The School Curriculum in China Today: A Study of Economic, Political, and Social Influences

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ABSTRACT

This study considers the way in which the Chinese government's core socialist values are being recontextualised into the most recent educational reforms in China. Education is identified as the key setting for symbolic recontextualisation where these values are transmitted and reproduced through an assemblage of discursive curriculum policies and pedagogic practices. Through analysis of curriculum policies, and observations and interviews with teachers, the research reveals a sociocultural orientation to the knowledge utilised for the teaching of the values within the area of Chinese language education at the senior school stage in China. I theorise this orientation as *socioculturalism*. The research also demonstrates how three strands of culture – traditional Chinese culture, revolutionary culture, and advanced socialist culture – have contributed to the emergence of this curriculum trend towards socioculturalism. The emphasis on sociocultural knowledge helps to recontextualise the core socialist values into the curriculum policies and practices. This process contributes to the cultivation of an idealised type of *knower*, one who personifies these values, and who can become a qualified builder of, and worthy successor to the country's great socialist cause.

Three key sociological concepts, Durkheim's *collective representations*, Althusser's *ideology*, and Bernstein's *recontextualisation*, contribute to the identification and theorisation of the political and curriculum phenomena of recontextualisation which I investigate. Drawing on these three concepts, I theorise the *socioculturalism* shown in the three empirical investigations of curriculum policy and practice as the means to *recontextualise* the government's core socialist values into the education system so as to develop what I term *socialist collective representations*. The political purpose is to use these socialist collective representations to resist a modern social trend towards individualistic and materialistic values, seen all-pervasively in the country's economic, ecological, political, cultural, social, and educational

spheres. This rise of individualism and materialism is the result of the country's market economy reforms since the 1970s. These reforms have had the potential to undermine the government's earlier socialist collective representations. By invoking the core socialist values and incorporating them at the doxic level of collective representations, the government aims to revitalise its ruling *ideology* of market socialism in the contemporary economic period of corporate globalisation.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my supervisors Elizabeth Mary Rata and Graham John McPhail who

have tried to teach me to be a rational thinker and to write logically and intelligently.

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This study explains why, and in what ways, the contemporary Chinese education system includes the core socialist values promulgated by the Chinese government in 2012. The research focuses on Chinese Language curriculum policies and practices at the senior high school stage in China and includes three empirical investigations: (i) an analysis of two curriculum policies enacted for Chinese language education, (ii) observations of six Chinese language teachers in the classroom, and (iii) interviews with the six teachers following the classroom observations. I was persuaded to conduct this research in part because of my many years learning Chinese language as a native speaker and also in part because of some political and curricular phenomena which have occurred in China since 2012.

1.1 The Real-world Phenomena

This section introduces three phenomena that motivated me to carry out this research. These three phenomena inform the government's *three stages* of policy development through which the core socialist values enter China's curriculum policy. The three phenomena are (i) the proposal of the core socialist values at the National People's Congress [NPC] in 2012, (ii) the enactment of the values by an official social policy in 2013, and (iii) the introduction of the values into curriculum policies including the National Curriculum Plan, and the Curriculum Standards for the various subjects contained in China's senior high school programme, in 2018. By elaborating on these phenomena, I introduce the research context.

1.1.1 Core socialist values

In this section, I outline how the core socialist values have been proposed and promoted by the Chinese government since 2012. I also present the content of the values. This is important because the birth of the values led to their recontextualisation in curriculum policies and practices. The examination of this recontextualisation is the crux of my study.

The release and enactment of the core socialist values

In 2012, the Chinese government proposed for the first time a set of core socialist values at the 18th NPC, a national conference held every five years:

> *core socialist values* are the soul of the Chinese nation and serve as the guide for building socialism with Chinese characteristics. We should carry out a thorough study of and education in these values and use them to *guide social trends of thought and forge public consensus* (emphasis added, NPC, 2012, n.p., translated by China Academy of Translation).

Following the 18th NPC, the government has continued to attach great importance to promoting and cultivating the core socialist values. For instance, on important occasions, Chinese President Xi Jinping frequently addresses the values, exhorting all sectors of society to put them into practice (12371.cn., 2014). In doing so, he intends to "make the influence of the values omnipresent like air" and "to insert the values into a solid mechanism to gather and unite the souls of all Chinese people" (President's speech, 12371.cn., 2014, n.p., my translation).

To legitimise the core socialist values, the government promulgated an official social policy in 2013, entitled *Guidance on Upholding and Observing Core Socialist Values* (people.cn., 2013b, my translation). The government also conducted centralised

training at all social levels to "disseminate and circulate the values as the official interpretation, carrier, and reflection of the traditional virtues of the Chinese nation re-envisioned for the contemporary period" (people.cn., 2014a, n.p., my translation). These vigorous official efforts strengthened not only the understanding of the values in all sectors of society but also offered methods to integrate the values into people's everyday practices (people.cn., 2014a). The country's construction of the core-socialist-value-themed park is an apposite case to exemplify this (see Chapter Nine).

Significantly, at the following NPC held in 2017, Chinese President Xi readdressed and reemphasised the core socialist values. He urged all Chinese people to uphold and observe these values:

> We must uphold Marxism, firm up and further build the ideal of communism and a shared ideal of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and nurture and practise *core socialist values* while making continued and greater efforts to maintain the initiative and ensure we have our say in the realm of ideology. […] *Core socialist values* represent the contemporary Chinese spirit and are a crystallisation of the values shared by all Chinese people. We will focus on fostering a new generation capable of shouldering the mission of national rejuvenation. We will offer them better guidance, expose them to practice, and provide institutional guarantees. We will draw on *core socialist values to guide education*, efforts to raise *cultural-ethical standards*, and the creation, production, and distribution of cultural and intellectual products, and see that all areas of social development are imbued with these values and that they become part of people's thinking and behaviour (emphasis added, NPC, 2017, n.p., translated by China Academy of Translation)

The government is intent on incorporating the values into each walk of civic life and every sphere of the country's social development, particularly the education system (people.cn., 2013b). The government aims to translate and naturalise the values so that they become a part of people's cultural recognition and everyday habitus. The values are also regarded as the most concise and crystallised expression of China's socialist values system and the contemporary Chinese spirit (people.cn., 2018).

> *The core socialist values* are the *central theme* of the country's socialism, the crystallised expression of its socialist road, socialist theory, and political system with Chinese characteristics. *The values provide ideological guidance to achieve the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation* as the soul of the country's socialist rationality, the reflection of the essential requirements for *upholding and observing socialism* in China, and the lifeline for constructing and developing a socialist way with Chinese characteristics (emphasis added, people.cn., 2015b, n.p., my translation).

The content of the core socialist values

China's 18th National People's Congress firstly introduced the content of the core socialist values, presenting them in 24 Chinese characters, officially translated into 12 English words (see italics):

> We should carry out extensive education about our ideal[s] and conviction[s] and rally the people under the great banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics. We should vigorously foster China's national character and promote the underlying trend of the times, intensify education in patriotism, collectivism, and socialism, and enrich people's cultural life and enhance their moral strength. We should promote *prosperity, democracy, civility*, and *harmony*, uphold *freedom,*

equality, justice, and *rule of law,* and advocate *patriotism, dedication, integrity*, and *friendship*, so as to cultivate and observe core socialist values (emphasis added, NPC, 2012, n.p., translated by China Academy of Translation).

The government categorises the twelve values into three groups, with each group addressing one question. *Figure 1.1* summarises the content of the core socialist values at different levels.

prosperity, democracy, civility, harmony

values at the national level

question addressed: Into what type of country does the government want to build China?

core socialist values

freedom, equality, justice, rule of law

values at the societal level

question addressed: Into what type of society does the government want to unite people?

patriotism, dedication, integrity, friendship

values at the civic level

question addressed: What type of citizen does the government want to cultivate within each individual?

Figure 1.1 The content of the core socialist values at different levels

The four values of prosperity, democracy, civility, and harmony are the core socialist values at *the national level,* embedding the goal for China's socialist modernisation and

providing the key ideas for understanding the values at the societal and civic levels (people.cn., 2013a). As a reflection of "the essential criteria for the country's development of socialist modernisation" (people.cn., 2013a, n.p., my translation), these four values answer this question: "Into what type of country does the government want to build China?" (people.cn., 2015b, n.p., my translation).

The four values of freedom, equality, justice, and rule of law are the core socialist values at *the societal level* (people.cn., 2013a). The four values express the nature of a harmonious society, representing the government's "unswerving pursuit of building up a better society with Chinese characteristics" (people.cn., 2013a, n.p., my translation). As "the essential criteria for the development of Chinese society" (people.cn., 2015b, n.p., my translation), the four values provide an answer to this question: "Into what type of society does the government want to unite people?" (people.cn., 2015b, n.p., my translation).

The four values of patriotism, dedication, integrity, and friendship are the core socialist values at *the civic level*, providing people with the most basic public ethics (people.cn., 2013a). The four values apply to all walks of life, serving as fundamental social norms by which people should abide and as criteria for evaluating people's ethical behaviour (people.cn., 2013a). As "a goal to cultivate social norms and to develop advanced socialist civic culture" (people.cn., 2015b, n.p., my translation), the four values answer this question: "What type of citizen does the government want to cultivate within each individual?" (people.cn., 2015b, n.p., my translation).

1.1.2 Core socialist values and China's education

The government is intent on "promoting the core socialist values and making that promotion a fundamental task of education" (people.cn., 2013b, n.p., my translation).

This is seen in the official efforts to incorporate the values into the entire procedures of the country's education system, from kindergarten to tertiary education:

> We should start from the *education sector* to cultivate and observe the *core socialist values.* We should *insert the values into the overall plan of our education system*, including kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, higher educational institutions, and adult and vocational educational units. We should *include the values in all educational procedures* to establish a multi-integrated educational platform – covering educational policymaking, curriculum design, in-class education, out-of-class practices, and full school culture construction. […] We should improve the formation of an instructional network, linking schools, families, and society, which allows the three to cooperate to form a strong synergy in cultivating and promoting the values (emphasis added, people.cn., 2013b, n.p., my translation).

According to the country's official social policy entitled *Guidance on Upholding and Observing Core Socialist Values* (people.cn., 2013b, my translation), the cultivation of the core socialist values within education has been theorised as occurring mainly in three areas. These areas are (i) the organisation of in-class education and extracurricular activities, (ii) the development of school culture, and (iii) the assessment of teacher performance and the criteria for teacher recruitment.

The first area identifies the official efforts to incorporate the core socialist values into the curriculum, teaching materials, classrooms, and students' extracurricular practices. For example, in terms of extracurricular practices, the policy requires schools at all levels to note the potential role of extracurricular activities in shaping students' values and outlooks (people.cn., 2013b). Schools are encouraged to create conditions for

students to internalise the core socialist values through extracurricular activities such as organising students to visit local museums in a bid to cultivate within them the core socialist value of patriotism (people.cn., 2013b).

The second area finds expression in the official commitment to fostering a school culture which identifies and highlights the core socialist values. The government encourages educational sectors at all levels to embed the values into their daily routines, such as the creation and circulation of school newspapers, advertisements and posters, the management of school libraries, and radio and television systems, and the operation of student organisations such as the Youth Leagues[1], the Student Associations[2], and the Student Unions[3] (people.cn., 2013b).

The third area identifies the use of the core socialist values in teacher assessment. The government requires schools at all levels to establish a long-term mechanism to incorporate the values into teacher education (people.cn., 2013b). The government also encourages schools nationwide to take into consideration the values in teacher recruitment, appointment, and annual assessment (people.cn., 2013b). For instance, schools are expected to establish models by rewarding those teachers who have

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[1] In China, Youth Leagues are advanced youth groups within a school and are led by the school committee of the Chinese Communist Party. Leagues have cultivated and delivered a large number of new members for the Party.

[2] In China, Student Associations refer to various cultural, artistic, and academic groups formed by students voluntarily, such as language clubs, chess clubs, photography clubs, painting clubs, school choirs, and different sports clubs. Each is composed of students coming from different faculties, departments, or year levels who have similar interests. They build up a platform for students to exchange ideas, to learn skills from one another, and to make new friends. In doing so, they help to enliven the campus atmosphere and to enrich students' extracurricular lives.

[3] In China, Student Unions are the leading student organisations jointly led by the school committee of the Chinese Communist Party and the Youth League in each school. They serve as the bridge between school administration and students. For example, they are responsible for collecting suggestions, opinions, and requests from students, and reporting them to the school management in a bid to solve the problems encountered by students in either their study or personal lives.

practised the values well in a bid to promote recognition of the values within teacher communities (people.cn., 2013b).

1.1.3 China's curriculum reforms and the release of new curriculum policies

Official policies aimed at inserting the core socialist values into the education system are the result of profound and rapid reforms in China's senior high school education. Curriculum reforms were formally launched in 2013 and culminated in the release of 21 official curriculum policies by the country's Ministry of Education in 2018. These reforms have major implications for curriculum policies, content, pedagogy, and evaluation (MoE, 2018a). These 21 policies included an overall Curriculum Plan entitled *Curriculum Plan for Senior High School Education (2017 edition)* [*Plan*[4]] (MoE, 2018a) and 20 specific Curriculum Standards for the 20 subjects[5] included in China's senior high school programme[6].

My examination of the 21 curriculum policies finds that the term *core socialist values* has been written into each policy document as a guiding principle framing all school activities including the curriculum itself, along with more opaque attitudes to learning and pedagogical relations. For example, the *Curriculum Standard for Chemistry (2017 edition)* states that "the core competencies of the Chemistry curriculum reflect the basic requirements of student cultivation through the study of Chemistry, which are developed under the guidance of the core socialist values" (MoE, 2018c, p. 3, my translation). The *Curriculum Standard for Chinese Language* suggests that "the newly-

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[4] This is my translation because the official English version of this policy is unavailable. Therefore, all the quotations of the policy text of the *Plan* in this thesis are translated by me.

[5] The twenty subjects are: Chinese Language, Mathematics, Japanese, Fine Arts, History, Sports and Health, Information Technology, Geography, Biology, Chemistry, Russian, French, Music, General Technology, Physics, Spanish, English, German, Art, and Thought and Politics.

[6] China's education system is a five-tier model, including kindergarten, primary school (from Year 1 to Year 6), junior high school (from Year 7 to Year 9), senior high school (from Year 10 and Year 12), and tertiary education.

reformed Chinese Language curriculum aims to help students develop an ability to reason, improve the quality of thinking, cultivate the *core socialist values*, nurture aesthetic tastes, accumulate rich cultural heritage, and understand cultural diversity" (emphasis added, MoE, 2018b, p. 1). The *Curriculum Standard for Thought and Politics* defines itself as a comprehensive and activity-based curriculum with the fundamental task of "fostering moral sensitivity and cultivating the *core socialist values*, aiming to help students build up ideological and political correctness, develop the core subject competencies, and enhance their social participation by deepening their understanding of Chinese society" (emphasis added, MoE, 2018d, p. 1, my translation). All of these findings resonate with the *Plan* which states that "the entire curriculum reform is guided by the *core socialist values* repeatedly addressed at the 18th and 19th NPCs" (emphasis added, MoE, 2018a, p. 2).

My research focuses on two of the 21 curriculum policies released in 2018, both of which concern Chinese language education (I explain my reasons for this choice in the methodology chapter which follows), which are:

- *Curriculum Plan for Senior High School Education (2017 Edition)* [*Plan* [7]] (MoE, 2018a)

- *Curriculum Standard for Chinese Language (2017 Edition)* [*Standard* [8]] (MoE, 2018b)

The study of the two curriculum policies is the first of the three empirical investigations in this thesis. The remaining two include an observational study of six Chinese language classrooms and interviews with six teachers about their efforts to embed the values in

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[7] This is my translation because the official English version of this policy is unavailable. Therefore, all the quotations of the policy text of the *Plan* in this thesis are translated by me.

