragmentations

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render less "fusion" of elements of representation,[12] these elements need to be refused through "convincing and effective — more ritual-like" performances" (Alexander 2006, 32). The requirements of successful performance prevent certain claims of representation, as well as possible meanings injected in those claims, from being actualized in the representative processes. The more complex and diverse of society, and the higher level of the actualization, the more difficult and competitive is the contestation of claims, and more demanding of performers to successfully convey intended information to their audience.

Second, how do meanings become more determinate at the moment of constituency judgement of representative claims? In performative actions, meanings are conveyed through comparisons and successful claims are not always the best claim for the audience. In the contestations of meanings, claim-makers achieve successful performance by "defining the difference between one's own side and the other's," by creating a powerful image or script where the maker appears to be "a natural symbol of what it means to be right and good" (Alexander 2010, 12). In this process, relatively good and bad performances, images, and meanings are determined with the clarity of meanings achieved through the comparison and difference identification between "us" and "them." It should be noted here that meanings presented in performances are not necessarily meanings that performers believe in. They are meanings that claim-makers want the audience to receive, the meanings that will give them the best chance to be transmitted and interpreted as expected.

Third, does power matter in performance? Both constructivists and Pitkinian theorists are concerned with the power imbalances between the representative and the represented, exemplified by the debates on manipulation, education, and coordination. Representation is a differentiated relationship, with the representative and the represented in different social positions (Young 2000; Manin 1997). In performative actions, power can enter the interaction quietly by controlling access to the meanings of symbolic production and channels of the presentation of the performance. How well a

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[12] I borrow the word "fusion" from Alexander's cultural pragmatics to refer to the elements involved in the performance of representation, the claim-maker, the scripts (claims) appear to be authentic through performative actions and consequently accepted by audience as "real."

representative claim is heard and accepted by targeted constituents depends on the claim-maker's ability to mobilize resources for the performance, e.g., locate an appropriate stage, create a favorable distribution of meanings conveyed in the performance. In successful performances, the influence of power is invisible as the actors become what they act and "[s]ymbols and referents are one" (Alexander 2006, 56). Power hence creates an invisible threshold that limits the number of possibilities of meanings to become salient in the actualization of representation.

Again, putting this argument in a larger context of interest aggregation, we find this aspect of performance because we are accustomed to the institutional context where interest aggregation follows a top-down approach with the claim-maker at the center offering images and options. There are, as I will show later, other types of performance that create different contestations of meanings in the actualization process.

Finally, as discussed above, culture matters in performative actions because performance succeeds more easily in relatively homogenous societies, where low levels of cultural fragmentations presents less difficulty for claim-makers and receivers to create and receive meanings consistently. This point is also relevant if we focus our analysis on different levels. At a lower level, audiences of performances may be relatively more homogenous, creating fewer burdens on the performers to make successful performances, while at the national level, more cultural fragmentations make it hard for performers to deliver successful performances.

3.4.4. Judgement of performance

Another important piece in actualization is the acceptance of claims by the audiences. Yet unlike Saward or Rehfeld's conception, targeted constituents or audiences do not simply accept or reject claims based on a set of predetermined rules. Given the cultural and social differences among audiences, it is unlikely that they will uniformly interpret claims offered by claim-makers. The more complex targeted audiences are, with more diverse interests and social backgrounds, the less likely audiences will have the same response to performers. Two issues arising from this plurality of claim interpretation and reception deserve our attention here.

First, in most settings, performative actions are mediated through media and experts. Audiences rarely have the chance to directly interact with claim-makers on the stage. The performance, consisting of claims made by claim-makers, is always reconstructed and interpreted in its distribution to targeted audiences. There are at least two types of mediation: the reperformance of media (Alexander 2006) and expert knowledge from experts (Saward 2010). In large and complex societies, media is unavoidably among the means of symbolic performance that connects the performance with audiences. However, performance in this connection is directed, cut, edited, and reinterpreted by the media before it is presented to the audience. In this sense, the media also re-performs the performative actions and is subject to the same factors influencing the performance. Experts, similarly, join the performance as "second-order roles" who interpret "the judgment that the appropriate people do make about representative claims and examining the conditions that have enabled those judgment" (Saward 2010, 146). The two mediums could either facilitate bridging the elements of performance or enlarging the disparities between claim-makers and audiences.

Second, the audience is not a homogenous group. While it is the intention of the claim-maker and criteria for successful performative actions, the shared identities that actors trying to create meaning through claim-making and performance will have different interpretations among audiences considering the cultural and social fragmentations among them. On the one hand, not all audiences will accept the claims made to them. On the other hand, even when they accept the claims and deem the performance successful, their decisions may be based on different considerations. Therefore, when meanings are actualized in an instance of representation, there are still degrees of freedom for audiences to have their own understanding of this representative relationship. From this perspective, it would be less meaningful to have a common identity for an instance of representation based on types of representation (substantive, descriptive, etc.), as substantive representation in the eyes of the claim-maker may be received as descriptive representation for some constituents. There is probably only one thing for certain, that is, representation is going on with performances and claim-making processes.

The fragmentation of judgement on representative claims when looking at the performative aspect of representation does not reject more consistent and unified

standards in assessing representation as a system. Each venue of representation may display different interpretations of representation and demand different sources of justification, together in a system of representation they complement each other in addressing the representativeness of the political system (Mansbridge et al. 2012; Kuyper 2016).

3.4.5. Actualizing difference

Now we have a cycle of representative claims and performances, where the meanings of representation are contested and highlighted in an instance of representation. A claim maker, aiming at the role of representative, offers herself or someone else from their group as the subject of representation. The claim she made is carefully and strategically articulated in the sense that it will appear to be attractive to most targeted constituents from the maker's perspective. The performance of claims is further mediated through media and/or experts in a plural society before reaching the audience. Audiences, then, based on the information (e.g., claim and media reports) they have at hand, make their judgments on the claims. This claim or performance cycle extends throughout the life cycle of the instance of representation and is nested in a web of performances where different claims and performances interacted and are contested.

Elements such as culture, institution, and power are pervasive in the claim or performance cycle, influencing each element of the performance of a representative claim. Depending on these elements, claim makers will have different resources available for them to offer claims; media and experts will re-present and interpret performances accordingly; audiences will have different responses to the claims and information received. These elements, like components of the cycles of claims or performances, are dynamic over time, though the changes may be too slow to be noticeable when we examine them. Therefore, studying the cultural and institutional contexts of representation contributes to the understanding of how conceptions of representation play out in political systems.

Instances of representation always express what I have called difference within representation, with all the possibilities of meanings to be expressed. In performative actions and claim-making and receiving processes, differentiated meanings of representation are created, contested, and eliminated. Temporally distinct periods of

political decision-making disambiguate meanings of representation and bring certain meanings of representation to salient positions in public discourse, creating the illusion that the instance of representation conforms to the types of representation differentiated. The temporal settlement of meanings does not signal the end of actualization. There will always be new claims, new meanings, and performative actions entering in the actualization process until the end of the instance of representation.

3.5. Conclusion

Now I can briefly summarize what I am trying to propose in the two chapters so far. From the two major approaches to the studies of representation, Pitkinian' theorists' typological approach or the presence approach and constructivists event approach, I develop two analytical aspects in conceptualizing representation: differentiation and actualization. Differentiation refers to the identification and analysis of possible meanings of representation from possible meanings of the concept. Pitkin's approach develops four types of representation under different contexts and contributes much to our understanding of the differentiation of representation. Each type of representation offers distinct answers to the key question of representation. Differentiated meanings of representation do not automatically attach to instances of representation. They are actualized, performed, and made through representative claims. Constructivists investigate the dynamic interactions among parties in the representative relationship through which the meanings of representation are constantly disambiguated with some meanings given salience. Both differentiation and actualization are subject to cultural and institutional restraints. Examining cultural and institutional aspects of representation helps us to understand why certain meanings of representation are actualized and how well these conceptions of representation are supported.

One major shortcoming of the two approaches, however, is their exclusive focus on democratic institutions and the democratic legitimacy of representation. It is thus reasonable to ask: can the tools that I have described and modified be used to make sense of a non-Western perspective on representation? In the remaining chapters of this dissertation, I switch my focus to contemporary China to examine the differentiation and actualization of representation in the Chinese context.

Chapter 4.
Ideology and Cultural Tradition

The previous two chapters laid down the framework for understanding representation through the problem-based approach. I argue that the key problem for representation is to define and maintain the connection between the representative and the represented. This problem encompasses three layers: 1) a conceptual and theoretical layer that pins down the scope and mechanism of the connection between parties in a representative relationship; 2) a practical and institutional layer that enables and constrains the performance of conceptual ideals in political realities; and 3) a normative layer that guides the evaluation of representation based on criteria outlined in respective conceptual formulations. Using this framework, the next two chapters unpacks the conception of mass line representation (MLR) through the morphological approach. This chapter focuses on Maoism as the dominant ideology where MLR situates in and Confucianism as the cultural adjacent to Maoism.

This chapter proceeds in three sections. The first section discusses the analysis of ideology China and outlines my approach to the official ideology of the Communist Party of China (CPC). After that, the second section maps out four core concepts of Maoism: contradiction, practice, class, and mass line. Section three discusses the cultural background for understanding Chinese politics, which also offers cultural justifications for the lack of liberal authorization and accountability in Maoist core concepts.

4.1. Ideology in China

Before diving into Maoism and the Communist Party of China's (CPC) ideology, I need to clarify the meaning of ideology and the CPC's ideology. The development of the CPC's ideology since its foundation posed a dilemma for researchers because of its adherence to the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist tradition in Mao's era and its embrace of market reform since the 1980s. Scholars often approach this issue by identifying different types of ideologies. Chen (2016), for example, distinguishes among regime

ideology, which is the coherent system of official ideas of the regime and has undergone dramatic changes, party ideology, which provides legitimation for specific policies, and national ideology, which serves as the basis of national identity and remains stable in China. He concludes that China's regime ideology has undergone dramatic changes whereas the national ideology remains relatively stable. A more pertinent example is the distinction between formal (official) and informal ideology (Sandby-Thomas 2014; Zeng 2016).[13] The official ideology proposed by the CPC leadership (e.g., Deng Xiaoping's "reform and opening up") is supplemented by the informal ideology of liberal marketization to provide justifications for the market reform in a communist regime (Sandby-Thomas 2014, 584). However, such classifications of ideology in China present a static view of ideology as a belief system and fail to fully grasp the dynamic and continually evolving nature of the CPC's ideology. From the morphological perspective, concepts in informal ideologies could very well be conceptual cores of concepts in formal ideology.

This project follows Michael Freeden's morphological approach in studying the differentiation of representation in CPC ideology. Ideologies can be understood as systems of political thinking produced and consumed by groups to interpret the political world (Freeden 1996, 2003). The set of organized ideas constructed, though not always mirroring political realities, provides pre-given interpretations of political realities that help us in making decisions among available options. One way of approaching ideologies, as suggested by Freeden, is through analyzing their morphologies, which regulate the location and relationship of concepts in the ideological semantic fields. Ideologies are "combinations of political concepts organized" according to their respective ideological morphologies of the core, adjacent, and peripheral concepts (Freeden 1996, 75). From this perspective, a concept is situated in a semantic field where its morphological position in the ideology and interactions with other concepts in the same field both contribute to its meanings. Therefore, analysis of a concept alone is insufficient without examining its conceptual morphology and its role in an ideology.

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[13] Whereas Schurman (1973) distinguishes a "pure ideology," which is Marxism (and sometimes Marxism-Leninism), and a "practical ideology," which he believes is the role of Mao Zedong thought in CPC.

Differentiation, following this line of thought, identifies meanings of representation through unpacking its conceptual components, as well as how these components gain more determinate meanings in their interactions with other concepts in the ideological morphologies of Maoism. The contestation of meanings in the semantic field and political practices clarifies the scope and mechanisms of representation in Maoism and hence offers a unique conceptual response to the key problem of representation. Core concepts of Maoism

Maoism, officially labelled as Mao Zedong Thought, is the foundation of the CPC's ideology. It has been repeatedly emphasized in party documents since its first appearance in the 7th National Congress of CPC (NCCPC) in 1945. Instead of providing an extensive review of Mao Zedong Thought, this section unpacks its four core concepts: contradiction, practice, class, and mass line. This is sufficient for us to understand the location of representation in Maoism and how the meanings of representation are determined in the ideology. For this purpose, I focus on the official publications under Mao's name, primarily the five-volume *Selected Works of Mao Zedong (Mao Zedong Xuanji, 毛泽东选集)* and eight-volume *Works of Mao Zedong (Mao Zedong Wenji, 毛泽东文集)*.

Despite scholars' concerns about whether these works fully reflect Mao's original ideas (Knight 2015, 41-48; Schram 1989, 62-63; Xu 2012, 2013; Chen and Pang 2019), these works reflect what the CPC perceives and promotes as a correct version of Mao's thought.[14] One of my goals in this dissertation, as I stated earlier, is to understand the concept of representation conceived by the CPC. Hence using the official version of Mao's works (even if they fail to capture Mao's thinking truly and fully, which is not likely the case) does not undermine my analysis of Maoism. Core Concepts of Maoism

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[14] Two concerns are raised here. First, some of Mao's works, especially the essay "On Contradiction," are greatly indebted to the Soviet works on similar topics and could not be considered as Mao's original work. Second, Mao's work is strongly influenced by his contemporary Marxist scholars such as Ai Siqi and Li Da, and was written by his secretaries such as Chen Boda, Hu Qiaomu, and Zhang Chunqiao. I agree with Knight (2015) and Xu (2012) that while Mao did refer to Soviet texts and Ai and Li's works, we cannot deny that Mao has his own interpretation of those sources, which contributes to Marxist theory generally and Chinese Marxism particularly.

4.2. Core concepts of Maoism

There are four core concepts in Maoism: contradiction, practice, class or class struggle, and mass line. Based on Freeden's (1996) morphological approach, we can create a conceptual map of the core concepts and other concepts related to representation in Maoism (See Figure 4.1). The first two core concepts, contradiction and practice, are the peak of Mao's philosophical contribution to Sinicized Marxism. Class and mass line are concepts developed in Mao's application of Marxism and Leninism to the Chinese social and cultural contexts.

Figure 4.1: Ideological Morphology of Maoism
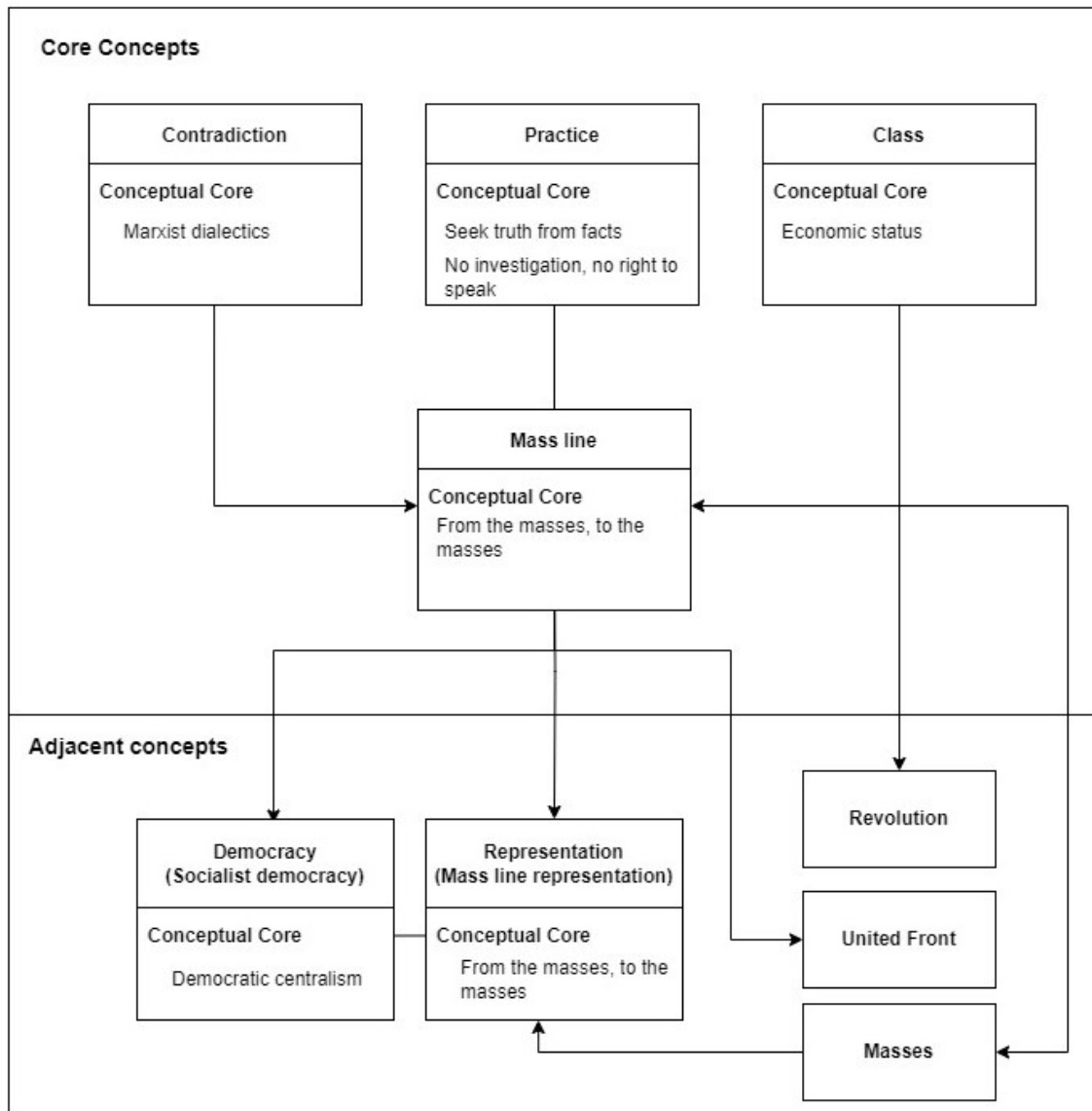
4.2.1. Contradiction

Contradiction is a core concept of dialectical materialism. It posits that the inherent conflicts between opposites, or the "negation of negation," drives the progress of history. As a faithful student of Marxism, Mao puts contradiction at the center of his philosophy (Schram 1989, 61-63). Commenting on Marxist dialectics, Mao concludes that studying the "law of contradiction" provides valuable guidance on "how to observe and analyze the movement of opposites in different things and … to indicate the methods for resolving contradictions" (Mao 1965a, 315). Mao notes that the orthodox Marxist law of contradiction, which focuses on the struggle between the proletariat and bourgeois classes, is not fully applicable to the Chinese society. In the essay *On Contradiction*, he fully elaborates his understanding of contradiction and further develops it as an important methodological and epistemological tool in understanding Chinese society.

Mao discusses two sets of features of contradiction: 1) universality and particularity, and 2) identity and struggle of aspects of contradiction.[15] Universality refers to the idea that contradiction exists in all things, in their motions and development: "[c]ontradiction is universal and absolute, it is present in the process of development of all things and permeates every process from beginning to end" (318). The universal presence of contradiction provides a theoretical justification for applying contradiction to the analysis of Chinese society.

However, Mao believes that China has unique social and political realities compared to the Marxist ideal and to Russia, China's neighbour with successful experience in the socialist revolution. This is where the particularity of contradiction becomes relevant. While contradiction exists in all motions of specific matters, for each type of motion, contradiction is unique and is the distinctive "qualitative difference" and "particular essence" that distinguishes one thing from another (320). Mao affirms the

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[15] Mao considers the following words as synonymous in this case: "identity, unity, coincidence, interpenetration, interpretation, interdependence (or mutual dependence for existence), interconnection or mutual co-operation" (Mao 1965a, 337).

contradiction between the proletariat and bourgeoisie in Chinese society, as is found in capitalism generally. Yet contradictions between feudal landlords and peasants, between imperialism or colonialism and the Chinese nation, and between the Communist Party and the Nationalist Party (Guomindang, 国民党) all together set the Chinese case apart from the general teachings in Marxist writings and the Russian experience.

Contradiction also involves aspects of identity and struggle. Mao explains the identity of contradiction as having two layers of meaning:

> first, the existence of each of the two aspects of a contradiction in the process of the development of a thing presupposes the existence of the other aspect, and both aspects coexist in a single entity; second, in given conditions, each of the two contradictory aspects transforms itself into its opposite. This is the meaning of identity. (337).

The identity of contradiction reveals the dynamic and developmental aspect of Maoist dialectics (or Leninist dialectics, as Mao frequently quotes Lenin here). Mao argues that the "unity or identity of opposites" is not "dead or rigid, but is living, conditional, mobile, temporary and relative" and both opposites could transform into each other in given conditions (340). Struggle between aspects of contradiction, on the other hand, sets "all things" in motion. The struggle of opposites leads to quantitative changes (e.g., changes in velocity or frequency of waves) and the culmination of quantitative changes leads to qualitative changes (where ocean waves turn into a tsunami).

In studying the particularity of contradiction, Mao distinguishes between the principal contradiction and the principal aspect of a contradiction. The principal contradiction "determines or influences" other contradictions in the same process or matters (331). The principal aspect of a contradiction refers to one opposite of the contradiction that plays a primary role in the motion and development of a process or matter. Mao's analysis of contradiction dismisses the static and dogmatic application of contradiction in analyzing practical issues. Contradictions are interrelated, and the principal contradiction and its principal aspect are constantly changing due to the identity and struggle of the opposites.

Therefore, contexts play an important role in the transformation of contradictions. The success of the proletarian revolution, for example, changes the principal aspect of

the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeois class from the bourgeoisie to the proletariat. Similarly, Japan's invasion in the 1930s made the contradiction between China and Japan the principal contradiction in Chinese society, superseding the contradiction between CPC and the Nationalist Party.

Mao's conceptualization of contradiction is not exactly a philosophical work that presents a clear conceptual scope and rigid logic consistent with orthodox Marxism (Knight 1990).[16] It appears to be a methodological and epistemological tool for the CPC to understand Chinese society during the periods of Revolutionary War and War of Resistance against Japanese Invasion (WRJI). One reason for Mao's less philosophical and Marxist understanding of contradiction is the practical orientation in his theorizations. Mao himself constantly applies his theory of contradiction in addressing Chinese social and political realities. For example, when talking about agricultural co-operatives after the founding of the People's Republic of China, Mao criticizes local officials for their ignorance of "the essential or main aspects" of CPC's socialist reform, which leads them to "emphasize the non-essential or minor" issues of CPC's experience in leading agriculture co-operatives (Mao 1977, 196).

Yet it is unfair to disregard Mao's theoretical contributions to Marxist dialectical materialism. While Mao is keen on understanding Chinese society through the Marxist lens, the particularity of China's cultural and historical conditions provides valuable insights for Mao in developing his version of dialectics (Schram 1989, 66; Cheek 2010, 13). On the one hand, the coexistence of foreign force, feudal landlords, warlords, and capitalists in early twentieth-century China presents complex social and political conditions, which in turn renders the orthodox Marxist teachings on contradictions between capitalists and proletarians and between forces and relations of production largely incompatible in the Chinese case. Mao, in this respect, develops concepts such as "principal contradiction" and "principal aspects of the principal contradiction," which, together with the "unity of opposites," provide a clinical analysis of principal contradictions in different stages of revolutions in China before 1949 and state-building

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[16] This is probably because when writing *On Contradiction* and *On Practice*, Mao had limited access to Lenin's writings. Instead, Mao used Soviet Union's textbooks that introduce Lenin's thought as his main source of reference (Yong 2007).

after 1949.[17] On the other hand, Mao's reading of contradiction and Marxism is closely related to his understanding of Chinese traditional philosophy (Liu 2003; Zhou 2004; Cheek 2010, 13). For example, in talking about contradiction, Mao (1971, 340) cites Laozi, the founder of Daoism, and argues that *yin* and *yang* are two indispensable but contradictory aspects of *Dao*. Hence, he urges his comrades to pay equal attention to both aspects of contradiction, as well as the unity of opposites in learning from the Soviet Union.[18]

4.2.2. Practice

Contradiction is closely related to practice, another core concept of Maoism. The combination of contradiction with practice gives life to Mao's philosophy. Practice speaks to Mao's theory of knowledge. For him, knowledge is gained through the dialectical process of "trial and error" in engaging with social practice. Correct ideas, Mao argues, "comes from social practice and from it alone" (Mao 1999, 251). The core of practice is the idea of "seek truth from facts" (*shishi qiushi* 实事求是). As Mao (1965c) explains:

> "Facts" are all the things that exist objectively, "truth" means their internal relations, that is, the laws governing them, and "to seek," means to study (22).

It is only through direct contact with the object of interest that we gain direct knowledge about it. Yet, direct contact with the object of interest does not guarantee the acquisition of "truth," or the general laws, due to our frequent misconceptions about the object and its environment and about the various perspectives on the same object. Learning is a dialectical process of "acquir[ing] through practice …[and] return[ing] to practice," which makes the "active leap from perceptual to rational knowledge" possible (Mao 1965a, 304). What we learn from a material object is perceptual knowledge that may be a false

[17] Mao determines that in the Anti-Japanese War period, the principal contradiction is between foreign invaders and the Chinese nation, whereas in the Liberation War period, the principal contradiction is between feudal landlords and bureaucratic bourgeoisie (with the Guomin Dang as the representative) and other classes in the united front (proletariat, peasants, petty bourgeoisie, small landlords, etc.)

[18] A While both China and the Soviet Union are both socialist countries (universality of contradiction), they have very different (particularity of contradiction) conditions. Therefore, it is wrong to "think everything Soviet is good and transplant it indiscriminately" (Mao 1971, 340).

perception of the object. It is only through repetition of the dialectics of learning and practice that the truth of the object can be found. "[P]ractice is the criterion of truth" not only because that theory is developed by human beings, whose recognition is subject to spatial and temporal limitations, but also because the truth of theories can only be tested and verified in practice (305).

"Seek truth from facts" is complemented by "no investigation, no right to speak" (*meiyou diaocha jiu meiyou fayan quan*, 没有调查就没有发言权), which describes the method of getting to know the "facts." The continual engagement with reality and repetitions of experiment with knowledge gained in this engagement, through which the truth emerges, connects theory with practice and is the source of authority on a specific issue. Opinions or views without thorough investigation "are nothing but twaddle" (Mao 1965c, 18). Mao is very serious about the importance of investigation. In reflecting on the CPC's mistakes under Wang Ming's (王明) leadership, which are termed as "left adventurism," he traces the root of those mistakes to the lack of investigation. At that time, Mao argues, the CPC leadership failed to "go deeply into complex matters, to analyze and study them over and over again" (Mao 1965c, 165). Without investigations into particular matters, "[n]o one in the leading position is competent to give general guidance" on issues related to them (118).

Practice is closely connected to contradiction. The key to practice and engagement with realities is to identify the principal aspect of contradiction that determines the nature or essence of things. Individuals are "bound to trip and fall" if they fail to do so since "this is the only reliable and scientific method of analysis" (Mao 1965a, 302, 119). Moreover, contradictions are interconnected with possibilities of transformation in given conditions. Hence it is important to investigate conditions, as well as the principal contradiction, secondary contradictions, and their potential of transformation, all of which affect the correct understanding of reality. Mao urges that problems or issues should be examined from different perspectives, that is, "seeing the reverse, as well as the obverse side of things" and noticing that "a bad thing can lead to good results and a good thing to bad results" (Mao 1965c, 416). The dialectical process of deriving theory from practice and testing theory through practice enhances and verifies the objective knowledge about reality and truth.

4.2.3. Class (class struggle)

Class, or its derivative, class struggle, is another core concept in Mao's ideology. It is closely related to his interpretation of revolution and the united front (*tongyi zhanxian,* 统一战线). Some scholars have contended that Mao has a different conception of class compared to the economy-determined perspective in orthodox Marxism (Schram 1984; Healy 2008). Yet this is not accurate. Mao does stress the importance of a political standpoint, the attitude of a class towards CPC in identifying existing classes in Chinese society, since it determines whether the class can potentially support a proletarian revolution in China. The opening paragraph of Mao's "Analysis of Classes in Chinese Society" (wrote in 1926) reads:

> Who are our enemies? Who are our friends? This is a question of the first importance for the revolution. … To distinguish real friends from real enemies, we must make a general analysis of the economic status of the various classes in Chinese society and of their respective attitudes towards the revolution (Mao 1965a, 13).

As Li Zehou (1987) insightfully notes, Mao's starting point of analyzing class is class struggle and his purpose in analyzing class was to satisfy the practical needs of the Chinese revolution at that time (153).[19]

While I do not wish to engage in a detailed analysis of Mao's interpretation of existing classes,[20] five points should be noted here. First, finding out whether a class is a friend or enemy does not undermine Mao's intention to draw a conclusion based on the economic status of the class in Chinese society. In fact, Mao strictly follows the Marxist tradition in drawing lines among different classes. For example, his semi-proletariat class includes those whose possession of means of production fails to provide sufficient needs and hence are forced to sell part of their labour to other property-owning classes (Mao

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[19] Class is by no means the first concept that Mao interprets to meet the "practical needs" of China's situation. Contradiction, for example, is largely stripped off the philosophical heritage of Hegel and Marx and becomes a practical concept Mao used to develop CPC's approaches to leadership in the revolution and socialist reform.

[20] In his 1926 article on classes in Chinese society, Mao determines that there are five main classes: 1) landlord and comprador; 2) middle bourgeoisie; 3) petty bourgeoisie; 4) semi-proletariat; 5) proletariat. Of the five classes, the proletariat class is the leader of revolution, and petty bourgeoisie and semi-proletariat classes are friends to the proletariat class.

1965a, 15-16). Second, analyzing the feudal history of China through the lens of class drives Mao to the conclusion that the "class struggles of peasants" are the "real motivative force of historical development in Chinese feudal society" (Mao 1965b, 308). The recognition of peasants' role in Chinese history contributes to Mao's conclusion that peasants, especially the poor ones, belong to the semi-proletariat class that is the friend for revolution.

Third, class is ubiquitous in class society. "[E]veryone lives as a member of a particular class, and every kind of thinking, without exception, is stamped with the brand of class" (Mao 1965a, 296). Fourth, contradiction between classes "pushes society forward and gives the impetus for the suppression of the old society by the new" (314). The progression of society to the higher stage of development, then, is accompanied by ubiquitous class struggle capped by revolution, which ends with the overthrow of one class by another. A revolutionary war is "the highest form of struggle for resolving contradictions" among classes (180).

Finally, the focus of class struggle, as the expression of contradictions among classes, varies depending on changes to the principal contradiction or the principal aspect of a contradiction. In reviewing the socialist reform completed in 1956, Mao determines that in building socialism, the contradiction between the people and the people's enemies changed to the contradiction between those who support socialist construction (people) and those who resist it (enemy) (Mao 1977, 385). Class, in association with contradiction, becomes a dynamic and developing concept that serves the "practical need" of social development.

Mao's anatomy of Chinese society through the lens of class resembles Marx's application of historical materialism in the analysis of the French Revolution of 1848. In *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, Marx suggests that the social and economic positions of different classes (French bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie, peasants, etc.), as well as the conflicts and struggles among them, determine their respective interests and reactions to the Revolution that lead to the consequent *coup d'etat* of Louis Bonaparte. The peasants, for example, play a passive role in the Revolution because their mode of production "isolates them from one another" and such isolation is "promoted by the poor means of communication in France" and "the poverty of the farmers" (Marx 1989 [1852], 71). Therefore, the peasants cannot "represent

themselves" since without political organization and mobilization, they cannot "assert their class interests in their own name" (71). In addition to standing for or acting for the peasants, representatives of the peasants will need to mobilize, organize, and lead them to raise their class consciousness and assert their interests.

Mao reaches the same conclusion on Chinese peasants in his analysis of classes in China. While acknowledging the peasants as friends of the Chinese revolution, Mao is fully aware that peasants, being exploited by other classes politically, economically, and culturally, need to be mobilized, organized, and led in the class struggle:

> … a large number of comrades must now make up their mind to do the vast amount of work on organizing peasants … hold the hands of peasants and ask what are their sufferings and what are their needs … starting from their sufferings and needs, guide them to get organized; guide them to struggle with the local tyrants and evil gentry; guide them to establish the united front with workers, students, and small and middle merchants in the city … (Mao 1993, 39).

That is, the CPC and its members, when representing the peasants, must stay connected with the peasants to understand their needs. More importantly, they need to raise the peasants' class consciousness and organize and lead them in the class struggle and revolution to overthrow exploitative landlords and compradors. This is where mass line comes into play.

4.2.4. Mass Line

Compared to the three concepts outlined above, which Mao tailored to the particularity of China, Mao could comfortably claim the authorship for the concept of mass line (*qunzhong luxian,* 群众路线). This concept has been criticized as the CPC's forged representation of the masses through manipulation and shaping them "into a political subjectivity" (Wang 2014, 229). There is no doubt that discrepancies exist between the Marxist-Maoist tradition and the liberal tradition, and scholars should be aware of the inconsistencies that may be produced by examining a Marxist-Maoist concept through liberal ethics (Steiner 1951). Stepping out of this particular ideological and cultural bias, however, can provide a neutral reading of what mass line means and how it functions as a tool of leadership and representation in Mao Zedong Thought. As

Korolev (2017) argues, the "de-ideologized" mass line could very well represent different social groups and become a mechanism of interest articulation and aggregation in the policymaking process. This section echoes Steiner and Korolev's research and offers a morphological reading of the concept of mass line in Mao's works.

The conceptual core of mass line is "from the masses, to the masses" (*cong qunzhong zhong lai, dao qunzhong zhong qu* 从群众中来，到群众中去). Mao explains that the party should collect "scattered and unsystematic ideas" from the masses and explain the "concentrated and systematic ideas" to the masses, who will "translate them into action" when these ideas are accepted by the masses (Mao 1965c, 119). If we read mass line in connection to other core concepts of Maoism, we may notice that mass line advocates a distinctive conception of the connection between the ruler and the ruled, and between the representative and the represented from the perspective of representation. This connection is representative-centric because both "from the masses" and "to the masses" requires motivation from the representative to engage with the masses. It can appear to be somewhat paternalistic because the ruler or the representative is responsible for collecting information from the ruled or the represented and, with the information collected, making decisions on their behalf. However, other core concepts in Maoism restrain such an interpretation of mass line.

The concept of contradiction constrains the meanings of mass line in three ways. First, the ruler (or representative) and the ruled (or represented) are two aspects of contradiction, meaning that they are both identical and contentious. They are identical because the representative must come "from the masses" to learn about the interests of the represented and both parties ideally have the same wish to promote those interests. They are contentious because the representative is the decision-maker and she cannot satisfy the multiplicity of needs of the masses at the same time. Second, the idea of principal contradiction and principal aspects of contradiction guides decision-making regarding which interests the representative should represent. From this perspective, representatives have limited autonomy in promoting certain interests because they have to prioritize principal contradictions in their decision-making process. Third, following the dialectics of contradiction, the represented can become its opposite — the representative. The difference between the represented and the representative lies primarily in knowledge and experience, which can be improved with practice.

Practice provides the rationale and approach for connecting with the masses. To represent the interests of the represented, the representative must "seek truth" on what those interests are from the "facts" of everyday life of the represented. Hence the representative must conduct investigations, meaning that they must connect with the represented and gather their input as raw materials for the representative to come up with a decision on what to represent. Mao does not suggest that the representative can always make the right decision —the decision that addresses the principal contradiction or the principal aspect of contradiction. It is a "trial and error" process for the representative, and it is through the repetition of practice that the representative can find the "truth" from all the issues reported by the represented.

Practice hence offers two implications for MLR. First, education can produce capable representatives. Since knowledge comes from practice, each individual can be representative, or at least as able as the representative in identifying the principal contradiction and the interest to be represented. Second, following that, the represented, with proper education, will be able to understand the representative's decisions and even become representatives. From this perspective, education is indispensable to the success of the mass line approach because the representative needs to be educated to become competent and the represented needs to be educated to understand policies implemented by the representative.

Class offers the basis for understanding who is part of the masses that the representative should work with. While the principal contradiction determines which classes are friends of the CPC, Mao's evaluation of Chinese society based on economic conditions guides the representative in identifying the masses to gather information from and promote the interest for. That is, definition of class becomes a simple gauge for representatives to reduce the complexity and cost of the "trial and error" process of policymaking. For example, while the bourgeois class was considered as class enemy of the proletariat, the shift of principal contradiction during the War of Resistance against Japanese Invasion (WRJI) period saw the CPC's change of attitude towards petty and medium bourgeoisie and landlords. Class helped the representatives to grasp this change and make policies accordingly.

Mass line, as an answer to the connection between representative and represented, has four features. First, it encourages inclusion of the represented.

Participation and input of the represented is indispensable for the representatives to understand the needs of the represented and decide what interests they should represent. Lin (2006, 138-143) is correct in identifying the democratic aspect of mass line as promoting public participation and input in the decision-making process. In this sense, the mass line approach may seem to echo Dahl's stipulation that in a democracy, citizens have the opportunity to provide their input in the decision-making process.

Yet, as I will show in the next Chapter, inclusion in mass line approach serves the function of information gathering rather than development of citizenship. It is passive and selective in mass line representation and does not necessarily empower the represented or create open public sphere for communication and alternative sources of information. Moreover, democracy in Maoism often comes with centralism. That is, input from participation of masses has to go through the deliberation of representatives in the decision-making process. Democracy and centralism appear to be incompatible with each other. Some scholars suggest that the incompatibility of the two concepts is resolvable in Mao's dialectics, especially in the rhetoric on contradiction (Lin and Lee 2013; He 2014). Angle (2005) argues that in its ideal form — democracy ensures mass participation and centralism ensures prompt decision-making — democratic centralism can be a sound alternative to liberal democracy.

Second, mobilization is an integral part of mass line. Constructivists' conceptions of democratic representation envision the creation of interests through mobilizing and recruiting constituents (Disch 2011; Saward 2010). For the mass line approach, mobilization does not create interests or demands, rather, it helps the masses to "discover" their interests because the class interest is objectively determined by the principal contradiction in a given condition. There exists one "truth" about the interest to be represented and it is knowable through practice. Therefore, representatives' claims and actions of representing must go "to the masses" to win their understanding and support by raising their class consciousness. It does not mobilize reflexivity — "expressed or implicit objections" from the constituents in Disch's (2011, 111) term — but consensus on the objective interest.

Third, to mobilize the represented, another function of mass line is to educate the masses so that they are aware of their class interests and willing to organize to join the class struggle and revolution. Normative theorists are especially concerned with the

possible manipulation in the education of the represented. Mansbridge (2003, 519) differentiates between education — non-coercive influences in the interests of the represented — and manipulation — coercive forces that deceive the represented to take actions against their interest. Mao is not very interested in this distinction for two reasons. First, Mao believes that each individual can learn what is her true interest through practice. External information, even deceptive information, will be examined in practice because practice is the "criterion of truth" on the true interest. Second, it is very likely that, in this process, the represented make mistakes in their judgements (being manipulated). Such mistakes, Mao suggests, are essential to the dialectical process of practice, which would eventually transform the perceptual knowledge from either education or manipulation to rational knowledge about the true interest.

Finally, Mao believes that the representative is different from the represented (Manin 1997). The mass line approach demands that the representative learn "from the masses." However, as Schram (1989) puts it, this does not mean to "lose oneself" in the masses; nor should it be interpreted as a form of "'extended democracy' with overtones of anarchism" (46). The representative is different in two aspects. On the one hand, the representative is supposed to be more knowledgeable in the sense that they know (or have the ability to know) the current principal contradiction locally and nationally, which is crucial for them to make the right decision on what interest to represent and how it is represented. Only through "detailed analysis" of contradictions can representatives avoid being "misled" by "superficial appearance … of what is before them" (Mao 1965a, 120). However, such knowledge is transferable to the represented, because the represented can also find it out by themselves if they engage in practice. That is, the difference in knowledge is amendable.

On the other hand, Mao constantly emphasizes the moral quality and capacity of the representative. Both the CPC and its members, as representatives, are expected to have "no private ends to pursue" and stay connected with the masses instead of "set themselves above" the represented (Mao 1965c, 33-34). Representatives, in Mao's vision, are somewhat like the Rousseauean legislator capable of making correct judgements about the interests of the masses while caring only about the public interest.

The four core concepts are the starting points for mapping out Mao Zedong Thought and understanding mass line representation. The mass line approach proposes a unique form of relationship between the ruler and the ruled (and between representative and represented). The ruler and representative are expected to be both morally and practically competent to promote the interest of the ruled and represented. Moreover, the representative also needs to raise class consciousness of the represented so that they understand actions of the representative and join the class struggle voluntarily.

4.3. Cultural heritage and normative foundations

The mass line approach proposes a form of representative relationship where the representative dominates the relationship, using her reason and judgement to promote the interests of the represented. This connection may sound unrealistic to Western scholars. It does not require authorization from the represented and the represented has very limited tools to hold the representative accountable (except when the representative justifies her decision in "to the masses" stage). The functioning of MLR mostly depends on the commitment and capability of the representative in gathering sufficient information and making correct decisions.

4.3.1. Confucianism as the cultural adjacent concept

How to make sense of this? Freeden (1996) suggests that the seemingly illogical components of concepts in any particular ideology can be justified through its culturally adjacent concepts. Confucianism, as the cultural heritage of Chinese politics, offers a responsibility-cultivation discourse that praises the ruler's moral virtues in taking care of her people (as sons and daughters). This is very different from the rights-authorization discourse in the liberal tradition, where individuals forfeit some rights to authorize the state to perform certain activities (mostly safety).

Confucianism is presented to the Western audience in the debate on its compatibility with liberal democracy (Huntington 1984; Fukuyama 1995).[21] Following the

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[21] For a summary of the debate, see He (2010). He presents four different views on the relationship between Confucianism and democracy: conflict, compatible, hybrid, and

problem-based approach (Warren 2017), this dissertation suggests that to better understand Confucianism, it is also useful to understand what problems Confucianism attempts to solve in a Confucian society. Confucius and Mencius, two founders of Confucianism, identify order and people's welfare as two priorities the ruler should attend to. Confucian responses to the two problems establish a set of paternalistic moral codes and policies to regulate behaviors of the ruler and direct his attention to the wellbeing of the people.