[8] This is my translation because the official English version of this policy is unavailable. Therefore, all the quotations of the policy text of the *Standard* in this thesis are translated by me.

their pedagogic practices. My analysis of the empirical data reveals that the values have, to a great extent, entered the minds and pedagogic practices of the six teacher participants. For instance, all of the six teachers explicitly mentioned some of the twelve values in the classroom. What is more surprising is that all of the participants could recite the values, with some of them even being able to repeat them from memory, during the interviews.

In this research, I analyse the two curriculum policies and examine policy practices as well as providing accounts of the empirical findings in Chapters Seven to Nine. During the fieldwork investigations, I ask, for instance, what the purpose is of the government's incorporation of the core socialist values into the educational curriculum policies and practices, what the link is between the current curriculum reforms and the values, how the values are inserted into the curriculum policies and following policy practices. The research argument and research questions captured these initial questions of interest.

1.2 Research Argument

Employing three primary conceptual tools of Durkheim's *collective representations* (2001[1912], p. 18), Althusser's *ideology* (2001, p. 106), and Bernstein's *recontextualisation* (2000, p. 32) (I briefly explain these three concepts later; see the detailed explanations in Chapter Three), I investigate the role that China's current education system plays in *recontextualising* the core socialist values promulgated by the government in 2012. By using education as a key institution for the implementation of these values, they are first recontextualised and then embedded into contemporary Chinese society. Following Durkheim, I argue that these core socialist values are used to develop what I term *socialist collective representations* in contemporary Chinese society. The government aims to build these values into both the socialist collective

representations of Chinese society and the self-representations of individuals, and thus to "guide social trends of thought and forge public consensus" (NPC, 2012, n.p.).

I argue that these socialist collective representations are being developed through education to revitalise the official ruling *ideology* of market socialism. Since the 1970s, the Chinese government has implemented its national strategy of *Reforming and Opening Up*, aiming to enable China to enter the global market as a major player through market economy reforms and to retain the socialist polity at the same time (Brødsgaard & Rutten, 2017; Deng, 1993). Ironically, these economic reforms towards market socialism have allowed China to be the second-largest economic entity in the world since 2010 (Nolan, 2012), and a society increasingly dependent upon capitalist accumulation (see Chapter Four). Yet some market values brought about by these reforms have moved contemporary Chinese society towards individualism and materialism, which has the potential to undermine the government's socialist polity (see Chapters Four and Five). In addressing this problem, I argue that the government has promulgated the core socialist values and is embedding them into society through the education system in a bid to generate and enhance what I term *socialist collective representations*. The government aims to revitalise its ruling ideology of market socialism in contemporary Chinese society.

I also argue that the government has drawn on two different forms of cultural understanding in creating the core socialist values which help to develop the *socialist collective representations*. One is the traditional Chinese cultural ethos, especially Confucianism, and the other includes the modern secular economic principles that underpin a market economy. The alignment of Confucian ideals to the core socialist values in an age of market socialism gives the values further legitimacy by evoking China's rich cultural heritage (see Chapter Six).

I investigate the recontextualisation of the core socialist values within the country's education system in a bid to understand how the implementation of the values occurs both in what Bernstein terms "the official recontextualising field" (curriculum policies), and "the pedagogic recontextualising field" (teachers and their teaching practices in the classroom) (2000, p. 32). To this end, this thesis contains three empirical studies. They include (i) an investigation of two specific curriculum policies regarding the Chinese Language subject, the *Plan* (MoE, 2018a) and the *Standard* (MoE, 2018b) (see above), (ii) an observational study of six Chinese language teachers in the classroom, and (iii) interviews with the six teachers who were observed to discuss their conceptualisations of the values and efforts to recontextualise the values into their teaching practices. Based on my hypothesis that the government is revitalising its *ideology* of market socialism by *recontextualising* the core socialist values into the educational system to develop the *socialist collective representations*, I designed the research questions.

1.3 Research Questions

Overarching research question

Why, and in what ways, does China's contemporary education system include the core socialist values promulgated by the Chinese government since 2012?

Research sub-questions

- Why does the Chinese government promulgate the core socialist values in contemporary society?

- In what ways has the Chinese government created the core socialist values?

- In what ways are the core socialist values recontextualised into China's contemporary curriculum policies?

- In what ways, and to what extent, are the core socialist values recontextualised into the curriculum policy practices?

1.4 Research Methodology: A Sketch

I take a realist approach to the study, using Rata's (2014) *Three Stages of Critical Policy Methodology* as the methodological framework. The application of a realist approach enables me to use theoretical concepts from the sociology of education at each of the three stages: (i) formulating a conceptual framework that identifies causal connections between international forces and local changes in China, (ii) analysing policies within the conceptually framed setting, and (iii) conducting empirical investigations to examine the policy practices in the real-world context (also see Chapter Two).

The conceptual framework that I have formulated comprises three major sociological concepts: Durkheim's *collective representations* (2001[1912]), Althusser's *ideology* (2001), and Bernstein's *recontextualisation* (2000). As discussed above, the use of the concept of *collective representations* helps me understand and conceptualise the government's intent in promoting and upholding the core socialist values as a method to develop what I term *socialist collective representations* for contemporary Chinese society. This is because collective representations are society's relatively stable convergent ideas through which social and personal consciousness and thoughts are developed and regulated collectively (Durkheim, 1912 [2001]). When inserted into all walks of society, these core socialist values can help to reproduce and strengthen what I term *socialist collective representations*. In this way, they become the shared consensus for society and the doxa or habitus of each individual, serving as a "shared reality" for that society (Bourdieu, 1979, p. 79; Rata, 2018). Such a function is reflected by the government's efforts to use the core socialist values to "guide social trends of

thought and forge public consensus" (NPC, 2012, n.p., translated by China Academy of Translation).

Why is the Chinese government fostering and promoting the core socialist values by embedding them into social and individual consciousness as what I term *socialist collective representations*? I argue that it is because the government's earlier socialist collective representations have been undermined by social trends of individualism and materialism brought about by the country's market economy reforms since the 1970s. These economic reforms were conducted to respond to the global capitalist forces and to tackle the political instability caused by both the aftermath brought about by the Cultural Revolution and the death of Chairman Mao, and to cope with the economic stagnation arising from the unstable politics and a rigid centralised planned economic model at that time (Deng, 1993; Harvey, 2007). These market economy reforms, underpinned by the ideology of market socialism, have enabled the government to retain the country's socialist polity on the one hand, and to build up a socialist market economy in which the market, rather than the centralised planning, plays a dominating role in resource allocation on the other (Brødsgaard & Rutten, 2017; CGTN, 2019; Deng, 1993; Harvey, 2007). However, some market values associated with a socialist market economy, such as the recognition of personal property, the acknowledgement of the individuality of a market entity, and the pursuit of optimising market benefits (Su, 2001), have oriented modern Chinese society towards individualistic and materialistic values, which has the potential to undermine the government's socialist polity.

The use of the concept of *ideology* assists me in understanding and theorising the government's efforts to produce and promote the core socialist values by embedding them into the country's education system. Using Althusser's (2001) terminology, this

embedding is a way to operate "the Dominant Ideological State Apparatus" [DISA] (p. 106). In China's case, the purpose is to maintain and revitalise a ruling ideology of market socialism in the current market economy period. Althusser (2001) argues that education has become the DISA in modern secular society, which is similar to the role played by the Church in terms of ideological control in the West in earlier times. By promoting and upholding the core socialist values to develop what I call *socialist collective representations*, the government is able to counter the rise of individualistic and materialistic values in Chinese society today and to strengthen its socialist polity, and thus revitalise its ruling ideology of market socialism.

The use of the concept of *recontextualisation* helps me to understand the education system as "a symbolic regulator of consciousness" (Bernstein, 2000, p. 37) that allocates and transmits different knowledge, *ideology*, and power to corresponding groups of people through the production, transmission, and reproduction of pedagogic discourses. These pedagogic discourses are recontextualised into the pedagogic recontextualising field through processes of production, transformation, and reproduction guided by recontextualising rules (Bernstein, 2000). I use the conceptual tool of *recontextualisation* and conduct three empirical investigations of curriculum policy analysis, class observations, and teacher interviews to examine the mechanisms of recontextualisation. This recontextualisation allows the government's ascendant ideals of the core socialist values to enter the country's senior high school curriculum policies and practices.

Through conducting fieldwork investigations, I examine and verify the hypothetical thesis argument (see above), the generalised theoretical causations, by answering the research questions (see above). In turn, the empirical data provide evidence to identify and illustrate the theoretical causations in the real world (Ekström, 1992; Little, 2011;

Rata & Tamati, in press). It is this realist research approach of the *Three Stages of Critical Policy Methodology* that enables the connection between the empirical/material and the theoretical/conceptual. The former provides both evidence, identification, and illustration of the latter in the real world (Maxwell, 2012; McPhail & Lourie, 2017; Rata & Tamati, in press; Rata, 2014). In this way, by using the theoretical concepts to explain the empirically collected data, the research becomes an authentic sociological undertaking (Maxwell, 2012; Rata & Tamati, in press).

1.5 Chapter Outlines

Chapter Two introduces the conceptual methodology that enables me to take a realist approach to the research. It describes the *Three Stages of Critical Policy Methodology* used to link the conceptual methodology to the empirical data (Rata, 2014). The three stages are: constructing a conceptual framework, using the framework to analyse policy, and conducting investigations into the policy implementation. The chapter ends with a description of how each of the three research stages is undertaken to answer the research questions and to verify the research argument.

Chapter Three elaborates the three key sociological concepts I use in the research and the way they are aligned with one another to formulate a theoretical framework. The three theoretical concepts are Durkheim's *collective representations* (2001[1912]), Althusser's *ideology* (2001), and Bernstein's *recontextualisation* (2000). The chapter also justifies why the three concepts are apposite for use to understand and theorise the connections between the Chinese government's ruling ideology of market socialism, its ascendant ideals of the core socialist values developed since 2012, and the country's senior high school curriculum reforms which began in 2013.

Chapter Four uses the first sociological concept of *ideology* (Althusser, 2001) included in the formulated theoretical framework to analyse the development of market socialism in China. It outlines the history of the country's market economy reforms in the 1970s, explaining how global capitalist forces have exerted an influence on these reforms, and how the reforms have contributed to the establishment of a socialist market economy in China. The chapter also describes how particular market values associated with a socialist market economy where the market plays a dominating role in resource allocation have led to a rise of individualism and materialism in the economic sphere (Brødsgaard & Rutten, 2017; CGTN, 2019; Deng, 1993; Harvey, 2007).

Chapter Five continues the discussion in Chapter Four by describing how the rise of individualism and materialism in the economic sphere, brought about by the country's market economy reforms since the 1970s, has permeated other spheres including ecological, political, cultural, social, and educational fields. It offers an overview of the manifestations of contemporary Chinese society towards individualistic and materialistic values. Paradoxically, this, in turn, has the potential to undermine the government's socialist values and its ruling ideology of market socialism.

Chapter Six uses the second conceptual tool of Durkheim's (2001[1912]) *collective representations* to theorise how to resist the rise of individualism and materialism. The government has proposed and promoted the core socialist values since 2012 to develop what I call *socialist collective representations*. The chapter takes the core socialist value of integrity as an example to elucidate how the government has drawn on both traditional Chinese culture and modern secularised market culture in creating its core socialist values. The chapter also describes how the values are communicated to communities and society as a key political discourse and perform an important symbolic role in the economic and social spheres in contemporary China.

Chapter Seven reports on the first of the three empirical investigations: curriculum policy analysis, research of the official recontextualising field. It analyses two official Chinese Language curriculum policies by using a *Four-Dimensional Analytic Schema* developed from the *Curriculum Design Coherence Model* [CDC Model] (McPhail, 2020a; Rata & McPhail, 2020; Rata, 2019, 2021). The chapter reveals how the government's core socialist values are recontextualised into both curriculum policies through a sociocultural knowledge orientation in terms of the policy propositions, the prescribed subject concepts, content, and competencies written in the two policies. The idea of a *sociocultural knowledge orientation,* or what I theorise as *socioculturalism,* is introduced in this chapter. It emerges as a key idea in the development of the thesis argument in subsequent chapters. This chapter also discusses how three strands of culture – traditional Chinese culture, revolutionary culture, and advanced socialist culture – have contributed to this curriculum trend towards socioculturalism.

Chapter Eight concerns the second of the three empirical investigations: school classroom observations, a study of the pedagogic recontextualising field. It introduces how I draw on the CDC Model (McPhail, 2020a; Rata & McPhail, 2020; Rata, 2019, 2021) and other sociological concepts from the discipline of sociology of education to formulate a *Six-Dimensional Analytic Schema*. It also describes how I use the schema to analyse, theorise, and explain the mechanisms of recontextualisation embedded in the empirical data. I show how the core socialist values are recontextualised into the six observed classes. The investigation reveals that these values were recontextualised through a sociocultural knowledge orientation in terms of the lesson propositions, concepts, content, competencies, pedagogy, and student participation in the classroom.

Chapter Nine describes the last of the three empirical investigations: teacher interviews, a study of the pedagogic recontextualising field. It explains how the core

socialist values are recontextualised by (i) the six teacher participants' understanding of the core socialist values, (ii) their perceptions of the role of the Chinese Language programme at the senior high school stage in China, (iii) their views about the two Chinese Language curriculum policies that I analyse, and (iv) their responses to the class that I observe. Furthermore, the chapter reveals an alignment between the official and pedagogic recontextualising fields in terms of understanding the core socialist value of integrity as a contractual virtue.

Chapter Ten explains how the sociocultural-knowledge-oriented consistency and coherence between the three clusters of empirical data (the curriculum policy analysis, the class observations, and the teacher interviews) contribute to the cultivation of socialist worldviews and pursuits within the young Chinese generation, creating an image for them as "qualified builders and successors of China's great socialist cause" (MoE, 2018a, p. 1). The chapter also connects the empirical findings to the theoretical concepts to demonstrate how the former serve as evidence for the identification, and illustration, of the latter in the real world. Finally, the chapter concludes this thesis by discussing the implications, strengths, and limitations of the research and providing suggestions for further studies.

1.6 Clarification of Terms

Before the chapters, I clarify several key terms that I use with specific meaning in this thesis.

Chinese Language/Chinese language

The phrase 'Chinese Language/Chinese language' has been perceived and utilised in two ways in the thesis, either with or without capitalisation of the word 'language'. To differentiate the meanings, I use 'Chinese Language' to refer to the name of the Chinese

Language subject included in the senior high school programme in China. For example, 'Chinese Language policy', 'Chinese Language curriculum', or 'Chinese Language programme' refers respectively to the policy, curriculum, or programme of the subject. I use 'Chinese language' in its ordinary sense, referring to the language itself, like that of the Japanese language, English language, etc.

Market socialism

Market socialism, as an ideology, refers to the combination of a market economy with a socialist polity. This ideology was adopted by the Chinese government in the 1970s, especially seen in the country's socialist market economy reforms. These economic reforms have changed the country's economic system from a planned economy dominated by rigid centralised planning to a socialist market economy where the market plays a dominating role in terms of resource allocation and distribution (Brødsgaard & Rutten, 2017; CGTN, 2019; Deng, 1993; Harvey, 2007). Ironically, these economic reforms have also resulted in a social trend towards individualism and materialism which is brought about by some capitalist marketised values underpinning these reforms. In my thesis, I argue that the government is embedding the core socialist values into the country's education system to develop and strengthen what I term socialist collective representations. By using these socialist collective representations to keep in check this rise of individualism and materialism, the government aims to revitalise its ideology of market socialism in contemporary Chinese society.