In a Confucian society, each actor has a role in the system. The ruler with relevant virtues and capacities is entrusted to promote the wellbeing of the people. Confucius says that good government comes when "the prince is prince, and the minister is minister; when the father is father, and the son is son" (*The Analects*, Book 12: Chapter 11-2).[22] This points to the foundation of Confucian political thought: rectification of names (*zhengming* 正名). This is primarily because Confucius (556-479 BC) lived in the Spring and Autumn period (*Chunqiu shiqi* 春秋时期, 776-403 BC), when the feudal states began to supersede the unified royal authority of the Zhou Dynasty (周, 1046-256 BC). The weakening of the Zhou dynasty and chaotic wars among the feudal states elevate the importance of order in Confucianism. Hence the first thing to be done in managing the government is "to rectify names." (Book 13: 3-2), that is, to return to the order and political system of the Zhou Dynasty, where the prince is prince and minister is minister. Confucius writes that:

> When good government prevails in the empire, ceremonies, music, and punitive military expeditions proceed from the son of Heaven. When bad government prevails in the empire, ceremonies, music, and punitive military expeditions proceed from the princes. (Book 16: 2-1).

In his view, governments of feudal states in the Spring and Autumn period were bad governments because order disappears when the princes do not play the role of the

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critical. Elstein (2010; 2012) suggests that we should look at contemporary Confucianism for the compatibility instead of Confucius and Mencius, whose views cannot generate democracy since they oppose assumptions of democracy — the public's ability to make collective decisions and a government by the people.

[22] I use James Legge's (2014) translation for *The Analects* in this dissertation. Four seas refer to the four seas surrounding ancient China. The term is generally used as a metaphor referring to ancient China.

prince and attempt to fulfil the responsibilities of the Son of Heaven (*tianzi* 天子). Hence, rectification of names is necessary to restore the order and corresponding responsibilities embedded in the roles different actors play according to their positions in the order.

The order is a paternalistic hierarchy where the ethical relationship of father and son is expressed in public and political life. King of the unified royal authority, as the Son of Heaven, rules with the Mandate of Heaven (*tianming* 天命). The Mandate of Heaven directs the king to protect his people and promote their interests. The *Book of Documents* (*Shangshu*, 尚书) writes that "Heaven has compassion for the people. What the people desire, Heaven will be found to give effect to." (*Book of Documents* Book 4: 1-6).[23] If a king fails to do so, Heaven will revoke the mandate of giving it to another king because Heaven "has no partial affections … [and] helps only the virtuous" who has the virtue to fulfil its duties (Book 4: 1-5; Book 4: 2-3; Book 4: 19-2). Confucius inherited the belief that the ruler should have the mandate of Heaven. Quoting words of ancient emperors, he states that the "Heaven-determined order of succession" will come to an end "if there shall be distress and want within the four seas" (*The Analects*, Book 20: 1-1).

On the one hand, the mandate of Heaven provides performance legitimacy to the royal authorities in Chinese history (Zhao 2009; Nuyen 2013). While the mandate of Heaven can be interpreted as a source of legitimacy for the royal authority, it should be noted that such legitimacy is based on Confucian morality, which prescribes order and responsibility between ruler and the ruled.

A more important distinction between the legal and institutional legitimacy of democracy and moral legitimacy of Confucianism lies in the different core problems that the two are facing. Instead of focusing on inclusion, empowerment, and collective decision-making, Confucianism cares about restoring and maintaining order, where the

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[23] As one of the classics of Confucianism, the *Book of Documents* is a collection of conversations between the emperor and officials in Xia Dynasty (about 2070 – 1600 BC), Shang Dynasty (about 1600 – 1046 BC), and West Zhou Dynasty (about 1046 – 771 BC). Citation of texts from *the Book of Documents* are in the format of "book number: section number-paragraph number." Texts are translated to English by James Legge.

well-being of the people is given priority. The Heaven's mandate, the Son of Heaven and the bureaucratic system, meritocracy, virtue, etc. are the institutional arrangements and mechanisms developed by Confucian scholars to address this problem. It is inadequate to match and compare similar concepts in Confucianism and Western political thought without referring to their distinctive problem-orientation.

The ruler's responsibility, as mentioned earlier, is the protection and wellbeing of the people. As Chan (2014) puts it, "the authority of the ruler and all other officials is an instrument to serve" the people (30). Mencius famously writes: "The people are the most important element in a nation … [and] the sovereign [king] the lightest" (*Mencius* 7B: 14). The welfare of the people determines whether the ruler is capable of serving the people. He states that:

> He caused him to preside over the sacrifices, and all the spirits were well pleased with them; thus Heaven accepted him. He caused him to preside over the conduct of affairs, and affairs were well administered, so that the people reposed under him; thus the people accepted him. Heaven gave the throne to him. The people gave it to him. (5A: 5).

Mencius offers a less mystified version of Confucian responsibility by including the voluntaristic agency of the people: the ruler is expected to serve the ruled and when the ruler fails to do so, he loses the authority and will be overthrown by the people.[24] Tong (2011) is right to stress that the people's expectation of government's performance is relative, that is, bad economic performance in the time of crisis does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that government fails to perform its responsibility. From the theatrical performance perspective, Confucian doctrine, mandate of Heaven, responsibility, people first, etc., sets up a dramatical script that assigns roles and their corresponding responsibilities in the society. A ruler's role is to take care of the livelihood of the people, which is also the Heaven's mandate.

To ensure that order is restored, and the responsibilities are carried out, Confucius introduces the cultivation of moral virtues. He emphasizes *ren (仁)*, or benevolence, as an important virtue in governance. For Confucius, *ren* is "to love all

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[24] As exemplified in the history of China, the right to rebel offers an accountability mechanism in the mandate of Heaven with the revolutions in changes of dynasties (Wood 1995, 12-15; Glanville 2010). But as I argue below, what is more important for maintaining order and responsibility is Confucian virtue of *ren*.

men," regardless of their backgrounds and social classes (*the Analects* Book 12: 22-1). *Ren* is the key to rule a country. One piece of advice Confucius offered for ruling a country is "love for men; and the employment of the people at proper seasons" (Book 1: 5). The emperor's rule must be based on his or her practice of *ren*. For an emperor with *ren*, his or her people will voluntarily follow his rule and the government may be "compared to the north polar star, which keeps its place and all stars turn toward it" (Book 2: 1). Confucius suggests that the cultivation of moral virtues starts from the private and individualistic spheres.[25] Love of family members (filial piety 孝 and fraternal submission 悌) is "the root of all benevolent actions" (Book 1: 2-2). It should be noted that while maintaining the difference between individual and collective, Confucius prefers the transferability between the individual and collective through the cultivation of virtues and denies the antagonism between the two (Hsiao 1995, 58). As Confucius put it, "[h]e (the superior man, *junzi*, 君子) cultivates himself so as to give rest to all the people" (Book 14: 45). The goal of government, namely, bringing peace and happiness to the people, is achieved by moral cultivation of the ruler.

Another reason for the necessity of moral cultivation lies in the education of the people, which in turn brings good governance. Confucius believes that in addition to providing food and shelter, the ruler should also offer moral cultivation to the people. But before he can do that, the ruler needs to be the moral model first. "If he cannot rectify himself, what has he to do with rectifying others?" (Book 13: 13-1). With a virtuous ruler, "the people from all quarters will come to him, bearing their children on their backs" (Book 13: 4-3). Moral virtues make it easier for the ruler to perform his responsibilities in protecting the people.

Moral cultivation and moral education, while bridging individual and collective, also underpin the Confucian political norm of meritocracy — the rule of virtuous and capable elites selected from the education system and competitive examination. Meritocracy provides sources for a capable bureaucratic system to maintain the stability of the political system and promote public interest in the long term (Ackerly 2005; Bell 2000; 2006). If democracy empowers inclusion of citizens, Confucianism empowers

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[25] As recorded in the *Book of Rites (*礼记*)*, development of *ren* follows the process of family to state: self-cultivation, regulation of family, rightly governance of state, and tranquility and happiness for all states (*Book of Rites*, Da Xue: 2)

rulers and bureaucrats, in the sense of improving their capacity to educate the people and safeguard their interests. The political system is designed to educate and select the virtuous and the wise, and to ensure that they are committed to serve the people through supervision and sanction. The people, despite being considered as of utmost importance, play a relatively passive role in politics as recipient of services delivered by the rulers, with the reservation of the right to rebel.

4.3.2. Confucianism and Maoism

While not being explicitly accepted by Mao, Confucian *minben*, responsibility and moral cultivation do share common features with Mao's mass line approach and its focus on the needs of the masses.[26] First, Confucian *minben* thought's focus on people's welfare is shared by the CPC. The core of the mass line approach is to address the concerns of the masses and promote their interests. More importantly, under the influence of Confucianism, Chinese society has accepted the standard for a good government as whether the government can take care of the people and promote their welfare (Ku 2003; Perry 2008; Tong 2011). From this perspective, steering the cadres/representative and mass/represented relationship toward the third represent — representation of the interests of the masses — is a strategy right to the topic.

Second, both the CPC's ideology and Confucianism adopt the service logic in understanding the relationship between the ruler/representative and the ruled/represented. As discussed, prioritization of *minben* in Confucianism is based on the idea of ruler's responsibility to serve the ruled and satisfy their needs. The mass line approach, similarly, emphasizes the representative's responsibility to engage with the masses and promote their welfare. This is fundamentally different from the natural rights and contractarian tradition of liberal democracy. Confucian societies favour a *minben* or guardianship view of democracy, where the government prioritizes people's welfare through a meritocratic system (Shi and Lu 2010; Lu and Shi 2014).

While the mass line approach finds a lot in common with Confucian responsibility, it follows a different mechanism derived from Mao's ideology. As will be

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[26] As will be discussed in the next Chapter, this connection was later promoted by Hu Jintao in his ideological development of MLR.

discussed in the next Chapter, the representative's responsibility in serving the people is performed in the four-step mechanism of the mass line approach — investigation, aggregation, decision, and persuasion. There is no clear boundary between the ruler/representative and the ruled/represented because in theory, the only difference between the two roles is knowledge about contradictions. Such knowledge, Mao argues, is attainable by all through practice (the dialectics of "trial and error"). More importantly, the mass line approach is situated in Maoist core concepts of contradiction, practice, and class, offering a different set of principles for the representatives to follow.

4.4. Conclusion

This chapter outlined the ideological and cultural foundation for understanding representation in the Chinese case. The mass line approach defines the representative relationship as the representative's willingness and ability to engage with the masses and address their needs and concerns. It does not offer formal authorization and accountability mechanisms. Confucianism offers cultural justifications for the dependence on the knowledge and virtue of the representation in the decision-making process. The next chapter moves on to the conception and mechanism of representation in the Chinese context.

Chapter 5.
Differentiation of Mass Line Representation

The last chapter built the ideological and cultural foundation for understanding representation in the Chinese context. In this chapter, I unpack the conception of mass line representation (MLR) by determining the meanings of its conceptual components. This chapter proceeds in four sections. The first section identifies the scope of MLR by connecting its conceptual components to the core concepts in Maoism. Mass line representation is a form of substantive representation where responsiveness is dependent on the representative's judgement and capacity in the practice of mass line approach. The next section breaks down the requirements of mass line approach in MLR into four steps: investigation, aggregation, discussion and decision, and implementation and persuasion. The representative's willingness and ability to follow the four steps is vital for the practice of MLR. Section three focuses on the normative criteria spelled out in MLR and how the Communist Party of China (CPC) utilizes party building to ensure that representatives are both willing to and capable of maintaining the expected connection with the represented. The last section compares MLR with Pitkin's substantive representation and constructivists' approach to representation to highlight the distinctive features of MLR.

5.1. The Scope of mass line representation

As discussed in Chapter 2, conceptions of representation can be understood through differentiation, namely, identifying its conceptual components and its connections to other concepts in the CPC ideology. Each conception of representation should address both the scope and mechanism of representation. The scope of representation is best captured in Dovi's (2018) five questions:

1. Who is the representative that makes present of something that is not present?

2. Who is the represented that have their "something" made present by the representative?

3. What is the "something" that is represented?

4. Where does representation take place?

5. What is being left out in representation?

The five questions speak to the four components of representation spelled out in Pitkin's (1967) general definition of representation as making something present — representative, represented, object of representation (and object not represented), and the venue of representation. The mechanism of representation completes the picture of representation by spelling out the connection between the four components and responding to the specifics of the key question of representation — what the connection is between the representative and the represented. This section will discuss how MLR provides an answer to all these questions and the next section focuses on the mechanism of MLR.

Usages of mass line in Mao's writings roughly capture MLR in two scopes: 1) at a more abstract level is the representation of the Chinese nation by the CPC; and 2) at a more substantial level is the representation of the Chinese people by members of CPC, the legislature, government, the People's Political Consultation Conferences (PPCCs, *Remin Zhengzhi Xieshang Huiyi* 人民政治协商会议), and other mass organizations (e.g., trade union, youth league, women's federation, etc.). I will discuss each in turn.

5.1.1. Representing the Chinese nation

Mao does not restrict the use of representation to the relationship among persons. At the abstract level, the CPC and the government (as abstract entities), are considered as the representative when referring to the representation of higher-level collectives such as the Chinese nation, the people, and certain classes. As a proletarian party, the CPC represents the interest of workers (proletariat class) and peasants (who belong to the semi-proletariat class). Since workers and peasants take up "about 80-90% of the population," Mao (1968a) decides that the party and the government also represent the interest of the Chinese nation (168).[27] From the Maoist perspective, the

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[27] The modern notion of the Chinese nation is shaped in the 1911 Revolution (*Xinhai Geming*) and the May Fourth Movement (Huang 2002; Li 2009). Mao's understanding of the Chinese nation is, again, class based. Compared to the proletariat and semi-

formation of modern nationalism in China is the result of the contradiction between the invasion and colonization of foreign powers and the Chinese people seeking independence and rejuvenation. Based on his analysis of contradiction, the interest of the Chinese nation is national independence and rejuvenation. Of course, Mao's dialectics reminds us that the interest may vary with the changing of principal contradictions in different times.

While the concepts of contradiction and practice are indispensable in the determination of the interest of the Chinese nation, this does not exclude the necessity of listening and responding to the voices of the masses. As specified in the concept of practice, knowledge about the principal contradiction or principal aspect of contradiction comes exactly from the masses. Mao himself reaches conclusions on which of the five classes of the Chinese society can be allies of the Chinese revolution from his experience in investigations on peasants and the organization of peasant movements in Hunan Province of China (Snow 1944, 160; Wang 2016). In Mao's vision, dialectics — expressed primarily in his understanding of contradiction and practice — offers the method to solve problems faced by representatives, including, vitally, how to determine the interest of the represented. Yet decisions and policies cannot be made without the participation and input of the masses, which provide both foundation and legitimacy for the decisions and policies made.

This form of representation is best understood from the constructivist's perspective. Saward (2010) considers representation as a claim making process where the components of representation are determined. The CPC's (claim-maker) representative claim portrays the CPC (subject) as the leader of the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation (object/referent) and is offered to the Chinese people (audience). Rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is an abstract concept and its meaning is further decontested within the CPC's ideology. This claim bears the CPC's judgement of the principal contradiction. For example, during the WRJI, the object of this representative claim was further decontested as national independence, or more specifically, the defeat of Japanese invaders. This is because the principal contradiction in this period had

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proletariat class that the CPC usually claims to represent, the Chinese nation also includes petty and middle (national) bourgeoisie but excludes the landlord and comprador classes as they are not part of the people (Mao 1965a, 168).

shifted from the contradiction between the Chinese nation and imperialism of foreign countries to the contradiction between the Chinese nation and Japanese imperialism.

Unlike Saward's (2010) representative claim, the CPC's claim to represent does not end with the establishment of the representative relationship. It extends into practice and has normative consequences. Whether the CPC can lead China towards this goal is simultaneously spelled out as a criterion for the audience to evaluate the CPC's claim. The ability to deliver what is promised in the claim became the source of credibility of the CPC's future claims on the one hand; on the other hand, it built up a history of CPC's ability to lead the Chinese nation. Therefore, the CPC's focus on economic development in the reform era has a more profound meaning than performance or output legitimacy. It is rooted in the CPC's claim to represent and its judgement of principal contradiction in the reform era. As determined by the CPC, the principal contradiction in this era is between "ever-growing material and cultural needs of the people and the backwardness of social production" (Document Research Office of the CPC Central Committee 2011, 168). Hence the major task for the CPC is to develop social production and drive economic growth.

5.1.2. Representing the masses

Moving to a more concrete level and considering MLR as the relationship between persons, MLR refers to the making present of interests of the masses by elected and non-elected representatives in their respective venues. This section will identify representatives and represented and the next section will focus on the meaning of "interests" in mass line representation.

Representative. As mentioned, there are both elected and non-elected representatives in MLR. Compared to elected representatives in liberal democracies, Mao's elected representatives are not limited to legislative assemblies, though People's Congresses (PCs), the legislative body in China, are the primary venue of elected representation.[28] Another major source of elected representatives comes from

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[28] There are also some temporary institutions for elected representatives. In the revolutionary war period, for example, Mao (1968a) stressed the importance of elected representatives in the Red Army to represent "the interests of soldiers" (81).

congresses of the CPC (CCPC), where decisions regarding party affairs are deliberated and determined. Representatives in the People's Political Consultative Conferences (PPCC) are also non-elected representatives, who are recommended by political parties, associations, and groups and approved by the standing committee of the PPCC.[29] PPCC provides a platform for representatives from various backgrounds (mostly not members of the CPC) to contribute to the decision-making process of people's congresses through deliberation and consultation (Mao 1999a, 384-388).

Class, a concept missing in most conceptions of representation, plays an important role in determining the composition and qualification of representatives. For Mao, the composition of representatives in representative bodies should consider the balance of gender, nationality, occupation, and class. Since every member of the society belongs to a class, the requirement of balancing classes in representative bodies is not surprising. Mao (1968a) made this point clear in the early revolutionary war period by stating that "we should increase the workers' representation in the government bodies" since "party organizations" are "composed mostly exclusively of peasants" (97).

In addition to the balance of class, the qualifications of representatives also include class as one criterion. The core concepts of contradiction and practice determine from which classes individuals can become representatives and be represented. In the revolutionary war period, the principal contradiction is between the poor (proletariat and peasants) and the rich (imperialists, feudal landlords, and compradors). Therefore, individuals from the poor classes can be the representatives and are represented. In the anti-Japanese war period, the principal contradiction shifted to the one between the Chinese nation and the Japanese invaders. Consequently, "urban petty bourgeoisie, the intellectuals and other sections of the population who support the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal programme" should be given the right to be elected as representatives and to be represented (Mao 1965a, 169).

Represented. Even though the mass is the most important portion of the represented that Mao discussed, the mass is frequently used without a clear and consistent definition. Often the mass appears to be used interchangeably with the

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[29] Standing Committee of the PCC is elected by the plenum of the PCC. The chair and secretary of the Standing Committee are usually from the CPC.

people (*renmin* 人民). For example, Mao urges that communists should "learn from the *masses* … only by learning from the *people*" can the communist be "practical" (Mao 1965b, 201, italics added). Who counts as part of the mass is always changing in his writings in different periods. Like who can be representatives, the core concepts of contradiction and practice play a role here. The middle or national bourgeoisie class is considered as part of the mass that the CPC and the government should represent in the WRJI period and Liberation War period, when the united front (*tongyi zhanxian*, 统一战线) of the most people is indispensable for the victory. [30] Yet they are subject to "socialist transformation" for their resistance to the development of proletariat party and nation (Mao 1999c, 3; Schram 1989, 81).

This interpretation is consistent with Lenin's understanding of the mass as a concept whose meaning changes with the development of class struggle:

> At the beginning of the struggle it took only a few thousand genuinely revolutionary workers to warrant talk of the masses. … When the revolution has been sufficiently prepared … it implies the majority, and not simply a majority of the workers alone, but the majority of all the exploited (Lenin 1973, 475-476).

The masses, composed of all the exploited classes, are not a unified group of people that should be treated as having the same preferences or interests. However, inclusion of different classes as the represented is necessary for Mao's revolution. When there is a strong foe (e.g., Japanese invaders in the Anti-Japanese Ware period), the strength of one or two classes is limited and hence it is necessary to include more classes in MLR and form a united front (Mao 1965a, 162-165). Yet the heterogeneity of the masses makes it more challenging for representatives to perform their duties. Mao is aware that among the masses there are relatively active, intermediate, and relatively backward parts, each deserves a different approach ("uniting the active, rely on the intermediate, and win over the backward") in CPC's leadership strategy (Mao 1965c, 118). For Mao, it is plausible that the active part of the masses becomes the first contact point for the

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[30] United front is the coalition of all possible allies with shared interests. Mao's judgement on what is the principal contradiction determines whom should be included in the coalition. For a review of the development of united front, see Lin 2011 and Cai and Li 2010. For detailed analysis of the united front in the Anti-Japanese War period, see Garver 1988 and Sheng 1992.

CPC to learn about the masses and eventually win over the backward parts of the masses.

The prominence of class in MLR creates a completely different landscape of representation compared to liberal conceptions of representation. Marxism and Maoism 'bring back' a collective or group basis for representation by putting class into the centre of the discussion about representation. As the representative of the revolutionary proletarian class, the CPC has 'representative work' to do that simply won't figure in liberal understandings of representation. In addition to acting for and standing for the represented, the mass line representative also leads, mobilizes, and educates the represented to raise their class awareness. This is why Mao gives the Party a key role in representation – some instrument of the revolutionary class had to play this role if the revolution was not to be overturned. I will discuss this point in more detail in Section 4.

5.1.3. What is interest?

Following the two scopes of representation, the interest could also be the unattached interest of the Chinese nation as a whole and attached interest of the masses, or the Chinese people. From the Maoist perspective, contradiction determines the primary interest to be represented in a given situation. However, contradiction and practice do not downplay the importance of input and participation of the represented. On the contrary, their participation is the very first step of representation that provides raw materials for the representatives to understand what is at stake. The representatives need their input as perceptual knowledge to gain rational knowledge about the principal contradiction.

The interest of the masses, for Mao, is the need of the masses, ranging from higher-level needs such as national independence and rival (as given by contradiction) to more basic needs such as food and clothing (varies by individual). He writes:

> We must lead the peasants' struggle for land and distribute the land to them, heighten their labour enthusiasm and increase agricultural production, safeguard the interests of the workers, establish co-operatives, develop trade with outside areas, and solve the problems facing the masses — food, shelter and clothing, fuel, rice, cooking oil and salt, sickness and hygiene, and marriage. In short, all the practical problems in

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the masses' everyday life should claim our attention. (Mao 1965a, 147-148).

Two points deserve our attention from this quote. First, it appears that Mao's understanding of interest is influenced by the Confucian notion of "people first" (minben), where the ruler is supposed to love the people and satisfy their needs (Zhang 2003; Sun 2013).[31] Following this tradition, Mao also considers the relationship between the mass and the Party (in a non-abstract sense as the representative) as that of the fish and water (Mao 1971, 471).[32] Therefore, the relationship between the representative (the Party and cadres) and the represented (the people or the masses) is much closer than institutional responsibilities. In the ideal form, the representative is closely engaged with the represented in the connection defined by MLR. As the core concept of mass line suggests, she is "from the represented" in the sense of facilitating participation and gathering information for decision-making and she is "to the represented" in the sense of explaining and implementing the decision made. It presents a more intimate relationship than the formal electoral connection in liberal democracies.

The second point concerns interest *per se*. Instead of engaging in the debate on whether to represent the wishes (subjective) or welfare (objective) of the represented, Mao focuses on the "problems" of the represented. Using the word "problem" dismisses the distinction between subjective and objective interest. Regardless of what problem is raised by the represented (food, clothing, salt, etc.), the representative has the responsibility to look into it and deal with it properly. This is the continuation of a Confucian "people first" influence on Mao's thinking. However, Mao does not ask representatives to solve all the problems of the represented. What is asked from the representative is to pay "attention" to the problems.

Two reasons are provided by Mao. First, there are conflicting and sometimes contradictory interests from the represented, making it impossible to solve "all" problems. Building on concepts of contradiction and class, Mao's understanding of different

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[31] This is one basic moral rule in Confucianism to judge a ruler. From the Confucian perspective, the people "are to be valued most" (*Mencius* 7B14).

[32] The metaphor of fish and water resembles the metaphor of boat and water by Xunzi, a Confucian philosopher. Xunzi writes that "[t]he lord is the boat. The common people are the water. The water can support the boat. The water can also overturn the boat" (*Xunzi* 9-5).

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interests experienced two stages of development. Before the socialist transformation (1953-1956), competing interests are mostly considered as existing among classes for their different motivations and roles in the Revolutionary War, WRJI, and Liberation War period. The socialist transformation did not eliminate contradictions of interests among classes, as Mao acknowledges. In the 1957 article, he confirms that there are still contradictions among the people (*renmin neibu de maodun* 人民内部矛盾), including contradictions within and among classes that constitute part of the people (Mao 1971, 384-421).[33] In addition to competing interests based on class, there are also conflicts between interests of the representative and the represented, national and local interests, short-term and long-term interests. There are, Mao (1971) states, "contradictions between the interests of the state and the interests of the collective on the one hand and the interests of the individual on the other … between the leadership and the led …" (386).

Second, the masses may not be able to properly raise their problems due to lack of political awareness or experience. If so, the masses will likely have inappropriate judgements of their situations and make poor decisions regarding what is best for them. In discussing post-WRJI arrangements, Mao (1965d) cautions that:

> When the people are not yet politically conscious, it is entirely possible that their revolutionary gains may be handed over to others. This happened in the past. … among the people … there are still a good many who believe in Chiang Kai-shek and have illusions about the Kuomintang and the United States of America, illusions which Chiang Kai-shek is working hard to spread. … The political awakening of the people is not easy. It requires much earnest effort on our part to rid their minds of wrong ideas. (19)

For Mao, without a certain level of experience and knowledge, the mass will be tricked by the "illusions" of representation which could go against their interests. Moreover, the masses are "prone to pay attention to immediate, partial and personal interests" and ignores "long-range, national and collective interests" due to the "lack of political and

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[33] Mao (1971) writes that there are "contradictions within the working class, the contradictions within the peasantry, the contradictions within the intelligentsia, the contradiction between the working class and the peasantry, the contradictions between the workers and peasants on the on hand and the intellectuals on the other, the contradictions between the working class and other sections of the working people on the one hand and the national bourgeoisie on the other, the contradictions within the national bourgeoisie, and so on" (385).

social experience" (Mao 1971, 415). Following Mao's discussions on practice, the understanding of facts or interest is a process from "perceptual knowledge," where fragments of interest are observed in isolation, to "rational knowledge," where internal relations and contradictions of all aspects are captured (Mao 1965a, 295-308). The masses are expected to be able to understand the representative's decisions and their true interest through practice, a dialectical process of "trial and error" that deepens their knowledge about their interests. Hence one task for MLR representatives is to "get rid of wrong ideas" and illusions of the masses through connecting with the masses and explaining to them about the decisions made. According to Mao's philosophy of knowledge, while the masses may be deceived or manipulated, they will eventually realize that they were tricked by false information as they gain rational knowledge through practice.

However, while contradiction and practice offer guiding principles in determining whom to include in MLR, Mao relies on the moral conduct and capability of the representative to follow the mass line approach in the representative relationship. Hence in reality, it is likely that the representative herself does not have the rational knowledge about interest, not to say to help the masses to locate the "facts" of their interests. That is, proper functioning of MLR relies largely on the will and wisdom of the representative. To this end, as I will discuss in section 4, Mao devised party building and party discipline as two mechanisms to incentivize representatives and hold them accountable.

Mao considers the needs of the masses as the interest to be represented. Such needs are determined by the principal contradiction at a given time. Both the representative and the represented can understand what the true interests are by following the "trial and error" approach in practice. From the discussions above, we can see that Mao puts priorities on national and collective interests instead of partial and individual interests, and on true interests instead of illusions of interests. But how can an MLR representative decide whose interest and what interest has priority? More importantly, how does MLR conceive the connection between the representative and the represented? The next section addresses these questions.

5.2. The Mechanism of mass line representation

Mao proposes the mass line approach as the answer to the key question of representation — the connection between representative and the represented. How does the mass line approach conceptualize this connection? Before addressing the question, it is useful to provide a brief recapitulation of Mao's core concept of practice. First, since social practice is the sole source of truth, any individual can gain knowledge about the truth through engaging in the dialectical process of trial and error in social practices. Second, contradictions in society, social classes, and other issues are all knowable to the human mind as long as individuals are willing to learn through practice. Lastly, party members and cadres, as representatives, can know the needs of the mass they represent through "no investigation, no right to speak." Following the dialectical process of learning, the mass line approach connects the representative and the represented, as well as translating the masses' input to the interests to be represented in four steps: 1) investigation, 2) aggregation, 3) discussion and decision, and 4) implementation and persuasion.

5.2.1. Investigation

The only way to learn about the needs of the masses is investigation — learn from the masses. While Mao says at least some of the masses lack political and social knowledge, he believes that it is only through investigation, through connecting and learning from the mass, that the representative can understand the mass and therefore represent the mass:

> Our congress should call upon the whole Party to be vigilant and to see that no comrade at any post is divorced from the masses. It should teach every comrade to love the people and listen attentively to the voice of the masses; to identify himself with the masses wherever he goes and, instead of standing above them, to immerse himself among them; … Our comrades must not assume that everything they themselves understand is understood by the masses. Whether the masses understand it and are ready to take action can be discovered only by going into their midst and making investigations. (Mao 1965c, 315-316).

From the perspective of practice, it is only through "immersing" in the lives of the masses that the representative learns their true needs. On the one hand, this provides the representative with perceptual knowledge of the masses' interests, which is the first step

to gain rational knowledge about their interest and the principal contradiction. On the other hand, engaging with the masses and giving them the opportunity to influence the decision-making of the representative is the source of legitimacy for the representatives. Mao (1965b) requires the government to be "true representative of popular will" that gives the masses "every opportunity of influencing its policies." (57). While elections are limited to the legislative bodies, the mass line approach offers space for public participation of broader masses beyond the legislature. Consequently, failures to connect with the masses, as shown in the next Chapter, undermine the legitimacy of MLR and the CPC's rule.

It should be noted here that Mao does not ask every representative, especially representative on the higher ends of the hierarchy of the representation system, to learn from everyone in the masses. In large constituencies, it is sufficient for the representative to understand the needs of the mass through learning from about 10 typical samples in-depth (Mao 1991, 233-237).[34] Therefore, the space for public participation may be sometimes restricted and selective. The representative is entrusted with the ability to make the right decision for the inclusion of the masses to produce sufficient input for her to understand the interest to be represented. However, it should be noted that despite his high expectations on the moral qualities of the representatives, Mao is fully aware that his trusted representatives can make mistakes with "subjectivist attitude" and dogmatic application of Marxism (Mao 1965c, 11-26, 35-97; Shi 2012). He asserts that "countless times our party suffered at the hands of these 'imperial envoys'" who make judgements and decisions without practical investigations (Mao 1965c, 13).

However, drawbacks of the mass line approach do not make election appear as a comparable alternative for Mao. He is strongly against election-based representation, where periodic elections become the only channel of communication between the representative and the represented. In talking about the mass meeting, where the masses elect executive committees of township or county governments, Mao (1965a)

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[34] Mao suggests that it would enough for a provincial level representative to investigate about 10 danwei (work unit) in total and investigate 2-4 of them by himself. Danwei is the basic organization unit for urban works and plays important pollical, social, and economic roles in China before economic reform. Danwei has lost its role in China with the restructure of state-owned enterprises and rise of private sector. For detailed review and analysis of danwei, see Lü and Perry 1997 and Bjorklund 1986.

determines that the periodical gathering of the mass "can neither discuss questions nor help in training the mass politically" and the mass can easily be "manipulated by intellectuals or careerists" (90-91). Without investigation and learning from the masses, the executive committee "acts without regard for the views of the masses" and hence fails to represent their needs (91).

Whether mass line promotes liberal democratic values is also a topic for debate. Lin (2006) believes that mass line shows democratic elements because "it is designed to encourage popular participation and deliberation for articulating and aggregating interests and preferences" (147). Critics, however, have noted that mass line promotes neither participation nor democracy, because the centralized decision-making mechanisms limits the impact of participation in political processes (Burns 1988; Shih 1997). Both arguments have some merit because when we situate the mass line approach in the ideological field of Maoism, both participation and democracy are granted slightly different meanings compared to the usages in dominant liberal discourses. In Section 4, I argue that mass line approach does not promote a liberal version of inclusion and participation. Instead, it is a form of informative — and largely passive — inclusion that primarily serves the function of providing information to the representative.

5.2.2. Aggregation

All the issues and problems collected from the representative's investigation are merely raw materials. Considering the possible conflicting and illusionary needs of the masses, aggregating those needs, and determining the needs to be represented is the next step in MLR. I will discuss three principles guiding the aggregation of needs for representatives in this section and talk about how the decision is made in the next section.

First, the principal contradiction over the secondary contradiction. The principle set up in the core concept of contradiction provides a basic rule for aggregating information learned from the masses. Mao (1965a) states that:

> in studying any complex process in which there are two or more
> contradictions, we must devote every effort to finding its principal

contradiction. Once this principal contradiction is grasped, all problems can be readily solved. (332).

In finding out the most important needs, the representative should focus on the principal contradiction and principal aspects of a contradiction. Through the dialectical process of practice, the principal contradiction and principal aspect of contradiction are knowable to the representative. Of course, with changing contexts, the principal contradiction or principal aspect of contradiction will also change accordingly. At the system level, the principal contradiction is made clear through the CPC's claims. For example, in the period of resistance war against Japan, the CPC determines that the principal contradiction is between the Chinese nation and Japanese invaders. This principal contradiction outlines the overarching policy for the nation. Whereas for each representative, they have to use principles of practice and contradiction to make their judgement on the principal contradiction among the masses they represent. Possible disagreements among the representatives are to be addressed in the next step — deliberation and decision.

Second, collective interests over individual interests. As discussed in the last section, when facing competing interests, representatives should favour national and collective interests over individual and partial interests, and long-term interests over short-term interests. This constitutes the second principle for representatives to determine which interest should have priority. The representative's judgement and decision on principal contradictions at the local level has to comply with contradictions at national level. While Mao expects the masses to understand and support the decision of the representative on what interest to represent, he acknowledges that it is not an easy task considering the plurality of masses and the dialectical law of learning — "trial and error" from perceptual knowledge (individual interest) to rational knowledge (collective interest). One task of the representative, when the decision on what interest to represent is made, is to help the represented to accept the Party's rational determination of the collective interest. However, it is through practice, that is, in the implementation of the decision, that both the representative and the represented know the "truth" about the collective interest as "practice is the criterion of truth" (Mao 1965a, 305).

Finally, the masses over the representative. Mao also acknowledges that interests of the masses may conflict with the interest of the representative as an

individual. When this happens, the representative should opt for the interests of the masses. This is the requirement for members of the CPC as they are considered as the model for the masses. Mao (1965b) stresses that "[a]t no time and in no circumstances should a communist place his personal interests first; he should subordinate them to the interests of the nation and of the masses" (198). By asking the representative (especially members of the CPC and cadre) to be a vanguard and model for the mass, Mao has a high expectation of the party members and cadres. When the representative fails to put "interests of the nation and the masses" first, the vital connection between the representative and the masses falls apart and representation no longer exists.

Two points deserve our attention here. First, Mao's principles in aggregating interests appear to be utilitarian and Mao himself does not reject this interpretation. In fact, Mao (1965c) labels the CPC and its members as the "revolutionary utilitarians aiming for the broadest and the most long-range objectives" and disdains the "selfish and short-sighted" utilitarianism of "the feudal, bourgeois and petty-bourgeois classes" (85). The revolutionary utilitarianism Mao championed focuses on the collective interests of the masses (or the exploited classes), which develop with the principal contradiction (Zheng 1993; Dou 1994). Second, proper interest aggregation, again, relies on the moral conduct and capability of the representatives. As I will show in the next Chapter, this becomes one of the major drawbacks of Mao's conception of representation — the power of representatives is only loosely limited by political education and disciplinary mechanisms beyond representative institutions, leaving room for the representative to not follow the mass line approach. The gap created by the lack of institutional restraints on the representatives becomes a rabbit hole that Chinese leaders after Mao devised various mechanisms to fill.

5.2.3. Discussion and decision

The good news is that a representative usually does not make the decision by herself. Mao's concept of democracy, or democratic centralism, constrains the decision-making process to a collective deliberation among representatives in decision-making

bodies.[35] For the two seemingly contradictory terms, Mao suggests that we should look at them more practically as democracy allowing freedom and participation of the mass in the legislative body and centralization allowing the government to smoothly execute decisions made by the legislative body (Mao 1965b, 57). On the one hand, democracy is the foundation for centralism. Mao (1962) argues centralism is "fake, hollow, and wrong" without input from the masses. Practices of true centralism must open the floor for the masses to criticize cadres and speak to issues to be discussed (Mao 1962). On the other hand, centralism ensures that input from the masses is considered and executed. Liu Shaoqi (1981), an important member of Mao's leadership team, explains democratic centralism when talking about the labour union:

> The so-called democratic centralism is that the power of the labor union centralized in the meeting of most people, not one individual, that is, everything must be decided by this meeting. Once decision is made, it must be carried out immediately. Before a decision is made, everyone can freely express their opinions. Yet once the decision is made, everyone should follow it. (6).

Therefore, in People's Congresses and other venues of representation, representatives can discuss and decide the priority of needs to be represented and how those needs are represented through policy choices. Once this is decided, representatives or the cadres should execute the decision without any excuses.

One point that deserves our attention here is that Mao believes collective deliberation is an integral part of the discussion and decision-making in the representative institution (be it the PCs, PPCCs, or other institutions). Mao foresees three types of clashes of opposites in deliberation:

> Three types of opposites need to clash with each other in the meeting: one type is between grass-root level cadres and their superiors at higher level; one type is between the politically uneducated and politically educated; one type is between the backwards figures … and … positive figures.[36] (Mao 1999c, 31-32).

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[35] There are considerable debates on the compatibility of seemingly two extremes — democracy and centralization (Lin 2004; Angle 2005; Lin and Lee 2012; He 2014). Here I focus on Mao's understanding of the two terms.

[36] Backwards figures are paraphrases from Mao's terms for tide-watching gang (guanchao pai) and account-settling gang (suanzhang pai), which refer to individuals

It is through the expression and confrontation of different opinions that representatives could reach a consensus in making decisions.

Yet we should refrain from the temptation to connect Mao's above words with democratic deliberation. The confrontation of different ideas in discussions is part of Mao's conception of democratic centralism, where democracy is exemplified in the collection of inputs from the represented and centralism in the centralized decision-making body for the final deliberation and decision. More importantly, the discursive involvement of the representative, especially through the potential selective organization of deliberations and her educational role in mass line approach, deviates from the recent western formulations of discursive will formation in the public sphere. For democratic deliberation, legitimacy of decision is based on communications in "legally formalized will-formation and culturally mobilized publics." (Habermas 1996, 301).

For democratic centralism, input and participation from the masses provide information for the representatives to make the best decision. It does not constitute absolute authority or provide legitimacy for the decisions directly. Decisions are made through the deliberation of representatives, with the help of principles of contradiction and practice. Such decision can only become legitimate through the test of practice, when the represented accepts the decision or explanations offered for it. Similar to Saward (2010), this formulation detaches legitimacy from normative considerations of representation. But unlike Saward, the core concept of practice directs the test of legitimacy of MLR to the outcome of representation.

5.2.4. Implementation and persuasion

From the perspective of contradiction, even when the representatives identify the principal contradiction or principal aspects of contradiction, the decision made by representatives may not satisfy all the masses. Mao believed that this is because some of them are focusing on the secondary contradiction or lacking rational knowledge about their interests. Therefore, implementing the decision may face resistance from them. There is no single optimal solution to the problem. The core concepts of practice and

who doubts the decisions and achievements of the CPC and government. Mao believes that there were 10% of backwards people and 90% of positive people.

contradiction instruct representatives to be flexible and handle different contradictions with different approaches. The representative should find specifically tailored approaches to perform her duties for different types of masses. For example, when working with people lacking political knowledge and awareness of the decision made, representatives should persuade them and help to understand what the decision is and why the decision is made by patiently educating them about the decision and raising their awareness about the rationales for making the decision.

This is an indispensable step for MLR. The mass line approach demands representatives to go back "to the masses," meaning that their actions have to be accepted and supported by the masses. Mao believes that their support is vital to the success of the CPC's work. Hence in talking to the editors of *Shanxi-Suiyuan Daily* (*Jinsui Ribao* 晋绥日报), he stresses that the newspaper should get "the broad masses to understand and master every movement we launch" because "we would certainly fail" if "we do anything against their will" (Mao 1965d, 242-243). Going back to the masses has two normative implications. First, it is a form of endogenous accountability of MLR because the representative is asked to give an account of the decisions she made to the masses. Their satisfaction and support of the decisions is the criterion for assessing the representative's work.

Second, it entails that MLR has to produce concrete outcomes on which the masses can base their judgements. With practice as the core concept, Mao is fully against pure claims of representation. All actions of the representatives must produce consequences that can justify the decisions and explanations made by the representatives. Of course, the representative could resort to their influence to educate and even manipulate the masses. Conceptually, education is an integral part of Mao's conception of mass line representation. This does not entail that the representative could shape the needs of the masses as she prefers because of the restrictions imposed by the core concepts of Maoism. Practice as the criterion of truth is among one of the restrictions that require the test of decisions made by representatives in practice, where both the representative and the represented can learn what is right and what is wrong.

This completes the loop of "from the masses and to the masses" and initiates another round of the 4 steps of MLR. The ideal results of the mass line are twofold: on the one hand, the masses and the representative will form close bonds through the dialectic interactions; on the other hand, based on the bonds between the masses and the representative, both parties will have a better knowledge of each other, making the representation process natural and smooth. For Mao, the key for mass line representation is the building of support and trust in the "fish and water" relationship between the representative and the represented. Therefore, the representative should be "from the masses" in facilitating the participation of the masses and "to the masses" in winning the support of the masses and implementing the decisions made. In this dialectical process, both the representative and the represented become familiar with each other, which contributes to the connection between the two parties.