Socialist collective representations

I regard the Chinese government's creation and promotion of the core socialist values by inserting them into the education system as a method to develop what I term *socialist collective representations*. In this way, these values become part of people's

consciousness as both the collective representations of Chinese society today and the self-representations of individuals.

Virtuous integrity

I coin this term in English to denote the heritage Chinese cultural value of integrity which is regarded as a personal virtue in pre-modern Chinese society (see Chapter Six).

Contractual integrity

I define this term in English to refer to the modern secular market value of integrity which is treated as part of the social contract underpinning the current global market economy (see Chapter Six).

Integrity as a contractual virtue

I use this term to explain how the government has drawn on two forms of cultural understanding, *virtuous integrity* and *contractual integrity*, in creating its *core socialist value of integrity as a contractual virtue* (see Chapter Six).

Three strands of culture

The three empirical investigations (see Chapters Seven, Eight, and Nine) find that three strands of culture, *advanced socialist culture*, *traditional Chinese culture*, and *revolutionary culture*, have contributed to the orientation towards sociocultural knowledge in the country's senior high school Chinese Language curriculum policies and practices. Advanced socialist culture refers to excellent practical experience and spiritual achievements that the Chinese people have achieved in the construction of socialist modernisation under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party [CCP] since the founding of China in 1949. Advanced socialist culture is developed based on the critical inheritance of *traditional Chinese culture* produced before the establishment

of the CCP in 1921, and *revolutionary culture* created after the establishment of the CCP and before the founding of modern China in 1949. In this thesis, I also argue that the Chinese government has drawn on traditional Chinese culture in creating the core socialist values.

Socioculturalism

I define socioculturalism as an orientation towards sociocultural knowledge. I use this term to theorise a sociocultural knowledge orientation embedded in the three empirical investigations of curriculum policy analysis, class observations, and teacher interviews in terms of the policy/lesson propositions, subject/lesson concepts, subject/lesson content, subject/lesson competencies, lesson pedagogy, and teachers' perceptions of the goal of Chinese Language curriculum teaching at the senior high school stage in China.

1.7 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has situated the research in the changing context of the Chinese government's ascendant intention to promote the core socialist values developed in 2012 by inserting them into the country's education system. Such political efforts have resulted in China's curriculum reforms that began in 2013, which culminated in the release of new curriculum policies in 2018. I have taken a realist approach, formulating a hypothetical argument by drawing on relevant theoretical concepts, and generating a number of research questions to investigate the connections between the government's ideology of market socialism, its ascendant ideals of the core socialist values, and the country's Chinese Language curriculum policies and practices. I have also briefly introduced the research methodology and presented chapter outlines of the thesis. I have ended the chapter by clarifying some key terms that I have used with specific meaning in this thesis.

The next chapter is about research design and implementation. I describe the realist approach that I take to this study. I also introduce the *Three Stages of Critical Policy Methodology* (Rata, 2014) that I use to conduct the research and the specific research work at each of the three stages.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

The preceding chapter introduced the research context, the thesis argument, and the research questions. It also briefly described the realist or conceptual methodology employed in the study.

This chapter describes the research design and implementation. The study takes a realist approach that requires the use of theoretical concepts, in this case from the discipline of sociology of education, to understand, theorise, and explain the empirical phenomena (Carter & New, 2004; Rata, 2014). I use Rata's (2014) *Three Stages of Critical Policy Methodology* as the methodological framework because it employs a theoretical conceptual approach to critical policy research. My research is centred on policy and its contextualisation, so the *Three Stages of Critical Policy Methodology* is an apposite choice. The three stages of this approach include (i) creating a conceptual framework that identifies the interactions between global forces and regional development, (ii) using the conceptual framework to research policies by setting the analysis under a theorised conceptual context, and (iii) conducting real-world material investigations to examine policy implementation in practice (Rata, 2014). This realist research approach enables me to use the empirical as evidence for both identification and illustration of the theoretical in reality through the research processes (Carter & New, 2004; Maxwell, 2012; McPhail & Lourie, 2017; Rata, 2014). The chapter ends with discussions on the research trustworthiness and ethical considerations.

2.1 A Realist Approach

Realists, or conceptual methodologists, following Durkheim (2001[1912]) and Popper (1978, 1981), argue for the explanatory power of theoretical concepts in understanding and conceptualising the material and symbolic world (Collier, 2003; Carter & New, 2004; Gamble,

2014; Heller, 2011; Kitcher, 2001; Lourie & Rata, 2017; McPhail & Lourie, 2017; Moore, 2007, 2013; Nola & Sankey, 2007; Nola, 2008; Rata, 2012; Sayer, 2000; Vernon, 2020). They contend that research procedures which test for veracity and logic according to disciplinary standards and procedures, enable disciplinary concepts to be utilised as methodological tools (Lourie & Rata, 2017; McPhail & Lourie, 2017; Moon & Blackman, 2014; Nola, 2008). In this process, disciplinary concepts which are accepted as reliable, are more *real* or *valid* than others in providing explanatory power (McPhail & Lourie, 2017). Therefore, disciplinary knowledge and its componential concepts can be used as theoretical tools, enabling new ideas to be generalised to explain multiple cases, and can be used by any person at any time and with regard to any context (Rata, 2012; 2018). In this way, a realist approach "detaches knowledge by locating it at the level of intellectual fields rather than within the consciousness of the knowing object" (Moore, 2007, p. 31).

I took a realist approach, using disciplinary concepts from the sociology of education as a means to examine three phenomena occurring in contemporary China. The three phenomena are (i) the Chinese government's proposal of its ascendant political ideals of a set of twelve *core socialist values* promulgated in 2012; (ii) the enactment of these values in a national social policy released in 2013; and (iii) the insertion of the values into the senior high school curriculum policies published in 2018 (also see Chapter One). My purpose is to capture deeper "causes and processes that are hidden in the phenomenon itself" (Kant, 1993[1781], p. 352).

By applying a conceptual methodology, I found three *best-fit* disciplinary concepts to understand, theorise, and examine the three phenomena. The three concepts are Durkheim's *collective representations* (2001[1912]), Althusser's *ideology* (2001), and Bernstein's *recontextualisation* (2000). They provide analytic, conceptual, and explanatory tools for me to examine (i) the government's *ideology* underpinning its proposal and promotion of the core socialist values, (ii) the role of *collective representations* that these values play in society, and

(iii) the ways in which these values were *recontextualised* into China's curriculum policies and practices. I call them the *best-fit* concepts because I recognise that "no ideally constructed model will fit reality exactly, there will be better and better degrees of fit" (Nola, 2001, p. 429). I explain and demonstrate why the three are best-fit concepts for my research. I also show how I apply the concepts in the three stages of critical policy analysis of this study.

2.2 The Three Stages of Critical Policy Analysis

Three stages of critical policy analysis were used to conduct both theoretical and empirical investigations into the three phenomena under investigation. These stages "integrate theories of macro political and economic movements with the analysis of how policy puts the generated power relations into operation" (Rata, 2014, p. 354). This methodology enables me to implement the theoretical tools of *ideology*, *collective representations*, and *recontextualisation*. These tools help me to examine how China's ascendant political ideals of the core socialist values are *recontextualised* into the country's senior high school Chinese Language curriculum policies and practices. I argue that this recontextualisation is underpinned by the government's *ideology* of market socialism. The purpose is to use the core socialist values to develop what I term *socialist collective representations* that help to consolidate the official *ideology* of market socialism in Chinese society today. In turn, the empirical data provided by the curriculum policies at the national level are the meeting point between the official ideological discourses contained in the policies and the empirical curriculum practices at the school level (Codd, 1988; Dale, 1989; Rata, 2014). This is also the crux of the research, namely, what happens to these ideological discourses as they enter the real world of policy implementation in teachers' pedagogic practices. I describe each of the *Three Stages of Critical Policy Analysis* (Rata, 2014) (see *Figure 2.1)* before I introduce detailed research work in each stage.
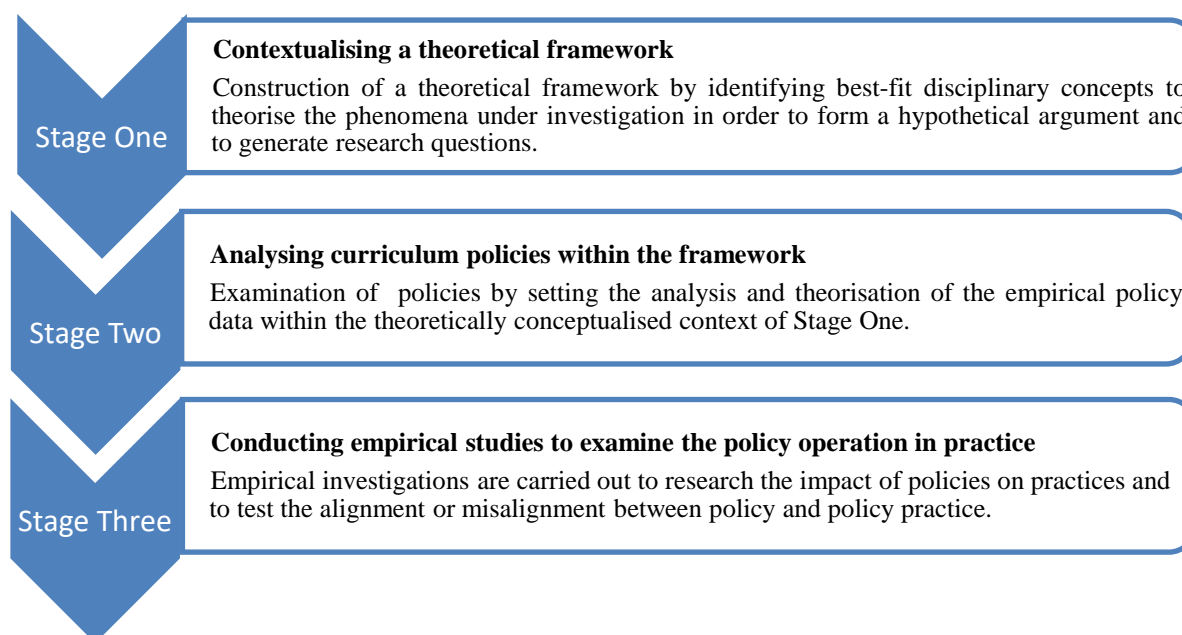
Figure 2.1 The three stages of the conceptual methodology for critical policy analysis

I introduce each of the three stages in detail below, including how I used qualitative empirical methods (i.e. policy analysis, observations, and interviews) to collect the data, how I applied the two methods of critical discourse analysis and thematic analysis to analyse the data, and how I explain the major themes from the empirical data by using the theoretical concepts from the discipline of sociology of education. This detail provides evidence of an operable, trustworthy, and credible research procedure (Nowell et al., 2017).

2.2.1 The first stage: contextualising a theoretical framework

The major tasks in this stage include (i) hypothesising a research argument by using apposite disciplinary concepts to theorise and explain phenomena to be investigated, and (ii) generating appropriate research questions for the argument. In doing so, a theoretical framework is created that links concepts to phenomena at the hypothetical level.

I investigate three phenomena. The first is the birth of the core socialist values. The Chinese government proposed for the first time a set of core socialist values at the country's 18th National People's Congress [NPC] held in 2012. In doing so, the government recognised the

role of these values as "the soul of the Chinese nation", and aimed to use them "as the guide for building socialism with Chinese characterises" (NPC, 2012, n.p., translated by China Academy of Translation). To achieve this goal, the government argues that "a thorough study of and education in these values" should be carried out so that the values can help to "*guide social trends of thought and forge public consensus*" (emphasis added, NPC, 2012, n.p., translated by China Academy of Translation).

By taking a conceptual methodology and reading relevant literature, I found that Durkheim's sociological concept of *collective representations* provides an apposite theoretical tool (2001[1912]). This concept enables me to understand and theorise the government's reasons for proposing the core socialist values. The government states that the purpose of the values is to direct the construction of "socialism with Chinese characteristics" and to "guide social trends of thought and forge public consensus" (NPC, 2012, n.p., translated by China Academy of Translation). The values create and strengthen what I term *socialist collective representations*. Collective representations are a society's relatively stable convergent ideas through which personal and social consciousness and thoughts are developed and regulated collectively (Durkheim,1912 [2001]). When inserted into all walks of society, *collective representations* become a shared social consensus and affect the doxa or habitus of each individual (Bourdieu, 2004; Rata, 2018).

The government's intention to use the values to develop what I call *socialist collective representations* is also embedded in the second phenomenon – the development of a national social policy called *Guidance on Upholding and Observing Core Socialist Values* [*Guidance*][9] in 2013 (people.cn., 2013b). This document comprehensively presents how to introduce these values into the everyday life of the Chinese people and how to systemically embed the values

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[9] This is my translation because the official English version of this policy is unavailable. Therefore, all the quotations of the policy text of *Guidance* in this thesis are translated by me.

into every sector of modern society. This document also recognises the role that education plays in fostering these values by providing some methodological approaches to help embed them into the country's education system. The phenomenon has led me to think more deeply about the government's purpose in promoting and upholding these values through education.

Althusser's concept of *ideology* (2001) offers another apposite theoretical tool to understand and theorise the government's intention to infuse the values into education as a way to permeate its ruling ideology through controlling "the Dominant Ideological State Apparatus" [DISA] (p. 106). According to Althusser (2001), education has, in the West, replaced the Church, which previously played a dominant role in ideological control. In this way, education has become the DISA in modern secular society. The concept also directs me to research further into the underlying *ideology* which drives the Chinese government's creation and promotion of the core socialist values in that country.

The third phenomenon which I examine is the reform of China's senior high school curriculum policies which began in 2013 and included the release of 21 new curriculum policies in 2018 (see Chapter One). An examination of the 21 policies reveals that the term *core socialist values* has become a guiding principle. The guiding principle not only leads the reforms of these policies themselves, but also exerts an influence on the curriculum content, together with more tacit implications for curriculum pedagogy, textbook use, teaching and learning attitudes, and pedagogic relations (also see Chapters One and Seven).

Bernstein's concept of *recontextualisation* (2000) offers the third apposite theoretical tool to examine how the core socialist values are inserted, that is, *recontextualised* into the curriculum policies and the subsequent policy practices. Bernstein (2000) argues that pedagogic discourses in the educational sphere are controlled and produced as "a symbolic regulator of consciousness" (p. 38). These discourses are generated through recontextualising rules which guide knowledge

reproduction and recontextualisation (Bernstein, 2000). Therefore, I use *recontextualisation* as a conceptual tool to examine the mechanisms of recontextualisation contributing to the insertion of the core socialist values into the curriculum policies and practices.

By taking a conceptual methodology that helps me identify apposite sociological concepts to understand and theorise the phenomena under examination at the first stage, I can reach a hypothetical argument: the government has proposed and promoted the core socialist values to develop and consolidate what I term *socialist collective representations*, by *recontextualising* these values into the country's educational policies and practices in a bid to permeate a certain type of *ideology*. I also generated the overarching research questions and sub-questions from the argument (see Chapter One about the research questions). Next, I verified the hypothesised argument by conducting both theoretical and empirical investigations to answer these research questions.

I initially conducted two theoretical investigations to answer the first two research sub-questions respectively: "Why does the Chinese government promulgate the core socialist values in contemporary society?" and "In what ways has the Chinese government created the core socialist values?". The first theoretical investigation reveals that by proposing the values, the government aims to improve and revitalise its ruling ideology of market socialism in contemporary society (see Chapters Four and Five). The government's ideology of market socialism has guided China's socialist market economy reforms that began in 1978 (Harvey, 2007). These reforms were conducted to respond to global capitalist forces at that time, to tackle the political instability brought about by the Cultural Revolution within China, and to address the economic stagnation arising from the unstable politics and rigid centralised planned economic model of the 1970s (Harvey, 2007). By introducing these economic reforms, the government aimed to, on the one hand, build up a socialist market economy in which the market,

rather than centralised planning, played a dominating role in resource allocation, and, on the other hand, retain the country's socialist polity (Brødsgaard & Rutten, 2017; Deng, 1993).

Along with these market economy reforms, two significant effects have emerged in contemporary China. These reforms have enriched the country and have made it the second-largest world economic entity since 2010 (Nolan, 2012). However, the reforms have introduced some market values which are inimical to socialism. These include capitalist principles such as the recognition of personal property, the acknowledgement of the individuality of a market entity, the heterogeneity between different market entities, an emphasis on free-market competition, and the pursuit of optimising market benefits (Su, 2001). These values have led to a rise of individualism and materialism in contemporary Chinese society, seen pervasively in the ecological, political, cultural, social, and educational spheres (see Chapters Four and Five).

This shift towards individualistic and materialistic values in contemporary society has the potential to undermine the socialist values that underpin China's socialist polity. To address this values conundrum, I argue that the government has been intent on promoting and upholding the core socialist values, especially by recontextualising these values into the country's education system. Such efforts aim (i) to use the values to reproduce and strengthen what I name *socialist collective representations* so that they help to mediate this increase in individualism and materialism, and (ii) to revitalise its ruling ideology of market socialism in contemporary society.

The second theoretical investigation reveals that the government has drawn on two different forms of cultural understanding in creating the core socialist values. One is the traditional Chinese cultural ethos, especially Confucianism, and the other includes the modern secular economic principles that underpin a market economy (see Chapter Six). The alignment of

Confucian ideals to the core socialist values in an age of market socialism gives them further legitimacy by invoking China's rich cultural heritage. This finding is also illustrated by the empirical teacher interview data regarding how the six teachers understand and conceptualise these values (see Chapter Nine).

To summarise, the first stage identifies three *best-fit* sociological concepts to theorise the causal mechanisms behind the phenomena. These concepts – *collective representations*, *recontextualisation*, and *ideology* – act as theoretical tools that enable the phenomena to be conceptualised and also enable me to hypothesise the research argument at the theoretical level and generate the research questions. I also conduct two theoretical investigations to answer the first research question – "Why does the Chinese government promulgate the core socialist values in contemporary society?" and "In what ways has the Chinese government created the core socialist values?" (see the detailed responses to the first two research sub-questions in Chapters Four, Five, and Six). The major tasks for the next two stages are to (i) conduct empirical investigations at both the policy and the practice levels, (ii) to *test* the veracity and usefulness of the three concepts, and (iii) to *illustrate* the theoretical causations formed at stage one at the empirical level of social phenomenon.

2.2.2 The second stage: analysing curriculum policies within the framework

Stage Two is an empirical analysis of two key policy documents: the *Plan* and the *Standard* (see Chapter One). The study of the two selected curriculum policies is in Chapter Seven. In keeping with the methodological purpose of this chapter, I now describe the critical discourse method used to analyse the two policy documents.

The method of critical discourse analysis emphasises the symbolic sphere of the core socialist values, highlighting that "language use, discourse, and communication should be studied in their social, cultural and political contexts" (Regmi, 2017, p. 93). The approach sees discourses,

especially political narratives, as "inherently part of and influenced by social structure, and produced in social interaction" (Van Dijk, 2001, p. 352). This is because "discourses, as realized in institutional practices, for example in the family and the school, constitute the meaning of the physical body, psychic energy, the emotions and desire as well as conscious subjectivity" (Weedon, 1997, p. 109). Therefore, the application of the method of critical discourse analysis can assist me in making visible the sociopolitical power structures embedded in the ideological discourses and narratives of the two curriculum policies.

To avoid getting into the interpretive trap and drawing conclusions directly from the empirical data, I use the *best-fit* concepts identified in the theoretical framework (see above) to examine the ideas found in the policy discourses. I conducted a critical policy analysis in Chapter Seven in a bid to find out to what extent and how the government's core socialist values underpinned by its ideology of market socialism, are recontextualised into the two curriculum policies. To facilitate my examination and description of the mechanisms of such recontextualisation, I also draw on the *Curriculum Design Coherence Model* [CDC Model] from the literature of the sociology of education (McPhail, 2020a; Rata & McPhail, 2020; Rata, 2019, 2021).

The CDC Model contains four elements, referring to (i) subject or topic propositions (the focus of subject knowledge), (ii) subject concepts (the meaning of subject knowledge), (iii) subject content (what subject knowledge actually is), and (iv) subject competencies (what can be done with subject knowledge). To enable the CDC Model to fit into the policy analysis context, I changed the first element from 'subject propositions' into 'policy propositions'. This refers to the examination of how the two policies describe the focus of the senior high school Chinese Language programme (also see Chapter Seven).

I draw on the CDC Model in the critical discourse analysis of the two curriculum policies: the *Plan* and the *Standard* (see Chapter One). The CDC Model is a useful analytical device because

it takes disciplinary *knowledge* as its focus. Knowledge, as a key content of pedagogic discourses, plays a vital role in the production, *recontextualisation*, and reproduction of different types (official/pedagogic) of ideology (Bernstein, 2000). The CDC Model was created as a means to identify and organise the epistemic structure of curriculum knowledge for teaching, that is, to identify disciplinary-derived propositions, concepts, content, and competencies to create curriculum coherence. Previously the CDC Model has been used to analyse the constitution of *disciplinary knowledge* (e.g., Rata & McPhail, 2020). However, my adaptation also allows the CDC Model to be applied to analysing *sociocultural knowledge* (see Chapter Seven).

By drawing on the four elements included in the CDC Model and the method of critical discourse analysis, I formulate a *Four-Dimensional Analytic Schema* (see Chapter Seven) to research the two curriculum policies in three phases (see *Figure 2.2* below). To make the research procedures transparent, I describe the detailed work in each of the three phases included in Stage Two of critical policy methodology in the following paragraphs.

The First Phase:
Familiarisation with the two policies and translation into English

The Second Phase: using the *Four-Dimensional Analytic Schema* to conduct textual and intertextual critical discourse analysis of the two policies.

The Third Phase:
reporting the findings
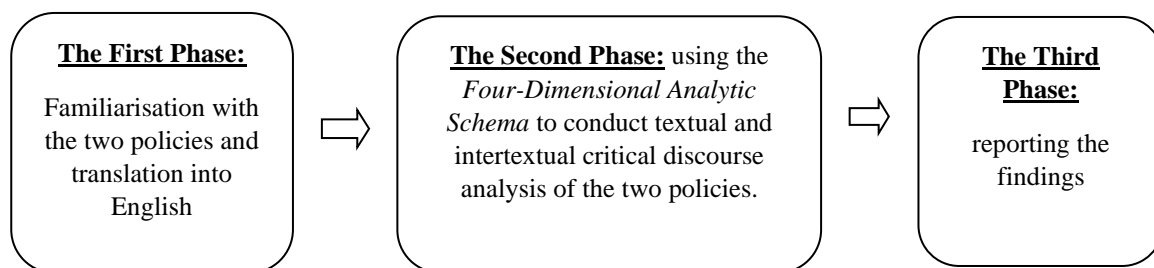
Figure 2.2 Three phases included in Stage Two of critical policy methodology

The first phase of Stage Two

How did I familiarise myself with the depth and breadth of the content of the policies? I not only focused on reading the two curriculum policies carefully numerous times but also turned to other relevant policies for reference and comparison. My investigation took the narratives of

the two curriculum policies as the primary focus and that of other official documents as supplementary. My rationale followed Dey (1993), who suggests that researchers should conduct a comprehensive review of the entire relevant data, though the data may lack consistent structure due to their complexity and their varied formats. My logic was also in line with Braun and Clarke (2006), who argue that the entire qualitative data should be read through at least once before being coded, sorted, synthesised, and analysed.

How did I translate the two policies from Chinese into English? My translation was conducted systemically and logically. First, for the policy terms or items with unclear or ambiguous connotations or denotations, I turned to relevant sister policies, official governmental discourses, or scholarly narratives for references. Upon completion, the translation manuscripts were put into Grammarly (an online autonomic proofreading tool) for grammatical checks and then sent to a professional bilingual (Chinese-English) translator for proofreading. After that, I had a discussion of the English translation with my two supervisors who are both native English speakers to reduce the likelihood of misunderstanding, ambiguities, and mistakes within the translation. My position as a Chinese language *insider* gives me the advantage of understanding the policies and my familiarisation with the policy texts enhances the quality and accuracy of my translation.

The second phase of Stage Two

How did I analyse the curriculum policies? I formulated a *Four-Dimensional Analytic Schema* by drawing on the CDC Model (see above) and used the schema to conduct a textual and intertextual critical discourse analysis of the two curriculum policies after their English translations were completed. The analytic schema includes four dimensions, referring respectively to *policy propositions* (what discourses contained in the two policies state the knowledge focus of the Chinese Language subject and how), *subject concepts* (what discourses

contained in the two policies address the meaning of the subject knowledge included in the Chinese Language curriculum and how), *subject content* (what discourses contained in the two policies prescribe the lesson materials used for teaching the subject knowledge and how), and *subject competencies* (what discourses contained in the two policies recognise the competencies in teaching and learning the Chinese Language curriculum and how). In this way, I moved from a context-based to a context-independent analysis and theorisation of the empirical policy analysis findings by applying the theoretical concepts included in the *Four-Dimensional Analytic Schema* as both investigative and explanatory tools (Maton & Chen, 2016; McPhail & Lourie, 2017). My rationale follows McPhail and Lourie (2017) who argue that conceptual tools help researchers to generalise and universalise empirical research findings into a more in-depth sociological inquiry, in this case, about how the underlying political discourses influence curriculum policymaking.

The third phase of Stage Two

How do I report the empirical findings of the policy analysis? I report on the policy study once the conceptual, critical discourse analysis has been completed. The results are found in Chapter Seven. I provide detailed accounts of the policy analysis findings in a bid to answer the third research sub-question: "In what ways are the core socialist values recontextualised into China's contemporary curriculum policies?"

2.2.3 The third stage: conducting empirical studies to examine the policy operation in practice

Stage Three is an empirical study using two data sources: class observations and teacher interviews. The aim was to investigate to what extent and how the government's core socialist values have been recontextualised in the real-world pedagogical context.

Research Sampling

The research participants I observed and then interviewed are six native Chinese language teachers who teach the Chinese Language curriculum at a senior high school in China. At the time, two of them taught at Grade One (Year 10), two at Grade Two (Year 11), and two at Grade Three (Year 12). In this way, the study provides an overview of the senior high school curriculum practices because China's senior high school system consists of three academic 'Years', or 'Grades', Year 10 to Year 12. The participants were recruited using the following four criteria.

- having at least five years' experience teaching Chinese language

- holding at least a bachelor's degree in Chinese language teaching

- having attended teacher training on the two curriculum policies

- having agreed to be observed in class and being interviewed after class

These six teachers were all recruited according to the ethical requirements of The University of Auckland. The ethics committee of The University of Auckland approved this research in December 2018 (see Appendix G).

I chose a particular senior high school in China as the research site. The reason was that the school has been rated as an advanced school at the provincial level in promoting the national senior high school curriculum reforms which began in 2013. The school has also been a curriculum pilot pioneer school, taking the lead in adopting the two policies (the *Plan* and the *Standard*) that I analyse.

I chose the Chinese Language curriculum as the research object for two reasons. First, existing literature argues that the Chinese Language curriculum holds a strategic position in transmitting and promoting the government's core socialist values (Ding, 2017; Lin, 2016; Ma, 2017; Xie,

2019). Second, special official attention has been given to this subject with respect to ideological education in China. Since 2019, China's Ministry of Education has required teachers who teach the subjects of Chinese Language, History, and Thought and Politics[10] throughout the senior high schools in China to use nationally prescribed textbooks for the three subjects (MoE, 2019). The government's official policy describes explicitly that the Chinese Language textbooks are scrupulously written in line with the two curriculum policies, the *Plan* and the *Standard* (see Chapter One), which I analyse in Stage Two (MoE, 2019).

It may be, given the nature of the Chinese Language subject, that my findings are atypical when compared to other subjects such as the sciences where sociocultural knowledge is less likely to affect curriculum content. As I note in the 'Suggestions for further research' section in Chapter Ten, that is work waiting to be carried out to complement the findings of this research.

Class observations

Class observations were conducted upon completion of the participant recruitment and the curriculum policy analysis. Permission was obtained from the head of the senior high school as well as from the six participants. I made digital audio recordings, and took notes, of a total of six periods of Chinese language classes (one period with each of the six teachers), with each period lasting 40 minutes.

I drew on the four elements of the CDC Model (see above) to design a *Six-Dimensional Analytic Schema* (see Chapter Eight) to analyse and theorise the empirical class observation data. I adapted the four elements of the CDC Model (propositions, concepts, content, and competencies) into 'lesson propositions' (the focus of the lesson knowledge), 'lesson concepts' (what the lesson knowledge means), 'lesson content' (what the lesson knowledge actually is),

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[10] This refers to 思想政治 (Sixiang Zhengzhi) in Chinese, a subject included in China's senior high school programme. It is similar to the subject of Citizenship Education in the West. Its major subject content includes 'economy and economic life', 'politics and political life', 'culture and cultural life', and 'society and social life'.

and 'lesson competencies' (what can be done by students learning and using the lesson concepts and content). I also added two dimensions – *lesson pedagogy* (the pedagogic approaches taken by the teachers to teach the lesson concepts and content), and *student participation* (the contributions made by the students to the observed classes, e.g., the views generated from student discussions and student group work in the observed classes). When I analysed the 'lesson pedagogy' embedded in the data, I also drew on the theoretical concepts of *facilitation teaching* and *instructional teaching* from the literature (Rata, 2017) in a bid to facilitate the analysis and elucidate the conceptualisation of the mechanisms of recontextualisation in relation to the dimension of *teaching pedagogy* (see Chapter Eight).

I refer to the CDC Model in creating the *Six-Dimensional Analytic Schema* for four reasons. First, as I have explained above, the CDC Model has proven to be effective in its application as a curriculum design tool (Rata & McPhail, 2020; Rata, 2021). Second, as I have mentioned above, the model takes *knowledge* as its focus, and knowledge is the most common carrier of pedagogic discourses which produces, *recontextualises*, and reproduces divergent social ideologies, especially those of the ruling class (Bernstein, 2000, 2003). Third, the theoretical concepts underpinning the four elements of the CDC Model provide me with conceptual tools to analyse, theorise, and explain the empirical class observation data (Maton & Chen, 2016; McPhail & Lourie, 2017). Fourth, the CDC Model is operable in the actual analysis, seen particularly in that the four elements provide the means to classify these data. In Chapter Eight, I explain in detail how the *Six-Dimensional Analytic Schema* was created, and then used to analyse and explain these data.