5.3. Normative implications and institutional support

This dissertation argues that any conception of representation should include three elements — the scope of representation defined by a morphological analysis of conceptual components of representation, the mechanism of representation with institutional settings that supports the mechanism, and the normative values embedded in the conception of representation. So far, I have reviewed two scopes of MLR in Mao's ideology and we can comfortably put together a general definition of MLR: representatives (in PCs, PPCCs, government, mass organizations such as trade unions, etc.) making present the interest (or needs) of the mass through mass line approach — the dialectical process of investigation, aggregation, discussion and decision, and implementation and persuasion — in legislative and non-legislative bodies. MLR proposed mass line as an alternative answer to the key question of representation — how the representative connects with the represented. This section builds on the conceptual morphology of MLR and outlines informative inclusion and consequential responsiveness as two normative criteria embedded in this form of representation, as well as party building as the main institution designed by Mao to support the functioning of MLR in practice.

5.3.1. Elitism, representation, and Maoist epistemology

MLR conceives the connection between the representative and the represented as a dialectical process defined by four elements: investigation, aggregation, discussion and decision, and implementation and persuasion. In this process, the representative takes the initiative in each of the four elements and bears the responsibility in decision-making. As such, we may conclude that MLR is an elitist form of representation. This is, however, not exactly the case with Maoist epistemology.

The elitist conception of representation is best captured in Bernard Manin's (1997) principle of distinction. In reviewing the historical development of representative government, he argues that representatives "would and should be distinguished citizens, socially different from those who elected them" (94). Democratic elections are intrinsically aristocratic regardless of equal voting rights and universal suffrage (Chapter 4). Manin further distinguishes between perceived superiority and "true" superiority, or superiority defined by universal standards. He argues that voters elect candidates that are "superior in the light of the quality or set of qualities that they consider *politically relevant*" (146, italics original). Hence "the elective principle does not guarantee that true *political* excellence gets selected" (146, italics original). Simultaneously, as Manin notes, elections do not guarantee the selection of elites either. What is certain is that elections produce differences among the representatives and the constituents because even perceived superiority has "objective existence," the traits of representatives that the constituents can refer to when making their decisions (148).

As discussed in Chapter 4, an MLR representative is different from the masses in two aspects: knowledge about contradictions and moral quality and ability to promote the interests of the masses. Such differences have nothing to do with social status or wealth. It focuses on the ability to understand principal contradiction and implement corresponding policies. From this perspective, MLR has an elitist element because the representative is considered superior in knowledge and ability. The elitism in MLR also incorporates egalitarianism for two reasons. Firstly, everyone has access to this ability. Based on Mao's understanding of contradiction and practice, such ability is attainable through the dialectic process of "trial and error." Second, the masses can equally participate in MLR through the representative's investigation. While Mao's approach to

investigation is a typical case study, he does not discriminate among masses in directing the investigation to a specific group of masses.

Mao's emphasis on the qualifications of representatives resembles Daniel A. Bell's discussion of meritocracy. Bell (2015) defends political meritocracy — combination of "democracy at the bottom, experimentation at the middle, and meritocracy at the top" (9) —as an alternative to Western democracy.[37] Political leaders, for Bell, should have qualities in three dimensions: intellectual ability, social skills, and virtue (Chapter 2). Yet in the Chinese context, it is insufficient to read meritocracy as the heritage of the Confucian tradition alone. Like representation, it is also a concept nested in the semantic field of the CPC's ideology. Mao obviously did not explicitly spell out the three qualities. However, based on principles of contradiction and practice, Mao does ask representatives to be intellectually capable so that they can gather and process information from the masses, as well as making the best decision based on their situation. An MLR representative should also have the social skills to work with the masses to persuade them to accept the decisions made. She should also be virtuous in the sense that she has no private interests and can devote herself to the interests of the masses. Moreover, in Mao's formulation, representatives at all levels of government, not just the top as Bell conceives, should possess these merits.

With most of the responsibilities placed on the shoulders of the representative in Mao's theory, an MLR representative is both elitist and meritocratic, though both traits are available through practice and education. Maintaining the connection of the representative relationship relies on the merits of representatives. Unlike electoral representation in Western democracies, collective decision-making depends mostly on the reason and judgement of the representative, not the voters. The key problem, as Bell (2015) also notices, is whether the CPC can produce competent leaders and representatives.

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[37] Bell's theory of political meritocracy is not well received by political theorists and scholars on Chinese politics because it is considered as "fictional" (Nathan 2016) and "self-contradictory" (Hui 2016). A more moderate critique from He and Warren (2020) suggests that meritocracy in incomparable to democracy because meritocracy describes qualifications for leaders, whereas democracy is a regime type. Both authoritarian and democratic regimes can be meritocratic.

5.3.2. Role of the CPC

The role of the CPC in MLR as a political party (and the ruling party in one-party system after 1949) is worth discussion here. The CPC plays three roles in MLR: 1) it represents the Chinese nation through claim-making and claim-fulfilment, 2) it leads the Chinese people because of its (and its party members') merit, and 3) it educates the masses to raise their class consciousness. I will discuss each in turn.

First, the CPC represents the interest of the Chinese nation. According to Saward (2008), political parties can represent in three ideal ways: popular, statal, and reflexive. The party can be a delegate of certain interests based on its relatively fixed ideology (popular mode). It can also be a trustee of certain depoliticized issues based on its flexible ideologies (statal mode). In the reflexive mode, the party plays the role of "synthesizer" of different issue positions based on its flexible policy programme.

Representation by the CPC does not easily fit into the three types. The national interest that the CPC represents does not come from delegation directly. It is based on the CPC leadership's understanding of contradictions in a given context, which is the outcome of a synthesis process (the mass line approach). The claim to represent national interest is expected to be followed by concrete actions promoting the interest. To use Saward's terms, the CPC is a trustee, synthesizer, and more importantly, man of action.

Second, the CPC plays the leadership role in the representative relationship. Mao (1965a) says that the CPC is both "leaders and organizers of the revolutionary war" and "leaders and organizers of the life of the masses" (150). It is the leader and organizer of the revolutionary war because the Party represents the abstract interest of the Chinese nation. It is the leader and organizer of the life of the masses because the Party (in the form of its members and cadres) represented the interests and needs of the masses. In each case, the CPC is leading the representative relationship.

Mao argues the CPC's leadership is the result of contradiction and class nature of Chinese society. In the revolutionary war period (1924-1936), the principal contradiction determines that the enemy of the Chinese nation is imperialism and feudalism, meaning that among all the classes, the proletariat class has both the will and

the political vision to lead the revolution (Mao 1965a, 13-19). The CPC, as the vanguard of the proletariat class, is the leader of the revolution. Mao lists all the achievements under the CPC's leadership and concludes that the CPC is accepted by the people "more readily than what any other political party" after "long years of testing" (1965a, 192-193). The history of CPC as the source of justification for the CPC's rule is also frequently used by Chinese leaders after Mao (as shown in the next Chapter).

In Chinese, lead is *ling dao* (领导), with *ling* meaning to guide and administer and *dao* meaning direction and enlighten. Therefore, leadership has two meanings: 1) making decisions, and most importantly, making right decisions, to guide the direction for the masses; 2) educating the masses so that they can understand the path taken by the leader and hence follow the leader. The two aspects of leadership are captured in the mass line approach and mass line representation.

Based on Mao's epistemology, to make decisions, political leaders or representatives must conduct investigations. One conceptual core of practice is "no investigation, no right to speak." Without gathering information from the masses, the cadres will have biased judgement on the issues and hence make wrong decisions. Another aspect of leadership is the ability to appoint appropriate cadres to implement the decisions made. For Mao (1965b), leadership has two elements: "to work out ideas" and "to use cadres well" (202). "Work out ideas" refers to decision-making. "Use cadres well," which is crucial in putting "ideas into practice," depends on whether the Party can "appoint people on their merit" and "weld the cadres together and encourage them to go into action" (202).

Finally, MLR is more than acting for and standing for the represented. Mao believes that representatives must lead, educate, and mobilize the represented through the mass line approach to raise the political knowledge and class awareness of the peasants. With the leadership and education of representatives, the peasants "have made very rapid progress" and are able to elect "progressive elements and promising young people" (Mao 1965b, 270-271). Mao does not believe leadership is manipulation or coercion. He writes:

> Leadership is neither a slogan to be shouted from morning till night nor an arrogant demand for obedience; it consists rather in using the Party's correct policies and the example we set by our own work to convince and

educate people outside the Party so that they willingly accept our proposals. (Mao 1965b, 418).

Leadership is persuasion of the masses by correct policies and actions of the representatives. Again, Mao counts on the representatives to be the role model who can produce "correct policies" and good examples for the masses.

The Party's leadership role in effect creates a triangular representative relationship between the Party, the representative, and the represented. Playing the leadership role, the CPC proves to be more impactful than political parties in multi-party systems. First, the Party is portrayed as being capable of making correct policies, which implies that the representative's decision has to comply with the Party's decisions. Mao admits that the Party may make mistakes, as shown in the history before and after the founding of PRC. The concept of practice also allows for the room of making mistakes in the dialectic process of "trial and error." The problem, however, is that before the Party switches its gear, the representative has limited capacity to go against the Party's decisions.

Moreover, the situation is exacerbated by the fact that most representatives are party members. Party membership is a dual-edged sword for MLR. On the one hand, when the party membership becomes one important qualification for most representatives, the CPC can better hold the representatives (as party members) accountable through the party discipline and promotion system. On the other hand, the power to discipline and promote representatives would very likely incentivize the representative to follow the directions of the Party (even the wrong ones) and ignore the information they gathered from the masses they represent.

Finally, the party's access to different elements of performance, especially after the foundation of the People's Republic of China in 1949, increased the authenticity of its representative claims. As discussed in section 3.4.3, successful performance depends on the actor's ability to bring all elements of performance (scripts, stages, technology) together to present a "real" performance (Alexander 2006). The CPC's dominance of elements of performance and power puts it in a favourable position when constructing and distributing meanings of representation.

5.3.3. Normative values embedded in the MLR

Constrained by core concepts of Maoism, mass line representation presents two normative considerations: informative inclusion and consequential responsiveness. MLR welcomes participation of the masses because principles of practice and contradiction demand that representatives understand needs and concerns of the masses. Hence such inclusion is functional, serving the representative's purpose of information gathering. MLR requires the representative to respond to the needs of the masses, but such responsiveness has to be consequential in the sense of being able to deliver policy outcomes.

Informative inclusion. Theorists of democratic inclusion focus on two aspects of inclusion: the boundary of democratic polities and the function of inclusion in democratic societies. When considering democracy as a collective decision-making mechanism, who should be included in this process becomes the first question to be addressed. Political theorists' answers are a set of principles — the "all affected" principle says that those affected by decisions made by the polity should be included and the "all subjected" principle says that those subjected to coercive power of the polity should be included (Goodin 2007; Näsström 2011). Bauböck (2018) adds the "all citizenship stakeholders" principle, stating that those who have stake (membership) in autonomy and well-being protected by the polity should be included.

Inclusion functions as an important source of legitimacy for the democratic decision-making process. Empowered inclusion, especially those in deliberative settings (e.g., deliberative mini publics), complements electoral democracy and enhances the democratic quality and the political system's capacity for collective action (Warren 2017; Beauvais and Warren 2019).

As Lin (2006) argues, the mass line approach facilitates inclusion and participation of the masses. Yet inclusion in the mass line approach serves the function of gathering information for the decision-making process. The mechanism of MLR stated above demands that the representative to first conduct investigations on the needs and issues of the masses before addressing their needs. Without the raw materials (perceptual knowledge), the representative is deemed to fail in finding the true needs (rational knowledge) and making correct decisions accordingly. Mao (1991b [1930])

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made it clear that "investigation is solving problems" since when the representative conducted investigation and fully understood the "history and current condition" of the issues, she will automatically "have solutions" to them (111-112). Hence inclusion in the MLR is informative inclusion with information gathering as its primary function.

Such inclusion does not define membership. For Mao, membership of the masses is determined by their class status. Whether a class could be included in MLR depends on the principal contradiction at a given time. Moreover, informative inclusion does not truly empower the masses. On the one hand, the boundary and approach of inclusion is decided by the representative. The masses are relatively passive in this process. On the other hand, the representative is also responsible for deciding which information to include in the decision-making process. More importantly, the Party's judgement on the principal contradiction limits the autonomy of the representative. That is, whether input of the masses can influence the final decision is dependent on the representative locally and the CPC nationally.

Consequential responsiveness. Responsiveness is the criteria for Pitkin's conception of substantive representation. As discussed in Chapter 2, substantive representation demands the representative to be at least ready to respond to the interest of the represented. By asking the representative to go back to the masses, MLR also demands responsiveness from the representative. Such responsiveness is not readiness to respond, but being able to deliver the solution or the outcome of representation. A mass line representative does not merely speak for or advocate for the represented. That is, after consulting with the represented, the representative has to take actions to address issues identified by the represented, though the issue in action and issue identified may vary.

This is where the leadership skills and autonomy of representatives come into play. She has to decide, among different interests (including the Party's interests) and issues, whose interest to advance. Her decision, regardless of her choice, is always consequential in two ways. First, it is responsive to those whose interests she promotes. Second, she is expected to respond (giving account) to those whose interests she does not promote through the mass line approach. Again, she cannot go against the party line because according to the principles of democratic centralism, once the Party has decided on the principal contradiction, the representative is expected to execute this

decision. Of course, such decision is generally vague, leaving room of interpretation for representatives.

Speaking of consequences of MLR reminds us of Mao's acceptance of utilitarianism. There are a few things to note. First, promoting the needs and interests of the represented — the consequence of MLR — follows principles and guidelines in the core concepts of Maoism: contradiction and practice. When responding to the preferences of the represented, the representative is asked to follow the mass line approach and find out the true preference to represent. Second, this means there is a priority of needs, which is determined by contradiction and knowable to representatives and the masses through practice. Mao himself places long-term and national interests over short-term and local interests.

Third, as discussed, the needs of the masses is a very abstract concept used by Mao. It ranges from abstract needs of national independence and economic development to more substantive ones such as food and shelter. We can also understand the different meanings of needs as the issues representatives may face at different levels. At the central level, representatives (most likely the CPC) are responsible for issues of nation-wide importance and hence the needs are more abstract and directional. At grassroot level (counties and villages), representatives may face more substantive issues such as food supply.

Fourth, responding to the needs is expected to have consequences in the sense that the outcome of representation is of the most importance. Mao gives the representatives the autonomy to find out specific strategies to implement decision made both at local and higher levels. This is justified by the core concept of contradiction. Each representative may face different situations (with slightly different contradictions) and following the principles of contradiction, she should take the approach that suits her situation.

Finally, the representative is not responding to everyone's needs. The core concept of class determines who should be represented in a given situation (which is also determined by contradiction). The class enemies are excluded in the representative relationship. Moreover, there will always be masses who focus on secondary contradictions. Based on the mass line approach, it is the representative's responsibility

to educate and persuade them to prioritize the interests associated with the principal contradiction.

5.3.4. Institutions supporting the MLR

As discussed, one critical drawback of the mass line approach is the high moral expectations and capability requirements for the representative to actualize representation. She shall encourage equal participation in information gathering, advocate for the represented in deliberation with other representatives, and make a reasoned judgement on what interests, preferences, and groups to represent following the guidelines of contradiction and practice. It can be said that in Maoism, the success of MLR solely relies on the representative.

However, there are few institutional incentives and sanctions endogenous to MLR that support and guide the representative to fulfill her responsibilities. To maintain a properly functioning representation system, Mao relies on party building as exogenous institutional arrangements. Party building has two aspects relevant to the discussion here: 1) party education that educates representatives about their duties and improves their administrative abilities; and 2) party disciplinary mechanisms that punish incompetent or corrupted representatives.

Party education and the party school system. Mao is fully aware that if representatives lack the knowledge and morality to practice mass line approach, the representative relationship, as well as the Party's survival, will be in danger. He concludes that the CPC cannot fulfil its "historical task without a large number of "qualified cadres who "combine ability with political integrity" (Mao 1965b, 201-2).

Cadres in the Party's history illustrate how the lack of "ability and political integrity" led to catastrophes for the Party. Wang Ming's "left adventurism" in the early 1930s, for Mao, is an example when the Party ignored principles of contradiction and practice. Policies made under Wang Ming almost led to the extinction of the CPC and forced the Party to start the Long March to evade encirclement and suppression by the Nationalist Party. Hence, when the Party settled down in Yan'an, Shaanxi, Mao started the "Yan'an Rectification Movement" (*Yan'an Zhengfeng Yundong* 延安整风运动) that

aims at improving ideological education of party members.[38] As Mao concludes, "[c]adres are a decisive factor, once the political line is determined" (202). When the Party found out the principal contradiction and determined appropriate policies, qualified representatives are "decisive" in implementing the policies appropriately and make their own decisions on the interests to be represented.

The primary goal of the cadre education system was to produce qualified cadres, each of whom are:

> [R]esolute in carrying out the Party line, keeps to the Party discipline, has close ties with the masses, has the ability to find his bearings independently, and is active, hard-working and unselfish. (Mao 1965b, 202).

Those merits, as discussed, are important for the practice of mass line approach, where the representative is expected to have the will to actively engage with the masses and have the knowledge and ability to understand the principal contradiction and hence make decisions on promoting interests of the masses.[39]

To achieve this, the education program has to follow the principles of contradiction and practice. The cadres should not learn Marxism dogmatically. Instead, they should learn the "standpoint and method in examining and solving problems" and apply Marxist theory to "the specific circumstances of China" (209). Mao's summary of contradiction and practice is intended to serve this purpose.

The party school system is the formal institution for party education. During the Rectification Movement period, the CPC created over 30 institutes around Yan'an only for the purpose of training qualified cadres (Zhao 2005, 66). The Central Party School is

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[38] Zhang (2010) and Zhao (2005) provides an historical overview of the education aspect of the rectification movement.

[39] Mao is more explicit about this in this inscription to the foundation of Shaanbei Gongxue (Shaanbei Public School) in 1937: Those people [trained cadres] have political vision. They are full of combat spirt and sacrifice spirit. They are honest, loyal, positive, and upright. They do not seek personal gains and their only goal is the independence of the nation and the society. They are not afraid of difficulties and in front of difficulties, they are determined and will march forward bravely. They are not frantic or arrogant, nor wishing to show off. They stand on solid ground and have the spirit of practice. (Pang 1993, 37; cf. Zhao 2005, 64).

among one of them.[40] The education system is essential for the training of qualified cadres for the Party. Zhang's (2010) research concluded that those training institutes trained over 100,000 cadres in the Resistance War period (till 1945) (39). In Mao's (1993 [1939]) report, there were over 30,000 graduates and students after two years of the establishment of those institutions (223).

After the foundation of the People's Republic of China in 1949, party education continues as an important institution for the practice of mass line approach and MLR. In talking about the Party's leadership role in the socialist transformation period, Mao (1971) argues that with the expansion of the CPC, "a great deal of work must be done to educate, enlighten and unite" the over 10 million party members (313). In December of 1954, the Party released a plan on party education that focused on institutionalizing education of cadres on a rotation basis.[41] Party schools were classified at two levels: an Institute of Marxism-Leninism directly managed by the Central Committee of the CPC that focuses on the education of higher-level officials; and seven medium-level party schools that focus on the education of municipal-level officials. Over 2.5 million cadres received theoretical education in this period (Zhao and Qin 2014).

Party disciplinary institutions. The mass line approach offers few accountability mechanisms except the demand that representatives go back to the masses when they make a specific policy decision that affects the masses. Explaining the decision to the masses, while serving as a form of accountability, does not have institutional guarantees. That is, the representative can easily skip this step if they wish. Without an

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[40] The party school system started with the Marx School of Communism in 1933 that focuses on the education of party members and cadres. It was interrupted during the Long March period and was re-established in November 1935, one mong after the CPC settled down in Yan'an. Later, the party school expanded rapidly and now has a four-level system of party schools corresponding to the institutional hierarchy of the party: central, provincial, prefectural, and township/county. But party schools at lower levels do not directly report to schools at higher level. For an introduction to the party school system and its history, see Shambaugh 2008b and Wang 2014.

[41] The plan is named *Zhonggong Zhongyang Guanyu Lunxun Quandang Gao,-Zhong ji Ganbu he Tiaozheng Dangxiao de Jihua (The Central Committee's Plan on Training High-Medium Level Cadres on Rotation Basis and Adjustment of Party Schools)*. It is included in the edited volume of *Jianguo yilai Zhongyao Wenxian Xuanbian (Selection of Important Documents since the Founding of People's Republic of China), vol 5,* pp. 600-605.

institutionalized check to prevent this, serious problems arise for MLR because without "to the masses," there is no mass line approach and mass line representation.

Unlike electoral representation in liberal democracies, mass line representation relies heavily on external institutions to enforce accountability of representatives. This is possible because of the complexity of institutional arrangements in China's one-party system. The overlap between party and government made it possible to check cadres and party members from both intra-party institutions and government institutions such as Prosecutor's Offices (see section 4.4). The Commissions of Discipline Inspection (CDIs) at central and local CPC committees constitute the intra-party disciplinary institutions that enforce the CPC's rules and regulations and sanction corruption and malfeasance of party members. These disciplinary institutions work at the initiative of higher-level party officials, not masses. They are intended to enforce accountability of representatives and other cadres to the Party, not accountability of representatives to the masses. Though, in the CPC's rhetoric, the Party shares the same interest with the masses.

In addition to the sanctioning institutions, the Party also offers incentives for outstanding representatives — the cadre promotion system. Since this is not Mao's focus, I will discuss it in the next Chapter, where I show that the promotion system can both enhance and undermine MLR because of the Party's monopoly on this mechanism.

5.3.5. MLR and complex institutional reality

When we consider the complex institutional reality of the Chinese political system, the picture of MLR becomes more complicated. In addition to the discussion in the last section, dominance of the CPC in political institutions modifies the principal-agent relationship of MLR in two ways. First, it creates mandatory shape-shifting representation that puts the representative in multiple roles on the one hand and biases the representative relationship towards favouring the party. Institutionally, the overlapping of party, government, and legislature renders it natural for representatives to take up multiple roles simultaneously. An elected representative in the legislature very likely also plays the role of a representative in other identities such as a member of the CPC, a public servant in the government, etc. Unlike Saward's (2014) "shape-shifting" representation, where representatives are depicted as being able to shift between their

possible roles in front of different audiences, MLR representatives, in this case, are bound by these institutions they are involved at the same time, limiting their ability to shape and shift their roles. Interests of the represented can easily be compromised when the interests expressed in all these parties involved in the representation process conflict with each other.

The complex supervisory and leadership roles among the party, government, and legislature further complicate this situation (for discussions on the relationships, see Unger 2002; He 2014; Zhang 2007).[42] In this network of institutions and the hierarchical organization of government, lower-level officials (or representatives) tend to give more priority to the tasks of higher-level officials and the central government (O'Brien and Li 1999; Kung et al. 2009). Ideally, such conflict of interests will not arise as all representatives are supposed to reach a consensus on the interests to represent with the mass line approach. Nevertheless, when performing representation, the representative becomes the focal point of interest aggregation and confrontation. In performing multiple roles, the representative is also expected to give account to various agencies and institutions.

Moreover, another factor that mediates the actualization of representation is the unique central-local government relationship. As discussed earlier, policy preferences of the central government are given priority by local/provincial governments. However, the provincial governments, in achieving the policy goals set by the central government, enjoy a certain level of autonomy, ranging from following the direction of the central government to implementing their own policies depending on policy issues and local preferences (Li 1997; Bernstein and Lü 2000; Mok and Wu 2013; Moore 2014). Zheng (2007) further argues that the relationship between central and local governments functions closer to federalism, or "*de facto*" or un-institutionalized federalism, where local governments engage with the central government through a combination of coercion,

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[42] Christiansen and Rai (1996, Chapter 4) and Collins and Cottey (2012, Chapter 2) offered good introductions to the institutions of Chinese political system. To briefly summarize the relationship: the legislature (People's Congresses) makes decisions; the government executes decisions made by the legislature; the People's Political Consultation Conferences offer advice to both; and the Party leads all (not to say that the party controls all) the institutions (Zhang 2007; Chang 2008; Guo 2010). Huang (2015) provides a positive example of this relationship at local level that showcases the "division of labor" among different institutions.

bargaining, and fiscal negotiations. Either way, local governments can use their discretion in implementing policies to achieve goals set by the central government. This leaves room for interpretation and flexibility in the application of policy directions from the top. Representatives have the freedom to determine their strategies and policy focuses in performing their roles. The represented, consequently, are represented at dual levels: representatives at the central level focusing on setting the agenda and abstract policy goals and representatives at the local level focusing on refining and developing specific policies to achieve the policy goals.

This section completes the portrait of mass line representation by outlining its institutional and normative implications. In Mao's conception, the morality and capability of representative is the key for the performance of MLR. The representative uses her reason and judgement to solicit input from the masses and address their concerns. To this end, Mao focuses primarily on the education of representatives with the party school system. However, the complexity of institutional facts (CPC's leadership role, overlapping and hierarchical institutions, and central-local relationship) challenges Mao's normative ideal of producing informative inclusion and consequential responsiveness.

5.4. Mass line representation in comparison

In some circumstances, Mao pays due attention to the role of a representative assembly, People's Congresses and Congresses of the CPC at different levels, in which representatives should represent the interests of the represented. It might be argued that, compared to Pitkin's substantive representation, which also focuses on representing the interests of the represented, Mao presents nothing new to the concept of representation. This is not the case. While Mao speaks highly of representative institutions, his use of representation is mediated by core concepts of Mao's thought such as class and mass line, rendering meanings of representation in Mao's writings distinct from those used in Pitkin and other Western scholars' works. This section will first review the features of MLR and then put MLR side to side with the Pitkinian and constructivists' conception of representation.

5.4.1. Distinctive features of MLR

Situated in Mao's ideological framework as an adjacent concept, MLR presents four distinctive features shaped by the core concepts of Maoism — contradiction, practice, class, and mass line. First, MLR offers a flexible conception of representation. Its flexibility lies in, on the one hand, the wide range of possibilities in scope of representation with variations on the representative, the represented, and the representative venue. Although Mao insists on the mass line approach in representing the needs of the people, less attention is paid to these three components. Everyone may have different representatives in different venues representing her needs and one representative can represent in a different scope (different levels of PCs, Congresses of the CPC, government agencies, etc.). On the other hand, unlike elected representatives in the West, a representative in MLR most likely has multiple roles across the government, the CPC, and social organizations that require the performance of representative functions in one role independently or in multiple roles collectively. As I will show in the next Chapter, this is further complicated by the supervisory relationships among different institutions.

At the highest level, MLR could become the representation of the interests of the Chinese nation by the CPC. The logic of this form of representation could be understood as representative claim or symbolic representation, through the "portraying-something-as-something" logic (Fossen 2019). It should be noted, however, MLR is situated in the ideological context of Maoism. That is, the CPC, based on the mass line approach, determines the revival of the Chinese nation as the need of the Chinese nation to be represented. This is the most abstract claim of representation in MLR, and the representative can leverage this claim to their advantage in making more substantive claims about policies to achieve this goal.

Second, MLR emphasizes the communication between the representative and the represented. Mao's metaphor of fish and water captures the importance of the representative's immersion in the mass because the "close ties with the broadest masses" is what distinguishes the CPC from "all other political parties" (Mao 1965c, 315). More importantly, connecting with the masses performs three functions in MLR. First, based on Mao's epistemology of practice, it is the sole source of truth about the masses that help the representative to determine the needs and interests to be

represented. This is, of course, not a straightforward process but requires the four steps of representation — investigation, aggregation, discussion and decision, and implementation and persuasion. Second, it provides clues on how to perform representative roles, namely, solving the problems raised by the masses. Mao frequently reminds his colleagues that different groups of the masses should have a targeted approach in implementing the decision.

Mao's view on this resembles the constructivist perspective on representation and acknowledges that a representative shapes and mobilizes the representative relationship in targeting the masses and determining what to represent (claim) (Saward 2010; Disch 2011). However, Mao moves beyond the constructive aspect of representation in building the connection through immersion in the masses as the proper route for the representative in solving their substantive problems.

Moreover, another goal of maintaining the connection is to raise the awareness of the represented so that they can understand and follow the decisions made by the representative. Mao is not concerned that such education may become manipulation because of the concept of practice, from which both the representative and the represented can learn the truth about their interests regardless of possible false information provided.

Third, Mao relies on the judgement and capacity of the representatives to perform their roles in including the represented, making correct policies to represent the interests, and leading and educating the represented. Mao has high expectations of the representatives. He writes:

> They must be cadres and leaders versed in Marxism-Leninism, politically far-sighted, competent in work, full of the spirit of self-sacrifice, capable of tackling problems on their own, steadfast in the midst of difficulties and loyal and devoted in serving the nation, the class and the Party. … Such cadres and leaders must be free from selfishness, from individualistic heroism, ostentation, sloth, passivity, and sectarian arrogance, and they must be selfless national and class heroes; such are the qualities and the style of work demanded of the members, cadres and leaders of our Party. (Mao 1965a, 291).

To this end, Mao pays due attention to the education of representatives through party building, a not fully institutionalized mechanism that often takes the form of mass

campaigns. The lack of institutional arrangements to ensure responsiveness through high moral expectations of the representatives becomes a weakness of MLR. When representatives no longer possess the virtues Mao demanded, MLR is also endangered. As I shall show in Chapters 6, 7, and 8, the CPC devised external institutions to mitigate the problems arising from this. But these cannot fully succeed simply with the moral requirements set up in MLR. The public-spirited and intelligent representative that Mao envisioned is reminiscent, in some ways, of Rousseau's Legislator, who educates the masses and establishes collective identity and collective interest among them.

Finally, MLR is deeply rooted in Mao's dialectics. Mao's dialectics, developed with the core concepts of contradiction and practice, is everywhere in his conception of MLR. Who are representative and represented depends on the class they belong to, and which class is included in representation further depends on the principal contradiction at a certain time. The middle or national bourgeoisie, for example, could be both representative and represented in the Anti-Japanese War period, when the principal contradiction is between the Japanese invaders and the Chinese nation. However, in the socialist reform period, they lost their role as representative and the represented since the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie becomes the principal contradiction. Contradiction also plays a role in determining the interest to be represented in MLR.

Practice speaks to the identification and representation of interests. Seeking truth from the mass reveals the needs of the masses and provides background knowledge for representatives to determine how to represent the needs. More importantly, the dialectical process of practice also works for MLR. In Mao's words:

> take the ideas of the masses (scattered and unsystematic ideas) and concentrate them (through study turn them into concentrated and systematic ideas), then go to the masses and propagate and explain these ideas until the masses embrace them as their own, hold fast to them and translate them into action, and test the correctness of these ideas in such action. Then once again concentrate ideas from the masses and once again go to the masses so that the ideas are persevered in and carried through. And so on, over and over again in an endless spiral, with the ideas becoming more correct, more vital and richer each time. Such is the Marxist theory of knowledge.

It is through the repetition of "from the masses, to the masses" processes that representatives and the represented become more conscious and educated about the representation they are involved in.

5.4.2. Comparing to Western views

The marriage between representation and Maoism does not produce a conception of representation completely alien to Western views. Despite its distinctive features, MLR also shares similarities with Pitkin's substantive representation in the representation of objective interests and the responsiveness to the represented. Compared to the constructivist approach, MLR does not involve the performative aspect of representation while maintaining representation as a process.

Pitkinian substantive representation

As outlined in Chapter 2, Pitkin's conception of substantive representation emphasizes the representation of the objective interest of the represented, which is determined through political processes. The objective interest is formed with the creative leadership of the representatives because of the necessity to mediate interest claims from multiple channels — the competing interests of the constituents (which could be irrational), the interests of the representatives' social and political networks (e.g., parties, legislature, etc.), and the self-interest of the representative (Pitkin 1967, 219-221). Therefore, instead of "constant activities of responding" to interest claims of the represented, the responsiveness criterion requires the institutional arrangements that make responsiveness possible when required (Pitkin 1967, 233).

Pitkin's views on interest formation and aggregation are surprisingly similar to Mao's statements on MLR. Of course, Pitkin's conception of representation is limited to the legislature, whereas MLR is not limited by venues, or type of representatives. However, this does not overshadow the similarities. First, both Pitkin and Mao believe that the represented are not always capable of expressing their interests. Therefore, it becomes the responsibility of the representative to find out the interest to be represented. Second, what is in front of the representative is not merely the interest claims of the represented, but an interest network, of which the representative himself is a part. Third, following that, the representative is not a passive recipient of voices from

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the represented. Instead, the representative is expected to be a creative leader, who can determine from the vast sources of interest claims the interest to be represented in the representative body.

The difference resides in Pitkin's ambiguity in the objective interest and how to uncover it.[43] While Pitkin relies on the creative leadership of the representatives, Mao is explicit in connecting the needs of the mass to principal contradiction and principal aspects of a contradiction, from which the most important need is determined. For example, during the Resistance War against Japan, the contradiction between the Japanese invaders and the Chinese nation was the principal contradiction. Hence the most important need of the masses is national independence, which, to Mao, is only possible under the leadership of the CPC.

In addition to that, Mao also provides a set of principles in determining the objective interest from a wide range of issues raised by the masses. That is, Mao's conception of representation offers principles and justifications on deciding the interests to represented. Ideally, the represented, following the same principles, could locate the principal contradictions and find out whether the interest representatives claim to represent is correct or not. Pitkin, on the other hand, places more emphasis on the representative's leadership skills in replying to questions of responsiveness from the represented.

It could be said that Mao also stresses the responsiveness of the representative. On the one hand, in the four-step mechanism of MLR, Mao requires the representatives to gather input from the represented and justify their decisions to the represented. From this perspective, Mao goes one step further in not just asking for the readiness to respond, but also the responsibility to respond when the decisions and policies are made.

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[43] It should be noted that Mao did not use the word "objective interest." Instead, as stated earlier, he uses words such as issues, needs, interests that blurs the distinction between subjective and objective interest. However, from his discussion on mass line and MLR, it could be inferred that Mao also prefers the representation of objective interests.

However, unlike Pitkin, MLR does not acknowledge the need for significant institutional arrangements that can force the representatives to fulfil their responsibility to respond to the masses. Moreover, also unlike Pitkin, Mao is more interested in the outcome of responsiveness. In addition to addressing the needs of the masses, one important function of MLR, for Mao, is to educate the masses so that they are politically capable of understanding the decisions made by the representatives. This should not be surprising, given the importance of contradiction, class struggle, and dialectical practice in his overall ideology. For Mao, the power of the mass is vital for the success of MLR because "the people alone, are the motive force of world history" (Mao 1965c, 257). All the work of representatives depends on the cooperation and collaboration of the masses. Therefore, the masses need to understand what the representatives are doing so that they can support the representative voluntarily. To achieve this, Mao focuses on building the relationship of mutual trust and support with the dialectical process of mass line approach.

The constructivist approach to representation

The constructivist approach to representation conceives representation as constructed and performed in the process of representing. This section discusses two contributors to this approach: 1) Michael Saward, who focuses on the performative aspect of representation; and 2) Lisa Disch, who focuses on mobilization and manipulation in the process of representation. Compared to Saward's notion of representative claim, Mao is clearly against a pure performative interpretation of representation. Seen from Disch's perspective, MLR does not concern itself much with manipulation. When the representative has no private interest and works towards promoting interests of the represented, there is little need to manipulate the represented because both the representative and the represented share the same goals.

Unlike Pitkin's focus on institutional arrangements of representation, Saward argues that we should investigate the dynamic interactions between the representative and the represented, which he theorizes as making and accepting (or rejecting) representative claims. MLR does highlight constant communications and interactions between the representative and the represented, which can be interpreted as claim-making and claim-receiving. The key to communication in MLR is to build a relationship of trust and support through engaging with and educating the represented to achieve a

consensus on the interest to be represented. In this sense, MLR does "construct" the masses. But for Mao, this is more like a process of education and leadership that aims at the collective interest of the represented, not a process driven by the "selfish and short-sighted" interests of audience-constructing representatives.

More importantly, Mao believes that there has to be a more substantive ground for representative claims. In his speech to provincial and municipal party secretaries in 1957, Mao criticized that some cadres' claim to represent peasants' sufferings revealed that they were not true representatives of peasants. Mao (1971) suggests that their "concern for the peasants" only represents "a small number of well-to-do peasants," but not "the peasant masses" (357). On the one hand, the well-off peasants have more influence on the representatives for their personal connections. On the other hand, the interest the representative represents, in this case, does not follow the four-step mechanism of MLR. The lack of investigation leads to bias in determining the interest to be represented.

Disch (2011) considers representatives as mobilizers, who actively create issues and mobilize support from constituents. From this perspective, MLR is a mobilization process that aims at wining the understanding and support of the masses on the decisions and policies made by the representative. The difference is that according to Mao, MLR does not create issues and needs of the masses. Instead, MLR theory tells us that the needs of the masses are gathered and synthesized through the representative's direct engagement with the masses and the representative's application of principles of contradiction and practice. As for the debate on manipulation and education in representation (Disch 2019; Mansbridge 2003, 2019), while I will address this topic in Chapter 9, it suffices to say here that Mao supports the education side. As stated earlier, raising the awareness of the masses through education is important for the success of MLR because the masses have a decisive role in practice and shaping history.

5.5. Conclusion

This chapter maps MLR in Maoism and compares it to both the Pitkinian substantive representation and constructivists approach to representation. Strongly influenced by the core concepts of Maoism — contradiction, practice, class, and mass

line — MLR refers to the making present of the synthesized interest of the masses by representatives in a variety of venues (legislature, government agency, party assembly, etc.). MLR has four distinctive features. First, it offers a flexible conception of representation where most components of representation could potentially change depending on the principal contradiction and class composition. What is not changed, however, is the mass line approach in interest aggregation (the "how to represent" question). Second, MLR highlights the relationship-building in the constant communication between the representative and the represented because the represented are the sources of interests to be represented and vital forces for the fulfilment of interest representation. Third, proper functioning of MLR places high moral requirements on representatives, which becomes the key drawback of MLR without appropriate institutional support. Finally, MLR is deeply rooted in Mao's dialectics. MLR is also a dialectical process where both the representative and the represented develop a better understanding of each other's situations.

Mao's view that proper functioning of MLR relies on the morality and capability of the representative leads him to emphasize on the education of the representative more than disciplinary and reward institutions. The complexity of institutional arrangements in China — leadership role of the CPC, overlapping and hierarchical institutions, and central-local relationships — present challenges to Mao's ideals in serving the masses and building the bond between the representative and the represented.

As Mao's core concepts of contradiction and practice suggest, what MLR implies for actual political practices could change with the times. Drastic changes have taken place in post-Mao China, especially since the economic reform initiated by Deng Xiaoping. The next three chapters focus on how MLR has been re-interpreted and actualized in the Jiang (1989-2003), Hu (2002-2012), Xi (2012 to present) era. While maintaining the mass line at the core of MLR, both Jiang and Xi have made changes to how MLR is differentiated and actualized. Nonetheless, as I will show, it would be a mistake to consider their innovations as dramatic departures from Mao.

Chapter 6.
Mass Line without Class: Jiang's Redefinition of Representation

The previous two chapters sketched out a conceptual map of mass line representation in the early stage of CPC's ideology. Like Pitkin's substantive representation, an MLR representative is supposed to represent the aggregated interests of her constituents. Instead of electoral institutions, MLR relies on two mechanisms to ensure the accurate and appropriate translation of diverse interests of the represented: moral conduct and capability of representatives and the CPC's party building efforts (especially the education of cadres). As a representative-centred conception of representation, the proper functioning of MLR largely depends on the representative's judgement and commitment to her responsibilities. The represented, or the masses, participate passively in the relationship with their roles limited to providing input when being asked by the representative. This is not to say that active participation of the represented has no value in MLR. Participation through formal and informal channels, as I will show in the next three chapters, is available and sometimes encouraged by the Party, especially when mass line representation fails.

The conceptual map offers responses to the second layer of the questions about representation — the practical layer that addresses how conceptions of representative relationships are performed and received in political life. MLR conceives the relationship between the representative and the represented as fish and water. The close connection is maintained by the representative's effort to actively engage with the represented and promote their wellbeing with good decisions based on information collected in the engagement processes. Conceptualizing the relationship in this way is consistent with the normative and cultural foundation in the Chinese context, which focuses on the virtue of the representative in carrying out her responsibilities. The represented, from the Western perspective, have limited capacity in holding the representative accountable. This chapter will focus on the performance of MLR in the three generations of Chinese leadership from Jiang Zemin to Xi Jinping.

In western democracies, political performance is about building relative advantage through the fusion of actors and audiences (Alexander 2010). Candidates win the majority of votes not by being the good option, but the better one. While Chinese leaders do not have this option in the single party system, they manage to draw a comparison between the Chinese and western political systems. Defense of the Chinese system portrays the Chinese version as the better and more suitable one for China. In this process, MLR consolidates its differentiation as a unique practice of the CPC that fosters the blood and flesh tie between the representative and the represented. From the CPC's perspective, the economic achievement in post-reform China becomes a strong justification for CPC representation in the Chinese political system.

Meanwhile, new challenges posed by market reform created problems for the CPC's claim of representation. Rapid social and economic development since China's market reform has raised three issues: decline in Marxist and Communist belief, pluralization of Chinese society, and corruption of cadres. These challenge CPC's performance of MLR at three levels. Decline in Marxist and communist belief signals the lost of common ideological ground in the Chinese society, making the fusion of performance (audience's perception of the performance as authentic) harder to achieve. Pluralization of Chinese society has introduced a Western conception of representation (mostly electoral representation) as a serious competitor to MLR. Corruption of cadres in effect destroys the connection that MLR advocates because its implementation almost completely relies on competent cadres.

Chinese leaders in the reform era have devised different approaches to re-fuse the performance of representation, ranging from reinterpretation of the Party's ideology and selective assimilation of institutions of liberal democracies. Nevertheless, approaches adopted by Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao, and Xi Jinping largely follow two streams: 1) exploration and defense of the distinctiveness of Chinese political system, drawing comparison with western democracies (electoral democracy in the United States as a typical example); 2) search for resonance between CPC's ideology and China's cultural heritage (mostly Confucianism) and its history.