Teacher Interviews

The interviews with each of the six teacher participants were conducted on the same day after the observation of the class. This was to ensure that each of the participants could readily recall

the lesson. The interviews were semi-structured, including eleven questions organised into three categories (see Appendix F). Questions in the first category are related to the government's core socialist values, exploring teachers' familiarity with and understanding of the values, and their perceptions of the role that the values play in contemporary Chinese society. Questions in the second category are based on the empirical findings of the analysis of the two curriculum policies at Stage Two, investigating how the six teachers understand the role of the Chinese Language programme and how they view the key terms, such as *three strands of culture*[11] and *four core competencies*[12] repeatedly highlighted by the two curriculum policies. These questions in the second category were designed to "establish a benchmark" for the policy analysis at Stage Two (Sit & Chen, 2010, p. 486). Questions in the third category are linked to the class observations, examining the teachers' comments or reflections on the classes that were observed, and anything else that they wanted to add to the interview.

The interviews were a vital part of the research, enabling me to investigate the six teachers' "perceptions, meaning, and definitions of situations and constructions of reality" about the core socialist values (Punch, 2009, p. 144). I conducted individual face-to-face interviews with the six teacher participants, each lasting approximately one hour. I held the interviews in a private library meeting room at the senior high school. All the conversations were in Chinese in a bid to avoid any possible ambiguities or misunderstanding and at the same time to enable the participants to share more in-depth views by using their mother tongue. Furthermore, conducting interviews in Chinese allowed me, a Chinese researcher, to "take advantage of [my] linguistic ability and cultural awareness" in the empirical investigations (Sit, 2012, p. 32). I

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[11] The three strands of culture referred to are (i) fine traditional Chinese culture, (ii) revolutionary culture, and (iii) advanced socialist culture (MoE, 2018b, p. 9, my translation).

[12] The four core competencies referred to are (i) acquisition of the Chinese language, (ii) development of the Chinese way of thinking, (iii) cultivation of appreciation and love of Chinese culture through developing aesthetic dispositions, attitudes, and values, and (iv) development of enthusiasm to understand, inherit, and transmit Chinese culture (MoE, 2018b, p. 4, my translation).

made digital audio recordings of all the interviews, with the consent of the six participants, which I transcribed verbatim. I then sent copies of the original transcripts, along with English translations, to the six participants so that they could identify any researcher assumptions or biases (Maxwell, 1996).

After all the empirical data had been prepared, I used thematic analysis as the research method for analysing the teacher interview data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; King, 2004; Nowell et al., 2017). In this process, I also referred to the concepts contained in the theoretical framework created at Stage One, and the theoretical concepts and dimensions embedded in the *Four-Dimensional Analytic Schema* designed for curriculum policy analysis and the *Six-Dimensional Analytic Schema* created for class observation analysis. I utilised these concepts and dimensions for two reasons. First, they help to capture and categorise the semantic themes embedded in the teacher interview data because the interview questions were designed with reference to these concepts and dimensions. Second, the use of these concepts and dimensions enables me to theorise and explain the semantic themes included in the data in a context-independent conceptual way. The account of this investigation of teacher interviews is provided in Chapter Nine. Stage Three (conducting empirical studies to examine the policy operation in practice) aims to answer the fourth research sub-question: "In what ways, and to what extent, are the core socialist values recontextualised into the curriculum policy practices?"

2.3 Correspondence Between the Research Questions and the Methodological Stages

Rata's (2014) *Three Stages of Critical Policy Methodology* is used to verify and illustrate the research argument by answering the research questions. The correspondence between the research questions and the methodological stages is shown in *Figure 2.3* below.

Research questions	Data collection	Stage
Why does the Chinese government promulgate the core socialist values in contemporary society? (The first research sub-question)	literature/ policy analysis	Stage One Stage Two
In what ways has the Chinese government created the core socialist values? (The second research sub-question)	literature/ teacher interviews	Stage One Stage Three
In what ways are the core socialist values recontextualised into China's contemporary curriculum policies? (The third research sub-question)	literature/ policy analysis	Stage One Stage Two
In what ways, and to what extent, are the core socialist values recontextualised into the curriculum policy practices? (The fourth research sub-question)	literature/class observations/teacher interviews	Stage One Stage Three
Why, and in what ways, does China's contemporary education system include the core socialist values promulgated by the Chinese government since 2012? (The overarching research question)	all the above	all three

Figure 2.3 The correspondence between the research questions and the methodological stages

2.4 Trustworthiness

Research needs to be recognised as legitimate and trustworthy so that it is meaningful and valuable to the field of knowledge production (Nowell et al., 2017). Corbin and Strauss (2008) argue that credibility, rather than validity and reliability, is a more appropriate term in qualitative research as it "indicates that findings are trustworthy and believable in that they reflect the participants', researchers', and readers' experiences with a phenomenon" (p. 302). I argue that my findings meet this criterion for trustworthiness and credibility for a number of reasons.

First, the concepts that I use to understand, analyse, and theorise the empirical phenomena are all from the discipline of sociology of education; they have been consistently developed and scrutinised over time as reliable theoretical tools (McPhail & Lourie, 2017). The utilisation of theoretical concepts also frees my study from a limited interpretive explanation and analysis of

curriculum policies and practices only (Lourie & Rata, 2017). Instead, the research becomes a more in-depth sociological inquiry about how global and domestic socioeconomic forces and ideologies are legitimatised and enforced through local curriculum policies and practices (McPhail & Lourie, 2017; Rata, 2014).

Second, the theoretical framework created in this research is likely to be trustworthy and credible because its creation was guided by cognisance of the three disciplinary concepts of *collective representations*, *ideology*, and *recontextualisation* (see Chapter Three). The theoretical framework offers both methodological and explanatory tools to explore, examine, and conceptualise the in-depth causes and processes *obscured* within the connections between the various social phenomena under investigation (McPhail & Lourie, 2017). In my research, these phenomena include the Chinese government's ascendant ideals of the core socialist values, its newly reformed curriculum policies, and the subsequent policy practices.

Third, the research is reliable because the methodological framework is trustworthy. Rata's (2014) *Three Stages of Critical Policy Methodology* is feasible and dependable because other researchers have adopted it to analyse the curriculum policies and practices of different countries on a global scale (e.g., Cunningham, 2019; Parekh & Brown, 2019; St. Clair, 2016). Moreover, the methodological schemas, including the *Four-Dimensional Analytic Schema* (see above) designed for curriculum policy analysis, and the *Six-Dimensional Analytic Schema* (see above) used for empirical class observation data analysis, are reliable because they are developed based on the CDC Model (McPhail, 2020a; Rata & McPhail, 2020; Rata, 2019, 2021). The CDC Model is underpinned by sociological concepts such as *disciplinary knowledge*, *instructional teaching*, and *conceptual progression*, and contains comprehensive epistemic dimensions and specific disciplinary procedures with respect to curriculum design and development (McPhail, 2020a; Rata & McPhail, 2020; Rata, 2019, 2021, I have explained and used these concepts in Chapter Seven).

Last but not least, all the theoretical, methodological, and analytical research information, such as policy translations, participant recruitment, data collection, empirical data analysis, data theorisation procedures, and critical policy analysis methods, is provided in detail to provide readers with an *audit trail* of this study (Koch, 1994; Nowell et al., 2017; Sandelowski, 1986). In this way, the research is reliable because a study becomes trustworthy and credible when readers or other researchers can understand how and why decisions are made through the evidence provided in the research (Bryman, 2004; Koch, 1994).

2.5 Ethical Considerations

The primary ethical consideration for the empirical investigations of classroom observations and teacher interviews was how to ensure the informed consent of the teacher participants was obtained, and how to protect their identity in the reporting of the study. To ensure that participants joined the research voluntarily and gave informed consent, I first asked the head of the research school to read the Participant Information Sheet [PIS] (see Appendix C) and to sign the Consent Form [CF] (see Appendix D). After the research permission was given by the school head, I then asked the secretary of the school head to send out an initial email invitation to around 40 academic staff teaching the Chinese Language curriculum at the school. All the documents, including the invitation email for participant recruitment (see Appendix E) and the PIS and CF for teachers (see Appendices A and B), were attached to the invitation email. Since there is no power relationship between the secretary and the participants, it was anticipated that the teachers would not feel coerced to participate in the study, or worry that their participation could have any negative consequences in relation to their employment. Any interested participants were invited to contact me directly. To further ensure the research participation was entirely voluntary, I also asked the school head to sign an agreement, stating that the employment of the participants would not be affected in any way, even though the school head was unlikely to know who would be participating.

The identities of the participants are protected as their personal information (name, gender, teacher ID number) is not mentioned in this thesis. I use pseudonyms (Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, Rachel, John, and Jean) for the six teacher participants. Moreover, I informed the participants in the PIS and the CF that the data collected before reporting in the thesis would only be read by themselves (for checking the transcriptions), my supervisors, and myself (for the study).

2.6 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has provided a detailed introduction to the research design and implementation. It has described the realist approach taken in this study, with the selection of the three *best-fit* theoretical concepts of *collective representations* (Durkheim, 2001[1912]), *ideology* (Althusser, 2001), and *recontextualisation* (Bernstein, 2000) which serve as both methodological and explanatory tools in the development of the thesis argument and research questions. I have also provided a comprehensive explanation of how Rata's (2014) *Three Stages of Critical Policy Methodology* has allowed me to connect the conceptually developed argument to the empirical work at each of the three stages and how research at each of the three methodological stages was conducted to answer the research questions and verify the research argument.

The next chapter introduces the three key theoretical concepts of Durkheim's *collective representations* (2001[1912]), Althusser's *ideology* (2001), and Bernstein's *recontextualisation* (2000) that comprise the heart of the theoretical framework that I created for the research. The following chapter not only justifies why the three concepts are apposite for use in this research, but also explains how the concepts align with each other and help to form the theoretical framework that is then used to understand, theorise, and explain the connections between the government's ideology of market socialism, its ascendant ideals of the core socialist values, the newly-reformed curriculum policies, and the subsequent policy practices.

CHAPTER THREE

CONCEPTUAL TOOLS

In the preceding chapter, I described the conceptual methodology that enables me to take a realist approach to the research. I also discussed Rata's (2014) *Three Stages of Critical Policy Methodology* that I use to link the conceptual methodology to the empirical data: constructing a conceptual framework at the first stage, using the framework to analyse policy at the second stage, and conducting an examination of the operation of policy practice at the final stage.

This chapter provides a detailed account of the three key sociological concepts that I use as analytical tools in the conceptual methodology. They are Durkheim's *collective representations* (2001[1912]), Althusser's *ideology* (2001), and Bernstein's *recontextualisation* (2000). I explain how the three concepts enable me to construct a conceptual framework to understand and theorise the connections between the Chinese government's ideology of market socialism, its ascendant ideals of the core socialist values developed since 2012, and China's current senior high school curriculum reforms that began in 2013.

In the following sections, I explain and elaborate each of the three concepts in turn, justifying why they are apposite for use in this study, and how they assist me in making the connections between data and theory. I also introduce them at this point so that the reader will be familiar with them when they are utilised in the subsequent chapters of the thesis.

3.1 Collective Representations

Emile Durkheim's "collective representations" (2001[1912], p. 18) is the first conceptual tool that I use in this study. It is an apposite concept that enables me to understand and theorise the Chinese government's efforts since 2012 to produce and promote the core socialist values as a

symbolic method to develop what I theorise *socialist collective representations* for contemporary Chinese society. The term *collective representations* refers to the collective ideas, values, and sentiments produced by "a vast cooperative effort" of each individual and through which social and personal consciousness is developed and regulated collectively (Durkheim, 2001[1912], p. 18). It is a sociological concept providing an essential conceptual means to examine the ways the external world is known and understood by the individual, and in turn, regulates the individual (Marková, 2015). Because this concept is central to my research, I provide a long quote by Durkheim (2001[1912]):

> Man is twofold. Within him are two beings: an individual being that originates in the organism and whose sphere of action is strictly limited by this fact; and a social being that separates within us the higher reality of the intellectual and moral order that I know through observation – by which I mean society. […] To live, society needs not only a degree of moral conformity but a minimum of logical conformity as well. Therefore, to prevent dissident views it leans on its members with all the weight of its authority. What happens when a mind openly departs from these norms of all thought? Society no longer considers that mind human in the full sense of the word, and treats it accordingly. This is why when we try, even deep inside ourselves, to shake off these fundamental notions, we feel that we are not completely free, that something resists us; but further, since society is also represented inside us, it sets itself against these revolutionary impulses from within. We have the feeling that if we abandon these constraints, our thought will cease to be truly human. This seems to be the origin of the very special authority inherent in reason that makes us confidently accept its suggestions. This is the authority of society colouring certain ways of thinking that are the indispensable conditions of all common action (pp. 18-19).

Collective representations are nonmaterial "social facts" that primarily produce social life for individuals (Durkheim, 1982[1895], p. 50). Durkheim (1982[1895]) suggests that the research foci for researchers in the field of sociology should be social facts, consisting of (i) material facts like social structures, national or regional demographics and (ii) nonmaterial facts such as political rationality, conscience, and social values. Collective representations, as nonmaterial social facts, are common throughout a particular society and external to and not affiliated with any specific individual (Durkheim, 1982[1895]). Durkheim (2001[1912]) further explains that:

> If [collective representations] are common to a whole social group, this is not because they represent a simple average among corresponding individual representations; for then they would be poorer than these [individual representations] in intellectual content, while in reality they are rich with a knowledge that surpasses that of the average individual. They are not abstractions that would have reality only in particular minds but representations every bit as concrete as those that the individual can construct from his personal surroundings: they correspond to the way in which that special entity, society, thinks about the things from its own experience (Durkheim, 2001[1912], p. 330).

Collective representations enjoy more stability than individual representations and are common to everyone because they are "the work of the community" which creates them (Durkheim, 2001[1912], p. 329). As Durkheim (2001[1912]) further explains:

> [collective representation] does not bear the imprint of any particular intelligence, since it is elaborated by a unique intelligence in which all others meet and come, in some sense, to nourish themselves. If it has more stability than sensations or images, this is because collective representations are more stable than individual representations. For while the individual is sensitive even to slight changes in his internal or external surroundings, only events of sufficient importance can manage to affect society's mental position (p. 329).

Collective representations then are the product of the "collective consciousness" (Durkheim, 2001[1912], p. 339), a term which Durkheim uses to refer to "the highest form of psychic life" (Durkheim, 2001[1912], p. 339), the mental or cognitive activity of society itself. Durkheim also explores the relation between collective representations and human consciousness:

> It is not surprising that social times, social space, social classes, and collective causality are at the basis of corresponding categories, since it is in their social forms that different relations were grasped for the first time with any clarity by human consciousness (2001[1912], p. 339).

Collective representations provide various collective concepts, images, systems of meaning, and objects for humans to think about and to think with. As pointed out by Durkheim (2001[1912]), "every time we are in the presence of a type of thought or action that uniformly imposes itself on particular wills or intellects, that pressure exerted on the individual discloses the intervention of the collectivity" (p. 329). In this way, collective representations enable society to bring each of its members together, which in turn guarantees society's existence and overall cohesion. As explained by Durkheim:

> Solely because society exists, there also exists – outside of individual sensations and images – a whole system of representations that enjoy marvellous properties. Through them, men understand one another, intellects can intermingle. These representations have a kind of force, a moral ascendancy by virtue of which they affect particular minds (2001[1912], p. 332).

In summary, collective representations are the convergent properties of ideas within a society which are relatively stable. They can present the collective consciousness of individuals within a society, and in turn, regulate the thinking of individuals within that society. Collective representations can display the relatively stable assembled characteristics of a community or

society within a specific time and space because they are "the product of a vast cooperative effort that extends not only through space but over time" (Durkheim, 2001[1912], p. 18).