The next three chapters unpack and compare the actualization of representation from Jiang Zemin to Xi Jinping and focuses on their strategies for performing MLR and corresponding institutional development. This chapter focuses on Jiang's innovations in

the CPC's ideology and representative institutions. After describing the challenges that China faces in the reform era, I move on to discuss Jiang's strategies for performing MLR. As the core of the third generation of leadership, Jiang offered a defensive interpretation of MLR and "kept it up to times" (*yushi jujing* 与时俱进) by marginalizing discourses of class from the CPC ideology and enhancing the mass line approach as a two-way connection through the grievance system.

6.1. Challenges in the reform era

Deng Xiaoping's restoration to a central position in the CPC senior leadership paved the way for redirecting China, as well as the CPC ideology, from class struggle and revolution to market reform and economic development. Astonished by the backwardness of China during his visit to Japan in 1978, Deng was determined to follow the market model of industrialized countries (Vogel 2011). The ideological tension caused by the introduction of economic development (decontested as market economy) into the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist tradition was justified by Deng's new interpretations of contradiction and practice, two core concepts in Mao Zedong Thought. He took advantage of concepts such as "seek truth from facts" (seeking facts from truth 实事求是) and "practice is the sole criterion of truth" (*shijian shi jianyan zhenli de weiyi biaozhun* 实践是检验真理的唯一标准) as the ideological foundation of "shifting the focus" and "the bundle of policies on building socialism" (Deng 1993, 10). In 1992, Deng contended that difference between a planned and a market economy is not the "fundamental difference" between capitalism and socialism (373). This claim echoes Deng's cat theory: no matter if it is a white or black cat, as long as it catches mice, it is a good cat. Both planned economy and market economy are "economic tools" and socialist economy can also develop key features of a market economy (373).

Institutionalization was a peripheral concept introduced to CPC ideology by Deng. The primary arena of institutionalization for Deng was the succession of power in China's senior leadership team, which lacks formal rules regulating the term and organization of incumbents. Examples of Deng's efforts included the two-term maximum rule for presidency in the Constitution, as well as the terminologies such as core of collective leadership (the President and General Secretary) and generations of leadership (Bo 2007).

Deng's reform brought up three challenges to the CPC: pluralization of Chinese society, waning of the communist ideology (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist tradition), and a rampage of corruption. Pluralization of Chinese society is exemplified by the changing structure of social composition and formation of different ideological or preference groups. It does not directly entail the inclusion and empowerment of different groups in the society. On the one hand, accumulation of private entrepreneurs and their wealth broke the class structure of Chinese society and, in their demand for political participation, created pressure on the CPC's rule. With the market reform, the number of private entrepreneurs increased dramatically to 2.81 million in 1999, 11 times more than in 1989 (Ru et al. 2000, 225). While private entrepreneurs might not have been able to wage full-scale political reform due to their lack of class formation and collective action (Tsai 2005), they were motivated to protect their rights and property through direct involvement in the Party and government (Parris 1999; Hong 2004).

The lack of class formation did not mean that private entrepreneurs were not organized. Local business associations, depending on the relationship with government agencies, are intermediary organizations that contribute to the interests of local businesses (Unger 1996; Foster 2002). Hence party building in the non-public sector was a constant topic in publications of CPC's Central Organization Department (COD). Addressing the political status of the new private entrepreneurs in CPC ideology and Chinese society became an urgent task for Jiang Zemin.[44]

On the other hand, marketization accelerated ideological polarization of the Chinese population, creating liberal and conservative camps in the society (Nathan and Shi 1996). The liberal camp was more concerned about issues such as corruption and inequality, and usually held favorable opinions towards liberal democracy (e.g., election of officials and responsive government). The conservative camp expected more government intervention in the provision of public goods. Among the CPC leadership, disagreement arose as to the priority of the country after 20 years of reform: should it continue to engage in economic and political reform or focus on handling corruption and social inequality arising from the reform?

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[44] For a review of the development of the private sector in China and its impact on political participation, see Guiheux 2006.

Conservatives like Chen Yun (陈云), who had been a member of the politburo since 1931 and participated in the economic policy design after 1949, placed more emphasis on the stability of CPC's rule and advocated for a more balanced approach between government control and opening domestic market (Bachman 1985; Kuhn 2011: 73; Fewsmith 2008: 21-47). Reformers like Deng Xiaoping insisted on reform as the key to address issues that China faced after the implementation market reform. In his speeches from 1987 to 1991, Deng (1993) frequently pushed the Party to be "more courageous" and sped up the marketization and globalization process (236-243, 248). Despite disparities on policy priorities in China, both conservatives and reformers agreed that economic reform was the right path to take.

Second, the opening-up of the Chinese market also introduced liberalism as a challenger to the dominant status of communist ideology in China (Feng 2008). Deng's interpretation of practice and contradiction, namely, "emancipation of mind (*jiefang sixiang* 解放思想)," stimulated doubts about the suitability of Marxism and Leninism in China and created three crises — "'crisis of faith' in socialism, 'crisis of confidence' in the future of China, and crisis of trust in the Party-State" (Chen 1995). Two incidents, the 1989 pro-democracy protest and the repression of Falun Gong in 1999, exemplified the decline of CPC ideology and the plurality of demands from the society.

The culmination of demands for democracy ended up in the pro-democracy protest in 1989, which severely challenged the stability and legitimacy of CPC's rule in China (Nathan 2009; Perry 2009). More profoundly, the protest signified the divergence of interests and policy preferences within the CPC regarding the political future of China (Lieberthal and Oksenberg 1988; Fewsmith 2001). The outburst of the protest warned the Party that Marxism and Maoism were becoming less attractive in China and pointed to liberal democracy as the right alternative. Ideologically, it signified ideological competition between liberalism and Maoism, suggesting that the CPC ideology was failing to either accommodate market reform or respond to the demands of the pluralizing society.

Falun Gong (法轮功), on the other hand, was outlawed and suppressed after its massive protest in front of Zhongnanhai, the national headquarter of the CPC and the Chinese Central Government in 1999. Here I do not wish to engage with the lengthy

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debate on the nature and development of Falun Gong (for discussions on this topic, see Thorton 2002; Zheng 2002; Chung et al. 2006). The pertinent political implication for analysis of CPC ideology is that Falun Gong revealed an "ideological vacuum" in China since the market reform (Xiao 2001; Chan 2004). Again, the Marxist and Maoist tradition obviously failed to offer convincing response to the rapidly diversifying Chinese society in the reform era.

Moreover, Confucianism, as the cultural tradition in the Chinese society, was also losing its charm in the ideological diversification. Using the Asian Barometer survey data, Shi and Lu (2010) tells a two-sided story about contemporary Confucianism: it is losing its competition with liberal democracy in both mainland China and Taiwan; and it still has a strong impact on perception of government. Chapter 4 discussed the potential compatibility of between Confucianism and CPC ideology. This connection was spelled out by Hu Jintao to create shared cultural heritage in his strategy to perform MLR.

Third, corruption was not a new issue to CPC in the reform era. With economic development and market reform, corruption was getting more and more severe with the government's focus and involvement in market-oriented economic activities intensified (Gong 1994; Lü 2000; Wedeman 2004). As revealed in surveys conducted by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, in 1999, about 20 years after market reform, corruption had become the most serious social issue for officials and scholars (Ru et al. 2000, 100, 112). The importance of corruption (including measures handling corruption) in Chinese politics is associated with the mass line approach, where representatives and bureaucrats are entrusted with the capacity and motivation to include the people in the policy making processes and address their concerns. Obviously, a corrupted representative cannot deliver what is expected in the mass line representation and Confucianism.

Despite China's remarkable economic achievements after Deng's initiation of market reform, pluralization of Chinese society, decline of CPC ideology, and corruption since Deng have presented no less daunting challenges for the CPC and its mass line representation. The next three sections focus on Jiang Zemin's ideological development, his strategies for political performance, and his institutional innovations.

Jiang Zemin's modification of the CPC's ideology was both bold and defensive. It was bold in his decisiveness to marginalize the role of class in Maoism and include the bourgeoisie in a proletariat party. It was defensive in his use of Maoist concepts like contradiction and practice to justify the modification and the intention to draw a distinctive line between the Chinese political system, namely, socialism with Chinese characteristics, and the Western style of democracy. Performance of representation in this period, similarly, still focused on MLR, with different interpretations of representatives and the represented when private entrepreneurs came to be included in the Party. Jiang also institutionalized the appeal system (Xinfang Ju, Bureau of Letters and Calls at different levels, 信访局), which became another channel of active participation for the masses. The appeal system offers an alternative form accountability for mass line representation, in addition to the representative's giving account of decisions made during her engagement with the masses.

6.2. Ideological development

Jiang Zemin's interpretation of CPC ideology is consistent with Mao's teaching on contradiction and practice. Like Deng Xiaoping's *jiefang sixiang* (mind emancipation, 解放思想), Jiang suggests that the CPC ideology and CPC itself has to *yushi jujin* (与时俱进), or to keep up with the times. As discussed in last section, economic and political reform raised three issues to prominence: pluralization of Chinese society, waning of Marxism and Maoism, and corruption. In his responses to these challenges, Jiang made three changes on the ideological front: marginalization of the concept of class from core to peripheral status in official party statement, introduction of stability as an adjacent concept, and reinterpretation of mass line to include mass perspective (*qunzhong guandian* 群众观点) as a component.

6.2.1. Class

Marginalization of class in the CPC's ideology is best illustrated in the amendment of the Party Constitution in the 16th National Congress of the CPC in 2002. Instead of being the "vanguard of the working class" and "faithful representative of the interest of all ethnic groups in China", the new Party Constitution declared the Party's role as the vanguard "both of the Chinese working class and the Chinese people and the

Chinese nation."[45] Framing the party's role in this way implicitly includes the bourgeoisie, the class enemy of workers and peasants for Mao, in the proletariat party. Unsurprisingly, Jiang's ideological work was resisted and criticized within the CPC. Then Party Secretary of Zhejiang Province, Zhang Dejiang (张德江), explicitly declared that allowing private entrepreneurs to join the party would "blur the nature of the party and the standard of the vanguard of the working class (Zhang 2000, 14).[46]

In addressing the backlash in the Party to his innovations, Jiang (2006a) suggested that the principal contradiction in the reform-era China determined that the task of the CPC is economic development, not class struggle, and criticized Mao for "taking class struggle as the key link" (*yi jieji douzheng weigang,* 以阶级斗争为纲) in the early stages of CPC's rule in China (351). He insisted that his response was correct in addressing the increasing size and influence of private entrepreneurs. Drawing on core concepts in CPC ideology such as contradiction and practice, Jiang provided three reasons to justify the CPC's representation of the new social strata (*xin de shehui jieceng renshi* 新的社会阶层人士).[47] First, from a pragmatic perspective, it is unwise to isolate the Party from the "capitalists" that are growing in strength, both economically and politically. Listing the number of private enterprises in 2000, Jiang argued that having their support is important for the party: "[i]f we do not win this social force [the new strata] over, and even consciously or unconsciously push them to our opposite side, it is unfavourable to the party politically" (Jiang 2006c, 341).

Second, the new social strata, unlike capitalists before the socialist transformation in Mao's era, are also constructors of socialism with Chinese

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[45] An archive of CPC's party constitution can be found on Wikisource: https://zh.m.wikisource.org/zh-hans/%E4%B8%AD%E5%9B%BD%E5%85%B1%E4%BA%A7%E5%85%9A%E7%AB%A0%E7%A8%8B_(1982%E5%B9%B4). The party's role is defined in the opening sentence of the party constitution.

[46] A survey conducted by Tianjin Cadre Institute of Union Management (TCIUM, Tianjin Gonghui Guanli Ganbu Xueyuan, 天津工会干部管理学院) revealed that the overwhelming majority of the respondents (97%) answered "No" to whether private entrepreneurs should be able to join the CPC (TCIUM 2000).

[47] The new social strata is a term coined by Jiang Zemin to include private entrepreneurs, technical and management employees in private sector, small business owners, etc.

characteristics who contribute to economic development. The new strata, Jiang argued, have four characteristics that warrant a place in the Party (Jiang 2006c, 341):

a. They emerge because of the party and the state's opening up and reform policy.

b. They exist and develop with the precondition that socialist public ownership and socialist superstructure are dominating economic and political life.

c. They are descendants or relatives to workers, peasants, cadres, and intellectuals, who are always following the education of the party.

d. Their businesses follow laws, regulations, and policies of the state.

Implicit in the four characteristics is that not all capitalists are allowed to join the party and allowing some of them to join the party will not weaken the socialist foundation of the party and the country. The strongest response, however, is (a), which connects the lawful existence of the strata to the right of party membership. Allowing the new strata to join the party is then consistent with CPC's ideology because economic development through market reform had been introduced by Deng into CPC's ideology as a key new adjacent concept, whereas denying their membership in the party creates incoherencies for the ideology. This was Jiang's ideological creation that "keeps up with the times."

Finally, based on the core concepts of practice and contradiction, Jiang further criticized the class view of Chinese society. He stressed that it is inappropriate to explain economic activities in contemporary China with "concepts used to explain capitalist society and the exploitative relationship in old China [before revolution]" (Jiang 2006c, 343). The political life of concepts such as class and class struggle are over, especially when applied to contemporary Chinese society. People from all social strata, regardless of their property ownership status, could join the party as long as they follow laws and regulations and contribute to the socialist system.

In referring to the class nature of CPC, while Jiang still maintained that the CPC is the vanguard of the working class, he contended that the primary criteria for determining whether a party is the vanguard of the working class depend on "[w]hether its [the party's] theory and manifesto is Marxist; whether it represents the correct direction of social development; whether it represents the fundamental interest of the majority" (Jiang 2006c, 285). Such interpretation separates the class nature of CPC from

the working class it claims to vanguard. Ideologically, it is a bold step away from the class-based politics that Mao chanted throughout his life. Empirically, it paves the road for people belonging to other classes to join the Party, which is the strategy that Jiang developed to deal with the increasing number of private entrepreneurs or the new social strata.

Jiang further justified this change by resorting to the concept of practice ("keep up with the times"):

> The profound change in the economic realm brings up changes in the composition of social *strata* in our society. In the past, workers, peasants, intellectuals, cadres, and soldiers made the basic social strata. Now there are new social *strata* [e.g., private entrepreneurs, technicians in the private sector, small business owners, etc.] and with economic and social development, these strata will expand in size. How should we treat those new strata? What is the party's attitude towards them politically? Those are important questions that we cannot remain ambiguous about or shy away from. (Jiang 2006c, 340, italics added).

Workers used to be called a class to which intellectuals belong. For Jiang, they now belonged to a social stratum and together with new social strata, they constituted the majority of people that the CPC claimed to represent.

6.2.2. Stability

Concern for stability is not new for the CPC. As discussed, the disagreement within the Party (between Chen Yun and Deng Xiaoping) rests mostly on the priority of stability and economic reform. Deng was often quoted as considering stability as the "overriding need" of China (Deng 1993, 284). This does not mean that he shifted his primary focus away from economic reform and development based on reform. Deng (1993) stressed that "development is the absolute principle" (*fazhen shi ying daoli* 发展是硬道理) and "we will have the initiative to address all kinds of contradictions and problems when we have more cards in our hands [by development]" (377). That is, stability is an important issue on the agenda but problems leading to instability have to be resolved through economic development. The Party needs stability but "stability alone cannot solve all the problems" and "sticking to reform and opening up policy is the fundamental principle that cannot be discarded" (Deng 1993, 368).

Jiang Zemin took a middle path between Deng's focus on reform and development and Chen's prioritization of stability over reform. He constructed a dialectical relationship among reform, economic development and stability (Jiang 2006a, 365-368, 460-462). In its most simplistic expression: "reform is the engine, development is the goal, and stability is the prerequisite" (改革是动力，发展是目标，稳定是前提) (Jiang 2006a, 365). On the one hand, following Deng, economic development is claimed to contribute to stability through improving people's living standards (Jiang 2006a, 332). On the other hand, following Chen, Jiang argued that without political and social stability, it is not possible to develop through reform and maintain the party's rule at the same time (Jiang 2006a, 223-224). However, in practice, stability is always raised to a more important position in Chinese politics. Shirk (2007), for example, argues that China's economic policies are based on "an algorithm derived from its priority on stability" (55).

In addition to balancing the relationship between reform, development, and stability, Jiang further redefined the conceptual core of stability to include mass incidents (*quntixing shijian* 群体性事件) and connected mass line to the maintenance of stability. Mass incidents is a general term used by the CPC and Chinese scholars to describe a wide range of social incidents such as protests, gatherings, sit-ins, and riots (Chinese Public Administration Society, CPAS 2002; 2009). Mass incidents showcase the impact of the three challenges for the CPC in the reform era. Chinese scholars attribute the causes of mass incidents to the pluralization of Chinese society, which introduced a much wider range of demands from the masses, and to the CPC cadres' incompetence in working with the masses to address their concerns (CPAS 2002; Yu 2000; 2009). Yu Jianrong (2000), a sociologist on rural China, has argued that mass incidents create opinion leaders and informal authorities that challenge formal authority and credibility of the government, thus producing another source of instability for the CPC. From the perspective of participation, mass incidents are signs of the masses demanding more channels of political participation in addition to the mass line approach (Wang 2004).

Deng's stability discourses concerned primarily the CPC's authority in China, namely, survival of the regime. The "liberal thought of bourgeoisie" had demonstrated its capacity to challenge CPC's rule in the pro-democracy protest of 1989. After 1983, Deng Xiaoping frequently reminded the party about the danger of indiscriminately accepting liberal thoughts without considering the cultural and economic gap between China and

the West. He cautioned that "once liberal thoughts developed … there will be instability and political unrest, and consequently no room for building socialism" (Deng 1993, 124). For Deng, liberalization means westernization and capitalism, which cannot solve major problems in China, e.g., development (capitalist development won't bring welfare to all people from Deng's perspective) and poverty reduction (207). Hence the Party should stick to the socialist path in addressing these problems through reform and maintaining the stability of CPC's leadership.

While accepting Deng's points, Jiang Zemin drew the Party's attention to the needs of the masses and concluded that one cause of the protest in 1989 was corruption and the Party's failure to effectively practice mass line approach and represent the masses. Scholars had argued that corruption was the primary cause of the pro-democracy protest in Tiananmen Square (Østergaard and Petersen 1991; Sun 1991). The CPC drew the same conclusion and Jiang stated that "one important reason" for people joining the protest was the "serious corruption of some party members, cadres, and especially a few leading cadres" (Jiang 2006a, 62-63). Jiang further concluded that formalism and bureaucratism of cadres alienated them from the masses and led to a poor understanding of how to address contradictions and problems of the masses, which eventually causes mass incidents (Jiang 2006c, 132-133). Therefore, he urged cadres to follow the mass line approach to "solve all kinds of urgent problems related to the overall situation of reform, development, and stability and problems affecting the production and life of the masses" (134). In this light, maintaining the stability of CPC's rule starts exactly from the mass line approach to maintaining close relationships between cadres and the masses.

6.2.3. Mass line

Unlike class, mass line stays in the CPC ideology during Jiang's leadership, regardless of the CPC's shift of focus from class struggle to economic development. Jiang maintained that mass line was among the fine traditions of CPC that "should be insisted upon and promoted" (Jiang 2006a, 24). The core of mass line, namely, "from the masses, to the masses," remains largely intact. In Jiang's formulation, mass line was still the primary intermediary mechanism connecting cadres (representatives) and the people. To uphold the mass line, all the cadres should serve the people by "going deep

into the mass," "listening to the mass," "synthesizing the experience of the mass," "finding solutions to problems," and "solving problems with help of the mass" (Jiang 2006b, 146). Of course, the masses (people) were re-interpreted in a class-neutral way according to Jiang's interpretation of class.

Jiang further introduced mass view as a core component of mass line. Mass view spells out the guiding principles in the Party's relationship with the people. Jiang stated that:

> All the party's work should rely on the people, trust the people, learn from the people, respect the creation of the people, and accept the supervision of the people. This is the communists' world view, philosophy of life, and value, as well as the work method. (Jiang 2001, 181).

For communists, "relying on the people" is the world view of communists; "serving the people wholeheartedly" is the philosophy of life and value; "from the masses, to the masses" and "learn from the people" are the work methods (Wang 2001). Jiang inherited Mao's view of mass line as principles and guidelines in representing and building relationships with the masses. He further argued that the masses are not just creators of history, but also "creators of advanced productive forces and advanced culture" (Jiang 2006c, 281). Realizing the importance of the masses is the starting point for maintaining the connection with the masses and promoting their interests. When representing advanced productive forces and advanced culture, the Party must practice the mass line approach.

Within the concept of mass view, Jiang promoted a concept of mass perspective that is very different from Iris M. Young's (2002) formulation of social perspectives. Jiang's use of mass perspective, in consistency with the mass line approach, focuses on the representative's willingness and capability to see the specific needs and interests of the masses as they see it. In addition to representing the needs of masses, Jiang (2006b) asked party members and cadres to "keep close connection" to the masses and "think what the masses think and respond to their needs" (*xiang qunzhong zhi suoxiang, ji qunzhong zhi suoji*, 想群众之所想，急群众之所急) (365). This formulation is an ideological continuation of Mao's emphasis on gaining the truth about the masses' interests, which employs the Maoist epistemology and primary agency for a ruling party. These elements are of course absent in Young's account. Jiang added that the

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representative should put herself in the conditions of the masses to properly understand their interests.

Implicit in this ideological development is the acknowledgement of the increasing diversity of Chinese society in the reform era. Unlike class-based society, where different classes as social groups provide relatively consistent gauges of group interest, the use of social strata recognizes the complexity of social groups in China and the representatives, party members and cadres, are very likely have different perspectives in understanding the needs of masses from different social strata. Jiang (2006c) admitted that it is inevitable for the masses to have "diversified material interests and demands" with marketization and hence the party's policies should "protect and satisfy reasonable requests of the masses to realize their interests" (18). Therefore, in addition to listening to and accounting for the masses' input in the policy making process, the representatives should also put themselves in the shoes of the masses and understand their needs from their perspectives.

6.3. Performing MLR

Figure 6.1 outlines ideological developments of the CPC's ideology under Jiang's rule based on Freeden's (1996) ideological morphology. Ideological development paves the way for Jiang Zemin's strategies in establishing the CPC as the competent representative and leader of the nation. First, Jiang refines the relationship between the representative and the represented by defining the role of the CPC in the reform era by promoting the idea of "three represents", which portrays the CPC as the representative of the Chinese people, superseding the Maoist expression of vanguard of the working class. Second, following the mass line tradition, Jiang stresses the importance of party building in maintaining the connection between the representative and the represented. Third, Jiang draws the boundary for political and economic reform by contrasting the Chinese and Western system. Following Deng Xiaoping's rejection of Western style democracy, Jiang further laid out the structure and core of Chinese democracy. Lastly, Jiang set policy goals — the two centenary goals — for the Party as the representative claim made to the masses. These goals reflected the Party's determination of the high-level needs of the masses in the reform era.

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Figure 6.1: Morphology of the CPC's Ideology under Jiang Zemin

Core Concepts

Contradiction	Practice	Class
Conceptual Core Marxist dialectics	Conceptual Core Seek truth from facts No investigation, no right to speak	Conceptual Core Economic status

Mass line

Conceptual Core
From the masses, to the masses

Mass view

Revolution

Democracy (Socialist democracy)	Representation (Mass line representation)	Masses/people
Conceptual Core Democratic centralism	Conceptual Core From the masses, to the masses	

Keep up with the times (*yushi jujin*)

Development (Economic development)	Emancipation of minds (*jiefang sixiang*)	Social strata
Conceptual Core Cat theory	Stability	Conceptual Core Contributors to socialism

Adjacent concepts

Institutionalization	Two centenary goals	"Three represents"	Corruption control

Periphery concepts

Legend | Removed | modified/added

6.3.1. "Three represents" and new role of the CPC.

In a speech delivered during his tour in Guangdong Province in 2000, Jiang Zemin articulated "three represents" for the first time by reviewing the historical development of CPC:

> the reason our Party enjoys the people's support is that throughout the historical periods of revolution, construction and reform, it has always represented the development trend of China's advanced productive forces, the orientation of China's advanced culture, and the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the Chinese people. (Jiang 2006c, 2).

"Three represents" outlines Jiang's vision of CPC's role in the reform era and the Party's response to the challenges of CPC's rule: pluralization of Chinese society, decline of trust in CPC ideology, and corruption.

First, as discussed, marginalization of class in CPC ideology paves the way for the private sector to join the Party. "Three represents" directly backs up this change in two ways: stressing the close connection between economic development and productive forces and redefining the meaning of people in the CPC's political dictionary. On the one hand, the expression of representing advanced productive forces is intended to support economic development, which is a key adjacent concept in CPC ideology since the market reform era had begun (Jiang 2006c, 275). Jiang explained that to represent the advanced productive forces, the party's line and policies should "take economic development as the central task" and promote "the continuing development of productive forces and the continuing enhancement of [our] country's economic power" (Jiang 2006c, 273, 2).

However, Jiang did not give a clear definition of advanced productive forces beyond identifying that "science and technology is the first and foremost (*diyi* 第一) productive force" (Jiang 2006c, 261). Despite disagreements among them, scholars tend to believe that workers, peasants, and managers and technical staff in public and private sectors can represent the advanced productive forces (Zheng and Xue 2005; Li and Shao 2006). *Renmin Ribao* (*RMRB*, People's Daily 人民日报) published articles praising farmers, workers, and entrepreneurs from both public and private sector as representing the development of advanced productive forces (for example, RMRB 2001a, 2001b, 2002). From this perspective, if the Party represents advanced productive forces, it has

to include the entrepreneurs and workers from the private sector because of their contribution in developing productive forces, or as the *RMRB* stated, they also represent the advanced productive forces.

On the other hand, "three represents" promoted a class free conception of the people and shifted the goal of the CPC to "represent the interests of the majority of people." Mao Zedong's understanding of the people is based on class and which class can be counted as people is determined by the principal contradiction of the time (mostly workers and peasants, and sometimes petty bourgeoisie) (Guo 2016). Following his theory of contradiction, Mao (1977) suggested that the concept of people:

> varies in content in different countries and in different periods of history in a given country … [a]t … the period of building socialism, the classes, strata, and social groups which favour, support and work for the cause of socialist construction all come within the category of the people … social forces and groups … which are hostile to or sabotage socialist construction are all enemies of the people" (385).

Since class struggle is not "up to times" in the reform era, Jiang made two changes to Mao's definition of the people. As discussed, in talking about the people and "three represents," Jiang used social strata and constructors of socialism and watered down the influence of class in his formulation. Another change Jiang promoted is the distinction between people/friends and enemies of the people. Those who support socialism are friends or part of the people and those who resist socialism are enemies or not part of the people. In highlighting the aspect of constructor of socialism as the conceptual core of the people, Jiang Zemin (2006a) was not fully committed to Mao's dichotomy of friends and enemies, but instead, clearly pointed to three groups as enemies: "international hostile forces (*guoji didui shili* 国际敌对势力)", "criminals" (those with criminal offenses) and "separationists" (groups aiming to separate from China) (156, 237, 395). This clear definition of who does not belong to the people is another sign of Jiang's ideological de-emphasis of class and creation of an image of CPC's representation of the "majority" of the people.

6.3.2. Party building as the key to mass line representation

Mass line representation relies heavily on the moral motivation and capability of the representative to engage with the masses, to find out the interest to be represented,

and to make correct decisions in this regard. The crisis of the CPC, exacerbated by the increasing pluralization of Chinese society and corruption of cadres, is also the crisis of representation. A corrupted representative obviously does not practice the mass line approach to engage with the masses and address their concerns.

The situation is worsened by three factors. First, diversification of interests makes it harder for the representative to make correct decisions about which interests to represent. In Mao's era, the concept of class offered relatively clear guidance on the identification of interests based on class status. When Jiang Zemin claims that the party represents interests of the majority of the people in a broader sense, the resulting broader range of possible interests become more difficult to choose among for representatives. As Pye (2001) put it, in making this claim, the Chinese leadership ignores the divergence of "strong and competing interests" across China (48).

Second, the inclusion of private entrepreneurs, the wealthy section of the people, further complicates this issue because of the asymmetrical influence of wealth on political decisions. While election provides a clear and open process of interest aggregation, representatives in electoral democracies are still more responsive to the preferences and interests of the rich (Page et al. 2013; Gillens and Page 2014; Lupu and Warner 2021). In MLR, the aggregation of interests is completely dependent on the will and ability of the representative. When the representative is incompetent or corrupted, the distortion of representation will happen, and the interests of the masses are not attended to. Finally, Jiang's development of CPC ideology places even higher demands on the representative when he asks cadres to pay attention to mass view and represent the perspective of the masses.

Jiang was fully aware of the potential disconnection between cadres and the masses and the importance of capable representative in practicing mass line representation. He repeatedly stressed that without honest cadres, the Party and government "will seriously be alienated from the masses and will be at the edge of perishing" (Jiang 2006c, 175). Hence party building is among the major themes in Jiang's writings and speeches. Jiang's strategy in party building is twofold. First, he initiated the "three stresses" (*sanjiang* 三讲) campaign — stress study, stress politics, stress rectitude — to put education of cadres at the "prominent position" in party building (Jiang 2006a, 483). Jiang Zemin stated that the primary reason for "negative and chaotic

phenomenon" in government is the lack of leadership. The first step to address the issue is to improve the "competency, responsibility, and work level" of cadres through education (483). From this perspective, "three represents" itself is also a party building campaign. While the "three stresses" focuses on the problems facing the Party, "three represents" outlines the goals and tasks of the Party in the reform era — shifting from a vanguard party of peasants and workers to a governing party of popular interests. The CPC's understanding of its role was brought to the attention of all cadres through the highly coordinated and thematically framed party building campaigns. In this process, cadres were made aware of the party line and thus expectations for their work as representatives.

Second, Jiang did not hesitate to discipline corrupted officials. Sanctioning corrupt cadres to hold representatives accountable had been the CPC's strategy since Mao's era. In the reform era, it took on a new meaning and was intended to play a crucial role in restoring people's confidence in the CPC in the aftermath of the 1989 protest (Deng 1993, 297, 313-4). As noted by scholars, widespread corruption had exacerbated social unrest and threatened stability in China (Pei 2007; Mi and Liu 2014). This gave the CPC a strong motivation to punish dysfunctional cadres. More importantly, the CPC continued to believe that having capable and motivated representatives is the key to the proper functioning of mass line representation. All the four steps in the mechanism of MLR — investigation, aggregation, decision, and explanation — demand responsible commitment from the representatives. A corrupted representative means a corrupted representative-represented relationship, which undermines MLR and credibility of the CPC.

Therefore, under Jiang's rule, the CPC was committed to curb corruption with disciplinary institutions. According to the reports presented by the Central Commission for Discipline Investigation (CCDI), the internal regulation and discipline organization of CPC, during the 15th NPC (1992-1997), Commission for Discipline Investigation (CDI) at central and local levels punished over 669,300 officials and the number rises by over 26% to 846,150 during the five years of the 16th NPC (1997-2002).[48] The number of

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[48] Like other party institutions, Commission for Discipline Investigation (CDI) operates at different levels from central to townships. CCDI's reports to the 15th and 16th National People's Congress are available at CCDI's website:

provincial and ministry-level officials convicted also increased from 78 to 98, about 3% of all officials at this level.

However, the CPC's efforts in containing corruption may not have been so effective as the numbers indicated. First, the CPC's anti-corruption tactics have little impact on either containing corruption among higher-level officials or tackling problems behind corruption (O'Brien and Li 1999; Tanner 2000; Wedeman 2005). Second, the anti-corruption institutions selectively punished convicted representatives (Manion 1997; Zhu 2015). The selectiveness of disciplinary activities compromised the effectiveness and credibility of CDIs in enforcing accountability. The other side of the story, as noted by Zhu (2015), is that selective punishments also create uncertainties for corrupt cadres. The prospect of being prosecuted or disciplined by the Party can deter representatives from not carrying out their responsibilities. Finally, CDIs offer only posterior punishment to corrupt representatives. It is costly because when the representatives were convicted, the damage to the represented and the CPC has been done. The CPC's corruption control efforts could have positive impacts on the operation of MLR when the Party enforced accountability on the representatives. However, the seemingly endless cases of corruption cast doubt on the Party's determination and ability to control corruption.

6.3.3. Defending the Chinese political system

Alexander (2010) suggests that political performance in democracies is about comparison and contestation, from which good and bad performances are determined. Promotion of "three represents" and efforts in party building present the CPC's hard work in developing its ideology and maintaining mass line representation. Yet to show that the socialist path is the correct or better option for China, the Party draws comparisons with Western liberal democracy, in the sense of democratic elections and division of power.

Deng Xiaoping (1993) believed that such arrangements are inappropriate for China because the "condition [of direct election in central government] is not mature" and direct election of heads of government "is limited to towns and counties" (242). Deng contended that the CPC's leadership is necessary to coordinate different interests and

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https://www.ccdi.gov.cn/xxgk/hyzl/201307/t20130726_114119.html and
https://www.ccdi.gov.cn/xxgk/hyzl/201307/t20130726_114134.html.

make the best decision for the development of the country (220, 241-43, 319). He further suggested that division of power is practically separation of governments that causes "internal fights and troubles" (195). In addition to the problems of capitalist democracy, the superiority of socialist path is also exemplified in its ability to deliver economic outcomes and reduce poverty in China since "poverty is not socialism" (255). More importantly, the CPC's ability to drive economic development is the sign of legitimacy of CPC's choice of socialism (317).

While inheriting Deng Xiaoping's rejection of liberalization and capitalist democracy, Jiang Zemin spent more time clarifying the meaning of democracy in China. Following Deng, Jiang (2006c) stated that Western democracy is not "as beautiful as it is publicized" because "big interest groups can summon wind and call for rain (*hufeng huanyu* 呼风唤雨) and ordinary citizens have little impact [on political decisions]" (237). By contrast, China's socialist democracy is "fundamentally the same with sticking to the party's mass view and mass line" (Jiang 2006a, 641). That is, democracy is "listening to the voices of the masses and caring for their needs" when making collective decisions (642).

Institutionally, democracy takes four forms in China: direct electoral democracy at village level, elected representatives at people's congresses (direct election at county level and indirect election at prefectural level and above), supervision of representatives in people's consultative conferences, and intra-party democracy that takes the form of democratic centralism. Democratic centralism encourages participation to provide information for decision-making within the collective leadership.

While elections are involved in some institutions that constitute the framework of democracy in China, it should be noted that it is the mass line approach that drives the operation of these four forms of representation. That is, the democratic responsibility of representatives and government officials is to gather input from the masses on policy issues and make decisions that benefit the majority of the people. Dickson (2021) noted that the perception of democracy in China is neither procedural nor highlighting values such as freedom or equal rights. It is outcome based, and "improved governance, a growing economy, and better quality of life are seen as evidence" of democracy (242).

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The more fundamental difference between Jiang's vision of democracy and western democracy, however, lies not in the emphasis on procedural or outcome. It is in the slightly different problems that the two systems are trying to address. While western democracy, in theory, focuses on empowering the citizens' active involvement in the decision-making process, Chinese democracy, based on mass line approach, places more responsibility on the shoulders of representatives and cadres, by expecting them to engage with the masses and find out the best solution to collective issues. It focuses on whether political leaders and representatives can deliver policy outcomes to the masses.

6.3.4. Set clear policy goals for the Party

The last strategy that Jiang utilized to rebuild the relationship between representative and represented was to set clear expectations for the CPC. Goal setting is a tradition for the CPC and has its root in the CPC's history and ideology. Based on the judgement on principal contradiction, Mao Zedong set two goals of the Chinese nation in the revolutionary war period: 1) to overturn the "three mountains" — imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucratic-capitalism — and 2) to lead the country to national independence. Ideologically, it is the logical expectation of the CPC with its emphasis on the concept of practice, where "practice is the sole criterion of truth," and the mass line approach, where the Party is committed to promote the interests of the masses. In 1997, Jiang Zemin followed this tradition and set economic goals for the party in reform era called "two centenaries" in the 15th NPC (Jiang 2006b, 4; Jiang 2006c, 414). At the centenary of the founding of CPC (2021), China will basically accomplish industrialization (*jiben shixian gongyehua* 基本实现工业化) and build a well-off society (*xiaokang shehui* 小康社会). At the centenary of the founding of PRC (2049), China will basically accomplish modernization and become a moderately developed country (*zhongdeng fada guojia* 中等发达国家).

Setting these broad policy goals has three implications in the Chinese context. First, it is a decontested version of CPC's claim to represent the Chinese nation. As discussed, the CPC's representative claim portrays itself as the leader of national rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. The two-centenaries goals specify what national rejuvenation means in Jiang's era. Second, it is a more concrete representative claim by the CPC at meta-level. It serves a role similar to a broad electoral mandate in Western

democracies. As a claim made to the masses, the CPC promised to deliver the two-centenaries goals and the masses can use the promise to judge the performance of the CPC. Finally, when economic performance matters for the legitimacy of CPC, the two-centenaries set and manage the expectation of the masses. The Chinese political culture exhibits a tradition of paternalistic responsibility. In a sense, laying down what the responsibility is in a sense substantialized the responsibility. Such responsibility, of course, is still vague at the national level because terms such as industrialization and well-off society are subject to contestation at any given time, and to re-interpretation by the CPC over time.

6.4. Institutional development in Jiang's era

China's decision to implement market reform created a crisis for the CPC's rule and its claim to represent the proletariat. On the one hand, to deliver its promises on economic performance, China had to keep marketization and opening up to the world. This meant further diversification of Chinese society and the ideological challenge from liberal political thought. On the other hand, the room for political reform was very limited for two reasons. First, the Party's ideology, despite Jiang's marginalization of class, does not support democracy through system-wide competitive elections and a multi-party system because of its emphasis on the Party's leadership. For the CPC, the mass line approach appears to be the only viable path to allow certain levels of participation from the masses while maintaining the leadership role of the CPC. Second, stability remained a major concern for the Party in considering political reform. As Deng (1993) said, political reform must be "cautious" because "the country is so large and the situation is so complicated" and reform will have "many obstacles" considering the number of people involved in it (176-77).

In Jiang's construction of the relationship between the representative and the represented, he redefined two components of representation — who is the representative and who is the represented — with the inclusion of the private sector in the Party. Private entrepreneurs can join the party as both representative and represented. For the content and mechanism of representation, Jiang stuck to interest representation through mass line approach. Correspondingly, institutional development

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in Jiang's era evolves around strengthening mass line representation and holding representatives accountable through party building and discipline.

6.4.1. Re-introduction of mass line

As the key mechanism of representation in China, mass line approach was not strictly practiced during the reform era partly because of the increasing corruption in the Party. In 1982, only three years after the decision to open the domestic market, Deng (1983) noted that "a considerable number of cadres were corrupted" and the Party is in danger of losing power if such a trend was not stopped (402-3). Jiang's strategy to rebuild the cadre-mass (or representative-represented) relationship was to adjust the role and task of the CPC and re-introduce mass line approach to the Party in a formalized manner. In 1990, the 13th National Congress of the CPC passed a resolution titled "Decision of the Central Committee of the CPC to strengthen the connection between the Party and the Masses" (*Zhonggong Zhongyang Guanyu Jiaqiang Dang tong Renmin Qunzhong Lianxi de Jueding* 中共中央关于加强党同人民群众联系的决定, the Decision hereafter).[49] While re-iterating the core components of mass line and its role in the reform era, the Decision made three new statements to anchor mass line as the key of CPC's institutional arrangements for representation.

First, the Decision formally linked mass line approach to Chinese democracy. As discussed, Jiang sorted out democracy in China by institutions: village committees, PCs, PPCCs, and the Party. The overarching principle for operating democracy in these institutions is the mass line approach. On paper, Chinese democracy does not appear to be strange to Western observers. It also emphasizes in the constitution (and restated in the Decision) that power of the Party comes from the masses and the masses exercise their power through PCs. But scholars are not convinced by this claim. CPC's rhetoric of democracy and selective implementation of features of democracy are part of its strategies to garner support and strengthen its legitimacy (Shambaugh 2008a; Fewsmith 2013; Cho 2021). Even for the implemented democratic mechanisms, CPC's leadership role enables it to either control the agenda or limit the policy options for elected bodies (He 2007; He and Warren 2011). These concerns are valid when democracy is

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[49] Full text of the Decision is available online:
http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/64168/64566/65389/4441853.html.

considered as empowering citizens in making collective decisions. Yet the CPC's substantiation of democracy in the mass line approach diverted the meaning of democracy in the Chinese context into another direction.

The priority of the CPC's mass line approach is not empowerment of citizens. Rather, it is an issue- or outcome-based approach that focuses on addressing the concerns of the masses. From the perspective of representation, it highlights informative inclusion and consequential responsiveness. The masses are empowered in the sense of having their concerns heard by the representative through the representative's investigation efforts. Voices of the represented provide information for the representative to understand the principal contradiction locally. The representative then can make a decision based on her ability to mediate the complex network of interests in the Chinese context (e.g., overlapping institutions, central and local relations). Following the mass line approach, the representative should give justifications of the decision to the masses by "going back to" the masses.

Similarly, democracy based on the mass line approach aims primarily at making good decisions about how to promote the interests of the masses. In order to solve the "primary question" of "ensuring that decisions and their execution are in the interest of the people," the Party needs to establish a "democratic and scientific decision-making and execution procedure" (the Decision). Mass line approach is the key for making and implementing decisions in both government (intra-party democracy as democratic centralism) and parliament (the PCs with direct or indirect elections). As discussed, democracy in the Chinese context is given a different meaning compared to Western democracy (as criticized by scholars). Chinese democracy and representation, following the mass line approach, promote a different set of normative ideals. Chapter 9 will focus on this issue.

Lack of institutional support proved to be fatal for the practice of the mass line approach in the reform era. Therefore, in addition to connecting mass line with democracy, the Decision spells out the institutionalization of the mass line approach in three areas, to address what Jiang and his senior leadership officials realized was a problematic failure of representation under the CPC's rule. First, the Decision issued requirements for cadres to practice mass line approach as the foundation of making policies. This includes a mandatory engagement requirement of cadres to ensure that

they understand the needs of the masses on the one hand and building channels of engagement in various venues of representation on the other hand. Following Mao's demands on leaders at different levels of government, the Decision pushed them to engage with the masses and conduct investigations on typical issues to learn from the masses. Based on the mass line approach, information gathered from the masses helps representatives to understand principal contradiction at local levels and to make policy decisions accordingly.

Moreover, the Decision asked governments above the county level to develop plans and institutions to ensure that all cadres can connect with the masses through investigations, solving outstanding issues (*jiejue tuchu wenti* 解决突出问题) and serving temporary assignments (*guazhi* 挂职) in grassroot governments. *Guazhi*, as the CPC's approach to train cadres, also serves the function of connecting with the masses. For example, in 2009, the National Bureau of Letter and Calls accepted over 30,000 cadres in temporary assignments, which helped build cadres' ability to understand and address the needs of the masses (Xinhua 2009).

Second, party building was promoted as the key to maintain the connection between cadres and the masses. This included two areas: educating party members and cadres on the mass line approach and disciplining those who failed to follow the approach in their work with the masses. In Mao's era, party schools were entrusted with the task of improving the moral conduct of the cadres through ideological education (Marxism and Maoism). In the reform era, party schools have played a more comprehensive role in cadre education. In addition to ideological education, the party school system offers a wide range of training programs for cadres and party members to improve their administrative abilities (Shambaugh 2008b; Pieke 2009; Lee 2015).

Moreover, party schools are also think tanks for both central and local governments (Fewsmith 2003; Shambaugh 2008b) that have the capacity to influence government decisions. In effect, the party school system provides another channel for the masses to participate and influence the decision-making process. Researchers in the party school system are expected to follow the mass line approach and conduct investigations in their research, which becomes a channel for the masses to voice their

concerns. Research reports prepared by party schools are also a channel for the cadres to learn about the needs of the masses (Tsai and Liao 2017).

Third, the Decision introduced a supervision system that involves intra-party mechanisms, external supervision, and media supervision. The supervision system was envisioned to have three levels. The intra-party mechanism includes the democratic meeting of the party organization and internal supervision organs (the CDI).[50] Thus democratic meeting is a meeting of criticism and self-criticism, where party leaders are expected to reflect on their conduct and accept supervision by other party members. External supervision has two components: supervision of the PCs and the government (procuratorate). The Decision also asked the party committee to support and encourage media to reflect opinions of the masses and criticize government wrong-doing. The supervision system was intended to provide another layer of institutional support to ensure that party members and cadres (representatives) will practice mass line approach and perform their responsibilities.

It is doubtful that this plan for institutionalizing the mass line approach had much effect. As will be shown in the next section and Chapter 9, this strategy proved to be ineffective because the three issues that Jiang faced — decline of faith in Marxism and Communist ideology, diversified interests of Chinese society, and corruption — were not fully resolved and still lingered to test Hu Jintao, Jiang's successor, in his rule from 2003 to 2012. As discussed in Chapter 5, the Party's effort to educate and discipline representatives potentially biased the judgement of representatives in representing the interest of the masses. Jiang (2006c) stated that "members and cadres of the CPC must excise power properly on behalf of the Party and masses" (184).

From the CPC's perspective, this is not a problem. The Decision asserted that being accountable to the party is the same as being accountable to the people. The logic behind this claim is relatively straightforward — the Party represents interest of the majority of the people and does not have any self-interest (Jiang 2006c, 280). Therefore, the interest of the people is the interest of the Party.

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[50] An interim version of the Regulation on CPC Internal Supervision was passed about 14 years later at the National Congress of the CPC in 2004 and final version was passed in 2016.

In practice, the system of representation relies on the representative's ability to navigate through the multiplicity of conflicting interests. The intention of party building and discipline is to encourage the representatives to practice the mass line approach in MLR. However, when the representative has the autonomy to make decisions (with little check from the masses) and the CPC has more power to hold her accountable, the representative would easily prioritize the Party's policy initiatives over interests of the masses (if the two are in conflict). Moreover, the cadre evaluation and promotion system further incentivize representatives to stick to the Party's policy goals, be it economic development or stability maintenance (Shih 2012; Heberer and Trappel 2013; Gao 2015; Chen et al. 2017).

6.4.2. Institutionalization of PCs

Jiang Zemin's emphasis on the mass line approach was also expressed in the institutionalization and empowerment of the People's Congresses (PCs) at both the central and local levels.[51] Institutionalization becomes a regular expression in the reform era describing political reform and policies in China. For example, in talking about corruption, Jiang argues that the "anti-corruption work should gradually be institutionalized and regulated [*fazhi hua* 法制化]" (Jiang 2006c, 188). Institutionalization of the key representation system, People's Congresses (PCs) at various levels of governance, focuses on two roles: legislation and oversight.

In Mao's era, the PCs largely disappeared in Chinese politics due to their failure to consistently gather information from the masses and their limited function in the political system (O'Brien 1990, 80; Xu 2005). Institutionalization of PCs started after the revision of the Constitution in the reform era, which affirms the lawmaking and supervision functions of PCs. For legislation, the purpose is to ensure that governments and PCs are operating according to the law and that legislation and decision made at PCs "better reflects the will of the people" (Jiang 2006c, 554). The 7th NPC and its Standing Committee alone (1988-1993) passed 87 bills and regulations in other forms,

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[51] The institutionalization of China's political system starts almost together with market reform. Scholars have identified two areas that are becoming more and more formal in Chinese politics: the succession of senior leadership (Dittmer 2003; Bo 2007) and the major congresses (Lee 2010). This section focuses on the latter.

which takes up 41% of all bills passed since 1978 (NPC 1993). In 2000, the 9th NPC passed the *Legislation Law of the P.R.C.* to further clarify and regulate the authority and procedure in legislation. The NPC's ability to pass bills is a sign of its resurgence in the reform era. The revival of the law-making function of the PCs was also noticed in local PCs (Xia 2007; Cho 2009).

The oversight power of PCs was re-affirmed in the 2nd session of the 5th NPC and implemented innovatively by PCs at different levels (Zhu 2014; Han 2018). PCs exert a strong influence on the executive, courts, and procuratorate (prosecutor's office) through their institutionalized oversight power on the appointment of senior officials and handling complaints from the people (MacFarquhar 1998; Xia 2000; Cho 2002). The institutionalization of PCs empowers them to check the power of the CPC and the government, making it an "iron stamp" in the Chinese political system (Tanner 1994; Cho 2009; Chen 2016). Correspondingly, representatives in PCs during this era were enjoying power and autonomy in carrying out their duties.

In addition to that, Jiang's institutionalization of PCs focused on the roles and responsibilities of representatives. In 1992, the 7th NPC passed the *Representative Law* (*Daibiao Fa* 代表法) that specified the activities and responsibilities of representatives during and beyond meetings. The *Representative Law* reflects Jiang's focus on the mass line approach. Despite mentioning that representatives are elected, it stresses that the representative should maintain a close connection with the masses. That is, unlike liberal democracies, elections in PCs do not translate voters' preferences to the representative. Instead, the representative is expected to practice mass line approach and follow the mechanism of MLR (investigation, aggregation, decision, and explanation) to establish the connection with the masses. In Jiang's account, such connection serves the purpose of gathering information from the masses and addressing their concerns.

Local PCs were given more autonomy to experiment with different approaches. In Hongkou (虹口) District of Shanghai (上海), for example, the PC passed a regulation that specifies the frequency, processes, and methods of the MLR connection.[52] In

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[52] See *Shanghaishi Hongkou Qu Renmin Daibiao Dahui Daibiao Lianxi Xuanmin Banfa* (*Measures for Representatives to Connect with the Electorate of Hongkou District People's Congress, Shanghai*), available at https://www.hkrd.gov.cn/c/2008-12-24/495966.shtml htm (accessed January 9, 2023).

addition to general requirements similar to those spelled out in the 1990 Decision, the PC of Hongkou District listed the approaches that the representative can use to connect with the masses: panel discussion, visits to the voters, reception of voter's visits, and setting up mailboxes for citizen input. More importantly, on annual basis, the representative should report on her work to the voters in an open public meeting and respond to questions during her report. Mao's formulation of the mass line approach requires the cadre to give account to the masses on decisions she has made. The Hongkou PC's annual report of the representative established this accountability mechanism in an institutionalized form. It also instructed the representative to organize engagement activities with the masses on specific topics for once or twice each quarter.

Such experiments of local PCs were efforts to provide more institutional details to the mass line approach. However, since election also exist in PCs, those experiments in effect also enhance the electoral bond between the representative and the voters, despite the fact that election in PCs may fail to meet the standards of election in liberal democracies. When election-based representation prevails in its competition with MLR, as shown in the next section, the price could be costly for the CPC because electoral representation does not rely on the leadership of the Party.

6.4.3. Making the mass line approach two-way

As noted earlier, the key problem with mass line representation is found in the tension between MLR's high requirements for representatives and the Party's ability to produce competent representatives through party building. The CPC has full control of the party disciplinary system and the cadre promotion system, which function as the accountability mechanism for MLR. When the CPC cannot hold representatives accountable to the masses, the autonomy of representatives in the representative relationship can undermine the CPC's claim to represent the majority of the people.

In Mao's conception, the connection between the representative and the masses is mostly one-way with the representative dominating the relationship. Party building was designed to educate, motivate, and penalize representatives to ensure that the one-way traffic is properly executed, namely, following the four steps of mass line representation: investigation, aggregation, discussion and decision, and implementation and persuasion. However, representatives are always situated in a nested administrative, legislative, and

party system, which mediates their decision on whose interest to represent. By contrast, the masses have limited resources to support their active participation in politics; in particular, they lack the resources to hold their representatives accountable.

Under Jiang's rule, the appeal system (*xinfang* 信访) is designed as a complementary institution to the mass line approach that offers the masses the opportunity to participate in the political processes. The Bureau of Letters and Calls (BLC, *Xinfang Ju* 信访局) at different levels of government are responsible for handling citizens' complaints and suggestions about cadres and local issues.[53] In 1957, the central government asked that governments at all levels should "have at least one leader to handle the letters and calls from the masses" (RMRB 1957). Jiang Zemin contributed to the institutionalization of *xinfang* system with the *Regulation on Letter and Visit* (RLV, Xinfang Tiaoli, 信访条例) in 1995.[54]

The *RLV* protects the masses' rights of participation and standardizes the process and responsibility of handling letters and visits from the masses. In fact, the *RLV* encourages the masses to report the misbehaviour of cadres by stating that the accuser "should be rewarded" for providing useful suggestions or reporting unlawful practices of the government when it contributes to "improving the functioning of the government and protecting public interest."

Also guided by the mass line approach, the BLC system was considered by the CPC as another tool for participation of the masses (O'Brien and Li 1995; Chen 2011). It allows and encourages the masses to actively participate in politics through observing the behaviour of the cadres and reporting their wrong-doing by writing a letter to or visiting one of the BLCs. Granting the masses the right and channel to express their grievances is a form of empowerment that slightly changes the power relationship in the

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[53] The appeal system was first formally introduced in 1951 and institutionalized in the form of BLC at different levels of government in 1982. For a review of the development of the BLC system, see Diao 1996 and Feng 2012.

[54] The *RLV* was revised in 2005 to further clarified the process and responsibility in handling letters, calls, and visits from the masses. The 2005 version can be found at http://www.gov.cn/zwgk/2005-05/23/content_271.htm. The 1995 version is archived by Wikisource at https://zh.m.wikisource.org/zh-hans/%E4%BF%A1%E8%AE%BF%E6%9D%A1%E4%BE%8B_(1995%E5%B9%B4).

mass line approach. Instead of waiting to be engaged by the cadre, the masses can connect to BLCs to voice their concerns. The BLC, in turn, must respond to the masses within 90 days according to the *RLV*. More importantly, the appeal system creates room for collective action that could attract more public attention and create more pressure on the BLC and corresponding government agencies to respond (O'Brien and Li 1995; Chen 2011; Liao and Tsai 2019). Ideally, when combined with MLR, the appeal system can generate surrogate accountability, with the BLCs holding the representatives accountable on behalf of the masses (Rubenstein 2007).

According to the CPC, the appeal system was designed to empower the masses and facilitate more of a two-way connection in the representative relationship. However, the effectiveness of *xinfang* is limited due to the way it is designed and the network of institutions in which it is situated (Yu 2005; Chen 2011, 95-109). On the one hand, the BLCs simply lack sufficient staff to handle the number of cases that flood in. On the other hand, when working on the selected cases, they have been ineffective in investigation and providing solutions because of "intra-bureaucratic relations" (Chen 2011, 109). BLCs could only provide recommendations to relevant government agencies regarding specific appeals and supervise the execution of recommendations (Xu and Chen 2010). They do not have the power to directly sanction unresponsive agencies.

More importantly, the appeal system, like mass line, is also designed to operate under the leadership of the CPC. Therefore, in BLC appeals the CPC's agenda usually prevails when compared to the preferences of the masses. The CPC's increasing emphasis on stability, for example, has been translated to the silence of *xinfang* by local agencies. The masses who filed complaints to government have been considered as "troublemakers" that constitute as elements of instability in the society and consequently discouraged from *xinfang* (sometimes through coercive measures) (Yu 2005; Chen 2011, Chapter 4, Gui et al. 2016). The appeal system is designed to include the masses in politics by creating channels for their voices to be heard, which, consequently, should contribute to social stability. Ironically, in practice, scholars notice that it works mostly the other around: voices of the masses are silenced for stability concerns by local governments (O'Brien and Li 1995; Yu 2005; Liao and Tsai 2019).

The CPC is fully aware of this trend. In an interview in 2015, Zhang Enxi (张恩玺) the then Deputy Director of the National Bureau of Letters and Calls, stressed that

masses who file complaints through BLCs should not be treated as the target of maintaining stability (or "troublemakers") (Zhongguo Zhengfu Wang 2015). As Yu Jianrong notes, simply suppressing voices through BLCs is a rigid and not sustainable approach in maintaining stability (Yu 2012). The government needs to be more resilient and inclusive to release the pressure building up for public participation and interest expression.

Local governments have adopted different innovations in enhancing the role of BLCs in this regard (Tian 2012). For example, Guangdong province established a one-stop platform to process appeals from the masses and enforce the resolution of the appeals (RMRB 2010). Chengdu municipal government (in Sichuan Province) even made a "troublemaker" named Li Chenghua an official in BLC to handle complaints from the masses because he was "familiar about their mentalities" (Renminwang 2014). Li, of course, resigned after 4 months because BLC has little power to solve problems reported by the masses.

6.5. Conclusion

Jiang Zemin's institutional development prioritized the defence of the Chinese political system as his response to the ideological and institutional challenges brought up by the marketization of Chinese economy. The mass line approach sits at the core of Jiang's effort in creating a Chinese style representation — mass line representation — and a Chinese style democracy — mass line democracy. The mass line approach makes the Chinese political system unique in comparison with liberal democracies. In its ideal form, with virtuous and competent cadres and representatives, the mass line approach can deliver what it promised — the wellbeing of the masses. However, the challenge of producing such cadres and representatives is exacerbated by the corruption of cadres and pluralization of interests and beliefs. Jiang's effort to restore confidence in MLR focused on institutionalizing the mass line approach. On the one hand, he stressed the importance of party building to equip cadres and representatives with proper skills and incentives to practice mass line approach. On the other hand, he tried to expand the channels of participation for the masses with the clarification of procedure and responsibilities in handling appeals from the masses. At the abstract level, the CPC is successful considering the economic outcome the Party delivered. Yet

it is hard to say that Jiang was successful in strengthening the connection between the cadres and the masses. This was due to the drawbacks of mass line approach *per se* and the inherent problems with the institutions Jiang developed. Hu Jintao, as Jiang's successor, had his own vision in coping with this challenge.

Chapter 7.
Hu's Responses to Pluralism: Marriage between Maoism and Confucianism

Deng's market reform, while successfully leading China to the fast-track of economic development, created social issues and ideological vacuums that challenge the legitimacy and stability of the CPC's rule. The increasing diversification of Chinese society and the decline of faith in the CPC's ideology added to the crisis of the CPC and representation in China. Incompetent and corrupt cadres stagnated the CPC's efforts in promoting the mass line approach as the connection between the representative and the represented. Jiang Zemin chose to institutionalize the mass line approach and the appeal system in addressing these challenges but was not very successful. Hu Jintao, succeeding Jiang, opted for a different strategy in performing the CPC's claims of representation in a more and more pluralistic society. Instead of defending the CPC's ideology straightforwardly, Hu focused on the intersection of the CPC's ideology and Confucianism to justify his search for alternatives to the mass line approach. Under the banner of *minben*, or people first, local governments in Hu's era enjoyed more autonomy in experimenting with and implementing Western style democratic institutions. These experiments, however, further exposed the tension between the elitist logic of MLR and populist logic of liberal forms of representation.

7.1. Jiang Zemin's legacies and Hu Jintao's responses

Jiang had proven his ability in delivering strong economic performances, which is vital to keep CPC's legitimacy for both Deng's claim that "poverty is not socialism" and Jiang's clams that the Party represents advanced productive forces.[55] Yet as discussed, Jiang's strategies in rebuilding the connection between the representatives and the represented were not very successful for two reasons. On the one hand, mass line representation demands high moral commitment and the ability to handle complex and

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[55] World Bank's data shows that China's GPD in current US dollar quadrupled under Jiang's rule from 1989 to 2002. See
https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?locations=CN.

conflicting interests from representatives. On the other hand, the nested institutional environment — the directives of the party and relationship among bureaucratic agencies — undermines the CPC's efforts in producing more responsive representatives. In addition to the crises that Jiang faced, Hu Jintao was left to deal with two additional problems: uneven economic development and intensifying mass incidents.

7.1.1. New problems Jiang introduced

Jiang's policy on economic development was twofold: "going out" (*zouchuqu* 走出去) and "bringing in" (*yinjinlai* 引进来), namely, exportation and foreign investment. The policy is undoubtedly successful with over 8% annual GDP growth under Jiang's rule. Because of the geographical advantage and government's regional focus in implementation, the policy benefited coastal provinces much more than inland provinces, creating and widening a development gap between the two regions (Wang and Hu 1999; Huang 2008, Chapter 3; Fu et al. 2021).[56] As numbers from the National Bureau of Statistics show, in 2002, per capita GDP in coastal regions was over twice as high as in central and western provinces. Nominal GDP in those provinces is on average over 2% more than inland provinces.[57] From the perspective of economic development, it was Hu's task to balance development among regions so that the government's claims about economic development were also valid in central and western provinces.

Uneven development also provided opportunities for political reform. As discussed, Jiang's reworking of the mass line approach was not very successful. It became Hu's job to provide an account of representation and interpretation of the relationship between the representative and the represented. On this end, Hu's task is not as difficult as Jiang's for two reasons. First, when Jiang took office in 1989, he was

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[56] Wang and Hu (1999) further point out the decline of extractive capacities of the central government as the main reason for uneven economic development among provinces. This in turn undermines the central government's redistributive ability.

[57] Numbers of uneven development among provinces in China can be found in the article published by the National Bureau of Statistics in 2004: "Empirical Analysis of the Regional Development Gap (Woguo Quyu Fazhan Chaju de Shizheng Fenxi)." Available at http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjzs/tjsj/tjcb/zggqgl/200403/t20040315_37437.html. Accessed Feb 20, 2022. The article also suggested reasons for the development gap: geographics, culturally conservative in inland provinces, policy advantage and active private sector in coastal areas, and difference in education levels.

presented with a dire choice between liberal democracy and Chinese socialism. Jiang chose to defend socialism and can be rated as successful for the economic development he delivered. Consequently, Hu had more freedom in calibrating the political system and finding answers to the problem Jiang left behind. Moreover, modernization theories anticipate democratization or the shift of political values favourable to liberal democracy with social and economic development (Lipset 1959; Diamond et al. 1999; Inglehart and Welzel 2005).[58] Rapid economic development in eastern coastal provinces provided an opportunity for experimentation with and development of democratic institutions in this region. Indeed, in addition to the implementation of village election in the late 1980s, practices of deliberative democracy were also adopted at about the same time (Leib and He 2006, 3). It was up to Hu to figure out whether liberal democracy could offer alternatives to or complement the mass line approach.

Another problem that Hu faced was the soaring number of mass incidents, namely, social incidents such as protests, gatherings, sit-ins, and riots. Despite Deng and Jiang's emphasis on stability, lack of effective measures to enforce the practice of mass line approach left some of the masses' concerns unattended. The malfunctioning of MLR, combined with uneven development, made mass incidents no longer negligible in the eyes of the CPC leadership. In a report published by the Ministry of Public Security General Office Research Department (2019), the number of mass incidents increased by 56.9% from 1997 to 1998 and participants in these incidents increased by 65.6% (6). The Organization Department of Sichuan Provincial Party Committee (ODSPPC) reported similar increases. Compared to 1998, the number of mass incidents involving more than 50 participants in Sichuan Province increased by 141.9% and the number of participants increased by 156.6% in 1999 (ODSPPC 2001, 285). Scholars observed similar trends with the number of mass incidents surged to 87,000 in 2005, from 8,700 in 1993 (O'Brien and Stern 2008, 12).

A rising number of mass incidents does not simply challenge the CPC's effort in maintaining political stability and reforging the cadres-mass relationship through its mass

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[58] While this is not the topic of this dissertation, it should be noted that modernization theory is not without challenges. Przeworski et al. (2000), for example, find that economic development is not necessarily associated with a transition to liberal democracy. The effect is further dependent on the type of international system (Boix 2011) and whether economic development brings cultural shifts (Ross 2001).

line approach. Mass incidents have become the focal point of an informal channel for interest articulation, aggregation, and representation (Chen 2011). In the CPC's formulation, this role is supposed to be played by mass line representation. Yet when the mass line approach fails to perform its role, citizens sometimes become self-appointed representatives in the contentious alternative of protests and petitions.

More frequently and more effectively, taking advantage of conflicting interests between central and local government, protesters usually work with government sponsored organizations (Chen and Xu 2011) or nongovernmental organizations and activist journalists (Mertha 2008; Cai 2010) to better articulate their interests and influence policy outcomes (O'Brien and Li 2006; Heurlin 2016). The burden of maintaining stability and legitimacy, on the other hand, pushes cadres to respond to the grievances of protestors and adjust policies accordingly (Cai 2010). From this perspective, mass incidents become the medium of making competing claims to the CPC's claims of representation through mass line approach. This is another challenge that the CPC had to resolve in the increasing diversification of society. In addition to the multiplicity of interests, Chinese citizens were looking for new methods of interest expression, especially when mass line representation failed.

7.1.2. Hu's responses to new challenges

Jiang Zemin's focus on the first of the "three represents" created two new issues for Hu Jintao: uneven development and mass incidents. Uneven economic development leads to inequality and hence political instability, which is shown in the rising number of mass incidents (Wang 2006). In Freeden's (1996) terms, Hu's ideological responses unfolded at the adjacency of the CPC's ideology, with a focus on new policy orientations (Figure 7.1). His contribution is summarized in two expressions: scientific outlook of development (SOD, *kexu fanzhan guan* 科学发展观) and harmonious society (*hexie shehui* 和谐社会). Instead of working on the CPC's ideology (as Jiang did), Hu chose to identify and locate the commonalities between the Marxist and Maoist tradition and

Figure 7.1: Morphology of the CPC's ideology under Hu Jintao
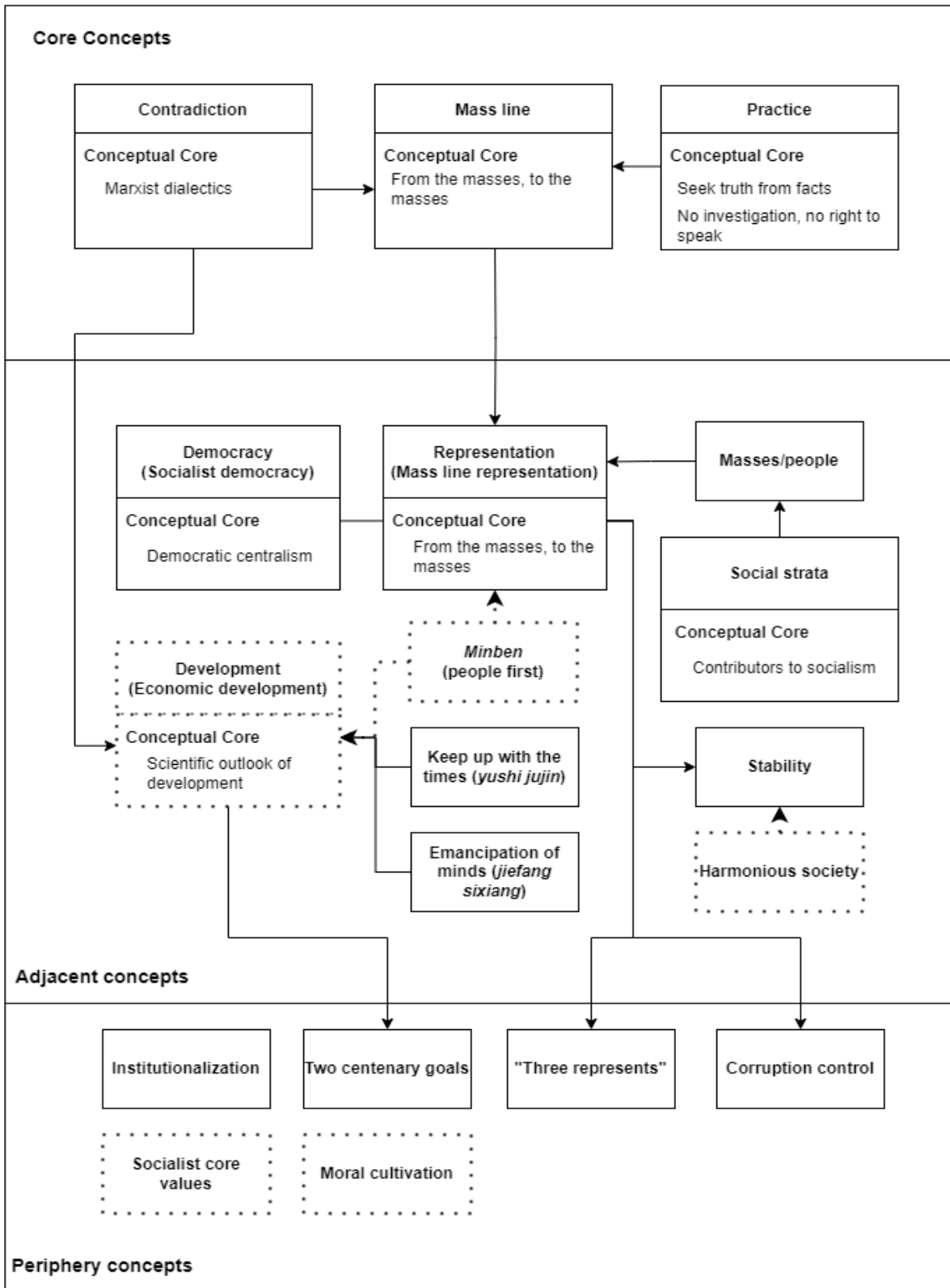
Chinese traditional political thought and culture — Confucianism.

The succession of power between Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao also signified a transition in the interpretive power of the CPC ideology (Bo 2004). This does not entail, however, that Hu turned down all Jiang's work. As Fewsmith (2003) observed, after taking office, Hu did not abandon Jiang's ideological contribution to the party. Yet facing the issues related to inequalities, Hu did re-interpret "three represents" with a focus on the third represent, namely, representation of the interests of the majority of the people. In his tour to Xibaipo (December 5-6, 2002), a small town with political significance in the history of the CPC, Hu, while mentioning "three represents," focused on the last represent and urges the party to keep Mao's "work hard" (*jianku fendou* 艰苦奋斗) in mind when representing the interest of majority (Hu 2016b, 4-6).

What is important for Hu is the representation of people's interest, which is later developed into the essence of "three represents" and one core of his notion of SOD. His attention to the interest of people, especially those disadvantaged during market reform, was further revealed through his visits to poor regions in China. In 2006, after Hu consolidated his power, he concluded that the "three represents" proposed the thought on "realizing, protecting, and developing the fundamental interest of the majority," as well as the thought of "building the party in the public interest and governing the country for the people" (Hu 2016b, 492-493). By focusing on the representation of the people, Hu further connected his formulation to the Confucian notion of *minben* (or people first). The next section will discuss this new strategy in the performance of representation.

Representation of advanced productive forces, an issue on the top of Jiang's list, was developed by Hu in the direction of "scientific development." Hu acknowledges that the representation of advanced productive forces is rooted in the concept of contradiction or the contradiction between productive forces and relations of production. This, for Hu, is only one aspect of productive forces. The other aspect of productive forces is the "reasonable distribution" (*heli buju* 合理布局) of productive forces and "reasonable allocation" (*heli peizhi* 合理配置) of elements within productive forces (Hu 2016a, 428). The development of productive forces and relations of production is to promote "harmonious coexistence of human and nature" and realize the "comprehensive development of human beings" (Hu 2016b, 188). In Hu's vision, the key to solving

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problems of uneven development and inequalities associated with development is to shift the mindset of development and apply the SOD to pursue "people first (*yiren weiben* 以人为本)" and "comprehensive, balanced, and sustainable development (Hu 2006b).[59]

The idea of harmonious society can also trace its root back to Confucianism. Harmony is the key in Confucius's ideal society, the society of Grand Union (*datong* 大同).[60] Tang (2006) summarizes four characteristics of this society: 1) the harmonious society is public spirited where common interests are pursued; 2) virtuous and capable individuals are selected to serve the society; 3) all kinds of people have their place to contribute to the society; and 4) the ideal society is a society of trust, with no room for robbers, filchers, and traitors. A key component of Confucian harmonious society is harmony in diversity (*he er butong* 和而不同). That is, harmony does not entail static conformity. Instead, it is a dynamic process of acknowledging and reconciling differences and contentions through the practice of Confucian virtues such as *ren* (benevolence 仁)*, li* (ritual propriety 礼)*,* and *zhongyong* (the state of equilibrium and harmony 中庸) (Li 2013).[61]

In his speech to the provincial leaders in 2005, Hu defined the socialist harmonious society as "democracy, rule of law, fairness, justice, integrity, amity, vitality, social stability and order, and harmonious coexistence of human and nature" (Hu 2005b). Hu's promotion of a socialist harmonious society signaled the CPC's new experiments with ideological work. First, it is another example of Hu's bridging of the

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[59] In official documents, people first or *minben* is elaborated as: "make realizing, safeguarding, and developing the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the people the starting point and goal of all the work of the Party and country … make continued progress in enabling the people to share in the fruits of development and in promoting well-rounded development of the person." See Hu's speech at the 18th Party Congress: https://language.chinadaily.com.cn/news/2012-11/19/content_15941774_2.htm.

[60] Confucius's words on harmonious society and *datong society* can be found in the *Liyun* Chapter of his *Book of Rites*.

[61] There are different interpretations on the meaning of *zhongyong,* which is shown in the translations of this term: the middle way, the central, the golden mean or moderation, etc. For a discussion, see Johnston and Wang 2012 and Li and Zhu 2020. Here I take it as the ability to balance different emotions and maintain a harmonious state.

CPC's ideology with Confucianism. Hu (2005b) stressed that the harmonious society is not contradiction free, and the harmonious society is built in the process of properly handling contradictions. The rising severity of mass incidents is obviously an area with sometimes contentious contradictions for the CPC to work on. More importantly, this claim connects contradiction, a core concept in CPC ideology, with the Confucian notion of harmony.

Second, like Deng and Jiang, Hu also believed that development, especially scientific development, is the foundation of solving these issues and building a harmonious society. Hu added that moral cultivation is crucial for a harmonious society. "Without common beliefs and good moral codes, there is no way for the society to be harmonious" (Hu 2005b). As discussed in Chapter 4, moral cultivation is an important aspect of Confucianism that echoes the CPC's focus on party building. However, Hu believed that moral cultivation is not just for cadres or representatives, through party building efforts, but also for the whole society. By introducing moral cultivation, Hu responded to the challenge of pluralization of society by attempting to create ideological consensus in the society. This strategy was later taken up by Xi Jinping in his formulation of Chinese dream.

Hu's ideological development targeted two issues with imminent pressure on the stability and legitimacy of the CPC's rule: uneven development and mass incidents. Both SOD and harmonious society have their roots in Confucianism. This does not mean the abandonment of the mass line approach. Hu inherited Jiang Zemin's development of mass line approach with minor tweaks to align it with the focus on *minben* or people first.

7.2. Performing "people first": Hu's new strategies

Hu Jintao was in a less critical time compared to Jiang Zemin. Unlike Jiang's mending of the mass line approach, Hu went much further to define the relationship between the representative and the represented. On the one hand, Hu tried to create consensus in the society through moral cultivation. As Alexander (2006) argues, performance is more likely to succeed when the society is more homogenous. Creating consensus in a diversified society makes the performance of mass line representation

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more acceptable to the multitude of audiences. On the other hand, Hu encouraged innovations in governance. Local governments were given more autonomy to experiment with alternatives to mass line representation, including liberal democratic institutions.

7.2.1. Hu's mass line approach

In defining the relationship between representative and the represented, Hu stuck to the tradition of the CPC in his emphasis on the representation of the people's interests. Despite seeking justification of this claim from Confucianism, Hu did not give up on the mass line approach as the most important form of representation. There are, however, two differences in his strategic presentation of mass line representation: Hu's representative claims added a layer of people-centric images in front of the media, and under his leadership, the CPC promoted of moral cultivation in the population.

Mass line remained as a core concept in the CPC's ideology in Hu's era because of its indispensable role in connecting with the masses and promoting their interests. As Hu (2005a) stated, it is of "utmost importance" for a Marxist party to "build the party for the public and exercise state power for the people" (*lidang weigong, zhizheng weimin* 立党为公，执政为民) (369). However, Hu did not propose major changes to the concept; rather, he introduced some minor adjustments to better align with his emphasis on people first and respond to the challenges of mass incidents.

In the CPC's ideology, mass line approach aims at promoting the welfare of the people. Hu Jintao further developed it in the people-centric direction. The Party, Hu (2007) states, "must put people first" and "regard the people's interests as the starting point and goal of all our work," so that "benefits of development are shared by all the people" (12). Compared to the interpretation of his predecessors, Hu paid more attention to the equality of distribution in his performance of mass line approach. Moreover, Hu's notion of people first is also shown in the representation of mass perspective. The masses' support the Party because the Party represents the interests of the majority and always "speak and work from the position of the majority of the masses" (Hu 2010, 1013).

Hu was fully aware of the pluralization and complexity of interests in the Chinese society. In 2006, he asked party members and cadres to "adapt to the shifting interest landscape and pluralization of subject of interests" in the society (Hu 2008, 532-33). The representatives are responsible to practice mass line approach and handle interest conflicts properly:

> Today, with the deepening of reform, many interest relations and social conflicts are concentrated at the grass-roots level. This requires the cadres at grass-roots level to improve their ability to coordinate relationships and resolve contradictions … [they must be] good at learning and give due consideration to different interests of the masses. (Hu 2006a, 363).

The statement is not surprising among the CPC's statements on mass line representation, where representatives are required to be fully committed to the masses and address their concerns. Yet as discussed, it places high demands for the representatives and not all cadres are able to maintain the expected connection with the masses. Hu's solution to the disconnection between representatives and represented, in addition to party building, was to look for possible alternative forms of representation such as descriptive and substantive representation.

7.2.2. Building a pragmatic and people-centric image

Political marketing or branding of leaders promotes an image of the leader or the party that is potentially attractive to consumers (citizens) and market (Scammell 2014; Beckman 2017). From the claim-making and performance perspective discussed in Chapter 3, political marketing is the strategic selection of claims to be made and stage/scripts to be performed. Echoing the promotion of people-first in the CPC's ideology, Hu Jintao created an image of pragmatism and care for the welfare of the masses, as well as the practice of mass line approach. This is a new strategy adopted by the CPC in the performance of mass line representation. It signals the Party's awareness of the new means of political performance available to it, allowing the Party to take advantage of media to promote favourable images to the audience.

The strategy is unpacked in three areas. First, Hu's public speeches were delivered in a less ideological and mechanical way. Compared to Jiang Zemin, Hu's public speech focused more on the issues at hand *per se*, e.g., sustainable development, and not much on the ideological slogans (Bo 2004). Second, media

coverage of central leaders' activities focused primarily on their intimacy with the people (*qinmin* 亲民). In the 2008 Wenchuan Earthquake, both Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao, the Prime Minister, went on site to lead the disaster relief works, which was reported as a sign of caring for the people. More importantly, Hu broke the image of leaders high above the masses by directly engaging with them in his visits. In his visit to Guangxi Province, for example, Hu was reported to talk to the villagers and learn about issues related to their livelihood (Liu 2008).

Third, the internet became a complementary channel for political performance. Hu started the trend to use online media to engage with the masses. Portraying the CPC leadership's closeness to the masses on the internet attracted fans for Hu and Wen. The fans called themselves "Shijin Babao Fans" (什锦八宝饭), which combines the name of two common Chinese dishes (*Shijin Fan* 什锦饭 and *Babao Fan* 八宝饭) and has one character from each of Hu and Wen's names.[62] Performing the mass line approach with the *qinmin* card is a smart move because showing intimacy with the people sits at the intersection of major concepts promoted by Hu — people first and the mass line approach — and fulfils the Confucian expectation of an official.

7.2.3. Moral cultivation of the population

The key to the mass line approach is the moral commitment of the cadres in serving the masses by developing and implementing policies in this regard. Jiang Zemin had tried education and party discipline to push representatives to improve the connection with the masses. Hu Jintao did not ease the requirement. But, as discussed, he realized the importance of creating common beliefs in a society with diverse and sometimes competing interests. Hence, in addition to party building, which focuses on the representatives, Hu took up moral cultivation, a tool from Confucianism, to achieve this goal by applying it to the society. This was done through a clear presentation of and emphasis on the socialist core value system (*shehui zhuyi hexin jiazhi tixi* 社会主义核心价值体系).

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[62] For a more detail introduction to the term "Shijin Babao Fans", see http://www.cctv.com/special/C22314/20081220/104468.shtml. Accessed March 9, 2022. The term used "Jin" from Hu Jintao's name and "Bao" from Wen Jiabao's name.

The campaign of building the socialist core value system was initiated in 2006 with Hu's promotion of "eight honors and eight shames (*barong bachi* 八荣八耻)".[63] A commentator's article published by Xinhua News Agency (Xinhua), China's state media, positioned the eight honors and eight shames as the "bottom line of moral conducts" that connects individual's moral pursuit with the stability and prosperity of the nation (Xinhua 2006). The exact content of socialist core values was not revealed until the 18th National Congress of the CPC (NCCPC) in 2012. In his last report to the NCCPC, Hu (2012) defined the socialist core values as "prosperity, democracy, civility, and harmony, upholding freedom, equality, justice and the rule of law, and advocating patriotism, dedication, integrity, and friendship". He placed high importance on these values by calling them "the soul of Chinese nation's revival (*xingguo zhihun* 兴国之魂)".

This is a modern version of Confucius' moral cultivation, which connects the individual's moral conduct with the wellbeing of the collective. From the perspective of representation, it has three implications. First, the CPC is expanding its toolkit in the performance of mass line representation. In addition to promoting core concepts of MLR (e.g., people first), the Party is utilizing China's cultural heritage to create consensus in a pluralized society. The people-centric and service-oriented aspects of Confucianism fuels the society's resonance with the CPC's ideology and the mass line approach. Second, the socialist core values divert the attention of individuals from social inequalities to self-cultivation. While Deng and Jiang placed great emphasis on economic achievements under the CPC's leadership, Hu turned to the moral world of the population in responding to challenges to stability. When the mass line approach failed to resolve social unrest in the society, self-cultivation becomes an alternative that the people should resort to before complaining and protesting. As Mencius says, "when the men of antiquity realized their wishes, benefits were conferred by them on the people. If they did not realize their wishes, they cultivated their personal character, and became illustrious in the world" (*Mencius* 7A: 9). Finally, the building of a socialist core value system adds a value layer to the socialist system that attempts to enhance the recognition of the socialist path that the CPC chose. It tries to mitigate challenges posed

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[63] Details of the eight honors and eight shames and their English translation can be found at https://language.chinadaily.com.cn/columnist/2006-09/15/content_686973.htm (accessed March 11, 2022).

by the actualization of other forms of representation introduced by Hu's openness to innovations in local governance.

7.3. Institutional innovation and competing forms of representation

Facing problems of social inequalities and interest pluralization, Hu Jintao brought Confucian concepts such as people first and harmony into CPC's ideology to create a more homogenous stage for the performance of mass line representation. Unlike Jiang Zemin, Hu's strategies were not limited to mass line representation. In addition to the institutionalization of People's Congresses system, China in the Hu era introduced more experiments with other forms of representation, most notably utilizing descriptive representation to include disadvantaged groups in the PCs.

7.3.1. Institutionalization of the PC system

China in Hu's era saw the development of the PC system in three areas: more citizen engagement in legislative processes, clarification of roles and responsibilities of representatives, and formalization of the supervision role of PCs. First, in addition to elections in PCs, Hu encouraged direct participation of the masses in the legislative process. The drafting of *the Labour Contract Law* (*LCL*, *laodong hetong fa* 劳动合同法), for example, was a process of inclusive participation and collective decision making.[64] The masses were able to participate in this process through two channels: direct participation by submitting comments to the Standing Committee of the NPC and indirect participation through the mass line approach by connecting with cadres and representatives from the labour union system.

The draft of *LCL* was published online and promoted to the masses through media. Within a month, the Standing Committee of the NPC received over 190,000 comments from participants (NPC 2007a). The All-China Federation of Trade Unions (Zhonghua Quanguo Zonggonghui 中华全国总工会), as an organization representing workers, provided over 100 comments on the draft of *LCL* and "overwhelming majority of

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[64] For an overview of the process, see NPC 2007a.

them" were adopted by the NPC (NPC 2007a). Including masses in the legislative process became a common practice for law-making in PCs. The two channels for participation show signs of a system of representation (Mansbridge et al. 2012; Kuyper 2016) — when the masses are not directly represented in one venue (e.g., the PCs), they can resort to representatives in other venues (e.g., the trade union) to have their voices heard and accounted for.