Durkheim's idea of *collective representations* is an apposite sociological concept which enables me to understand and theorise the Chinese government's efforts to promote and uphold the core socialist values as a way to create and develop *socialist collective representations* for contemporary Chinese society. These values have been proposed and upheld by the government since 2012 and they capture and normalise the essence of China's social values system in the current period of market socialism (NPC, 2012). I use the term *socialist collective representations* to theorise the intent, practice, and effects of the core socialist values; my theorisation follows Durkheim (2001[1912]) who argues that collective representations of society can convey its sense of an impersonal "consciousness of consciousnesses" (p. 339). The core socialist values produced by the Chinese government do offer multiple socialist ideas, thoughts, images, and systems of meaning which help to regulate and influence the thinking and being of individuals, and thus "guide social trends of thought and forge public consensus" (NPC, 2012, n.p., translated by China Academy of Translation). My theorisation is also in accord with Brown (2015) who indicates that any ascendant political rationality, in Durkheim's words, the rising collective representations, will bring "new subjects, conduct, relations, and worlds into being" (p. 36).

Why is the Chinese government making the core socialist values ascendant norms in the contemporary period? I argue that the purpose of the government is to enable the values to perform the role of *socialist collective representations* for contemporary society. I claim that the government is doing so because its earlier socialist collective representations have been weakened and undermined by the country's increasingly pervasive social orientation towards individualistic and materialistic values in the period of market socialism (see Chapters Four and Five). The government's efforts in promoting and upholding the core socialist values help

to develop and strengthen socialist collective representations, and thus improve and consolidate its ruling ideology of market socialism during the period of the socialist market economy. This argument links to my second conceptual tool – ideology.

3.2 Ideology

Althusser's (2001) concept of "ideology" (p. 106) provides the second conceptual tool for the research. It is an apposite sociological concept which helps me connect the government's ascendant ideals of the core socialist values to its ruling ideology of market socialism. Althusser (2001) conceptualises ideology as a structured "configuration" (p. 119) hidden deep in the thoughts and consciousness of individuals, which allows a "ruling ideology" (p. 112), often that of the ruling class, to be realised through "Ideological State Apparatuses" [ISAs] (p. 106). According to Althusser (2001), ISAs appear to observers in the form of "distinct and specialised institutions":

> we can for the moment regard the following institutions as Ideological State Apparatuses (the order in which I have listed them has no particular significance):
>
> the religious ISA (the system of the different churches),
>
> the educational ISA (the system of the different public and private 'schools'),
>
> the family ISA,
>
> the legal ISA,
>
> the political ISA (the political system, including the different parties),
>
> the trade union ISA,
>
> the communications ISA (press, radio and television, etc.),
>
> the cultural ISA (literature, the arts, sports, etc.) (p. 96).

Althusser (2001) points out that his concept of ISAs is a development of Marx's idea of "State Apparatus" (p. 94) which regards institutions such as the Government, the Army, the Police, the Courts, and the Prisons, as the *State Apparatus*. Althusser (2001) further suggests that Marx's concept of *State Apparatus* appears singular because institutions such as the Military, the Courts, the Police, the Prisons that form the *State Apparatus* are under the unified command of the ruling class even though they appear to be plural. However, the concept of ISAs is presented in plurality because different ISAs are carriers of divergent ideologies (Yu, 2004). Althusser (2001) elaborates that "even presupposing that [a unified ISA] exists, the unity that constitutes this plurality of ISAs as a body is not immediately visible" (p. 97).

Althusser (2001) suggests that his concept of ISAs is developed under the influence of Gramsci whose ideas help to connect ISAs to the "private domain" (p. 97). This is because churches, organisations, families, some schools, cultural ventures, books, most newspapers where ISAs appear inconspicuously and implicitly, are private. As he (2001) explains,

> someone is bound to [ask] me by what right I regard as Ideological *State* Apparatuses, institutions which for the most part do not possess public status, but are quite simply *private* institutions. As a conscious Marxist, Gramsci already forestalled this objection in one sentence. The distinction between the public and the private is a distinction internal to bourgeois law, and valid in the (subordinate) domains in which bourgeois law exercises its 'authority'. The domain of the State escapes it because the latter is 'above the law': the State, which is the State *of* the ruling class, is neither public nor private; on the contrary, it is the precondition for any distinction between public and private (italics in the original text, p. 97).

Although different ISAs carry divergent ideologies, there is one "Dominant Ideological State Apparatus" [DISA], enabling a ruling ideology to perform its vital role in the unity of a state

(Althusser, 2001, p. 102). In Althusser's (2001) theoretical context, the ruling ideology that is carried by the DISA refers to the ideology of the class that holds state power in most instances. Althusser (2001) claims that the control over the DISA that works for a ruling ideology is vital because "no class can hold State power over a long period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over and in the State Ideological Apparatuses" (p. 99).

In my research, I argue that the Chinese government's ruling ideology of *market socialism* is becoming pervasive in the form of the core socialist values developed since 2012. Significantly, China's education system plays the role of the *Dominant Ideological State Apparatus* in transmitting and reproducing these ideological values. In doing so, the Chinese government is able to use the core socialist values to develop and strengthen what I term *socialist collective representations* in the period of the socialist market economy, and thus consolidate its ruling *ideology* of *market socialism*. My discussion is also in line with Althusser's (2001) argument that the ruling ideology, because of its supremacy over the others, plays a crucial role in alleviating any potential contradictions or conflicts when it is incompatible with, or contrary to, the other ideologies carried by different *Ideological State Apparatuses*. For instance, Althusser (2001) describes how, in the Middle Ages, Christian belief was the ruling ideology. The Church, as the *Dominant Ideological State Apparatus*, had a central role in mitigating the conflicts caused by differing secular ideologies held by the monarchy and the military.

Significantly, for this study, which focusses on education, Althusser (2001) claims that education has become the *Dominant Ideological State Apparatus* in modern secular society: "I believe that the Ideological State Apparatus which has been installed in the *dominant* position in mature capitalist social formations is the *educational ideological apparatus"* (original italics, p. 22). This is because education, as a *Dominant Ideological State Apparatus*, enables the ideology needed for a society's stability to exert an influence on the reproduction of labour-

power necessary for the continuation of any social form (Althusser, 2001). As Althusser explains further:

> The reproduction of labour-power thus reveals as its *sine qua non* not only the reproduction of its 'skills' but also the reproduction of its subjection to the ruling ideology or of the 'practice' of that ideology, with the proviso that it is not enough to say 'not only but also', for it is clear that *it is in the forms and under the forms of ideological subjection that provision is made for the reproduction of the skills of labour power* (italics in the original text, 2001, p. 89).

To summarise, Althusser's concept of *ideology* provides me with an analytical tool to examine in what ways a ruling ideology becomes pervasive and hegemonic through the use of ISAs, especially the DISA. In my thesis, I theorise that the Chinese government's market socialism as its ruling ideology has been dominant in China since the 1970s. The ideology has been incorporated into Chinese society through the market economy reforms led by China's implementation of the national strategy of *Reforming and Opening Up* since 1978. I also argue that the ideology of market socialism has guided the government's ascendant efforts to promulgate the core socialist values and to insert them into the country's education system. The purpose is to utilise education as a *DISA* to embed the values into people's thoughts and behaviours so that they become the country's socialist collective representations in the period of market socialism. In doing so, the government aims to decrease the adverse effects of increased individualism and materialism in contemporary China brought about by the country's development of a socialist market economy, and thus improve its ruling *ideology* of market socialism. My argument is consistent with Yu (2004) who suggests that education has often been the *DISA* in China since ancient times. My argument also links to the third methodological concept *recontextualisation* which provides an analytical tool to examine the mechanisms of how education plays its role as the *DISA* in actual and authentic educational contexts.

3.3 Recontextualisation

Bernstein's (2000) concept of "recontextualisation" (p. 32) provides the third conceptual tool for my research. This sociological concept provides an apposite analytical instrument to examine how the Chinese government's core socialist values, underpinned by its ruling ideology of market socialism, are recontextualised into the country's *Dominant Ideological State Apparatus*, education. This recontextualisation occurs through, and is made visible in, the country's most recent curriculum policies and practices, the key empirical focus of this research.

The concept of *recontextualisation* constitutes a crucial part of Bernstein's theory of pedagogic discourse (Lei & Zhao, 2016). Bernstein (2000, 2013) views education as a symbolic sphere where different consciousnesses are shaped by a large number of discursive communications, processes, and interactions of different pedagogic discourses, such as knowledge, curriculum, educational policies, and classroom teaching. It is precisely through this "complex assemblage of [pedagogic] processes and interactions" that mechanisms which offer "the relay for the distribution, recontextualisation and evaluation of knowledge" are formed (McPhail, 2016b, p. 295). Bernstein's (2000) pedagogic discourse theory explains the mechanisms that comprise these discursive pedagogic discourses and the ways in which they play the role of "a symbolic regulator of consciousness" through performing the functions of "the production, reproduction and transformation of culture" (p. 37).

In contrast to previous research of sociocultural reproduction which treats education as "a carrier of power relations external to education" and therefore does not offer "strong [internal] principles of description of pedagogic agencies, of their discourses, of their pedagogic practices" (Bernstein, 2000, p. 2), Bernstein (2000) argues that an internal analysis of the structure and logic of these pedagogic discourses is much more critical. Therefore, he differentiates the

mechanisms behind discursive pedagogic discourses and explains how they offer "the means whereby external power relations can be carried by [them]" (Bernstein, 2000, p. 3).

Bernstein (2000) proposed three fields within a structure he terms *the pedagogic device*, a mechanism for "the production, reproduction and transformation of culture" (p. 38). The device acts as "a symbolic regulator of consciousness" in a given society (Bernstein, 2000, p. 38). The three fields refer to *the field of production* (discourse creation), *the field of recontextualisation* (discourse transmission), and t*he field of reproduction* (discourse acquisition and evaluation) (Bernstein, 2000). Of the three, the field of recontextualisation which connects the fields of production and reproduction is most useful for my purposes. This field is the site for the alignment (or misalignment) between policy intentions and implementation. My interest is to investigate this recontextualisation field in order to analyse the ways in which, and the extent to which, the educational discourses created in relation to the Chinese government's ascendant ideals of the core socialist values underpinned by its ideology of market socialism are adapted in ways that enable them to be: first, included in the country's curriculum policies, and second, included in such a way as to be implementable. The alignment of these concepts with my empirical analysis is shown in *Figure 3.1*. I then briefly discuss each of the fields of the pedagogic device.

Field of Practice	Form of Regulation	Functions & Processes	Typical Sites	Link to My Research
production	distributive rules	creation/production (new pedagogic discourses are produced and positioned)	universities, research publications, conferences, laboratories	The government's ascendant ideals of the core socialist values underpinned by its ideology of market socialism control the production of the core-socialist-value-led pedagogic discourses
recontextualisation including official recontextualising field [ORF] and pedagogic recontextualising field [PRF]	recontextualising rules	transmission/relocation (pedagogic discourses are selected and transformed into curricula according to dominant recontextualising principles, e.g. constructivism)	curriculum policy, textbooks, review agencies	The core-socialist-value-led pedagogic discourses are recontextualised into China's newly reformed curriculum policies
reproduction	evaluative rules	acquisition/reproduction (pedagogic discourses are recontextualised in pedagogic communications in classrooms, lecture theatres etc.)	classrooms, assessment	The core-socialist-value-led pedagogic discourses are reconceptualised by teachers and recontextualised into their practices in the classroom

Figure 3.1 The arena of the pedagogic device (after Karl Maton and Johan Muller, "A Sociology for the Transmission of Knowledges," in *Language, Knowledge and Pedagogy: Functional Linguistic and Sociological Perspectives*, ed. F. Christie and J. R. Martin (London: Continuum, 2007), 14-33).

3.3.1 Field of production, distributive rules, and creation

The field of production controlled by distributive rules is a place where pedagogic discourses, often in the form of knowledge, are created (produced) (Bernstein, 2003). Distributive rules regulate the distribution of power, knowledge, and ideology through classifying and transmitting different knowledge, ideology, and power to corresponding groups of people (Bernstein, 2003). By means of distributive rules, social classes are maintained; the differences between them are distinguished (Bernstein, 2003). Bernstein (2003) argues that knowledge production happens primarily in the academic field in modern society. The ruling class of a modern state establishes an education system to control the production of pedagogic discourses in a bid to maintain the legitimacy of existing principles through symbol control (Bernstein, 2003). In my research, I argue that the Chinese government's insertion of its core socialist

values into the country's education system enables it to control the field of production so that it can create core-socialist-value-led pedagogic discourses that help to strengthen its ruling ideology of market socialism.

3.3.2 Field of recontextualisation, recontextualising rules, and transmission

Bernstein theorises that within the field of recontextualisation, the recontextualising rules select, relocate, transform, and combine the pedagogic discourses produced in the field of production in a bid to transmit (relocate) them to the field of reproduction (Bernstein, 2003). The field of recontextualisation thus is a field between the fields of production and reproduction and under control of recontextualising rules, logics, or principles, comprising two significant subfields: the "official recontextualising field" [ORF] and the "pedagogic recontextualising field" [PRF] (Bernstein, 2000, p. 32).

Both subfields have their own "recontextualising agents" (Bernstein, 2000, p. 32). The recontextualising agents of the ORF often refer to the government or its agents (Bernstein, 2000, 2003), such as the Ministry of Education at the national level, the Departments of Education at the provincial level, and the Educational Bureaus at the local level in China's context (Lei & Zhao, 2016). These educational institutions are in charge of producing and supervising the implementation of pedagogic discourses that are consistent with the ideology of the central Chinese government (Lei & Zhao, 2016). The recontextualising agents of the PRF include nonofficial educational organisations and personnel as well as private schools, research groups, educational media, journals, publishing houses, and teachers (Bernstein, 2000, 2003).

In the recontextualising processes, agents from the ORF produce pedagogic policies and materials that align with the official ideology (Bernstein, 2000, 2003). In contrast, agents from the PRF create pedagogic discourses, either based on personal understanding of the official

pedagogic discourses (such as where teachers select or create teaching materials for in-class use based on their comprehension of the official curriculum policies, or in opposition to them), or on their individual needs or particular purposes (e.g., the majority of private educational training centres in China design their curricula, often in a bid to improve students' academic performances in examinations, rather than for quality education purposes as addressed in the current official curriculum policies, see in Lu et al., 2019) (Bernstein, 2000, 2003).

Different recontextualising agents in the field of recontextualisation lead to coherence, coincidence, conflict, or competition between the two subfields of the ORF and the PRF (Bernstein, 2000, 2003). When the two subfields align with each other, the official ideology plays a dominant role in recontextualising and reproducing pedagogic discourses (Bernstein, 2000, 2003). When the two subfields are in some degree of tension with each other, and if the PRF has greater autonomy, then the transmission and reproduction of official pedagogic discourses will be weakened, or possibly undermined (Bernstein, 2000, 2003). The existence of the field of recontextualisation enables different recontextualising principles to come into play, meaning that the operation of the education system is not entirely in the hands of the ruling class (Bernstein, 2000, 2003). As McPhail (2016b) points out, "the discourse appropriated in a given educational setting at a particular time is the result of the dynamic interplay between the dominant ideology in the official recontextualising field (ORF) and the relative autonomy of the pedagogic recontextualising field (PRF)" (p. 295). Because of this, the official pedagogic discourses may not be transmitted as expected (Bernstein, 2000, 2003).

My research navigates both subfields of the recontextualising field. I investigated the official recontextualising field in a bid to find out how the Chinese government has recontextualised its core socialist values into China's two curriculum policies, the *Plan* and the *Standard* (see Chapter One), for senior high school Chinese language education. To find illustrations of the research phenomena in action, I also explored the pedagogic recontextualising field through

conducting teacher interviews and class observations to collect empirical data about teachers' conceptualisations and efforts in understanding and promoting the core socialist values in practice.