Second, representatives in the NPC were given clear instructions on their roles and responsibilities. In 2005, the Central Committee of the CPC issued a document on the institutionalization of the NPC and the representatives' roles.[65] One the one hand, the representative's supervisory role was enhanced in the document. Government agencies are required to distribute their annual reports before the annual session of the NPC so that the representatives will have time to review them before the meeting. The standing committee of the NPC should work with relevant government agencies to respond to and act on the advice and criticism of the representatives, which was, theoretically, aggregated from the masses' input. These measures were meant to ensure that the representatives are informed in reviewing government reports and voting on them. Moreover, the representatives are further empowered in correcting the misconduct of the government because what they reported will have a consequence in the action of the standing committee of the NPC and government.

On the other hand, the document provided clearer instructions on how to practice the mass line approach in between the meetings of NPC. As discussed, local PCs in Jiang's era developed their own guidelines for representatives. This document outlined that at the NPC level, the representatives were required to participate in the annual inspection and investigation organized by the standing committee. Inspection focuses on the operation of government agencies. Investigation focuses on the topics important to

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[65] The document is called *Some Advice of the Party Group of the Central Committee at the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Further Strengthening the Roles of Representatives and Enhancing the Institutionalization of the Standing Committees (Quanguo Renda Changweihui Dangzu Guanyu Jinyibu Fahui Quanguo Renda Daibiao Zuoyong, Jiangiang Changweihui Zhidu Jianshe de Ruogan Yijian* 全国人大常委会党组关于进一步发挥全国人大代表作用，加强常委会制度建设的若干意见). Full text can be found at
http://fnlzw.gov.cn/showLaw.aspx?id=5475&fID=86&pid=73&lid=73, accessed March 25, 2022.

general situation of the nation and are usually specified by the standing committee or proposed by the representative. In both cases, the representative is expected to practice the mass line approach and provide feedback to government and the NPC for action based on input from the masses. In routines between sessions, the representative is required to maintain various channels of connection with the masses (group discussion, online forum, email, etc.). For issues identified in this process, the representative can report to the standing committee, who will work with relevant government agencies to address them.

Finally, the supervision role of the PCs was also institutionalized in 2007, with the *Supervision Act of the Standing Committee of People's Congress at Different Levels (Zhongghua Renmin Gongheguo Geji Renmin Daibiao Dahui Changwu Weiyuan Hui Jiandu Fa* 中华人民共和国各级人民代表大会常务委员会监督法*).*[66] The *Act* institutionalized the role of standing committees in PCs in supervising government operations in four areas: annual operational report of government, review and approval of government budget plan, review implementation status of laws, and review regulations made by the government. Moreover, standing committees of PCs were confirmed to have the responsibility for checking the government through inquiring about government decisions and conducting special investigations on issues difficult to resolve due to lack of information. In both cases, relevant government agencies are required to provide justification and information to the standing committee. More importantly, the *Act* granted the standing committee the right to remove officials at the deputy level (e.g., deputy major, deputy governor of province) from their positions.

Clarifying the supervisory role of the PC system is important for MLR for two reasons. First, representation in the PCs becomes an institutional check on representation in the government (and in the Party considering the overlap of representative responsibilities). Representatives in the PCs can inspect and investigate misconducts of representatives in the government, where the government must give justifications to their decisions. Second, the standing committee's ability to overturn the appointment of cadres offers a countermeasure to balance the CPC's influence. As

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[66] Texts of the act is available at https://www.12371.cn/2020/06/28/ARTI1593275897783913.shtml, accessed March 25, 2022.

discussed, for representatives in the government, the CPC can influence their decisions through the cadre promotion system. However, the effectiveness of such influence is dependent on the degree to which the legislature can exercise some power autonomously from the CPC.

7.3.2. Experimenting with other forms of representation

MLR is a form of substantive representation, where the representative should respond to the needs of the masses. In addition to promoting the mass line approach, Hu also paid attention to descriptive representation, which echoes with his promise of putting people first, especially disadvantaged groups in the reform era. Descriptive representation conceives the connection between the representative and the represented as a reflection of demographical attributes.

Compared to the composition of representatives in the National People's Congresses in Jiang Zemin's era, Hu improved descriptive representation in two ways. One the one hand, Hu initiated the equal voting rights for the rural population. In 1995, the *Election Law of National People's Congress and Local People's Congresses* amended the proportion of population a representative represented in urban and rural areas from 1:8 to 1:4. That is, a rural representative would represent four times the population of a representative in urban areas.[67] While the ratio ensured an equal number of representatives in urban and rural areas, it discriminates against the rural population because they have less voting weight compared to their urban counterparts. To put it in ratios, one urban resident has one representative and in rural areas, four citizens share one representative. Following the mass line approach, this distribution obviously makes it harder for the rural population to have their voices heard. In response to the increasing urbanization, the *Election Law* was amended again in 2010 to adjust the ratio to 1:1.

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[67] The ratio was determined by the urban population proportional to rural population. In 1953, when the *Election Law* was first passed, the rural population is eight times of urban population. In 1995, the national census found the ratio had raised to 4:1 and the *Election Law* was amended accordingly. The amendment in Hu's era followed the same logic. The 2010 national census indicated 50.3% of population in rural area and 49.7% in urban area (see the report from the National Bureau of Statistics: http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/tjgb/rkpcgb/qgrkpcgb/201104/t20110428_30327.html).

Hence the rural population is enjoying the same voting influence as the urban population.

On the other hand, Hu introduced new characteristics to be represented, mostly to increase the descriptive representation of disadvantaged groups. Since the 5th NPC (1978-1983), composition of the representatives had become increasingly elitist with the ratio of cadres increased from 13.38% to 41.55% of all representatives in the 9th NPC (1998-2003) (Zhao 2012, 986-987). In the 10th NPC (2003-2008), after Hu took office, the percentage of cadres decreased to 33.17% and the proportion of grass-root representatives (workers and peasants) increased from 6% in the 9th NPC to 9% (Zhao 2012, 987). The effort to improve the descriptive representation of the disadvantaged groups was institutionalized in 2007 with the decision to give representatives to migrant workers (*nongmin gong* 农民工) (NPC 2007b). In the 11th NPC (2008-2012), three migrant workers were selected as representatives out of a total of 2,987 in the NPC (NPC 2008).

7.4. Democratic experiments and the role of the CPC

In addition to promoting the institutionalization of the PC system and increasing descriptive representation of different social groups, Hu also created room for local governments to experiment with liberal democratic institutions. In answering a question on political reform at the Davos Forum in 2011, Wen Jiabao suggested the expansion of village elections to the township and event county level, because when the masses can "manage a village, they can manage a town, and even a county" (Xinhua 2011). This claim signaled the Central Government's openness to local governments' democratic experiments. Hu's encouragement of governance innovation was also exemplified by rewarding local governments' creative thinking in solving problems of legitimacy and participation and delivering better services (Wu and Su 2011; He 2016; Yu 2019).[68]

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[68] Chinese Local Government Innovation Award was initiated by Central Compilation and Translation Bureau, Party School of the Central Committee of CPC, and Peking University in 2000 and 178 projects across China was named finalists (80 named award winners) before the award's termination in 2015.

Local governments' autonomy in policy implementation allows them to conduct institutional and policy experiments in addressing both the concerns of higher-level government and local issues. From the central government's perspective, it is beneficial for the local governments to experiment with new policies and learn from their experience of adopting new ways of policy development in the central government's policy-making process (Heilmann 2008, 2011; Wang 2011). Political experiments with democratic elections in local congresses (Manion 2000; Li 2002) and introduction of deliberative polls and deliberative democracy (Fishkin et al. 2010; He and Warren 2011) either created new channels of communication between representatives and the represented or re-shaped the existing relationship between the cadre and the masses. Practically, these experiments helped the CPC to maintain stability and legitimacy by resolving disputes at the local level (Tang 2015a; Tang 2015b).

7.4.1. New meanings of election

If, in Jiang's era, election in PCs did not translate into substantial improvements in representative relationship between cadres and the masses, Hu's loosening of controls on experiments with liberal democratic institutions granted new meaning to elections in the Chinese legislature. Representation in a democratic sense emerged in those PCs where representatives identify with a constituency and consider election as a source of authority and obligation (Kamo and Takeuchi 2013; Manion 2014). That is, Pitkinian substantive representation is also actualized in significant ways in Hu's era, even if just at the local level, adding an additional layer to the orthodox mass line representation. Admittedly, the democratic tendency in PCs should be not exaggerated (O'Brien 2009).

What we should note is its profound impact on the functioning of the Chinese political system. First, substantive representation creates questions about the compatibility of the CPC's ideology with new political institutions and practices. Ideologically, MLR is deeply rooted in the core concepts of CPC ideology — contradiction, practice, and mass line approach. Contradiction offers guidelines for the representative to identify the interest to represent. Practice points to the method of getting to know the principal contradiction and needs of the masses. The mass line approach defines the connection between representative and the represented in MLR.

There is little room for these concepts to play a role in substantive representation. Institutional arrangements for MLR — party building and discipline — obviously do not claim a central position in the performance of substantive representation.

Second, substantive representation presents a new agenda of problems for a regime to resolve. Election and representation, in the liberal context, address the problems of inclusion, collective will formation, and collective decision-making (Warren 2017). Hence substantive representation prioritizes preference aggregation and agenda formation through democratic elections, in which elected representatives are expected to respond to citizens. This is not to say that substantive representation ignores other problems such as stability and prosperity, the two problems that the CPC placed on top of its agenda. However, substantive representation has performed better in delivering citizen empowerment and clear and accountable decision-making.

Third, introduction of substantive representation creates a tension between two logics of representation. Through democratic elections, substantive representation translates individual preferences into public reason and judgement in the decision-making process. It is quite the opposite of the mass line approach, where reason and judgement of the representative is of utmost importance. This is not to say that the two logics are incompatible. Bell (2006) suggests a vertical model where democracy works at the bottom and meritocracy works at higher levels of government. The problem is that such arrangements deviate from the CPC's formulation of the mass line approach, where all cadres, including those at the lower levels of the government, should use their judgement in collecting information from the masses and making decisions based on the input.

Most importantly, substantive representation challenges the CPC's role in representation and its legitimacy in ruling China. The CPC plays the leadership role in MLR, meaning that the CPC contends that it can make correct decisions in promoting the welfare of the masses. The masses' participation in representation is limited to providing information for the Party to make the decision. The Party's ability to drive economic development since market reform, then, becomes the primary source of its legitimacy. However, when preferences are aggregated and the agenda is set through elections, the Party may appear to be less useful in pointing out the right decision to be made. Thinking counterfactually, if liberal democracy and substantive representation can

also sustain good economic performance, the CPC's claim to legitimacy would be severely undermined. Of course, this point is hard to validate because experiments with liberal democratic institutions are mostly in developed regions, and the CPC still plays important roles in these experiments.

The CPC's tool kit to hold representatives accountable — the party discipline system (Committee for Discipline Investigation) — also loses its efficacy when democratic election is in place. Empirical evidence from elections in Chinese villages has demonstrated that village cadres are responsive to the represented under electoral constraints, which in turn, enhances the trustworthiness of the representative (Li 2002, 2003; Manion 1996, 2006; Pastor and Tan 2000). Ideally, this is not an issue because the CPC represents the masses and responding to the masses' interest is the same as responding to the CPC's interest. Yet, when the direction pointed out by the CPC is against the wishes expressed by the masses, the representative would have a hard time deciding whose will to follow. This is exactly why MLR has a high requirement on the ability of the representatives.[69]

This perhaps partially explains why the Party is reluctant to commit to full scale liberal democratic reforms. Wen Jiabao's response to political reform did not go beyond the county-level government. When talking about the institutions of representation, Hu maintained that the party will not adopt the "Western parliament system" and will "uphold and perfect" People's Congresses (PCs) and People's Political Consultation Conferences (PPCCs) under the party's leadership (Hu 2016b, 33). Therefore, bringing in forms of liberal democratic representation did not replace mass line representation. It is a set of experiments in testing alternatives complementary for mass line representation, especially when mass line representation fails to function properly and social unrest raises. As some scholars have suggested, introduction of democratic

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[69] As discussed in Chapter 5, Mao suggested that the representative should follow the core concepts of contradiction and practice to make the correct decision. However, compared to responding to the needs of the masses, this is a high risk and time-consuming option for most representatives. To make the correct decision, the representative needs to conduct investigation to understand the situation (contradiction). She can then decide what to represent. If the decision is against the wishes of the masses, she needs to go back to the masses and explain her decision to them, which is a test of her ability to calm the unhappy masses. If the decision is wrong, she may be again tested by both the Party's sanctions and the masses' discontent.

mechanisms in local governments is more like a response to social instabilities (He and Wu 2017; Tang et al. 2018; Qin 2021).

7.4.2. Democratic deliberation

Another area of experimentation in Hu's era was with deliberative democracy. Despite a different understanding of this concept, deliberative democracy in minimal sense involves practices that focus on "mutual communication that involves weighing and reflecting on preferences, values, and interests regarding matters of common concern" (Bächtiger et al. 2018). In the Chinese context, there are two forms of deliberation: deliberation in the People's Political Consultative Conferences (PPCCs) at central and local levels and deliberation in local governments, most notably deliberation in Wenling, a coastal city in Zhejiang province.

Deliberation in PPCCs gained prominence in Hu's era with its institutionalization, which clarified PPCCs' roles and responsibilities in the Chinese political system.[70] According to Hu, PPCCs have three roles: political consultation that should be a part of decision-making process, supervision of cadres through proposals and inspections, and representation of opinions and issues of the masses (Hu 2009). From the perspective of Western scholars, the PPCCs has three limitations. First, representatives in the PPCCs are nominated by political parties and social groups in China, not elected by masses.[71]

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[70] After Hu took office in 2002, the Central Committee of CPC (CCoCPC) released 2 documents to regulate the role, procedural, and responsibility of PPCCs: *Zhonggong Zhongyang Guanyu Jinyibu Jiaqiang Zhongguo Gongchandang Lingdao de Duodang Hezuo he Zhengzhi Xieshang Zhidu de Yijian (CCoCPC's Advice on Further Strengthening the Institution Building of the Multi-Party Cooperation and Political Consultation under the CPC's Leadership)* (2005, available at https://www.mj.org.cn/mjzt/content/2019-09/25/content_338132.htm, accessed March 22, 2022), *Zhonggong Zhongyang Guanyu Jiaqiang Renmin Zhengxie Gongzuo de Yijian (CCoCPC's Advice on Strengthening the Work of People's Consultative Conferences)* (2006, excerpts of this document is available at http://www.cppcc.gov.cn/2011/09/06/ARTI1315304860593207.shtml, accessed March 22, 2022). Both documents highlight the consultation and supervision role of the PCCs and the CPC's leadership of PCCs.

[71] In addition to the CPC, there are eight other political parties in China, which are called the democratic parties (minzhu dangpai 民主党派). As minor parties, their roles in politics were limited to participation and consultation. Social groups (e.g., the Trade Union,

Second, PPCCs, as the name suggests, function mostly as a consultative body that brings the input from different social groups to the CPC and the government. Third, performance of this role (and the ones specified by Hu) has to "conscientiously" adhere and contribute to the Party and government's plans (Hu 2009). Hence scholars generally consider it as a tool of cooptation that contributes to the resilience of the CPC's rule (Dickson 2008; Chen 2015; Yan 2011). However, from the perspective of MLR, representatives in PPCCs follow the logic of the mass line approach to provide information and suggestions for the CPC's reference in making decisions. Of course, in this case, deliberation in the PPCCs does not introduce new forms of representation.

On the other hand, deliberation in Wenling is a true example of local governments' adoption of democratic practices in their experiments. Its popularity among political theorists mostly derived from the fact that it is a democratic institution designed by democratic theorists (James Fishkin and his team) and implemented in a place where liberal democracy is considered "unlikely" (Fishkin et al. 2010). It meets some criteria of democratic theory in its representative participants, forming a general will through deliberation (with attitude change), training public spirited citizens, and having results of deliberation affects the policy-making process (Fishkin et al. 2010). Yet the CPC's involvement in the deliberation also leads to reservation in scholars' appraisal of these experiments (He and Warren 2011).

From the perspective of representation, democratic deliberation, while being less formal in authorization and accountability, supplements electoral representation with more nuanced and reasoned will formation and decision-making processes (Brown 2006; Warren 2008). Unlike PCs or PPCCs, representatives in local deliberation experiments most resemble what Warren (2008) refers to as citizen representatives. There are, of course, different opinions on whether these experiments meet criteria developed in democratic theory. On the one hand, the Party and government's role in the deliberative practices makes them authoritarian, not democratic (He and Warren 2011; Unger et al. 2014). He (2014) and Tan (2014) trace the root of CPC's contemporary experiments with deliberation to Confucian deliberative culture, which contributes to the authority and legitimacy of ruling elites. On the other hand,

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Association of Science and Technology) and different walks of life (e.g., culture, education, social science) all have their representatives in the PPCCs.

observations of practices of deliberation in local governments show strong democratic elements such as empowered inclusion, reasoned will formation, and consequential deliberation (Korolev 2014; Tong and He 2018).

In either case, the new mode of representation introduced by citizen representatives remains an extra source of understanding representation in China. Whether the CPC or government controls the agenda, representatives in deliberations are speaking for and acting for their counterparts, without formal authorization or accountability from them. It is sufficient to challenge the dominant form of representation that the CPC promotes and leads — mass line representation. Like democratic elections and substantive representation, empowering the masses in the decision-making process potentially places the CPC's role in representation in an awkward position. Admittedly, compared to substantive representation in PCs, deliberation in local governments has limited impact because of the scale and number of masses (only in limited number of municipalities) involved.

7.5. Conclusion

Compared to Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao took a very different approach in the actualization of mass line representation. Instead of enhancing institutions of MLR, Hu tried to build value consensus in a pluralized society through connecting the CPC's ideology with Confucianism. Highlighting people first as the key concept and responsibility of the Party and cadres in promoting people's welfare, as well as introducing moral cultivation of the society, Hu intended to create a common stage for the performance of MLR, which, according to Alexander (2006), allows the performance to more easily succeed. Hu's other strategy was to introduce complementary forms of representation to create more channels of representation. This perhaps created more problems for the Party than it solved. Representative relationships based on elections challenged the actualization of MLR based on the representative's engagement with the masses. Xi Jinping, taking office in 2012, was ready to address this problem.

Chapter 8.
Xi Jinping: Restoring Confidence in the Mass Line Approach

Hu Jintao's Scientific Development Outlook did bring economic development, with China overtaking Japan as the second largest economy in the world in 2010. His harmonious society approach, however, did not bring harmony to Chinese society. Instead, Hu's openness to liberal democracy encouraged protestors to go onto the street, leading to a "high-tide" of petitions since he took office (Li et al. 2012). As discussed, mass incidents such as protests signal the malfunctioning of MLR, the form of representation that the CPC embraces. More importantly, substantive representation is actualized as a competing claim to mass line representation, which could also threaten the CPC's authority and legitimacy. Instead of learning from liberal democratic practices, Xi Jinping urged confidence in the Party's doctrine and praised the economic success under the CPC's rule as proof of its correctness. In addition to incentivizing the practice of mass line approach through discipline, Xi has gone one step further than Hu Jintao in the creation of common identities through a symbolic Chinese dream and shared historical memories.

8.1. Confidence and Chinese socialist democracy

From Jiang Zemin to Hu Jintao, the CPC's primary task was to find justifications for one-party rule in China. In addition to seeking legitimacy from economic performance, Jiang chose to defend the socialist system by drawing comparisons between China and the West, from which he concluded that western democracy does not fit China. Hu sought complementary institutions to mass line approach from liberal democratic practices to handle the pluralization of Chinese society. Xi Jinping has taken a different approach. On the one hand, he continues the tradition of highlighting the importance of development. His doctrine of the "four comprehensives" (*sige quanmian* 四个全面), for example, reiterates the party's long-term focus on economic development

and political reform.[72] One the other hand, he has returned to the defence and promotion of socialist democracy — based on village elections, People's Congresses (PCs), People's Political Consultative Conferences (PPCCs), and Congresses of the CPC (CCPCs) — with a more open discussion and critique of liberal democracy. Xi encourages confidence in the socialist political system with the promotion of "four matters of confidence" (*sige zixin* 四个自信). Moreover, Xi continues Hu's effort in creating consensus in Chinese society, but with more connection to nationalism than to Confucianism.

8.1.1. Four matters of confidence

Xi's "four confidences" develops from Hu Jintao's "three confidences". In the report to the 18th National Congress of CPC, Hu (2012) encouraged the party and the people to be "confident in our chosen party, confident in our guiding theories, and confident in our political system". Xi (2016) added "confident in our culture" and stated that this confidence is "more fundamental, more extensive, and more profound." Hence the expansion of the confidence doctrine does not merely include cultural heritage in the CPC ideology. Rather, it raises the importance of culture as the foundation of CPC's rule and the socialist political system. It is a continuation of Hu's focus on creating common values in pluralized Chinese society through shared culture, which brings morality into politics.

What does the culture refer to? Xi (2019) looks at Chinese history for the "unique ideas and moral norms" that emerge in the long-term practice of the Chinese nation, which include ideas and thoughts of "appreciating benevolence (*chong ren'ai* 崇仁爱), valuing people first (*zhong minben* 重民本), guarding integrity (*shou chengxin* 守诚信), stressing dialectics (*jiang bianzheng* 讲辩证), respecting harmony and unity (*shang hehe* 尚和合), and seeking great harmony and unity (*qiu datong* 求大同)."

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[72] Xi (2014) raises the "four comprehensives" in 2014 as the goal of China: 1) comprehensively build a moderately prosperous society; 2) comprehensively deepen reform; 3) comprehensively implement the rule of law; and 4) comprehensively strengthen party discipline. The four points were also repeatedly emphasized by Xi's precedents.

Claiming this large role for culture in CPC ideology has three implications. First, it is an attempt to counteract the influx of liberal values and their erosion of CPC ideology. From the party's perspective, the damaging side effect of cultural plurality after market reform has been undermining the CPC ideology and the legitimacy of its rule with discourses of historical nihilism (Luo 2017). Hence moral cultivation of the population is critical in creating a common understanding of the political goals, namely, welfare of the society, that are on the top of the CPC's agenda. To this end, moral cultivation translates political contentions and disagreements to moral justifications.

According to the Party, the lack of citizen confidence in the CPC stems from the lack of promotion and education of the shared history and culture. Regarding history, the CPC contends that it has been very successful in leading the Chinese people to independence and prosperity. On the cultural end, education should focus on moral cultivation and collectivism, not individualism and liberalism. Values and concepts in Chinese culture highlight the consistency and continuation between culture and CPC ideology, especially with party leaders acquiescing in the fading away of class struggle as a central theme in the Chinese history. Second, like Hu's "people first," Xi's cultural confidence campaign attached the people to Confucian *minben* as a cultural justification of consistency between individual pursuit and collective welfare. Lastly, as discussed, referring to Chinese culture creates resonance in the performance of mass line representation. It is the CPC's responsibility to promote the well-being of the people and the interest of the nation.

Xi's confidence doctrine is exemplified in his promotion of a Chinese style democracy. Like Jiang Zemin, Xi Jinping's formulation of the Chinese political system is based on a comparison between the socialist path and liberal path. Unlike Jiang, Xi is more open and confident in his criticisms of liberal democracy. In December 2021, China published a booklet called *The State of Democracy in the United States (Democracy in the US, Meiguo Minzhu Qingkuang 美国民主情况)*.[73] In this booklet, China openly

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[73] China's response to liberal democracy mostly targets American electoral democracy. Online version of this booklet is available at https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/zyxw/202112/t20211205_10462534.shtml and English version at https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/202112/t20211205_10462535.htm, accessed March 24, 2022.

criticizes the institutional faults and "chaotic" practices of American democracy, as well as "disastrous consequences" of US's exportation of democracy. At the same time, another booklet was published under the title *China: Democracy That works (Democracy in China, Zhongguo de Minzhu 中国的民主)*.[74] As a comparison, *Democracy in China* introduces and praises Chinese democracy as "whole process democracy" that is "scientific", "efficient" and "pragmatic." And mostly importantly, it "works".

Xi's critique of American democracy focuses on the procedural and outcome aspects of democratic practices. According to Wang Shaoguang's interpretation, Xi considers democracy as a governing institution and American democracy exists only at the moment of election (Zhongxinwang 2021). By contrast, the Chinese democracy is "whole process democracy" that includes the four forms of representation Pitkin defines — formal representation through election in PCs, descriptive representation as the Party's representation of all works of the population, symbolic representation as the Party's promotion of the notion "people first," and substantive representation as the inclusion of masses through practicing the mass line approach.

From this perspective, Xi's critique does not fully capture the meaning of liberal democracy. It does not capture the normative values that liberal democracy attempts to deliver — empowered citizens, open and diverse public sphere, equal and inclusive collective decision-making. Moreover, election is not the only institution of liberal democracy. There are many institutions available that promote normative values that liberal democracy embraces, e.g., deliberation, exit, resistance, etc. (Warren 2017). Chinese socialist democracy does not address the problem of empowerment and inclusive decision-making. Its focus, as Xi's "whole process democracy" indicates, is on delivering the outcomes through the practice of the mass line approach and MLR.

Xi defends socialist democracy in four aspects. First, democracy has different forms and there is no one-size-fits-all solution. Xi (2014a) suggests that "each country has its unique realities" and political institutions are "decided by the people and have experienced long-term development, gradual improvement, and endogenous evolution".

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[74] Both Chinese and English version of this booklet is available at http://language.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202112/07/WS61aefdb1a310cdd39bc79e03.html, accessed March 24, 2022.

This argument was frequently used by Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin to justify the Chinese political system. Second, since each country is facing different situations, "democracy promotion" is not a good idea. Xi (2021a) suggests that there are different ways to practice democracy and "external military intervention and the so-called democratic transformation have proven to cause endless troubles (*yihai wuqiong*, 贻害无穷)".

Third, democracy is consequential. Democracy is not an "ornament" and "it should be used to address people's concerns" (Xi 2014b). Here Xi directly criticizes electoral democracy as procedural, where "people are woken up in elections only and back to hibernation afterwards" (Xi 2014b). While Jiang spells out the institutions of Chinese democracy, Xi goes further to argue that democracy has to solve substantial problems. In the Chinese context, the key problem is people's welfare. And, according to the Party's claim, it is doing an excellent job in this regard. Finally, Chinese democracy is better than liberal democracy: its "whole process democracy … realizes process and outcome democracy, procedural and substantive democracy, and direct and indirect democracy" (Xi 2021b).

Xi's confidence in articulating a Chinese style of democracy is on the one hand, based on China's economic success since the market reform in 1978. In 2021, China's GDP is reported to be $17.7 trillion, about 77% of the reported GDP of the United States ($23 trillion).[75] Considering the fact that China's GDP was only 6.8% of the GDP of the United States in 1978, this is a remarkable achievement.[76] It substantiates Deng's (1993) claim that "poverty is not socialism" and strengthens the CPC's legitimacy to rule (225). On the other hand, China's continuous effort in promoting Chinese style of democracy has successfully set it as a capable alternative to liberal democracy (Wu et al. 2020). Xi contends that the Chinese political system has shown that it can solve the

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[75] China's GDP is from a report by National Bureau of Statistics. Available at http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2022-01/17/content_5668815.htm, accessed March 25, 2022. GDP of the United States is from a news release by Bureau of Economic Analysis. Available at https://www.bea.gov/news/2022/gross-domestic-product-fourth-quarter-and-year-2021-second-estimate, accessed March 25, 2022.

[76] Data is from World Bank GDP data, available at https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?locations=US-CN, accessed March 25, 2022.

problems of stability and development that the Party has prioritized. Moreover, liberal democracy, exemplified by electoral democracy in the United States, is portrayed as failed democracy that brings "disastrous consequences" to the US and the world.[77]

Chinese democracy is rooted in the mass line approach, which, in its ideal form, can aggregate input of the masses and make decisions based on the input. However, as discussed, the partial failure of the mass line approach makes the translation of input to decisions problematic. Both Jiang and Hu looked at different measures to fix the problem of mass line approach but with limited success. Xi combined Jiang's work on party building and Hu's consensus creation, as will be discussed in the next section.

8.1.2. Nationalism

Chinese nationalism has key terms: humiliation and rejuvenation.[78] Humiliation contrasts China's cultural glories in the past (before mid-1990s) and sufferings from foreign invasions and interventions from the Opium War in 1840 to the founding of CPC in 1921. Nationalism featuring the rejuvenation discourse is not new in Chinese politics. In 1997, Jiang defined the primary stage of socialism as a "historical stage of achieving the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation" in the report to the 15th National Congress of the CPC (Jiang 1997). Hu (2011) stressed that the "core strength" (*hexin liliang* 核心力量) of the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is the CPC. Xi's words in 2012 best summarized the Party's interpretation of the two terms:

> Since modern times [1840-1919], our nation has gone through hardships and the Chinese nation faces its greatest danger. Countless Chinese Patriots rose one after another to fight for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation but failed one time after another. Since its founding, the CPC united and led the Chinese people in transforming the poor and backward old China to an increasingly prosperous and powerful New China with great sacrifices and indomitable struggles. (RMRB 2012).

[77] See *The State of Democracy in the United States*.

[78] For a discussion on the history of "one hundred years of humiliation" (*bainian quru* 百年屈辱) and the patriotic education based on this part of Chinese history, see Wang 2008 and Mayer 2018. But it is contentious as to how effective the history education is (Qian et al. 2017).

Nationalism fuels the CPC's ideological and practical focus on stability and wellbeing of the people. It is because of the chaotic and backward past that the Party is building a socialism towards stability and prosperity. In Xi's era, the CPC determined that the principal contradiction has shifted to "the contradiction between unbalanced and inadequate development and the people's ever-growing needs for a better life" (Xi 2017). While economic development is still the key task for the CPC, the focus has changed from pure economic growth to comprehensive and balanced development that aimed at addressing social and regional inequalities, as well as satisfying people's "ever-growing needs for a better life."

Moreover, based on the shared past, nationalism creates a common identity and a symbol that resonates with the Chinese people. From the perspective of Saward's (2010) representative claim, nationalism already exists in the CPC's representative claim — the CPC (claim-maker) portrays the CPC (subject) as the leader of the revival of the Chinese nation (object/referent) and is offered to the Chinese people (audience). Most importantly, discourses of humiliation and rejuvenation entail that the Party had and continues to have an indispensable leadership role in fulfilling the responsibility of leading the Chinese nation to stability and prosperity. Tracing the historical development and achievement of the Chinese nation and the CPC justifies Xi's promotion of Chinese democracy as a suitable choice for China because of its ability to deliver national rejuvenation as the outcome.

It is hard to tell whether the Party's promotion of nationalistic discourses and education have been successful, nor is it completely under the control of the CPC (Dickson 2021, Chapter 7). But it is safe to say that nationalism is Xi's response to the increasing pluralization of Chinese society in reform era. Promotion of nationalist discourses with an emphasis on the contrast between the history of humiliation and economic success in contemporary China is an effort to recruit the pluralized public and intellectuals to support the Chinese political system (Cheek and Ownby 2018). It is an effort functionally similar to Hu Jintao's emphasis on socialist core values based on Confucianism: they both aim at creating a relatively homogenous stage for the performance of mass line representation. Unlike Hu, Xi does not limit himself to the cultural heritage in building up nationalism. He also includes shared history as a source of common identity and justification for the Party's rule.

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Figure 8.1: Morphology of the CPC's Ideology under Xi Jinping
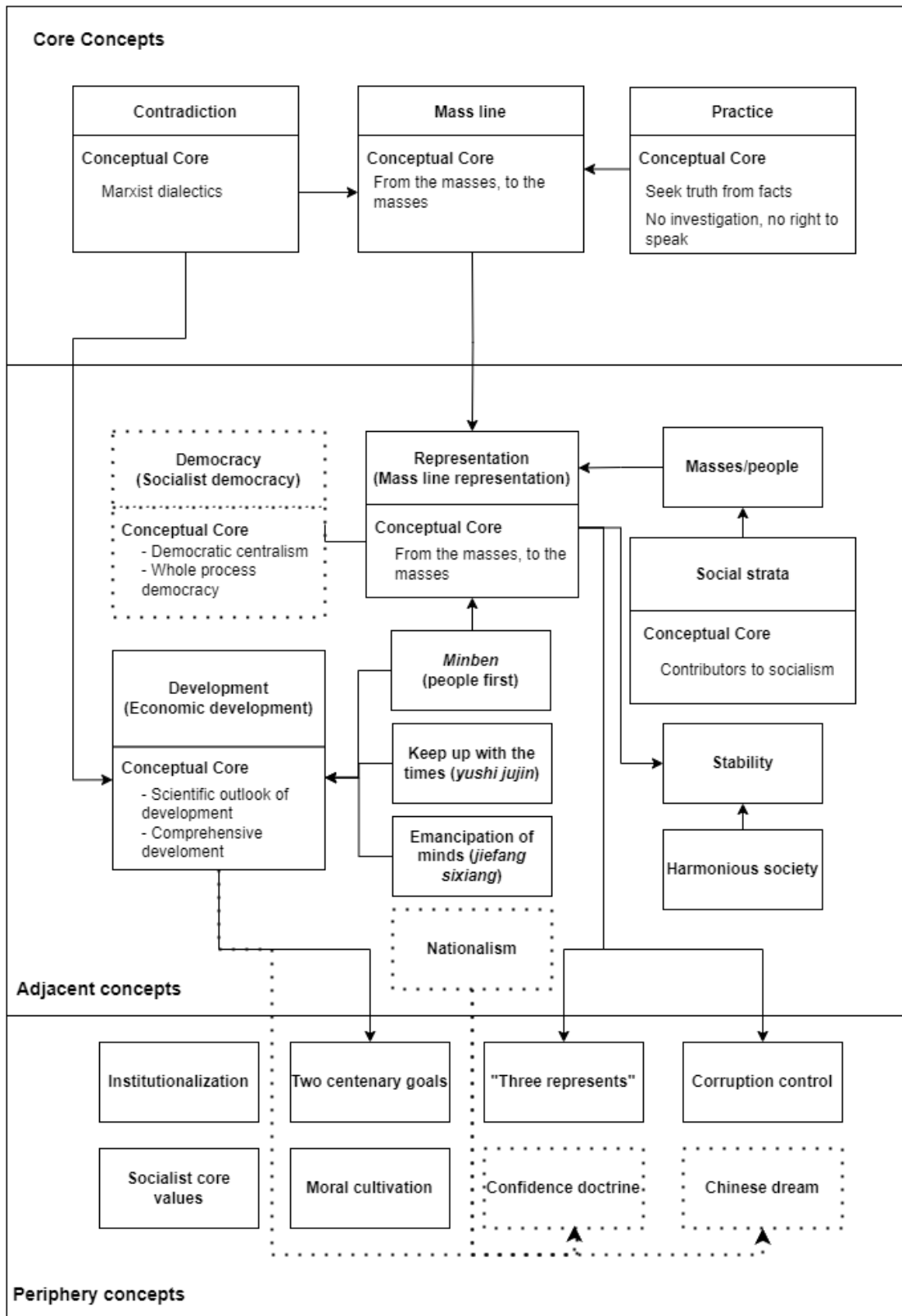
8.2. Xi's strategies in performing mass line representation

Ideologically, Xi focuses on restoration of confidence in the Chinese political system and creation of common identity through shared culture and history (Figure 8.1). Strategies in actualization of mass line representation under Xi's rule revolve around the two areas. First, Xi has waged perhaps the biggest anti-corruption campaign since 1949 as part of his party building work in support of the mass line approach. Second, Chinese dream is proposed to create a common identity and symbol, through which symbolic representation (Pitkin 1967) is enacted. Third, following Hu's work, Xi promotes deliberative/consultative democracy as a supplement to intra-party deliberation and village elections. Finally, Xi has added the internet as another space for mass line representation.

8.2.1. Party discipline and anti-corruption campaigns

One month after taking office in 2012, Xi launched an anti-corruption campaign with the advance of "eight-point regulation" (*baxiang guiding* 八项规定) to "make great determination to improve the style of work … [and] always maintain blood and flesh relationship with the masses" (Xinhua 2012). In this anti-corruption campaign, Xi urged cracking down on both tigers and flies (high-ranking officials and grass-root officials). Tigers such as former members of the Politburo were brought down in this campaign (Zhou Yongkang and Xu Caihou in 2014, Guo Boxiong in 2015, and Sun Zhengcai in 2017). In five years of the campaign (2012-2017), about 2 million officials at or lower than the county level were disciplined (Xinhua 2018). Over 4 million officials at different levels were investigated and about 3.7 million of them were disciplined from 2012 to 2021 (Pengpai 2021). Over 90% of the cases ended with a warning and/or demotion and about 10% involved dismissal of duties and further prosecution by the procurator.[79] The anti-corruption campaign is accompanied by further institutionalization of disciplinary mechanisms with CDI's focus on intra-party supervision and inspection and the

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[79] See http://www.news.cn/politics/2022-06/30/c_1128793505.htm. Accessed January 12, 2023.

establishment of a National Supervision Committee in 2018 that covers the gray area of officials serving public roles (in public organizations such as universities).

Some scholars consider Xi's anti-corruption campaign as a form of intra-party factional struggle and consolidation of his rule since the foundation of CPC's monopoly of power, crony capitalism, is reformed (Lam 2015; Pei 2016; 2018). But factionalism alone cannot explain Xi's efforts in the institutionalization of anti-corruption mechanisms and his "tiger and fly" approach (Carothers 2020). The campaign deserves closer examination, especially concerning MLR. On the one hand, anti-corruption campaigns create the opportunity for personnel changes in local governments. This could serve Xi's goals of building his faction or facilitating his centralization efforts (Bulman and Jaros 2021). However, it nonetheless provides incentives for representatives to perform their duties, either due to fear of punishment or for the rewards of promotion (Li and Gore 2017; Economy 2018).

More importantly, the anti-corruption campaign is, in Saward's terms, a representative claim made to the masses, showing the Party's determination to promotion the wellbeing of the people on the one hand, and to hold the representatives accountable on the other. Mass line representation relies on motivated and capable representatives to connect with the masses and make reasoned decisions based on their input. Xi's anti-corruption campaign provides opportunities to promote qualified representatives who replace representatives not performing their duties. The campaign also holds at least some representatives accountable. It sends a signal to the masses and the representatives that the Party is performing its supervision roles and will discipline those who fail to practice mass line approach and stay connected with the masses. Of course, such a signal lends itself to different interpretations for higher- and lower-level officials. For members of the Central Committee of the CPC, where factional tie is an important consideration for promotion (Shih et al. 2012; Shih and Lee 2020), it is a signal to show loyalty to the Party and to XI's leadership. For cadres at provincial level and lower, where delivering economic performance is more important in promotion (Bo 1996; Landry et al. 2018), it is a signal to perform their duties.

8.2.2. Chinese dream

In 2012, Xi advanced the concept of the Chinese dream in his speech at an exhibit named "Road to Rejuvenation" (*fuxing zhilu* 复兴之路). He stated that:

> Everyone has their goals and pursuits and has their dreams. … The great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is the greatest Chinese dream in modern times. The dream carries a long-cherished wish of generations of Chinese people. It reflects the interests of the Chinese people as a whole and is a common expectation of every Chinese person. History has told us that the future of each of us is tied to the future of our nation and country. (Xi 2014c, 36).

The expression "Chinese dream" is meant to evoke the "American dream." Yet, whereas the American dream features individualism, material success, and personal freedom from constraints, the Chinese dream is collectivist, making individual success dependent on the future and fate of the nation and state (Callahan 2014; Pena 2015).

Chinese dream, on the one hand, is the continuation of the rejuvenation discourse of nationalism. On the other hand, it is an attempt to bridge various competing and contradictory interests under the umbrella of nationalism, culture, and history. Xi's expression of Chinese dream has three distinctive features. First, it is rooted in China's history of humiliation (Zhao 2006; 2014; Wang 2014). The Chinese dream is not an empty slogan but the expectation of the whole nation with shared historic memories from the Party's rhetoric. As Xi (2014c) states, the Chinese dream is the "expression of the long-cherished wish of the nation" (240). The CPC, in this logic, is to be credited and trusted with a leadership that took China from poverty to prosperity.

Second, based on nationalism, the Chinese dream intends to create a common identity and symbol in the era of diversified interests. Culture is connected to nationalism in the Chinese dream to shape a common and collective identity (Wang 2017). As Xi (2019) said, "Chinese culture sticks to its root and continuously keeps up with times. It gives the Chinese nation firm confidence in the nation and a strong capacity for recovery. It breeds common emotions and values, common ideals and aspirations." A less heterogenous society, as discussed, makes the acceptance of performative claims easier (Alexander 2006). Situated at the intersection of nationalism, culture, history, and the CPC's focus on stability and prosperity, the Chinese dream becomes a symbol created by the Party which can resonate with the masses. The Party, in this case,

becomes a symbolic representative of the Chinese nation for its leadership role embedded in the Chinese dream.

Finally, the Chinese dream connects individual success to the dream of the nation and state. Rapid economic development over the past 40 years has transformed the political, social, and economic landscape; in the Chinese case, a key transformation has involved the decline of collectivism and the rise of individualism. Steele and Lynch's (2013) analysis of three waves of World Value Survey data (1995, 2001, and 2007) suggests that the Chinese people increasingly emphasize individual well-being and happiness. The Chinese dream connects individual choices to collective success and aligns them to the representative role of the CPC. Xi stresses that the Chinese dream is about the people and that their realization of individual dreams contributes to the Chinese dream. "The Chinese dream means … great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation … everyone can fulfil their dreams in striving for the Chinese dream" (Xi 2014c, 161). Therefore, "we must realize it by closely depending on the people, and we must increasingly bring benefits to the people" (Xi 2014c, 40). When the CPC represents the interests of the people, that is, taking care of their welfare, it is at the same time contributing to the Chinese dream, or the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

The Chinese dream and four matters of confidence bridge the multiplicity of competing and sometimes contradictory interests of the masses to the collective interest of the Chinese nation. From the perspective of representation, these modifications to the CPC ideology add the Confucian responsibility discourse to the claims of representation. As Xi (2012) outlined in his inaugural speech, "our [the CPC] responsibility is to lead and unite the whole party and people of all ethnic groups … continue to strive for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation … work hard to solve the difficulties of the masses in production and livelihood." The responsibility discourse does not alter the mechanism of MLR since the CPC still embraces the mass line approach in building its relationship with the masses. Xi (2018) insisted that the party has to "implement mass line," making policies based on "whether the masses support it or not, whether they agree with it or not, and whether they are happy about it or not."