3.3.3 Field of reproduction, evaluative rules, and acquisition

Evaluative rules dominate the field of reproduction that exists at the level of schools (Bernstein, 2003). This is an arena where recontextualised pedagogic discourses are made real in educational practices, enabling the acquisition (reproduction) of the pedagogic discourses produced in the fields of production and recontextualisation (Bernstein, 2003). An examination of the field of reproduction helps to explore and explain educational practices in answer to questions such as 'what pedagogic discourses are presented by teachers in their educational practices', 'what pedagogic discourses are missing in the classroom', and 'what are the differences between pedagogic discourses used in the classroom and those documented in policies' (Bernstein, 2003). In my research, I investigated the field of reproduction where I collected empirical data from classroom observations and interviews with teachers. I use these empirical data to investigate the mechanisms of how the core-socialist-value-oriented pedagogic discourses created in the field of production were recontextualised into the fields of recontextualisation and reproduction.

To summarise, Bernstein's concept of *recontextualisation* provides a theoretical tool to research "the underlying rules shaping the social construction of pedagogic discourse and its various practices" (Bernstein, 2000, p. 2). I focus on the field of recontextualisation in my thesis because it is a place "where knowledges from production fields are selected, rearranged and transformed to become pedagogic discourse" (Maton, 2014, p. 51). The concept of *recontextualisation* enables me to explore and explain how the government's core socialist values that align with its ruling ideology of market socialism, have been recontextualised into

China's current curriculum policies and practices for senior high school Chinese Language curriculum education.

3.4 Chapter Conclusion

To summarise, this chapter has introduced and elaborated the three key concepts that I use to construct a conceptual framework for my research. In this conceptual methodology, sociological concepts provide the key mechanism for (i) translating data into theoretical explanations, and (ii) using the empirical data as both the means to identify the phenomena to be investigated and the means to illustrate that phenomena. I have elaborated on the three concepts of *collective representations*, *ideology*, and *recontextualisation* and explained how these conceptual tools have enabled me to establish connections between (i) the Chinese government's *ideology* of market socialism, (ii) its ascendant ideals of the core socialist values used to develop what I term *socialist collective representations*, and (iii) the country's current educational reforms which *recontextualise* the core socialist values into subsequent curriculum policies and practices. By using these theoretical concepts, I am able to examine why and in what ways the core socialist values underpinned by the government's ideology of market socialism have been recontextualised into the country's curriculum policies and practices for Chinese language teaching at the senior high school stage.

The next chapter is about the development of market socialism and its influences in China. I use the concept of *ideology* to theorise and explain how the government's economic reforms towards a socialist market economy since the 1970s, have helped to promote its ideology of market socialism, which has resulted in a social trend towards individualistic and materialistic values in contemporary society.

CHAPTER FOUR

MARKET SOCIALISM

In the preceding chapter, I explained and elaborated the three sociological concepts of *collective representations*, *ideology*, and *recontextualisation* that I use to construct a theoretical framework for the research. I also justified why they are apposite for use in my study and how they assist me in establishing connections between the theoretical and the empirical by making the latter as both evidence for identification and illustration of the former in reality.

This chapter is about China's development of market socialism, a socialist political system combined with a market economy, and its effects. The Chinese government, under the overwhelming influence of global capitalism, has conducted a series of economic reforms towards market socialism since the 1970s. These economic reforms changed a planned economy underpinning the country's socialist polity into a socialist market economy, with the market playing a dominating role in resource allocation (Brødsgaard & Rutten, 2017; CGTN, 2019; Harvey, 2007). The establishment of a socialist market economy also enables particular market values to enter the country's economic sphere, such as recognition of individual property, optimisation of business interests, and increased acceptance of the mechanism of free-market competition (Su, 2001). This has the potential to cause a rise in individualism and materialism, a trend also noted in the literature (e.g., Feng & Yang, 2019; Li, 1994; Lin & Shao, 2019; PRCCW, 1991; Shi, 2010; Su, 2001; Xu, 2018). In the following sections, I describe the mechanisms of China's economic reforms towards market socialism and explain how the market values associated with a socialist market economy lead to an increase of individualism and materialism in the economic sphere.

4.1 China's Socialist Market Economy

In this section, I focus on (i) reviewing the history of China's socialist market economy, (ii) investigating the ideology underpinning it, and (iii) examining its essential features. In doing so, I aim to describe the mechanisms of China's economic reforms towards market socialism.

4.1.1 China's socialist market economy: a historical overview

The impact of global capitalism on China began with the country's economic reforms that began in the 1970s. For socialist ideological reasons, from its foundation in 1949, China copied the economic and political systems of the Soviet Union and implemented a planned economy and centralised governance (Brødsgaard & Rutten, 2017). In 1976, a historic shift in the economic system from a planned economy to a market economy was announced by China's leadership under Deng Xiaoping's administration (Brødsgaard & Rutten, 2017). This economic adjustment in 1976 aimed (i) to tackle the political instability caused by both the death of Chairman Mao and the aftermath of the *Cultural Revolution*, and (ii) to cope with the economic stagnation arising from the unstable politics and a planned economic model (Harvey, 2007). The proposed solution was to shift the government's focus on economic development by liberating productive forces (Tang, 2009). Underpinning this economic transformation was the government's resolution to construct a form of *market socialism*, an ideology that would enable China to cross the threshold of the global market as a major player, but to retain a socialist polity at the same time (Deng, 1993).

The government's itinerary of economic adjustment started to be implemented in 1978, marked by the launch of the national strategy of *Reforming and Opening Up*, aiming to promote China's full opening to the outside world. The government initially implemented this strategy in the same year when market allocation, for the first time, was introduced into the country's planned economic system. In 1984, after six years of practising market allocation, the

government officially termed the country's economic system a *socialist commodity economy*, a concept which attempted to support the dominant position of planned allocation but at the same time allowed the market to allocate resources (Deng, 1993).

From 1984 to 1992, the construction of a socialist commodity economy encountered economic difficulties which culminated in the inflationary crisis of 1988 (Brødsgaard & Rutten, 2017). Because of the financial crisis, doubts regarding the commodity economy emerged. These doubts caused a debate about 'the capitalist or socialist genealogy and character'[13] of China's economic reforms (Du, 2012). To lessen the concerns, to further encourage people to accept the new financial system, and to make the country more open to the outside world dominated by capitalism, the government announced a market-oriented economic pattern of a *socialist market economy* at the country's 14th National People's Congress held in 1992. In the following year, the government institutionalised the concept of *socialist market economy*, incorporating it into China's *Constitution* – the fundamental law of China that has the supreme legal authority.

4.1.2 China's socialist market economy: the underpinning ideology

The government's ideological justification for a *socialist market economy* which could allow market allocation instead of rigid centralised planning – although still within a highly centralised economy – is embedded in Deng's essential comments regarding the genealogy of China's economy. According to Deng, "plan and market are merely two mechanisms of resource allocation, and do not signify a delineation between socialism and capitalism; there is planning under capitalism, and market [allocation] under socialism" (Huang, 1991, n.p., translated by Brødsgaard & Rutten, 2017, p. 96). This appeared to resolve the capitalist-

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[13] This concept refers to '姓资姓社' in Chinese.

socialist paradox for China's leaders by seeing the issue as one of resource allocation rather than systems of that allocation.

Deng's comments are embedded in the government's ideological concept of *the primary stage of socialism* proposed at the country's 13th National People's Congress held in 1987, five years prior to the announcement of a *socialist market economy* (NPC, 1987). The concept, underpinned by the ruling ideology of market socialism, proposed that, starting in 1976, China would for some time be in *the primary stage of socialism* where market allocation was employed to unleash the country's overall productive forces (NPC, 1987). The reason for emancipating the country's productive forces and developing the economy, as claimed by the government, was to better build socialism with Chinese characteristics (NPC, 1987). The underpinning philosophy of this idea is Marx's assertion that "the first proletarian revolutions would occur in the most advanced capitalist countries" (Marx, cited in Gurley, 2017, p. 111) because of the ownership of relatively stable and advanced productive forces. However, the consequences of these economic reforms underpinned by the ideology of market socialism were unprecedented and even unforeseen by the government itself. According to Harvey:

> these reforms would not have assumed the significance we now accord to them, nor would China's extraordinary subsequent economic evaluation have taken the path and registered the achievements it did, had there not been significant and seemingly unrelated parallel shifts in the advanced capitalist world with respect to how the world market worked (2007, p. 121).

Moreover, regarding the characteristics of those reforms, Harvey argues that:

> we may never know for sure whether Deng was all along a secret 'capitalist roader' (as Mao has claimed during the Cultural Revolution) or whether the reforms were simply a desperate move to ensure China's economic security and bolster its prestige in the face

of the rising tide of capitalist development in the rest of the East and South-East Asia (2007, p. 120).

The country's socialist market economy now gives the leading role in economic development to market allocation and resource distribution, rather than to government planning (Brødsgaard & Rutten, 2017; CGTN, 2019). The role of a socialist market economy in contemporary Chinese society is becoming increasingly substantial, and the government's ideology of market socialism has been further legitimatised (Zhang, 2020). This is because the shift from a planned economy to a socialist market economy has led to constructive changes in economic and social development. For instance, according to Mao's (1999) research, in the agricultural sphere, collective farming under the unified management of the central government was replaced. Peasants and farmers were given the autonomy to manage what to produce and how to conduct agrarian work. Furthermore, the government no longer implemented a unified price for agricultural production, enabling the market to set the price of goods and services (Mao, 1999). As a result, farmers were willing to produce more than they consumed in a bid to sell their surplus on the open market, which contributed to increasing the country's overall productivity (Mao, 1999). Moreover, in the industrial sphere, for example, the government replaced the central planning of revenue and expenditure in the electric power industry and encouraged the establishment of different electrical power companies who were allowed to operate following market competition mechanisms (Wang, 2018). This change resulted in the overall improvement of the country's total power generation capacity and solved the problem of electric power shortages that had characterised the country's planned economy period (Wang, 2018).

Along with the substantial development of a socialist market economy underpinned by the official ideology of market socialism, a reinterpretation of the country's socialist genealogy has emerged (Harvey, 2007; Huang, 2012a, 2012b; Xie et al., 2013; Xu, 2011). Harvey (2007)

argues that "western [capitalist] theories provided the main input to [China's] economic discourse" (p. 126) in the 1990s, which is marked by the country's official announcement of a socialist market economy in 1992. The government's economic reform shows its "own peculiar path towards 'socialism with Chinese characteristics', or, as some now, prefer to call it, 'privatisation with Chinese characteristics'" (Harvey, 2007, p. 122). The economic adjustment also inevitably fused elements of individualism that characterises capitalist society because the value that underpins a market economy is "*individualism* with individual interest as its starting point and target", rather than "*collectivism* which emphasises the unity of social interest and individual interest, yet the former is superior to the latter" (emphasis added, Su, 2001, p. 5). In the next section, I extend my discussion of these debates about the capitalist and socialist genealogy of China's socialist market economy in terms of its essential features.

4.1.3 China's socialist market economy: the essential features

This section describes the essential features of China's *socialist market economy*, including (i) public ownership, (ii) socialist income distribution system, and (iii) state macroeconomic control (Li, 2010). I also discuss how global capitalism has exerted an influence on China's economic reforms towards market socialism in relation to each of the features.

Public Ownership

Public ownership is the most prominent feature of China's socialist market economy, consisting of state-owned assets, collectively owned enterprises, and the publicly owned shares of mixed enterprises (Li, 2010). They exist alongside substantial private and foreign enterprises (Li, 2010). Public ownership in China's economy is manifested by the dominant proportion of different forms of publicly owned enterprises in the total economic output (Li, 2010). The publicly owned economy controls the lifeline of the national economy and plays a leading role in the country's economic development (Li, 2010). The core of public ownership is that each

member of society equally shares the means of production because the essential goal for operating a publicly owned economy is to seek benefits for everyone (Hu, 2011; Zhu, 2006).

Public ownership in practice, however, turns out to be another story. The government's economic adjustment from a planned economy to a socialist market economy enables the full play of the economic dynamism of multiple ownership (Su, 2001). This has legitimised the existence of privately owned and foreign enterprises in China's market. Since the 1970s, the shares of non-publicly owned enterprises in the market have increased substantially. This is demonstrated in the *cross-ocean dialogue* on the issues of Sino-US trade friction and other related matters between Liu-Xin, the anchor and journalist of China Global Television Network (CGTN) and Trish Regan, the host of American Fox Business Network held in May 2019:

> **Liu Xin:** We would like to define it as socialism with Chinese characteristics, where market forces are expected to play the dominating or the deciding role in the allocation of resources. Basically, we want it to be a market economy but there are some Chinese characteristics, for instance, some state-owned enterprises which are playing an important but increasingly smaller role, maybe, in the economy. And everybody thinks that China's economy is state-owned, everything is state-controlled, everything is state, state, state, but let me tell you, it is not the true picture. If you look at the statistics, for instance, 80% of Chinese employees were employed by private enterprises, 80% of Chinese exports were done by private companies, 65% of technological innovation was achieved, carried out, by private enterprises, some of the largest companies that affect our lives, for instance, some Internet companies or some 5G technology companies, they are private companies. So we are, yes, a socialist economy with Chinese characteristics, but not everything is state-controlled, state-run, it's not like that, we are actually quite mixed, very dynamic and actually very very open as well (CGTN, 2019, n.p.).

Socialist Income Distribution System

The second essential feature of China's socialist market economy is its *socialist income distribution system*. The system says that the predominant distribution mode is "distribution according to one's performance" (Li, 2010, p. 25, translation provided by Baidu Baike[14]). It is claimed to be a socialist principle for distributing the total social products (Li, 2010). That is, under the premise of socialist public ownership of means of production, the total products – after necessary deductions of inputs used for production – are distributed to each according to the quantity and quality of labour provided by individuals to the society (Li, 2010). Li (2010) claims that the socialist income distribution system can reduce the income gaps among individuals compared to other distribution modes underpinned by private ownership of the means of production, such as distribution predominantly based on productive factors or market shares for example.

The socialist income distribution system turns out to be merely an idea rather than a reality in practice (Li, 2010; Xie et al., 2013), for example, Li (2010) claims that there are still substantial income gaps between intellectual and manual workers and between urban and rural areas in China. Xie et al. (2013) suggest that the distribution system has lost a socialist purpose in practice. For instance, "national statistics have shown that average wages for workers in SOEs [state-owned enterprises] are significantly higher than those of private enterprises in general" (explanation added, Xie et al., 2013, p. 445). Moreover, by breaking down the economy into 19 different-value-loaded and varying-skill-involved major sectors, the same outcome is reached – "state ownership appears to be more beneficial for workers in terms of distribution relations" (Xie et al., 2013, p. 445).

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[14] Baibu Baike (百度百科, in Chinese), also called Baidu Encyclopaedia, known as "the world's largest Chinese encyclopaedia", is similar to Wikipedia. It is an open and free online encyclopaedia provided by Baidu company in China.

State Macroeconomic Control

Macroeconomic control is the third essential feature of China's socialist market economy. As a highly developed market economy based on large-scale socialised production, the operation of the economy follows the market law (Li, 2010). That is, in a socialist market economy, crucial decisions – what to produce, how to produce it, what to operate, and how to operate it – are mainly determined by economic entities in the production processes. Nevertheless, the comparatively strong autonomous management of market entities means the relatively free running of the large-scale socialised production (Li, 2010). Thus, driven by profits, market entities may violate the market law in production management; there occurs, in this case, a conflict between the running of large-scale socialised production and the management autonomy of market entities (Li, 2010). Unless the conflict is managed well, it can affect the operation of the entire market economy; this is because such mass socialised production has made each market entity a part of the industrial chains, requiring them to be coordinated for the overall economic profits (Li, 2010). Under such circumstances, the state's macroeconomic control can, to an utmost extent, guarantee large-scale socialised productions, by alleviating its conflict with the free management of market entities; thus, it promotes the coordinated development of the socialist economy (Li, 2010).