8.2.3. Consultative democracy and mass line representation

China has been looking for a version of democracy compatible with its tradition for some time (Nathan 1985). From democratic centralism in the Marxist-Leninist tradition to village elections to deliberative democracy, China has experimented with different forms of representation. Hu's (2012) report at the 18th National Congress of CPC brings forward consultative democracy as an "important form of people's democracy". The introduction of consultative democracy is based on experiments with deliberative democracy in Zhejiang province, where local governments adopted deliberative and participatory institutions in collective decision-making (Leib and He 2006; Fishkin et al. 2010).

Xi has contended that participation of the masses in consultations includes a different interest in the decision-making process and creates mechanisms for error checking and prevention (Renminwang 2021).[80] Therefore, in addition to consultation at PPCCs, there should be broad consultation at different levels and between different institutions. In practice, despite Xi's centralization efforts, participation through formal channels was not impacted (Fu and Distelhorst 2018). Scholars still find public consultations frequently used in law-making (Deng and Liu 2017) and local deliberations (Huang 2023).[81]

Three aspects of this deserve our attention. First, democratic consultation or deliberation finds its root in Confucianism (especially *minben* and deliberation) and practice in ancient China (Chen 2006; He 2014; Tan 2014). From the CPC's perspective, consultative democracy is not the transplantation of democratic deliberation, but the combination of Chinese political practices and cultural heritage. Second, as discussed, there are disagreements on whether deliberations or consultation in China are democratic or authoritarian (He and Warren 2011; He 2014; Korolev 2014; Tong and He 2018). Bell (2006) reminds us that such assessment should consider how different forms and institutions of deliberative democracy are available to limit the influence of local

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[80] For an overview of consultative democracy in China, see Chen 2020.

[81] The Ministry of Civil Affairs (MCA) also compiles reports from local governments on their practices of consultations and deliberations. These reports are available by searching *xieshang minzhu* (consultative democracy) on the website of MCA: https://so.mca.gov.cn/searchweb/.

officials and capitalists. As I will show in the next Chapter, institutional arrangements in the Chinese context are geared towards the mass line approach.

Finally, discussions on consultative democracy should not ignore the goal of consultation or the problem consultative democracy is designed to solve. If the focus is on citizen empowerment and collective decision-making, consultative democracy in China is limited compared to deliberative democracy in Western democracies. However, when consultative democracy targets gathering information and input from participants and making inclusive decisions, as Xi states, consultative democracy perhaps exceeds Xi's expectation because it not only encourages participation but also enhances trust in the government (Truex 2017). The adoption of consultative democracy opens new channels for MLR where the representative has more resources for understanding the masses and their concerns. Moreover, it provides more venues of representation that go beyond PCs and PPCCs and makes the cross-party and cross-institution conversation more effective.

8.2.4. Internet as the new venue of representation

Hu Jintao extended the Party's presence to the internet through engaging with citizens through online forums (Xinhua 2008). Xi explicitly brought the internet into mass line as a new venue of representation. In 2016, Xi asks cadres to practice "online mass line" (*wangluo qunzhong luxian* 网络群众路线), where they can learn what the masses want and respond to concerns and issues the masses may have online (RMRB 2016). Moving mass line online provides an instant and convenient channel for the connection between representative and the masses and improves the masses' supervision of the representative (Zhang and Zhou 2017). Notably, the online mass line became a nationwide policy before experiments in multiple settings and venues. Researchers have noticed that local governments are responsive to messages and information passed through government websites (Chen et al. 2016), online opinions surveys and consultations (Kornreich 2019), and Weibo (Chinese Twitter) (Shpakovskaya 2019).

On the one hand, online platforms provide an extra channel for representatives to include the represented and their preferences in the decision-making process and for the represented to participate and engage with representatives more directly. On the other hand, the represented can mobilize collective interests more effectively and exert a

stronger influence on the policymaking process with the help of the internet (Heberer and Shpakovskaya 2020). Therefore, communicative venues through the internet create new stages and strategies for the representatives to actualize their preferred conception of representation. At the same time, these pose challenges to representatives for aggregating and determining the input to be included in the decision-making process. This is where the online mass line approach comes into play. The representative is responsible to make the decision about which opinions to represent based on her understanding of principal contradiction (or the Party's decision).

A representative's responsiveness to preferences expressed online is mediated by the government's control of the internet (King et al. 2014; Stockman and Luo 2017, 189-190; Yang 2014). First, not all comments posted online can reach the representative. The internet in China tolerates criticisms of the government and leaders but not comments that may lead to social mobilization and collective action (King et al. 2013). Second, the representative will avoid responding to topics that may exacerbate the tension between the government and the masses. Empirical studies suggest that representatives are equally receptive — willing to incorporate citizen input in the decision-making process — to both formal channels and the internet when they sense no antagonism towards the state in the input (Meng et al. 2017).

In addition to online participation, Xi Jinping further promotes the practice of the mass line approach in two ways. First, he established the linkage (*lianxi* 联系) system, where the members of the Politburo were assigned a province or a county for them to practice the mass line approach. The linkage system created a channel for the core leadership of the CPC to connect with local cadres through their linkage activities (talk with local cadres and participate in meetings of criticism and self-criticism). Moreover, Xi has recently advocated the importance of investigation for cadres. Investigation is one important step in the mechanism of MLR that provides information on which representatives to base their decisions.

8.3. Democracy or dictatorship?

Scholars have noticed centralization and restriction of local autonomy in the transition from Hu's "steward leadership" to Xi's "strongman rule" (Chan et al. 2021; Bulman and

Jaros 2021). Shirk (2018) criticizes Xi's centralization efforts as a reversion to "personalistic dictatorship" after the establishment of institutional checks to central authorities under Jiang and Hu. However, simply calling the different ruling style of the Chinese leadership democratic or dictatorial may lead to misunderstanding of the nature of Chinese politics. Pluralization of policymaking in local governments encourages the involvement of "policy entrepreneurs" such as social organizations and media in the policy-making process (Metha 2009). However, pluralization does not entail the loosening of control in the central leadership. The central government and party committee retain the ultimate authority to set policy priorities and steering policy directions for central and local governments (Donaldson 2017, 15; Schubert and Alpermann 2019). Therefore, centralization and decentralization are better conceived as the CPC's policy adjustment in governance and representation.

The Party, especially the Central Committee, is expected to have the best knowledge about the principal contradiction in the Chinese society. Centralization restricts the ability and credibility of representatives at or below the provincial level in making claims of representation because they are supposed to follow policy directions from the central government and party committee. However, centralization does not undermine one important function of MLR: information gathering and aggregating. While representatives are limited in available policy options in decision-making, they retain the function of gathering information and feeding it to decision-making bodies at the CPC's Central Committee and Central Government. In this aspect, centralization provides more "mature institutionalization of governance" that aligns policymaking with the long-term goals of the government (Qiaoan and Teets 2020, 145-146). This point is consistent with the Maoist epistemology to which the Party adheres. That is, the Party has the best knowledge about contradictions in China; accordingly, it is capable of making best decisions.

Moreover, centralization reduces but does not eliminate room for policy experiments. Local governments can still experiment with policy innovations, admittedly and unsurprisingly at a lower level because of centralization (Teets et al. 2017). The adoption of consultative democracy at the central level is partly the outcome of experiments of deliberative democracy at the local level. Mao's theory of contradiction provides ideological support for such limited autonomy. Each province and municipality

may have its own unique situation that breeds slightly different contradictions and principal contradictions. The representative can and should make their own decisions in handling these contradictions (setting policy priorities) based on their judgement. Of course, such judgements should not contradict with the principal contradiction determined by the Party.

Hence, with centralization, local representatives have less autonomy in policy options but retain functions of information gathering and reporting. From the perspective of participation, centralization under Xi does not undermine institutionalized channels of participation such as letters and appeals and freedom of information requests (Fu and Distelhorst 2018).

How does centralization affect representatives? Before addressing this question, it is useful to briefly review China's cultural tradition and mass line representation. Confucian responsibility suggests that the ruler is responsible for the well-being of the people, including material livelihood and moral cultivation. To fulfil Heaven's mandate, the ruler shall cultivate his moral virtues. Correspondingly, the people expect that the ruler will take care of their lives and can rebel against rulers failing to do so. This resembles what Dahl (1989) defines as guardianship. Zhao (2009) suggests that the responsibility discourse is coupled with performance legitimacy in Chinese politics, where the fulfilment of promises is critical for the survival of the Chinese government. The daunting prospect of being unable to deliver promises drives the party to make policy shifts favourable to the accomplishment of policy goals (Yang and Zhao 2015). Mass line representation is the key for the Party in making and achieving policy goals through the engagement with the masses. From the masses' perspective, whether the promised goals are delivered or not also depends on their expectations and awareness of the policy (Lü 2014; Ratigan 2022). When the represented have low expectations as to the policy outcome, they will more easily tolerate poor performances by the representative and the Party.

Following that, when the representative has the autonomy in making claims or promises, her strategic calculations will include one more factor: the trade-off between delivery of promises and support of the represented. Promises in policy areas where the represented have little interest, or in which policy delivery is difficult, are not the best choice for any rational representatives. This adds one explanation to representatives'

focus on issues related to livelihood in the Chinese legislature, not political reform towards liberalism and Western democracy. On the one hand, the well-being of the people is the mutually accepted goal for the representative and represented with the indoctrination of Confucian responsibility. On the other hand, promises related to political reform are more difficult to deliver on and are not the primary policy focus on the masses. What decentralization offered is more autonomy in gathering information and delivering policy outcomes. It merely changes policy options available to the representatives.

With the CPC's ability to control different elements of performance (scripts, venues, technologies), its representative claims are more likely to be accepted by the masses (Alexander 2006). In this regard, the representatives can control their claims through clarifying the meaning of performance targets in their promises. For example, Xi's advancement of the Chinese dream comes with an abstract claim of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, where what counts as "great rejuvenation" is subject to contestation. He further sets "two centenary goals" (*Liange Yibainian* 两个一百年) for the rejuvenation (Xi 2014).[82] The represented, on the other hand, are relatively passive in negotiating and bargaining regarding these targets for the lack of knowledge or awareness.

The CPC's claims to represent echo Lu and Shi's (2014) finding on the Party's ability to promote guardianship democracy — with selection of a capable ruler as the key to governance and democracy — as an alternative to electoral democracy among people. However, the term guardianship is not in the CPC's dictionary. From the CPC's perspective, the representative's knowledge about what is good for the masses comes from the masses through the practice of mass line approach. But the judgement of the representative may also fail her. That's why she needs to practice the mass line approach and follow the guidelines provided by the CPC, which, as history has

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[82] In 2014, Xi first proposes the two centenary goals in his speech at the conference celebrating the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and France. He states that the two goals are to complete a moderately prosperous society in all respects by the centenary of the CPC and build a modern socialist country by the centenary of the PRC.

demonstrated, also made mistakes. For the CPC, it is through the dialectical process of "trial and error" in practice that we can know the interests of the masses.

8.4. Conclusion

Chapters 6, 7, and 8 have discussed the actualization of mass line representation in post-Deng China. Performance of representation develops different focuses, but the goal is to address the disconnection between the representative and the represented, which is a common and vital problem for the CPC. While all three leaders made considerable efforts in curtailing the negative impact of corruption on the blood and flesh relationship, each devised different strategies in their respective stages set up by the social and economic conditions in their times.

Economic reform transformed China's social and political landscape and created an ideological vacuum for the CPC with the influx of liberal values. Jiang Zemin defended a socialist democracy by drawing comparison between Chinese political system and democracy in the United States. He institutionalized party building to motivate and sanction representatives to practice mass line approach in representing the masses. The masses were given the opportunity to participate by voicing their complaints through the Bureau of Letters and Appeals. However, Jiang failed to properly handle the value pluralization and diversification of the Chinese society.

Hu Jintao's strategies looked beyond mass line representation *per se* to create a favourable stage for the performance of MLR. Highlighting Confucian concepts such as people first, harmony, and moral cultivation, Hu bridged Confucianism with the CPC's ideology to instill the masses' resonance with the Party's ideology. Moreover, Hu loosened restrictions on local governments to allow them to experiment with different institutions of liberal democracies, which he believed complemented the practice of MLR.

Following Hu's effort, Xi Jinping went further in the creation of common identities. In addition to the cultural heritage, Xi has drawn attention to the Chinese people's shared history and the Party's task to bring stability and prosperity with the promotion of a Chinese dream. Institutionally, Xi has tried to restore confidence in the Chinese political system and the mass line approach through his "tiger and fly" anti-corruption campaigns.

Moreover, he has urged representatives to also practice mass line approach through the internet, which has offered alternative channels of participation for the masses.

Scholars have adopted a systemic approach in understanding how different venues of deliberation and representation contribute to the overfall functioning of a democratic system (Mansbridge et al. 2012; Kuyper 2016; Warren 2017). In the Chinese context, the different institutions for representation should not be treated as isolated venues of participation and representation. For example, when the masses cannot participate directly in the law-making process in PCs, they can resort to other institutions (e.g., trade unions, women's federations.) for surrogate representation.

What remains in question is how effective these strategies have been? From the perspective of performance legitimacy, the CPC has been able to deliver what it promised — stability and prosperity — to the masses. Yet there are criticisms of the Chinese political system as authoritarian. This question needs to be addressed within the context of mass line representation and the problems that the Chinese political system is designed to solve from a systemic approach. The next chapter will deal with this in more detail.

Chapter 9.
Normative Considerations: Mass Line Representation in Comparison

This dissertation argues that understanding how a form of representation answers the key problem of representation — the connection between the representative and the represented — is critical in pinning down the meaning of representation in different contexts. Building on the insights of Pitkinian and constructivists' conceptions of representation, I propose an analytical framework that unpacks the key problem in three layers. First, the conceptual layer differentiates the meaning of representation from a multiplicity of possibilities. This is done through an analysis of the conceptual morphology of representation. Each form of representation gains its unique meaning from the interactions of its conceptual components and other concepts in the same ideology. Chapters 4 and 5 took up this task and mapped out the conceptual components of mass line representation (MLR) and its connection with core concepts in the CPC's ideology. Secondly, the practical layer focuses on how a specific meaning is actualized and performed in political life. Carefully devised performative actions of representatives aim at creating resonance with targeted audiences, turning them into a relatively homogenous group with the acceptance of specific meaning of representation (usually the intended meaning the representative attempts to deliver). Chapters 6, 7, and 8 outlined the strategies and institutional innovations that Chinese leaders from Jiang Zemin to Xi Jinping developed to enhance the recognition of MLR in China.

Finally, the third layer considers normative issues revolving around the conception and practice of representation. This layer has two aspects: the normative criteria spelled out in the conception of representation and the assessment of the practice of representation with the criteria. Chapter 5 had laid down informative inclusion and consequential responsiveness as the two criteria expressed in the conception of mass line representation. This chapter deals with the second part and discusses whether MLR meets the two normative criteria with its institutional development from Jiang Zemin to Xi Jinping.

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This chapter consists of three sections. The first section considers the normativity of representation and argues that theorists should separate representation from democracy in developing their normative criteria. After reviewing normative values emphasized in MLR, the next section evaluates institutional innovations from Jiang to Xi based on their impact on MLR's two criteria: informative inclusion and consequential responsiveness. The last section puts MLR side to side with normative criteria spelled out in Pitkin's substantive representation — empowered inclusion and substantive responsiveness. This chapter concludes with a brief review of crisis of representation in both the Chinese and liberal democratic contexts.

9.1. Normativity and performance of representation in the Chinese Context

In liberal democratic systems, representation is expected to promote normative values of equality (Urbinati 2006; Näsström 2015), inclusion (Young 2000), and deliberation (Mansbridge 2003; Urbinati and Warren 2008). Each of the values is decontested in a way that facilitates the formation of public reason and judgement crucial for inclusive and collective decision making in democratic institutions. From this perspective, mass line representation operates in a different political system where these values are not prioritized. It is less useful to assess whether MLR promotes democratic equality, democratic inclusion, and democratic deliberation in China. Instead, theorists should ask the question: does MLR meet the values and standards that it claims to promote?

9.1.1. Normative considerations

To answer this question, I argue that we should move beyond the dichotomy of democracy and non-democracy and return to the concept of representation *per se*. Normativity of representation is endogenous to the conceptualization of representation. Each valid conception of representation should define which value(s) and standard(s) it applies. In her analysis of different forms of representation, Mansbridge (2003) notes that each form of representation comes with "normative criteria appropriate to each" (515). Admittedly, her analysis assumes representation as an indispensable component of democracy and considers democratic deliberation as the overarching norm for

representation. Yet it is safe to extrapolate that forms of representation in non-democratic contexts have their own norms. Such norms can of course align with values and goals expressed in democratic institutions. They can also follow principles and rules beyond liberal democracy. It is the task for political theorists to identify the normative aspects of each conception of representation they develop.

There is one overarching principle for assessing the normativity of representation if we accept Pitkin's (1967) general definition of representation as making something of the represented present in some sense. An imminent normative question to ask about the definition is: does the representative make the something present and how well does she make the something present? Political theorists must first unpack the conceptual components of representation and understand how a specific form of representation functions before they can offer an answer to this question. Each form of representation, when defining what is the "something" that representatives represent and how it is represented, provides the standard to address the normative question that comes with it. Pitkin's (1967) substantive representation, for example, provides responsiveness as the criterion to evaluate how well the representative makes the interest of the represented present in the legislature.

From this perspective, democratic values that representation should advance in liberal democracies focus on building the capacity of citizens in controlling the representative institutions. As Näsström (2015) argues, when citizens share the responsibility to hold representatives accountable, each of the three values — equality, inclusion, and deliberation — equips citizens with appropriate identity and approach to perform their duties. While representatives are expected to be ready to respond to the represented, the represented shall form their individual and group judgement as to whether they should express their objections to decisions made by the representatives (Pitkin 1967; Runciman 2007).

Similarly, the two normative principles expressed in the conception of MLR — informative inclusion and consequential responsiveness — are derived from its distinct decontestation of conceptual components. Despite its concern with the representation of interests, MLR focuses on the representative's motivation and ability to gather information necessary for making the right decision. Therefore, it is crucial for her to engage with the masses and collect sufficient input from them. Core concepts such as

contradiction and practice offer principles for the representative to make the best decision. Implementation of the policy constitutes the outcome of representation that responds to the needs of the masses.

9.1.2. Conceptual components and institutional innovations

Chapters 6, 7, and 8 outlined the ideological lineage and institutional development of mass line representation in the reform era. To better understand the implications of various strategies adopted by the CPC in performing MLR from Jiang to Xi, it is useful to group them into a two-dimensional matrix that captures their different focus and contribution to the functioning of MLR.

The first dimension consists of the conceptual components of representation. As argued in Chapter 2, an implicit theme in Pitkin's classic work on representation is a general conceptualization of representation by its components. Her definition of representation as "making something present" suggests five components — the representative, the represented, objects being represented, venue of representation, and mechanism of representation.[83] This section focuses on three of them: the representative, the represented, and the mechanism of representation. The other two components — objects being represented and venue of representation — has not seen significant changes in the reform era and hence are not included in the discussion here.

The second dimension consists of three generation of leaders in the reform era: Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao, and Xi Jinping. Deng Xiaoping's decision to open the Chinese market set China's economy on the fast-track of development. The economic boom has proven to be a double-edged sword for the practice of MLR. On the one hand, it signals that the CPC's claim to represent — bringing welfare to the people — is delivered by the economic success. On the other hand, issues associated with development — diversification of interests, corruption, pluralization of Chinese society, etc. — challenge

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[83] As discussed in Chapter 5, Dovi (2018) outlines five questions associated with Pitkin's definition, which capture the first four components of representation. The mechanism of representation is another component integral to representation because it defines the type of connection between the representative and the represented in a conception of representation. In Pitkin's (1967) substantive representation, for example, the mechanism is democratic election, where the representative and the represented are connected through periodic elections.

Chinese leaders. Each of them offered their own answers to the most severe issues as reviewed in Chapters 6, 7, and 8.

Table 9.1: Institutional development of MLR

	Jiang	Hu	Xi
Representative	Party building	Party building	Party building (anti-corruption)
Represented	New social strata	Moral cultivation, empowerment (local), minority representation	Moral cultivation
Mechanism of Representation	Institutionalization of mass line (outlines requirements of mass line approach), PCs, Bureau of Letters and Calls	PCs, descriptive representation, electoral representation, symbolic representation, deliberation	Symbolic representation, Chinese democracy, online mass line approach

Combining the two dimensions gives us a table of institutional developments of MLR from Jiang to Xi (Table 9.1). Their strategies to perform mass line representation vary in their focus on the three conceptual components. Jiang's focus was on the mass line approach and his strategies were developed around rebuilding the mechanisms of MLR. His response to the diversification of Chinese society in the reform era was to incorporate the new social strata (e.g., private entrepreneurs, senior technical workers, etc.) in the system of MLR. Hu Jintao was more open to experimentation with different institutions, including those of liberal democracy. His strategy was not to replace mass line approach with these experiments. Instead, Hu retained the CPC's leadership role in trying out open elections and deliberations at local level. More importantly, Hu built the connection between the Confucian tradition and CPC's ideology. The socialist core values, as the product of this connection, provided an extra channel to perform MLR. In addition to institutional innovations in MLR, the CPC started work on moral cultivation, which aims at building ideological consensus in the pluralized society of China. Xi Jinping's contributions to MLR are exhibited in his confidence doctrine and the explicit statement on Chinese democracy, with the mass line approach as the cornerstone. It signals another shift in the CPC leadership's attitude towards MLR. While Jiang and Hu were mostly defensive about and cautiously learning from liberal democracy, Xi promotes what this regime has come to call Chinese democracy as a viable competitor

to liberal democracy. Moreover, Xi advocates for the practice of mass line approach in online portals of government agencies and People's Congresses (PCs).

Despite the different focuses of the three leaders, all of them paid considerable attention to party building, the orthodox institution proposed by Mao Zedong as the key to the proper functioning of MLR. With its extensive focus on the representative's will and ability to locate and promote interests of the represented, MLR heavily relies on a supply of competent representatives. Party building, with education and discipline as two institutional dimensions, is entrusted to train and incentivize representatives towards behaving as the ideal representative spelled out in the conception of MLR.

9.2. Normative appraisal of MLR

Does MLR meet its normative standards? From the perspective of representation, the question speaks to how well MLR fosters an inclusive information collection process and delivers desired policy outcomes to the represented. This section addresses this question by mapping institutional innovations from Jiang Zemin to Xi Jinping with the two normative criteria spelled out in the conception of MLR.

Mass line representation is designed to promote the wellbeing of the masses. This issue sits right in the intersection of Confucian responsibility and CPC's claim to lead the people. Confucianism takes a paternalistic approach in spelling out the government's responsibility in addressing the needs of its people. The CPC also follows a paternalistic course but reads the goal from the perspective of Maoist epistemology. Such needs, at the abstract level, are determined by the principal contradiction, which is knowable through practice. It thus contends that the best way to take care of the masses' welfare is to practice the mass line approach, claiming that true knowledge about interests of the masses and how to promote them is attainable through investigation, aggregation, decision, and persuasion. The CPC is portrayed as having such knowledge and hence should lead the masses.

According to the CPC ideology, two obstacles prevent the Party from advancing the interests of the masses. First, since needs of the masses vary and may contradict with one another, an important task for the CPC is to identify the proper interest to promote. This is done through the dialectical process of practice — from cumulation of

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perceptual knowledge (various needs of the masses) to the discovery of rational knowledge (principal contradiction). While it is impossible for the cadre/representative to connect with everyone, she is expected to plan her investigation properly in order to locate the contradiction in place.[84] Therefore, the masses should be included in the representative process for the purpose of information gathering.

Secondly, another obstacle for the mass line approach is in the implementation of the policy that has been chosen. Once the cadre has identified the principal contradiction and made decisions on the interest to represent, she needs to implement the decision as a response to the needs of the masses. From the theory of contradiction, the appropriate policy in place is very likely to address the principal contradiction and leave the secondary contradiction unattended. Hence responsiveness in MLR does not merely mean to promote interests associated with the principal contradiction. More importantly, it demands that representatives respond to the interest not represented by explaining to the masses affected and persuading them to accept the decision made.

The two obstacles illustrate the two aspects of the key responsibility of representatives in MLR — responding to the needs of the masses — and the two normative criteria spelled out in the conception of MLR — informative inclusion and consequential responsiveness. As discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, performing this responsibility under the mechanisms of MLR places high demands on the representative. The three challenges that arose during the reform era — decline of Marxist belief, pluralization of Chinese society, and corruption of cadres — further tested the representative and the CPC in upholding the mass line approach. The institutional developments listed in the last section offered a convenient framework to examine the CPC's responses to the challenges, and to consider whether the innovations pushed the performance of MLR closer to its normative ideals (summarized in Table 9.2).

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[84] Mao (1991) recommends that cadres choose 10 typical sites to conduct investigation (233-237). This will give cadres sufficient knowledge about the needs of the masses.

Table 9.2: Evaluation of the impact of institutional innovations on MLR

(Positive impacts are in bold)

	Informative inclusion	Consequential responsiveness
Party building (discipline)	**Promotes the practice of the mass line approach by sanctioning corrupted cadres.** Restricted by the CPC's ability to identify corrupt cadres and promote competent cadres.	**Promote the practice of the mass line approach by sanctioning corrupted cadres.** More responsive to the principal contradiction identified by the CPC and accountability to the masses is mediated by the CPC.
Party building (education)	**Offers ideological and administrative skill training to help cadres to better practice the mass line approach.** Doubts on the effectiveness of the trainings	**Offers ideological and administrative skill training to help cadres to better practice the mass line approach**. Cannot enforce accountability and may subject to the Party's directions.
Bureau of Letters and Calls system (BLCs)	**Offers a channel for active participation, which is made more accessible with the online mass line approach.** BLC cannot force the inclusion of information gathered in this channel. It also requires personal information for filing complaints online.	**Offers a bottom-up accountability mechanism.** Its effectiveness is limited by the BLCs' ability to enforce response from related agencies.
People's Congress system (PCs)	**Institutionalized the law-making and supervisory functions of PCs that prioritizes inclusion of masses (especially the disadvantaged groups) and sanction of cadres who failed to practice the mass line approach.** The effectiveness of PCs depends on the power relationship between the Party, government, and PCs.	**Offers horizontal accountability with its power to check performance of cadres/representatives in government. Elections in PCs offer an extra layer of substantive responsiveness.** The effectiveness of PCs depends on the power relationship between the Party, government, and PCs.
Deliberation and consultation	**Offers additional channels for participation of the masses.** The CPC reserves decision-making power.	**Offers additional channels for consideration of public opinion in the decision-making process.** May be limited by the Party's control over agenda and reservation of the power to make final decisions.

9.2.1. Informative inclusion

Collecting credible information is vital for reducing uncertainty and bias in political decision-making (Patty 2009; Gailmard and Patty 2012). Institutional innovations adopted by CPC leaders from Jiang to Xi were geared towards this goal in two aspects:

they aim to 1) produce more willing and capable representative to engage with the masses and collect their input; 2) offer more channels for the masses to participate in MLR. The system of MLR is also a system of information gathering that prepares the CPC for making good decisions. This section reviews institutional developments in the three generations of Chinese leadership from Jiang to Xi and argues that, despite their respective shortcomings, these institutions offer more channels for participation and provide information for the representative to make appropriate decisions.

Party discipline. As one aspect of the CPC's party building efforts, party discipline is indispensable for the functioning of MLR. The mass line approach offers a standard formula for representatives to perform their duties. As long as they follow the principles of contradiction and practice — the two core concepts of Maoism — representatives can make the best decision for a given situation. Obviously, this is not as easy as it appears. Two questions can be asked regarding the representative's performance on informative inclusion: 1) are the representatives willing to practice the mass line approach to include the represented; and 2) are the representatives capable of gathering sufficient information for their decision-making? The two questions speak to the CPC's party building efforts respectively — discipline and education.

One challenge to the CPC's rule and its efficacy in practicing MLR is corruption among cadres and representatives. As an institution designed to control corruption, party discipline is developed and adopted by all the Chinese leaders from Jiang to Xi. Compared to Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao, Xi Jinping's "tiger and fly" strategy (punishing both high-ranking officials and grass-root officials) expands the CPC's anti-corruption effort to public organizations such as universities. Despite doubts about Xi's intentions for adopting a large-scale anti-corruption campaign, Carothers (2022) suggests that a strong leadership in non-democratic regimes is more likely to control corruption with anti-corruption campaigns. As discussed in section 5.3.4 of Chapter 5, discipline of corrupted officials provides incentives for representatives to practice the mass line approach. This is crucial for the proper collection of information from the masses and making good decisions based on the input gathered.

Yet the full power of party discipline in controlling corruption is limited by answers to two questions. First, can the Party identify and punish corrupted cadres? Scholars have long doubted the intention of the CPC's anti-corruption efforts, claiming they are

tools for intra-party factional struggle (Lam 2015; Pei 2016, 2018; Liu 2022). If party discipline is widely viewed by cadres as the CPC leadership's strategy to consolidate its rule, sanctioning corrupt cadres would be less effective in motivating other cadres to perform their duties.

Second, can the Party educate and promote competent cadres to appropriate positions? When the Party can remove corrupted officials from their positions, it becomes important for the Party to appoint competent replacers to rebuild the connection with the masses. However, research has shown that personal connection, or the factional network, is a more important consideration in the Party's appointment of higher-level officials (CPC's Central Committee) (Shih et al. 2012; Shih and Lee 2020), whereas at lower levels, the ability to deliver economic performance (determined by the Party as the principal contradiction) is the driving factor (Bo 1996; Landry et al. 2018; Zeng and Wong 2021; Jia 2022). Nonetheless, we should not exaggerate the charm of promotion to cadres (Pang et al. 2023). Most cadres have little hope of being promoted because of their education background and the CPC's age restriction in promotion (Gao 2017). For the CPC, it is perhaps equally important in ensuring that cadres can perform their roles in representation without incentives of promotion.

Party education. Party education is another aspect of the CPC's party building effort. The party school system attempts to equip representatives with ideological foundations and necessary administrative skills to manage a modernized China (Wibowo and Fook 2006; Shambaugh 2008b). The ideological training and administrative skill training offered at party schools remind the cadres to practice the mass line approach and give them skills in collecting information from the masses and handling possible conflicts concerning the masses. From this perspective, party education facilitates the informative inclusion required in the practice of mass line approach. However, the effectiveness of such training is unclear. Moreover, the party school system is also a source of information for the CPC leadership at different levels. As Shambaugh (2008b) notes, the Central Party School regularly compiles reports on research conducted by the School for the leadership. Party leaders at different levels can respond to the research through the *pishi* system (批示制度), where their comments and instructions on the reports are prioritized by related agencies (Tsai and Liao 2017).

The Bureau of Letters and Calls system (BLCs). The BLCs was institutionalized under Jiang Zemin's rule. It offers a channel of participation for the masses by allowing them to file their complaints and proposals to BLC at different levels of government, which are then processed and potentially acted on in some manner by related agencies. Active participation of the masses through the BLCs complements the passive participation provided in MLR. Each year, the system of BLV receives over millions of complaints from the masses, making it an important channel for participation of the masses and for the CPC to gauge the interests of the masses (Chen 2011). As discussed, BLCs can supervise but not enforce the response from agencies involved in a complaint. This, however, does not undermine its role as a source of information for representatives.

Table 9.3: Number of cases filed to Guangdong BLC

Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Cases	240,600	258,522	401,500	352,900	677,000

Sources: Guangdong Bureau of Letters and Calls.[85]

Xi Jinping's focus on online components in the mass line approach made the BLCs available through online portals.[86] As disclosed by Zhang Enxi (张恩玺) in 2015, the then Deputy Director of the National Bureau of Letters and Calls, 39% of complaints and proposals were submitted online in 2014 and 40% were submitted online in the first quarter of 2015 (Zhongguo Zhengfu Wang 2015). Xi's centralization of power did not reduce the number of complaints received by the BLCs. Numbers from Guangdong province alone shows steady increases in cases reported to the BLCs from 2018 to 2022 (Table 9.3). The number of online portals make the BLCs more accessible for the masses to report their grievances and suggestions. More importantly, it makes it more convenient for cadres and representatives to collect input from the masses. One problem of BLCs is that, due to the requirement of these online portals, one has to

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[85] The numbers are extracted from reports compiled by the Guangdong Bureau of Letter and Calls. The reports are available at http://gdwsxf.gd.gov.cn/xxgk/sjfb/tjsj/, accessed June 10, 2023.

[86] The National Bureau of Letter and Calls started its online portal in 2013 and further included online portals of BLCs at local levels in 2015. A mobile app was made available in 2016 (RMRB 2022).

register for accounts with their personal information (name, phone number, identification number, etc.). The masses may be discouraged to file their complaints and proposals for this reason.

As discussed in Chapter 6, local cadres have often considered participation of masses through the BLCs channel as a threat to political stability and hence chosen to silence their voices (O'Brien and Li 1995; Yu 2005; Liao and Tsai 2019). This in effect undermines the role of BLCs in informative inclusion. However, we should also notice that there are positive developments in this regard. Some local governments started innovations in the procedure of filing complaints and management of complaints from the masses, which encouraged participation and enforced responses from agencies involved (RMRB 2010; Tian 2012; Renminwang 2014).

The People's Congress system (PCs). The PCs is an integral part of the CPC's effort in including the masses and brining their input forward for decision-making. As O'Brien (1994) observes, representatives in PCs are both agents of the CPC, who explain the decisions of the Party to the masses, and "remonstrators" for the masses, who bring grievances of the masses to the attention of the Party. Institutionalization of the PCs from Jiang to Xi has revolved around three areas: law-making, supervision, and minority representation.

The law-making function of PCs was institutionalized under Jiang's rule. Representatives in the PCs are expected to practice the mass line approach in engaging with the masses and including input from the masses in their proposals in PCs. Truex traces the information gathering function of the National People's Congress (NPC) from 2002 to 2012 and finds that the number of motions and suggestions in 2012 increased by 67.8% over the 10 years (Truex 2016, 31-32).[87] Compared to this period, the number is relatively stable in Xi's era with around 470 motions and 8,000 suggestions. While most of the motions are proposals for amending existing legislation or making new

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[87] Motions in the PCs are more formal proposals to amend laws or making new laws. It requires at least 30 representative's signatures. Suggestions are less formal and can be criticisms or opinions on certain issues.

legislation, a small portion of them (about 1 % - 3%) are related to the NPC's supervision role.[88]

Among the motions and suggestions in the 1st session of the 14th NPC, 62.7% of the motions and 60% of the suggestions (out of about 8,000) were formulated through practicing the mass line approach, namely, through investigations and engagement with the masses (Xinhua 2023). Based on these numbers, representatives in NPC are performing their duties to include the masses and communicating their concerns to the CPC and the government, which become the raw material for decision-making at the national level.

This claim is understandable for two reasons. First, as discussed in Chapter 7, with Hu's experiments with liberal democratic institutions, elections in PCs are gaining political significance and representatives are facing a dilemma as they are torn two roles: agent of the state and "remonstrators" on behalf of the masses. Some research suggests that when representatives see potential contradiction between the two roles, they tend to opt for the representation of the masses (He and Huang 2018). Second, Cho (2009) and Xia (2007) observe that the law-making function of the PCs is an inclusive process where parties representing different interests can have a say either through deliberations organized by the PCs or public hearings.

Institutionalizing PCs has also involved strengthening its supervisory role. Cho (2002) praises such institutionalization as the "supervisory powerhouse" that upgrades the PCs from "rubber stamps" to "iron stamps." An important part of this supervisory role is budgetary oversight. Representatives in the PCs have the authority to review the governments' budget reports during the plenary sessions. This form of supervision is sometimes weak due to the lack of expertise in interpreting the reports (Cho 2009, 52). In some local PCs, this role becomes a channel of political participation of the masses, where they can question and debate the allocation of public funds with government representatives (Li et al. 2023).

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[88] From public sources published by the government, motions that reports on the misconduct of the government see an increase after Xi took office in 2012 (from around 8 motions in 2012 to 14 and 16 in 2016 and 2017).

Representatives in the PCs can monitor the performance of government agencies through onsite investigations and review of their annual work reports. This form of supervision, on the one hand, is an extra channel for the representatives in PCs to gather information. On the other hand, it provides a check on the performance of representatives in government agencies. The PCs have the power to remove cadres whom they deem incompetent in plenary sessions or by its standing committee (Cho 2002). Such a check is by no means close to check and balance in liberal democracies. Its impact is dependent on the relative power relations between the PCs and government. When the Party and government is strongly against the decisions of the PCs, the supervisory role is rather limited, with few meaningful consequences. A less supportive Party leadership can easily undermine the supervisory power of the PCs (Almén 2013).

Reform of the PCs, especially the NPC, also focused on the representation of minority and disadvantaged groups (e.g., peasant workers) under Hu Jintao's rule. Political theorists argue that inclusion of minority and disadvantaged groups in political representation is valuable for including the distinctive perspective of these groups (Mansbridge 1999; Young 2000). It is, of course, a gesture of the CPC to include more voices and perspectives in its decision-making process. However, the impact minority groups can make on decisions of the PCs is questionable due to their small proportional allocation of seats in PCs.

Deliberation and consultation. Hu Jintao's realignment between the CPC's claim to promote the interest of the masses and the Confucian notion of *minben* (people first) created room for experimenting with liberal democratic institutions. Democratic deliberation is adapted to the Chinese context in ways that create additional channels for the masses to advocate their interests and preferences (He and Thøgersen 2010; He and Warren 2011). He and Warren (2011) describe experiment with deliberative institutions as deliberative authoritarianism or consultative authoritarianism, where "power holders use communication to collect the preferences of those their decisions will affect and take those preferences into account as information relevant to their decision-making" (273). Deliberations in the Chinese context offer opportunities for the masses to voice their concerns, which becomes the raw information for representatives to come up

with their judgement on policy priorities. In this sense, deliberative institutions promote informative inclusion in an MLR system.

As discussed, deliberative institutions in the PCs take two forms: participatory law-making (Xia 2007; Cho 2009; He and Huang 2018) and participatory budgeting (He 2011; Li et al. 2023). These institutions have been further implemented by local governments and communities (He and Thøgersen 2010; Tang 2015a; Tang 2015b). As He and Warren (2017) observes, deliberations in China are "increasingly genuine, substantive, inclusive, and often impressive" even after Xi took power in 2013 (159). Yet inclusion in deliberative institutions primarily serves the function of providing information for the representative. It does not empower participants in the democratic sense because the CPC reserves the power in decision-making (He and Thøgersen 2010; He and Warren 2011).

9.2.2. Consequential responsiveness

Representatives are able to gather information from the masses through two main channels: 1) the mass line approach as the primary channel; and 2) other channels developed by the CPC as responses to the challenges in reform era. Following the mass line approach, representatives are then expected to deliver the outcomes promised in their representative claims with the information collected. This is also a way to assess the effectiveness of informative inclusion. That is, the effect of informative inclusion is also exemplified in the other normative criteria — consequential responsiveness, namely, the ability to make good decisions about which interest to represent on what policy issues. Institutional innovations since Jiang Zemin have focused on three aspects: 1) managing the masses' expectation of the outcome through the CPC's representative claims; 2) strengthening the ability of representatives to process information collected and make good decisions on government policies; and 3) creating additional sources of accountability for representatives.

At the national level, the CPC has been claiming that it represents the interests of the people. With the principal contradiction determined by the CPC, its claim has two themes: stability and development. Both are scripted in the collective representation of the Chinese people. On the one hand, CPC's emphasis on the importance of stability since Deng's era is gaining resonance within the Chinese population. Shue (2010) finds

that stability is a competent competitor with economic development in sources of legitimacy in China. On the other hand, China has a long tradition of belief in benevolent government, that is, a government caring for the people (Perry 2008; Tong 2011). Hu Jintao's shift from a pure economic development focus to *minben*, or people first, signals the CPC's adaptability and awareness of the importance of taking advantage of China's shared cultural heritage in making claims of representation. Disch (2019) argues that citizens follow a "common frame of reference" and collective "coordination process" in forming their opinions (175-178). In connecting its claim to represent with the Confucian tradition, the CPC is strengthening its claim by referring to Confucian *minben* as the rule of recognition and common frame of reference.

We can also briefly check how well the CPC has performed its claimed responsibilities as a spectator. As discussed, the CPC frames its representative claims based on the principal contradiction, which focuses on economic development, and its ability to lead China to resolve the contradiction. There are two related goals for the CPC: maintain its rule and promote welfare of its people. There is no doubt that CPC excels in both aspects. Despite pessimistic predictions of scholars on the future of CPC's rule,[89] the CPC demonstrated flexibility in adapting to the changing structure of Chinese society with economic and political reform. As shown in Chapters 6,7 and 8, the three post-Deng leaderships have utilized their dominant role in state and society and developed new institutions to cope with challenges they faced.

China's economic performance since Deng's opening-up policy, China's GDP is growing steadily at a fast pace. Data from the World Bank shows that China's GDP in 2021 is $17.76 trillion, over 14 times more than the number in 2000.[90] Xi Jinping's "targeted poverty alleviation (*jingzhun fupin* 精准扶贫)" is another policy developed to accomplish the Party's "two centenaries" goals first proposed by Jiang Zemin, which claims that China would basically accomplish industrialization and build a well-off society by 2021.

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[89] The stream of research follows Fukuyama's (1992) conclusion that the collapse of Soviet Union is the end of history where liberal democracy becomes the last form of human ideology and governance model. Shambaugh (2015) is among the many scholars that predicts the end of CPC's rule in China.

[90] See World Bank's data: https://data.worldbank.org/country/china.

The CPC's ability to deliver representative claims enhances the masses' trust in the CPC. Scholars find high levels of support of the Chinese government and regime in different opinion surveys (e.g., World Value Survey, Asian Barometer, etc.) (Dickson et al. 2017; Chu 2013; Li 2016; Lu and Dickson 2020).[91] Li (2016), for example, finds that over 80% of respondents to The China Survey conducted in 2008 expressed some level of trust in central government. Over 40% of them responded with a high level of trust in central government. Survey results also indicate a gap between trust in central government and local governments (Dickson et al. 2017; Li 2016). In Li's (2016) study, trust in provincial government is about 10% lower than trust in central government, which is still a good number. From the perspective of mass line representation, it shows that representation in provincial governments is less recognized and accepted by the represented. One possible explanation may stem from the close relationship between economic performance and citizens' trust in government (Yang and Zhao 2015). Uneven development across provinces in China can cause less trust in provinces with worse economic performances.

Moving beyond representation at the national level, MLR places the burden of judgement on the representative. On the one hand, the CPC's decision on the principal contradiction provides a general guidance for representatives. The representatives are expected to have more concrete understanding of principal contradictions at local levels with their own efforts in engaging with the masses. On the other hand, the mass line approach provides party building as the institutional support for the representative to make reasoned decision on behalf of the masses. When a decision is made, MLR demands representatives to go back "to the masses" to resolve any possible interest conflicts with the decisions made. To ensure that the representatives can perform their duties in delivering policy outcomes, the CPC's institutional innovations developed new sources of accountability for representatives.

Party discipline. Punishing cadres who have failed to perform their duties also offers an extra layer of accountability for MLR. Mao's conception of MLR asks

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[91] One general concern in surveys conducted in China is on the credibility of responses provided by the respondents. Research on this question paid special attention on this issue and found little evidence on the falsification of preferences (e.g., Dickson et al. 2017).

representatives to give account to the represented after the decision is made. Yet, Mao did not provide institutional warrants for this requirement on an MLR representative. When the CPC monitors and sanctions incompetent cadres, it offers hierarchical accountability through its disciplinary institutions (Grant and Keohane 2005). From the perspective of the represented, corruption control provides a weakened form of "surrogate accountability" (Rubenstein 2007). The CPC acts as the "surrogate" of the represented to hold representatives accountable. However, the represented do not have effective control over the CPC regarding which representatives should be sanctioned, or over the priority of the CPC gives to which issues are the focus of any discipline.

Combined with the CPC's ability to promote cadres based on the primary task of the Party (Bo 1996; Landry et al. 2018; Zeng and Wong 2021; Jia 2022), namely economic development, the ability to sanction corrupted cadres does explain the CPC's economic success from the party building perspective. However, the sanction of cadres does not offer incentive to all cadres to work towards the Party's policy goals, nor does it push cadres to go "to the masses" to explain the policies to them and resolve any potential conflicts in the society. Moreover, hierarchical accountability makes the representatives more accountable to the CPC and gives them little additional incentive to pay little direct attention to preferences of the masses (mediated by the CPC).

Party education. Education of cadres is indispensable for the functioning of MLR. When the representative is key to connect with the masses and promote their interests, party education prepares representatives with ideological and administrative skill training. Unlike party discipline, party education cannot enforce accountability from cadres. It offers training opportunities for cadres and helps them to better handle different situations in the practice of mass line approach. More importantly, the party school system, especially the Central Party School, interprets and explains policies and directions from the central government. With the centralization of power under Xi's rule, interpretations from the party school system guide local governments in making their own policies accordingly through various training programs (Tian and Tsai 2021; Zhou 2023, Chapter 5).

BLCs. The Bureau of Letters and Calls system was institutionalized under the rule of Jiang Zemin as a channel of active participation of the masses. The masses can file their complaints on misconduct of cadres and representatives, which is a bottom-up

accountability mechanism. As discussed, this function is less effective in empowering the masses because the BLCs cannot enforce responses from agencies and cadres involved in complaints. However, with Xi's emphasis on practicing the mass line approach online, online portals of both the government and BLCs have seen evidence of responsiveness from cadres and representatives (Chen et al. 2016; Distelhorst and Hou 2017; Kornreich 2019). Using the numbers from Guangdong Bureau of Letters and Calls as example, despite the high number of complaints received, Guangdong BLC was able to respond to almost all the cases (Table 9.4).

Table 9.4: Number of cases filed to Guangdong BLC and portion of closed cases

Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Cases	240,600	258,522	401,500	352,900	677,000
Close rate	95.7%	97.28%	97.4%	99.9%	99.9%

Sources: Guangdong Bureau of Letters and Calls.[92]

The high rate of responses can be deceptive in evaluating the responsiveness of BLCs. First, response to a complaint does not necessarily entail the resolution of it, which is the requirement of consequential responsiveness. Guangdong BLC also reported the number of repeated complaints, which refers to the case where the same individual files the same complaint in a given period of time (over 60 days). In 2021, this portion of repeated complaints was 51.1%, meaning over half of the complaints were not truly resolved. Second, such responsiveness is sometimes selective. Complaints with threats of collective action are more likely to receive responses from cadres (Chen et al. 2016). Cadres are also more responsive to the masses when there are conflicts between directives from their superiors and preferences of the masses on issues regarding welfare provision (Meng and Su 2021).

The PCs. Institutionalization of the People Congress system (PCs) is exemplified in three areas: law-making, supervision, and minority representation. Supervisory power of the PCs is more relevant to consequential responsiveness. When the PCs and their standing committees can monitor, appoint, and sanction cadres and representatives, the

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[92] The numbers are extracted from reports compiled by the Guangdong Bureau of Letter and Calls. The reports are available at http://gdwsxf.gd.gov.cn/xxgk/sjfb/tjsj/, accessed June 10, 2023.

system offers horizontal accountability that incentivizes representatives to perform their duties in responding to the masses. However, as discussed, this power is contingent on the power relationship between the PC and government, as well as on the preference of the party secretary.

The role of election in PCs also deserves our attention here. Chapter 7 discussed how elections in PCs, despite failing the criteria in liberal democracies, create a sense of Pitkinian substantive representation, where the representatives feel obliged to respond to the needs of citizens. While the mass line approach requires representatives to find out the principal contradiction at the local level (identified by the CPC at national level), representatives are more prone to respond to the masses when there are conflicts between directions from the higher-level cadres and preferences of the masses (He and Huang 2018; Meng and Su 2021).

Deliberation and consultation. Deliberative institutions, including online consultations, create additional channels for citizen participation. Truex's (2017) original survey indicates that extra channels of participation foster support for the government and feelings of responsiveness, especially with those with limited access to formal political participation. For consequential responsiveness, the question is whether citizen input is translated into policies. He and Thøgersen's (2010) observation of deliberative polling in Zeguo, a county in Wenling city, indicates that public opinions and preferences forms through deliberations are adopted in the formal decision-making process. Of course, the CPC controls the agenda and has the final say in making the decision (He and Warren 2011; Tang 2015a; Tang 2015b). However, in the case of Zegou, deliberations distributed the responsibility and risk of decision-making, which is considered as a gain for the Party leadership (He and Thøgersen 2010).

In addition to formal institutions, online consultations also bear consequences in decision-making. Meng et al.'s (2017) experiments with formal and online channels confirm that leaders at provincial and municipal levels are willing to incorporate citizen opinions in their making of policies. However, when these opinions may contradict with state directives, these leaders are more responsive to opinions submitted through formal channels. Kornreich (2019) trace the comments submitted through online portals for health care policy and conclude that the final version of the policy includes these comments.

9.3. MLR through a liberal democratic lens

Performance of MLR in the reform era was able to meet its normative criteria of informative inclusion and consequential responsiveness reasonably well, as demonstrated by the CPC's ability to maintain channels of communication and deliver promises made in the CPC's representative claim. We can also learn something about MLR by examining it through the lens of liberal democracy. This exercise can help us better understand the representative centric conception of MLR and potential alternatives to tackle challenges that MLR faces after the institutional innovations. This section puts MLR side by side with Pitkin's conception of substantive representation. Corresponding to the two normative standards that MLR is expected to meet, I assess MLR's performance using two normative criteria in liberal democracy: empowered inclusion and responsiveness in substantive representation.

9.3.1. Empowered inclusion

Determining membership and citizenship in a political community is an inescapable question for any justifiable decisions made for the community. Democratic theorists differentiate two principles for setting up the boundary of inclusion — the all-subjected principle and the all-affected principle (Näsström 2011; Bauböck 2017). The all-subjected principle takes the state's boundary of decision-making authority as given and argues that all those subject to that state's coercive power are entitled to have their voice in the political community. The all-affected principle focuses on individual's judgement and argues that all those affected by a decision in the political community should have their voice in the decision-making process.

Representation is the institution that makes democratic inclusion possible. In most cases, it is practically impossible to include everyone in the decision-making process because of the size of political communities. It is more problematic for the all-affected principle as those affected by decisions in one jurisdiction may reside in another jurisdiction and perhaps are not aware of the decision made. As Goodin (2007) puts it, the ideal of inclusion "would mean "giving everyone everywhere a vote on virtually everything decided anywhere" (68). Plotke's (1997) claim that "representation is democracy" builds the practices of democracy and individual's capacity to be part of

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democracy. Proper arrangements of representation should make those included literally present in the decision-making process.

In addition to the two principles of democratic inclusion, political theorists have also paid attention to the inclusion of ethnic minorities and disadvantaged groups. A good representation should include the marginalized groups and take their voices into consideration (Dovi 2007; Celis and Childs 2018). Unique perspectives of these groups contribute to the formation of public reason and collective judgement in decision-making processes (Young 2000). Moreover, liberal democracies also need to empower inclusion, namely, those who should be included in the political community should "have powers" to "demand and enforce their inclusions" (Warren 2017, 44). Empowered inclusion is not passive. Members of the community do not merely present information in the collective decision-making process. They are entitled to have their voices heard, their preferences taken into consideration, and their ability to disagree with decisions made on their behalf.

MLR asks the representative to come "from the masses" with their input as raw material for decision-making. From this perspective, informative inclusion is based on the all-subjected principle, where the masses are included because they subject to the rule of the CPC. The ideal of MLR is to collect information from the masses and understand their needs before representatives make a decision. However, when the representative and the CPC controls the decision-making process, it is hard to say that MLR empowers the masses by giving them sufficient spaces to discuss the issue at hand and disagree with the decision made.

Party building. One function of the CPC's party building efforts is to produce competent cadres and representatives who know how to practice the mass line approach and implement the Party's decisions on the principal contradiction. In its ideal form, MLR fosters informative participation where the masses are passively included in the decision-making process. In this sense, not all masses affected by the decision to be made have the opportunity to be included in this process. Following Mao Zedong's instructions on how to conduct investigation, it is sufficient for the representative to select several typical sites and collect preferences from these sites. When considering the representation of discourses and opinions (Young 2000; Dryzek and Niemeyer 2008), the typical-case approach is supposed to comfortably address this task.

Neither party discipline nor party education specify that the representative must include minority and disadvantaged groups. An MLR representative will have to use her judgement to decide what characteristics should be included in gathering information when selecting the typical sites. Moreover, MLR does not truly empower the masses because the representative has the final judgement on whom to be included. One potential moment of empowerment in the process of MLR occurs when the representative goes back "to the masses" to justify her decisions. This is the time for the masses to voice their concerns and objections to the decision. However, MLR does not have endogenous mechanisms to enforce this type of accountability. The representative's engagement with the masses more often creates "psychological empowerment," which unlike real empowerment, refers to the masses' perception of being empowered (Qin and He 2022). To use Hammond's (2021) words, inclusion of the masses in MLR is "an elite-led engineering of citizen engagement" that activates the masses when needed by the Party and fails to empower them.

BLCs. The Bureau of Letters and Calls system provides a channel of active participation for the masses. They can file complaints and suggestions on specific issue to the BLC, which is responsible for processing the information and assigning it to relevant agencies for action. It offers an opportunity for those who are affected by a decision but are not included in the decision-making process to voice their concerns and objections. However, BLCs does not create a public space for information and discussion. The space of participation is closed and limited to the individual filing the complaint and government agencies responsible to the complaint. However, it does empower the masses in the sense that representatives involved in this complaint is expected to respond and resolve the issue reported by the masses. Such empowerment through BLCs is not full empowerment in liberal democratic terms because the participation is in a private space and, as discussed, such responsiveness is selective in practice.

PCs. In liberal democracies, the legislature is an important venue of representation, with democratic elections operating as the institution that includes citizens and translates their preferences to collective judgement. Elections in PCs, despite its limited competitiveness (Manion 2008), do not include the masses as part of preference formation process. That is, election in PCs does not in itself empower the

masses. It depends on the representatives' willingness to listen to the voices of the masses and incorporate them in decision-making processes. This appears to be happening to some degree. Scholars have shown positive developments in the trajectory of empowerment in PCs as representatives are recognizing the electoral bond with the masses (Manion 2014; He and Huang 2018; Meng and Su 2021).

MLR's attention to disadvantaged groups (e.g., women, migrant workers, etc.) was revived in Hu Jintao's introduction of descriptive representation in the PCs. In addition to the CPC's proportional allocation of seats in PCs by occupation, ethnicity, and gender, Hu included the socially disadvantaged groups in the NPC, offering these groups a channel to voice their concerns in the political system. However, it should be noted that inclusion of marginalized groups in the PCs has a different purpose and function in MLR than in liberal democracies. Instead of giving previously under-represented groups an opportunity to contribute their voices, dissents, and concerns to the legislative formation of a collective will, MLR's inclusion is informational. It prepares the perceptual knowledge for the representative to develop a reasoned judgement about the principal contradiction.

Deliberation and consultation. Democratic deliberations create public spaces for citizens to form reasoned judgements on issues under discussion. The CPC's experiment with deliberative and consultative institutions is considered 'authoritarian' because opportunities to form community judgements through deliberations are selected by the CPC, not by local communities, and because such deliberations' decisions do not have binding consequences (He and Warren 2011). The CPC retains exclusive power to set the agenda and make the final decision. As such, deliberations in the Chinese context are sufficient for informative inclusion but not empowered inclusion. This does not mean that the CPC always rejects decisions made by deliberations. Focusing on the deliberation in Wenling city, scholars argue that the deliberation is designed and implemented following democratic practices with the CPC performing the role of implementing the decisions made by deliberations (Fishkin et al 2010; He and Thøgersen 2010).

Either way, deliberations under the CPC's influence create a public space where those affected by the decision are included and partially empowered. Such influence is hard to categorize as either beneficial or detrimental to the inclusion of the masses.

Tang (2015a; 2015b) argues that the CPC's power can facilitate agenda setting (for its knowledge of the issue to be discussed), inclusion (for its knowledge of relevant groups that should be included), and decision (the power to carry out the decisions made) in deliberations. Moreover, deliberations create a public sphere and build the citizens' deliberative capacity (Tang 2014). Of course, for the purpose of normative assessment using liberal democratic standards, it is important to acknowledge that the CPC does not intent to do either of these things, unlike the use of deliberative "mini-publics" in various liberal democracies.

9.3.2. Substantive responsiveness

Responsiveness is a criterion spelled out in Pitkin's (1967) account of substantive representation. She suggests that the "representative system must look after the public interest and be responsive to public opinion, except insofar as non-responsiveness can be justified in terms of public interest" (224). Pitkin does not expect the representative to be always responding to the represented. She sets the baseline for responsiveness as "a constant condition of responsiveness, of potential readiness to respond" (233). That is, when needed, the represented should have access to demand response from the representative. Pitkin's notion of responsiveness has its institutional prerequisites: 1) "genuine" and regular elections; 2) a representative body with decision-making capacities; and 3) a government that is not "in the hands of a single ruler" (235). These institutions are necessary for responsiveness because, while they cannot "guarantee" representation, they guarantee the "structure and functioning" of representation in practice (239-240).

Robert A. Dahl (1971) further specifies that in order to ensure democratic government's continual responsiveness to the citizens, all citizens should have "unimpaired opportunities" to: 1) formulate their preferences; 2) signify preferences; and 3) have preferences weighted equally (2-3). To this end, large scale democracies require six essential institutions: 1) elected officials; 2) free, fair, and frequent elections; 3) freedom of expression; 4) access to alternative sources of information; 5) associational autonomy; and 6) inclusive citizenship (Dahl 1998). For Dahl, it is crucial to have an open and diverse public sphere where citizens can form public opinion with the support of different sources of information and different civil society groups.

Responsiveness in MLR focuses on the outcome of representation. That is, the representative must implement the decisions made and explain the decision to the masses. It can be said that an MLR representative is ready to respond to the represented when asked by the represented. The mass line approach demands the representative to go back "to the masses" to justify the decision made. However, the masses do not have sufficient resources and institutional support to demand responses from the representative. They can, of course, file complaints through BLC and participation in elections and deliberations. These arrangements are not sufficient to guarantee responsiveness from the representative in Pitkin's eyes. For Pitkin, the represented cannot be said to have control over the representative when they lack "free and genuine" elections (Pitkin 1967, 234).

More importantly, MLR does not in itself provide an open and pluralistic public space where the masses can find extra sources of information and form public judgement, create pressure on representatives to change their policy positions, and hold representatives accountable for promises made. Unlike the inclusion of citizens in liberal democratic contexts, where individuals are regarded as capable of developing individual preferences and judgements in political associations and hence should be included in political processes, the masses have a more passive role in their contributions to political engagement and formation of collective interests with the guidance of the representatives. Institutions supporting MLR are designed to ensure that the representative can have reasoned judgement with accumulation of perceptual knowledge about the needs of the masses as a collective. Institutionalization of BLCs, PCs, and experiments with deliberations are designed to guarantee that the representative can practice the mass line approach and make good decisions based on the information gathered. Deliberative institutions in China have seen developments in inclusiveness and openness (He and Warren 2017) and in building deliberative capacities of participants (Tang 2014). However, Chinese politics continued to lack either genuine elections or open public space with different sources of information.

In practice, MLR's outcome-oriented conception of representation may encounter the danger of manipulation because the representative dominates the power relationship. Imbalanced power distribution in the representative relationship is concerning for political theorists. Mansbridge (2003), for example, warns about potential

manipulation in the representative process, where coercive force deceives or misleads individuals to make choices against their interests (519). When constructivists place the decision power in the hands of individuals, this power is in danger of being manipulated and abused by the representative and other power authorities in the representative relationship. Disch (2019) rejects this conclusion by referring to the literature on political framing. She suggests that contestation of different messages in democratic contexts dramatically diminishes the possibility of manipulation. Even when it does happen, individuals will not necessarily accept what was presented to them because they follow a "common frame of reference" and collective "coordination process" in forming their opinions (175-178). Yet, as Disch acknowledges, it is inevitable that the socially powerful can exploit the common frame and coordination process to the advantage of certain groups. The CPC, both politically and socially powerful, still has control over both paper and online media with little room for different opinions on the internet (Zhao 2011). Therefore, in the absence of functional equivalents to competitive elections and a pluralistic public sphere, CPC's institutional innovations such as BLCs, PCs, and deliberation cannot by themselves empower citizens to a level that meets liberal democratic standards.

9.4. Conclusion: crisis of representation and institutional innovations

With MLR's exclusive focus on the judgement of representatives, it is vital for the CPC to preserve and promote their willingness and capacity to engage with the masses and make appropriate policy decisions accordingly. The three challenges to the CPC's rule in the reform era — decline of faith in the Marxist tradition, pluralization of interests in the Chinese society, and corruption — created a crisis of representation in China. When the representatives fail to practice the mass line approach due to corruption or fail to identify the principal contradiction among various interests, MLR can hardly meet its own normative criteria of informative inclusion and consequential responsiveness.

China is not alone in this sense. Representation in liberal democracies is also facing a crisis. When representation is considered as a collective will formation process, it is crucial for the represented to have equal access to participation and have their preferences weighted equally (Urbinati 2006). However, voter turnout in elections, an

important institution supporting representation in liberal democracies, is declining (Gray and Caul 2000; Dalton 2007; Blais and Rubenson 2013). What is more concerning is that the younger generations are shunning electoral participation (Dalton 2007; Blais and Rubenson 2013). Moreover, representatives are more responsive to preferences of the wealthy end of the population (Bartels 2008; Gilens 2009; Page et al. 2013). Therefore, we also cannot reach the conclusion that representation in liberal democracies meets its normative criteria of empowered inclusion and responsiveness.

As Näsström (2015) contends, equal rights to participation ensure the equal distribution of burden and responsibility of judgement and monitoring of representatives. When parts of the population cannot participate or are not willing to participate, it creates a crisis for representation, which as Mansbridge (2019) frames it, is a collective action/free rider problem. To address this problem, we need institutional innovations that legitimize the minimal use of state coercion (Mansbridge 2019). Similarly, Warren (2022) perceives the crisis of participation as a mismatch between the performance of electoral representation and citizen's changing expectations of government. Therefore, we need institutional innovations within and beyond electoral institutions to address the democratic deficit.

Institutional innovation is also the path that the CPC took in coping with the challenges to MLR. In addition to regulating the behaviour of cadres and representatives through the institutionalization of the mass line approach and tightening measures in party building, the CPC also resorted to institutions such as the BLCs, PCs, deliberation and consultation, and online mass line approach. These innovations created more channels for informative inclusion and made representatives more accountable. But the challenges are still there. As Warren notes, innovations in liberal democracies have had "a good start" (293). The CPC has also started its innovations to representation in China. It is time for scholars to understand the logic of Chinese politics and contribute to its development.

Chapter 10.   Conclusion

This dissertation explored the conception of representation in the Chinese context. Instead of fitting the Chinese case in the shoes of various Western conceptions of representation, I took one step back and started the investigation with the problem-based approach to political theory (Warren 2017). What is the key problem that a relationship between two parties needs to address for us to call it representation? Answers to this key problem speak to the question on how the representative relationship is defined and maintained between the representative and the represented. There are three layers to this problem — a conceptual layer that defines the connection between the representative and the represented, a practical layer that focuses on how this meaning of representation is delivered to political reality, and a normative layer that offers standards for judging the practice of representation. Each conception of representation should have clear answers to the three layers of the key problem.

10.1. Findings

Building on the Pitkinian and the constructivist approaches, I proposed differentiation and actualization as two analytical tools to address the three layers of the key problem of representation and to assist with mapping the meaning and practice of representation in a specific context. Differentiation refers to the temporal determination of meaning through the contestations among components of a concept and other concepts in the semantic field. Pitkin's etymological investigation of the concept of representation implicitly spells out the four conceptual components of representation — the representative, the represented, something to be represented, and how (where) it is made present. Each conception of representation has a distinctive interpretation of these components. Drawing on Michael Freeden's (1996) approach to analysis of ideological morphology, I developed differentiation as a conceptual morphology that unpacks the internal dynamics of decontestation of conceptual components in its ideological and cultural context. Meanings of representation are determined by the configuration of its components, which are further constrained by other concepts in an ideology and contested by other ideologies.

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Hence, in addition to mapping static meanings of representation, it is equally important to analyze how different parties (representatives and the represented) engage with the practice of representation in the political life. This engagement creates a common but temporal understanding of the concept, which I term actualization of representation. Two streams of research were introduced to facilitate the analysis of the actualization process — Saward's (2010) representative claims and Alexander's (2006; 2010) cultural pragmatics. Unlike the Pitkinian approach, the representative claim approach conceives representation as a constitutive process of claim-making and claim-reception. Representation is performed. Representatives can strategically craft their claims in front of different audiences to maximize the chances of being accepted by the represented. Cultural pragmatics theory contributes to our understanding of political performance and identifies conditions for successful performances.

The problem with the constructivist perspective on representation, however, is that it pays insufficient attention to the elements that make representation an active process. Conceiving representation as a constitutive process reveals the functioning of representation in political reality. But representation's practical significance goes far beyond performance. It is the act and institution of standing for and acting for that makes collective decision-making possible in modern political communities. Hence the performative process does not merely confirm a representative relationship, it further consolidates the meaning of representation — for parties involved in the relationship, concerning the actions expected of the representative, and about appropriate standards with which representative may be judged.

Focusing on differentiation and actualization dimensions of representation offers a powerful tool kit to unpack the conceptual and practical dynamics of representation. I applied it to the Chinese case and analyzed the conception of representation in the official doctrine of the Communist Party of China (CPC). An anatomy of CPC ideology — Mao Zedong Thought or Maoism — located representation as an adjacent concept in the ideology with its meaning constrained by the four core concepts: contradiction, practice, class, and mass line. While the general definition of representation applies here, the core concepts limited its meaning to the substantive representation of needs of the

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proletariat and peasants through the mass line approach.[93] Hence, I call this form of representation mass line representation (MLR). The representatives are expected to follow the principle of "from the masses, to the masses" in representing needs of the masses and justifying the decisions made. MLR is a form of substantive representation that emphasizes the representative's ability and willingness to include the masses in the decision-making process. Mao devised party building — primarily party discipline and education — as the institutional support that facilitates the representative's dedication and capacity in building and maintaining the representative relationship.

From the perspective of representative claims, the CPC portrays itself as the leader for national rejuvenation at the national level and as capable of addressing the needs of the masses and local communities. The meaning of this general representative claim is further decontested in the claims made by different Chinese leaders in the reform era. The Party's ability to control various elements of performance (scripts, technology, stage, etc.) makes its claims more accessible and acceptable to the representative and the represented.

This general claim is based on Mao's conceptualization of contradiction, practice, and class, which provides an epistemological foundation for the Party and its representatives to identify and serve the masses' interests. Based on the Maoist epistemology, the truth about various questions can be found through the dialectical process of practice. The job of representatives (including the CPC) is to collect and aggregate information from the masses that can support correct policies (that is, those addressing the principal contradiction). While representatives are expected to justify their decisions by going back "to the masses," the Maoist epistemology that helps to legitimize the Party's rule contends that the CPC has the best knowledge to both determine the principal contradiction and policies at the national level and hold representatives accountable. Given this logic, inclusion and responsiveness have meanings in MLR that are very distinct from modern liberal theory.

Therefore, from the normative perspective, this conception of representation focuses on two criteria: informative inclusion, which involves representatives gathering

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[93] As discussed in Chapter 5, contradiction and practice defines the represented in different eras. I leave here only the proletariat and peasants because these two classes are always represented by the CPC.

sufficient information from the masses to conduct decision-making in their interests; and consequential responsiveness, which highlights the delivery of beneficial policy outcomes to the masses.

Deng Xiaoping's introduction of market reforms in China proved to be a double-edged sword. While putting China on the fast-track of economic development, his opening up policy created ideological challenges to the CPC. A widespread declining belief in Maoism and influx of western liberalism cast doubt on the suitability of the CPC's ideology. More importantly, the severity of corruption among party officials pointed directly to the inability of representatives to follow the mass line approach, and hence the possible collapse of the ideological and practical foundation of MLR.

Three generations of leadership after Deng Xiaoping — Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao, and Xi Jinping — offered their respective responses to these challenges. Jiang Zemin was bold in marginalizing class as a core concept in the CPC's ideology. His efforts to rebuild confidence in the Chinese political system (and MLR) focused on the institutionalization of the mass line approach and rejection of liberal democracy as inappropriate in China. Most notably, Jiang institutionalized the Bureau of Letters and Calls system (BLCs), allowing the masses to file complaints on issues of their concern. The BLCs provided MLR with an element of two-way communication between the representatives and the represented and offered a channel for the masses to demand accountability from the representatives.

Hu Jintao's strategy in performing representation was two-fold. On the one hand, he connected the dots between CPC's ideology and Confucianism, utilizing concepts such as people-first and harmony to support CPC's focus on "serving the people" and maintenance of social stability. On the other hand, Hu endeavored to experiment with liberal institutions such as direct elections and democratic deliberation in local governments. While promoting participation of the masses and empowering them in the decision-making process, these innovations created tension between the liberal logic of representation — representation as a process for opinion and judgement formation — and the logic of MLR — representation as the reason and judgement of the representative. Xi Jinping returned to the promotion of mass line approach in his confidence doctrine. In addition to starting another round of anti-corruption campaigns, Xi's performance showed more confidence in the Chinese system by promoting a

nationalistic "Chinese dream" and a direct comparison between what Xi characterized as a "Chinese democracy" and American democracy. Moreover, Xi advocated the practice of mass line approach online, contending that this makes participation more accessible to the masses and enhances accountability of representatives.

Assessment of these strategies should follow the normative criteria spelled out in the conception of MLR — informative inclusion and consequential responsiveness. The three generations of Chinese leaders expanded the boundary of MLR by including different classes (social strata) in the representative relationship and institutionalized different channels (e.g., the mass line approach, People's Congresses, deliberation and consultation) for including masses in the decision-making process. Yet it depends on the representative's ability and willingness to translate the information gathered into evidence supporting the policies to be implemented. Therefore, the Party also devotes resources to training capable representatives and punishing incompetent ones through party building (party discipline and education).

Seen from the most abstract level of its representative claims, that is, the representation of the interests of the Chinese nation by the CPC, the Party was able to deliver on its central promise of economic development and more widespread prosperity. However, balancing the interests of three parties (cadres, masses, and the CPC) involved in MLR, and improving the Party's ability to produce competent representatives, remain the top challenges for the CPC's advocating of MLR.

10.2. Contributions

This dissertation developed an analytical tool for understanding representation beyond democratic contexts. Applying the two concepts of differentiation and actualization to the Chinese case, it identified the historical and cultural background that shapes the understanding of representation in the official ideology in China. By doing that, the dissertation contributes to the study of representation and Chinese political theory in three major areas.

First, it offers a conception of representation rooted in the ideology and practice of Chinese politics. As discussed in the Introduction, both empirical political scientists and political theorists have examined representation in China by looking for evidence of

its responsiveness. For example, Chen et al. (2016) and Su and Meng (2016) categorize cadres' responsiveness to the masses as a response to the pressure of collective action (mass incidents). Such responsiveness contributes to the authoritarian resilience of the Chinese regime (Wang and Liu 2020). It is parochial activities of the representatives that delivers public goods to the represented (Manion 2014). I have argued that these observations failed to capture the Chinese perspective on representation because of their attempts to understanding representation in China from an outsider's perspective, namely, from Western political theory and practice. Operationalization of responsiveness as policy or ideological congruence in empirical studies is relatively unproblematic in liberal democracies because its normative origin in Pitkin's formulation relies on democratic elections. Indiscriminately extending the application of this criterion to a different context could easily overstretch the concept of representation as responsiveness.

More importantly, such a view does not pay due respect to the historical and cultural differences among various political contexts. Simply identifying responsiveness as reaction to populist demands indeed reverses the logic of mass line representation. It is true that threats of collective action could push cadres to respond to the needs of the masses. However, this is a sign of malfunctioning representation in China. MLR demands that representatives actively engage with the represented and address their concerns, not the other way around. Such an understanding of representation has its cultural root in Confucianism, where virtuous and competent officials are entrusted to take care of the people's needs, and China's history, including the practice of Confucianism and contemporary leadership of the CPC throughout the revolutionary period, which led China to a fast-track of economic development. The conception of MLR is further refined in the development of CPC's ideology from Mao Zedong to Xi Jinping.

In unpacking the meaning and practice of representation in China, I resisted the temptation to categorize it as strictly authoritarian or democratic. Considering the evolution of CPC's ideology and conception of MLR, as well as regional differences in China, labelling MLR as democratic or non-democratic according to the Western standards would be misleading and challenging. Warren (2017) has reminded us of the difficulties in studying various forms of democracy. Similarly, if we focus on a specific

practice or issue in China, we can easily come up with terms such as resilient authoritarianism (Nathan 2003), network authoritarianism (Duckett 2019), and responsive authoritarianism (Chen et al. 2016), etc. Yet such interpretations are bound by the authoritarian/democratic dichotomy and fail to capture the internal logic of Chinese politics. When we look at MLR, for example, it does show signs of responsiveness, where the cadres are responding to the voices and interests of the masses. However, as I argue in this dissertation, the responsiveness is based on the mass line approach, which is heavily dependent on the representative's ability to identify principal contradictions.

The questions we should always ask about representation in China after 1949 are: 1) how does MLR, or any other related representative practices, contribute to addressing the problems identified by the CPC, with development being the main theme, and 2) what are the limitations of MLR in meeting the goals set by the CPC? Without an adequate understanding of the conceptual cores of CPC's ideology, analysis of practices and institutions in China are prone to distortion when we indiscriminately utilize liberal democratic rhetoric.

This dissertation also contributes to the study of representation and Chinese political thought by proposing an analytical framework for understanding key political concepts across contexts. The framework acknowledges the possibilities of multiple meanings of a concept and suggests two tools to unpack these meanings in a given context — differentiation as a tool to identify meanings through anatomy of components of the concept, and actualization as a tool to capture the contestation of meanings through the lens of political performance. Each form of representation that political theorists have identified represents a possible meaning of the concept. The problem is, with most of the forms of representation analyzed by political scientists tied to liberal democracy, how can we properly present a conception of the concept where liberal democratic institutions are missing?

Instead of untangling the connection between representation and democracy, differentiation looks at both the micro and macro levels to uncover the multiple facets of representation and how it relates to other concepts of an ideology. The micro level offers a structural approach in exploring various possibilities and interpretations of representation. This entails analyzing conceptual components of representation and

their interactions with one another, presenting a repertoire of meanings. The macro level puts the concept in the semantic field of a broader ideology and unveils the internal dynamics of interactions among other political concepts, which further constrains the list of available meanings. As Freeden explains (1997), this is also where history and culture come into play to shape the meaning of a concept. Pitkin's substantive representation is closely connected to electoral democracy in the liberal ideology, which in turn restricts its interpretation of responsiveness as election based. Similarly, MLR's understanding of the relationship between the representative and the represented is shaped by the core concepts of CPC's ideology, namely, contradiction, practice, class, and mass line approach.

Actualization extends the contextualized understanding of representation further to its practice in concrete political settings. Focusing on performative actions of representatives, actualization approaches representation as a meaning construction process, where each representative relationship obtains agreement through contestations of meanings advocated by representatives. That is, in each instance of representation, substantive representation and MLR may compete for the definitive meaning through a representative's performative actions. It is up to the targeted audiences to determine which form of representation they accept in the established representative relationship. In this process, both the representative and the represented will have a determinate and potentially different understanding of representation that defines the representative relationship. In order to prevail in the contestation, representatives are expected to take advantage of institutional and emotional arrangements to convince the represented to accepting the meanings advocated by the representative.

Actualization does not guarantee that a meaning of representation, e.g., MLR, will be accepted by the audience. In liberal democracies, representatives can "shape-shift" to convey different meanings of representation to different audiences (Saward 2014). The represented can decide whether they accept a particular meaning of representation, including meanings that the representative are not intended to deliver. What Saward failed to capture, however, is the role of political parties in representative claims. In the Chinese context, MLR dominates the forms of representation to be actualized with the CPC's ability to control political life. While the representatives have

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different roles depending on their positions in the Party and government, MLR is the meaning of representation embedded in their message to the masses. Through party building and other institutions, the CPC can effectively deliver its understanding of the party line and policies to representatives, which guide them to do a good job in representing the masses.

This does not mean, however, that the masses are left without any choices. They can accept a representative claim because the representative will do what is best for their interests (the MLR way), and also because the representative looks like me (descriptive). The influx of liberal ideas in the reform era further extended the dictionary of representation in China. As discussed, representatives and the masses also exhibited an understanding of substantive representation despite the lack of liberal electoral institutions.

Even when this meaning is accepted, the institutional complexity of political realities creates notable gaps between MLR in theory and practice. With differentiation and actualization, political theorists can better understand which institutions contribute to the acceptance of a meaning of representation or its fulfillment in practice. Chapters 6 to 8 presented strategies that the Chinese leaders adopted in performing the conception of MLR in the post-Deng era. For MLR, ability and virtue of representatives are critical for maintaining the fish and water connection specified in its conceptualization.

All three leaders, Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao, and Xi Jinping, focused on party building — party discipline and party education — to ensure that representatives are willing to and capable of engaging with the masses and identifying which interest to represent. However, the effectiveness of party building is limited by the CPC's ability to control corruption and motivate cadres to perform their duties. Jiang institutionalized the Bureau of Letters and Calls system as an additional channel for participation. The problem is that BLCs cannot enforce accountability from the agencies about which the masses complained. The People's Congresses system (PCs), under Jiang and Hu's development, has became a venue of representation with its ability to include minority groups and sanction cadres. In practice, the power of PCs is dependent on the relationship between the Party, the government, and the PCs. Deliberation and consultation are other institutionalized representative practices adopted by Hu and Xi.

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While offering additional channels for participation, the CPC reserves the power to set their agendas and make decisions.

Finally, this dissertation contributes to the study of comparative political theory by showing how the structural and contextual interpretation of similar concepts in different contexts is indispensable for establishing a channel for communication among political theories in different countries. In acknowledging the dominance of the Western perspective in comparative political theory, Dallymayr (1997) suggests that theorists can only find the "general truth" about global village through "mutual interrogation, contestation, and engagement" (422). Yet where should we start the dialogue on differences among cultures and find the most promising bases for such conversations?

This dissertation offers a tool kit and example to aid this conversation. In tracing the formation of meanings through ideological contestations and institutional practices, theorists have a baseline to start building a mutual understanding of the differences in meanings. If we look at the conceptual components and meaning of representation, Mansbridge's (2003) analysis of new forms of representation — promissory, anticipatory, and gyroscopic — is closer to small variations of electoral representation than distinct forms of representation. The difference between electoral representation and MLR lies much more in the logic by which the two forms of representation operate than the dichotomy of authoritarianism and democracy. While elections theoretically translate the self-determination of individual reason to public reason, MLR, in theory, relies on the merit and wisdom of the representative to take care of the public good. What we need, as Williams and Warren (2014) argue, is global publics where we take difference seriously and conduct reasoned communications on the differences.

In this review of different approaches to study comparative political theory, von Vacano (2015) distinguishes a normative paradigm and an interpretive paradigm. Dallymayr and Williams and Warren participate in the normative paradigm because they advocate a moral end for the study of political theories among cultures. The interpretive paradigm sets the primary goal of investigation as the understanding of different perspectives. Michael Freeden's (1996) ideological morphology provides an epistemology and methodology for inquiry into the latter. Vincent and Freeden (2013) suggest that comparative political theory should abandon the meta categories of West

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and East and investigate clusters of political thinking from their very roots — concepts and conceptual concatenations.

In addition to conducting an interpretive study, this dissertation also analyzed normative aspects of representation. At the conceptual level, I argue that normativity is embedded in the conception of representation. When representatives advocate and perform a particular meaning of representation, they also establish normative criteria for the represented and the audience. MLR, as discussed, promotes informative inclusion and consequential responsiveness as its normative standards.

The two normative ideas have their epistemological foundation in Mao Zedong Thought and serve as the Chinese criteria for assessing the normativity of MLR in practice. When the CPC claims that it is the leader of national rejuvenation in China, the claim becomes an abstract policy goal for the CPC. The CPC and representatives must practice the mass line approach to engage with the masses and understand their needs so that they can understand the principal contradiction, which is, in turn, indispensable in identifying the concrete meaning of interest and national rejuvenation in the Chinese context. In practice, MLR's exclusive focus on the merit and judgement of the representative limits its ability to deliver the two normative goals.

When we have the interpretive foundation of MLR, including its ideological and cultural backgrounds, we are in a better position to start the conversation on the normativity of representation across contexts. MLR can also be judged by liberal democratic standards, such as empowered inclusion and substantive responsiveness developed by Pitkin (1967) and Dahl (1971, 1998). Of course, we saw in Chapter 9 that MLR has a considerably less positive assessment in practice when considering its ability to empower citizens and institutions to guarantee substantive responsiveness. More importantly, we understand why MLR fails in such assessment if we accept the ideological and cultural foundations that underpin the conceptualization of MLR.

10.3. Limitations and future research opportunities

With a structural and contextual perspective, the dissertation presented the conception of representation in the development of the CPC's ideology. Yet due to the limitations of my ability and the length of the dissertation, it does not discuss the

meaning of representation in other political thought active in Chinese society, has not analyzed practices of representation in local governments, and has only utilized a small number of the analytical tools available for comparing different forms of representation.

With China's market reform and opening up to the world, various political ideas other than the CPC's ideology were developed locally or imported from other cultures. As discussed in Chapter 7, some aspects of liberalism were once embraced by the Chinese leadership with the experimentation of democratic institutions in local governments. The contestation between liberalism and CPC's ideology is exemplified in the practice of representation according to electoral accountability and mass line approach. There are, of course many other schools of thought in Chinese society that are not discussed in this dissertation. Jiang Qing's (2013) political Confucianism, for example, offers an interesting combination of liberal democracy and Confucian moral philosophy. Jiang acknowledges values in democratic institutions such as election and separation of power but also notes its limitations — politics is stripped down to "desires and interests of the electorate" (33).

In bringing morality back to politics, Jiang proposed a humane authority with a three-house-parliament: a House of the People with democratically elected representatives, a House of Confucian scholars with scholars proposed by all Confucian scholars, and a House of the Nation with descendants of famous figures in the history, retired officials, and worthy people from different religions. From the perspective of representation, each parliament Jiang proposed can be interpreted as the practice of a form of representation. His House of the People is a place where electoral representation takes place, whereas symbolic representation and surrogate representation, or even MLR, can be found in the other two houses.

This dissertation also gave little attention to the importance of different levels of governance, and regionalism, in China. Despite being a one-party system, the power relationship between central and local governments in China, as well as regional differences in local governments, shapes the performance of representation and the contestation of different forms of representation. This dissertation focuses primarily on representation by the CPC as a whole, with minimal discussion of representation at local levels.

In fact, if we look at research on representation in China, we will find that most of it focuses on governments and legislatures at provincial levels or lower. Manion (2014), for example, based her conclusions about "authoritarian parochial" representation in China on evidence from People's Congresses at township, county, and municipal levels. Other research focuses on a specific channel of representation such as online forums (Su and Meng 2016; Wang and Han 2023) and public service hotlines in Shanghai (Wang and Liu 2020). With centralization and decentralization since Deng's time, local governments have enjoyed varying levels of freedom in experimenting different institutional arrangements and policies. Democratic deliberation, for example, was adopted by a county-level city in Zhejiang province. Such autonomy provides a valuable opportunity to observe the power dynamics in the contestation of MLR and other form of representation in political practices.

Finally, there are more opportunities in the comparative study of concepts and political ideas. In the dissertation, I proposed differentiation and actualization as analytical tools to understand concepts in different contexts. My focus is on investigating how China, mostly the official CPC ideology, has understood and practiced the concept of representation. The assessment of MLR with normative criteria in substantive representation is far short of an attempt in conducting comparative studies of concepts in different cultures. Yet the analytical framework sheds light on how we can start research on the comparison of ideas with full respect for cultural differences.

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