There is disagreement in the literature about whether the government's macroeconomic control contributes to achieving socialist goals (e.g., Brødsgaard & Rutten, 2017; Huang, 2012a). Huang argues that China's "central and local Chinese government actions lie at the root of the growing social inequalities" (2012a, p. 591). Brødsgaard and Rutten (2017) also suggest that, compared with the socialist purpose, China's macroeconomic control over its socialist market economy aims to consolidate a centralised polity:

In order to understand how China's continued search for economic growth and modernisation may unfold, it is essential to carefully study the Chinese discourse and identify the various views on how to combine economic modernisation and reform with continued growth in the context of a centralised political order (p. 178).

To summarise, the government has developed the economy through conducting economic reforms towards market socialism but without changing China's socialist polity (Li, 2010; Zhu, 2006). However, the outcome of these economic reforms, the established *socialist market economy*, somehow characterises an unstable form of capitalism in terms of its essential features (Xu, 2011). First, it allows a market mechanism that permits multiple ownership (CGTN, 2019; Su, 2001; Xu, 2011). Second, state ownership is not equivalent to socialism because a significant proportion of state profits is owned by the publicly owned enterprises instead of being distributed to the public in a relatively same schema (Xu, 2011, Xie et al., 2013). These findings are also consistent with Huang who argues that "the big question for China's development is not whether state firms should play a key role, or exist at all, but rather where the profits of state firms are to go" (2012a, p. 622). Therefore, the official ideology of market socialism that underpins China's socialist market economy to a great extent resembles *state capitalism* (Huang, 2012a, 2012b).

The government's incorporation of market allocation into China's planned economy also enabled some market values which heavily influence the regulation of the global capitalist economy to enter China's economic sphere. These influences affected greater recognition of individual property, emphasis on personal interests, increased acceptance of the mechanism of free-market competition, the pursuit of industrial privatisation, as well as a more efficiency-based distribution system (Su, 2001). Commentators attach these influences to the rise of individualism and materialism in contemporary Chinese society (e.g., Feng & Yang, 2019; Li, 1994; Lin & Shao, 2019; PRCCW, 1991; Shi, 2010; Su, 2001; Xu, 2018). In the next section,

I describe the mechanisms in which the values associated with a market economy contribute to the increase of individualism and materialism in China's economic sphere and hence the need for the establishment of the government's core socialist values.

4.2 Market Values, Individualism, and Materialism

In the previous section, I discussed how global capitalism has influenced China's economic reforms towards market socialism by (i) reviewing the history of China's socialist market economy reforms, (ii) examining the government's ideology of *market socialism* underpinning these reforms, and (iii), investigating the essential features of a socialist market economy which is established through these reforms. In this section, I continue my discussion of the influence of global capitalism on China's economic reforms by describing how capitalist values associated with a socialist market economy have the potential to result in a rise in individualism and materialism in the economic sphere. My discussion also reflects the necessity for the Chinese government to develop the core socialist values for contemporary Chinese society.

The implementation of the government's national strategy of *Reforming and Opening Up* underpinned by the ideology of market socialism is considered to be the country's "second revolution" (Feng & Yang, 2019, p. 5, my translation) in the modern period – the first one refers to the revolution for the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. Harvey views this official strategy as a "neoliberal solution" (2007, p. 120) to the country's economic stagnation under a planned economy, marking the beginning of the government's integration of market allocation to form a socialist market economy.

China's socialist market economy is a type of market economy (Brødsgaard & Rutten, 2017; Li, 2010) where the market allocation plays "the dominating or the deciding role" (CGTN, 2019, n.p.). This requires that all factors of production should, according to the relationship between supply and demand, be transformed into commodities capable of being allocated by

the market in a bid to optimise resource allocation (Su, 2001). This also requires that each economic entity, as an independent production and operation unit in the market, should bear its own incomes and losses, make its own profits through exchanges, and freely join in market competitions (Lin & Shao, 2019; Su, 2001). Under such requirements, the production of a socialist market economy has been both individualised and socialised, becoming a process of exchanging individual labour for social labour (Lin & Shao, 2019). In other words, an enterprise's individual labour forms a part of the total social labour. An enterprise, as an independent economic production and operation unit, must transfer its individual labour into social labour through market exchanges in a bid to make profits and to survive the market economy (Lin & Shao, 2019). This makes labour products produced by an individual market entity become "magical" (Marx, 2005[1857], p. 154) only in the form of exchangeable commodities for market exchanges:

> A commodity is therefore a mysterious thing, simply because in it the social character of men's labour appears to them as an objective character stamped upon the product of that labour; because the relation of the producers to the sum total of their own labour is presented to them as a social relation, existing not between themselves, but between the products of their labour. This is the reason why the products of labour become commodities, social things whose qualities are at the same time perceptible and imperceptible by the senses (Marx, 2007[1867], p. 83).

In this way, the fate of commodity producers, economic entities or enterprises, is controlled by commodities because profits are only made through fruitful market exchanges of exchangeable products (Lin & Shao, 2019; Marx, 2005[1857]). Thus the relationship between labourers and their labouring work in a socialist market economy becomes expressed by the relations between different commodities that are interchangeable, resulting in the alienation of labour – the separation of labourers and their labouring products (Lin & Shao, 2019; Marx, 2005[1857]).

This also leads to an increase in market values towards individuality. Economic exchanges are workable only on the premise of the "independence" and "difference" of production conducted by different market entities (Hao & Huang, 2019, p. 13, my translation). Under such conditions, a market economy highlights both the "individuality" of each market entity and the "heterogeneity" among different market entities (Hao & Huang, 2019).

It is also in this process of individual and social labour exchange that the omnipotent role of money, as the exchange medium, is intensified (Marx, 2005[1857]). This is because, at least theoretically, money can exchange with, and measure the value of, all commodities in a market (Marx, 2005[1857]). As explained by Marx,

> We followed up this false appearance to its final establishment, which is complete so soon as the universal equivalent form becomes identified with the bodily form of a particular commodity, and thus crystallised into the money-form. What appears to happen is, not that gold becomes money, in consequence of all other commodities expressing their values in it, but, on the contrary, that all other commodities universally express their values in gold, because it is money. The intermediate steps of the process vanish in the result and leave no trace behind. Commodities find their own value already completely represented, without any initiative on their part, in another commodity existing in company with them. These objects, gold and silver, just as they come out of the bowels of the earth, are forthwith the direct incarnation of all human labour. Hence the magic of money (2007[1867]), p. 105).

In this way, money becomes a symbol of wealth or profits pursued by market entities because it is the measurement of the value of all commodities and the means of circulation capable of purchasing all products (Su, 2001). This further deepens the alienation of labour in a market economy:

Money is the universal, self-constituted value of all things. Hence it has robbed the whole world, the human world as well as nature, of its proper value. Money is the alienated essence of man's labour and life, and this alien essence dominates him as he worships it (Marx, 'On the Jewish Question', cited in Scruton, 2001, p. 216).

In this way, money becomes a symbol of market profits, which stimulates each market entity's desire to work in the pursuit of profits by producing exchangeable commodities for market exchanges in a bid to compensate for costs and to optimise benefits. However, such desires to pursue wealth has the risk of undermining moral codes of life (Su, 2001). It has the danger to turn people into the slaves of money and thus forge a trend towards individualism and materialism:

Money, then, appears as this distorting power both against the individual and against the bonds of society, etc., which claim to be entities in themselves. It transforms fidelity into infidelity, love into hate, hate into love, virtue into vice, vice into virtue, servant into master, master into servant, idiocy into intelligence, and intelligence into idiocy (Marx, 1959[1844], p. 61).

Capital eschews no profit, or very small profit, just as nature was formerly said to abhor a vacuum. With adequate profit, capital is very bold. A certain 10 per cent will ensure its employment anywhere; 20 per cent certain will produce eagerness; 50 per cent, positive audacity; 100 per cent will make it ready to trample on all human laws; 300 per cent, and there is not a crime at which it will scruple, nor a risk it will not run, even to the chance of its owner being hanged (Marx, 2007[1867], p. 834).

William Shakespeare (1564-1616) also describes the social and moral chaos within a society of materialism in his famous play entitled *The Tragedy of Timon of Athens*. According to him,

little of the "yellow, glittering, precious gold" can make "black white, foul fair, wrong right, base noble, old young, coward valiant" (Shakespeare, 1735[1607], p. 43).

Su (2001) summarises the characteristics of a market economy – "it takes individual property and profits as the soul, uses commodity exchange as the tie, regards money or capital as the medium, takes market allocation as the guide, and treats market competition as the driving force" (p. 6, my translation). Su (2001) argues that a market economy, as an autonomous economic operation system, has its own independent "consciousness" and "values" no matter how it is used by what polity (p. 7, my translation). Su (2001) abstracts the *consciousness* and *values* associated with a market economy and encapsulates them into an umbrella term: *individualism* (p. 5, my translation), with specific manifestations as follows:

> A market economy recognises *independent* status, *personal* property, and *individual* profits of each market entity. It encourages each of them to recover the *individual* cost of production and to maximise *personal* market profits through *free-market exchanges*. It regards *free-market exchanges* in the form of *laissez-faire* trading, bargaining, buying, and selling as the best way to make *individual* profits. It advocates a *free market competition mechanism* based on the principle of survival of the fittest in running the market. It advocates an *efficiency-based* distribution system (emphasis added, p. 10, my translation).

These characteristics of a market economy have a shared premise, that is, a normative value applied to private ownership, which is also the source of individualism (Zhou, 2007). That is, private ownership causes everyone to desire personal wealth accumulation. This desire is intensified by money because of its ability to exchange with any commodity and to be stored for a longer time due to its functions such as measurement of value, means of circulation, means of payment, means of storage, and world currency (Su, 2001; Zhou, 2007). Such conditions

theoretically result in a rise of individualism and materialism and an ethical solicitude in those who are overly obsessed with self-material interests, neglecting the interests of others, and the welfare of the society from which they benefit (Su, 2001; Zhou, 2007). This trend towards individualistic and materially-oriented values has also been noticed not only by the Chinese government but also by scholars (e.g., Feng & Yang, 2019; Li, 1994; Lin & Shao, 2019; PRCCW, 1991; Shi, 2010; Su, 2001; Xu, 2018).

4.3 Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explained how global capitalism has exerted an influence on China's socialist market economy reforms since the 1970s underpinned by the official ideology of market socialism. The government aims to build up a socialist market economy that can work compatibly with its socialist political system. However, some capitalist market values associated with a socialist market economy can inevitably and theoretically lead to a rise of individualism and materialism, which is inimical to the country's socialist polity.

In the next chapter, I describe the pervasive manifestations of this rise in individualism and materialism in reality. In doing so, I aim to draw a panorama to show how the rise of individualism and materialism in the economic sphere has crossed the thresholds into other spheres of contemporary Chinese society, the ecological, political, cultural, social, and educational fields.

CHAPTER FIVE

INDIVIDUALISM AND MATERIALISM

In the preceding chapter, I introduced China's economic reforms towards market socialism since the 1970s. I also elucidated how these reforms can theoretically lead to a rise of individualism and materialism in the economic sphere. This chapter continues the discussion of the effects of these reforms. It provides an overview of the manifestations of a rise of individualism and materialism in contemporary Chinese society by elucidating how global capitalism that firstly entered China's economic sphere has exerted an all-pervasive impact on the other spheres – ecological, political, cultural, social, and educational. I deal with each of these spheres in turn below. My explanation is, to some extent, based on Harvey (2007) who argues that China's market socialism reforms have led to "environmental degradation, social inequality, and eventually something that looks uncomfortably like the reconstitution of capitalist class power" (p. 122).

This chapter and the preceding chapter are about the development of market socialism and its effects and current state in China. By introducing this, I explain why, since 2012, the Chinese government has proposed and promoted the core socialist values and embedded them into the education system. I argue that the government aims to foster the values so that they become what I term *socialist collective representations* of modern Chinese society. This helps to revitalise the government's ruling ideology of market socialism by mitigating the increasingly pervasive trend towards individualistic and materialistic values – a social trend that has the potential to undermine the government's socialist values. The two chapters address my first research sub-question: "Why does the Chinese government promulgate the core socialist values in contemporary society?"

5.1 The Ecological Sphere

The most obvious effect of China's market socialism reforms on the ecological sphere is seen in its development logic of what is termed by some commentators as *treatment after pollution* (e.g., Chen et al., 2011; Ju, 2017; Liu, 2015; Su, 2008; Su et al., 2010; Xu, 2016). This refers to the efforts to treat environmental pollution after it has occurred.

It can be argued that China's current environmental management system has internalised this development logic of treatment after pollution. The country's environmental protection law summarises its long-standing and active environmental management systems into 11 provisions (Zhang et al., 2002), of which eight are frequently used in the contemporary period (Mu, 2016). The eight include (i) environmental impact assessment system, (ii) three simultaneity system[15], (iii) environmental pollution castigation system, (iv) environmental protection responsibility system, (v) quantitative assessment system of the urban environment, (vi) pollutant emission permit system, (vii) central pollutant control system, (viii) pollutant periodic rectification system (Mu, 2016). The rationale for the utilisation of the eight systems reflects the country's developmental philosophy of treatment after pollution because more than half of them (ii, iii, vi, vii, viii) presuppose the existence of pollution.

A typical incarnation of this tendency towards the goal of economic growth at the cost of the environment is seen in the country's policies concerning the management of small and medium-sized industries, especially those located in remote regions or the backward prefecture-level cities of China. These industries are believed to be a primary source of environmental pollution in China (Chen et al., 2011; Wang, 2008; Zhang et al., 2002). However,

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[15] The "three-simultaneity" system is the earliest environmental management system introduced in China. It requires industrial enterprises to design, install, and operate pollution prevention facilities in the production processes. The official narrative claims that it is an original Chinese idea and an effective environmental management system with Chinese characteristics based on China's socialist system and construction experience.

these industries cannot be stopped despite their potential to damage the environment, something known from their inception (Zhang et al., 2002). Paramount to the existence of these industries is the all-out support from local and regional governments (Chen et al., 2011; Zhang et al., 2002).

Industry protectionism has been adopted by an increasing number of local governments, especially for those industries that have considerable economic benefits and can bring revenue to local finances and help to solve social problems such as unemployment (Chen et al., 2011; Wang, 2008; Zhang et al., 2002;). Because the central government's evaluation of lower levels of government often focuses on the economy, some local governments are concerned more about short-term economic prosperity than about long-term sustainable economic growth (Chen et al., 2011; Wang, 2008; Xu, 2018). This has further led to some regional governments allowing the existence of grossly pollutive industries or those that overdevelop local resources in exchange for economic growth at the cost of environmental pollution and resources destruction (Wang, 2008).

In addition to governmental protectionism, the individualistic goal of some industrial enterprises, to pursue economic interests for their own sake, also contributes significantly to environmental pollution (Zhang et al., 2002). This is because an enormous investment is needed sometimes for an industrial enterprise to tackle environmental pollution in its industrial processes. For instance, Gao's (2009) research shows that an extra expenditure of CNY215,000 (equivalent to approximate USD30,450) is needed for a dyeing industrial enterprise to remodel a single boiler in a bid to meet the country's air pollutants emission standard. Such a considerable input to pollution treatment becomes the main obstacle for the dyeing industrial enterprise to adopt green or anti-pollution techniques (Gao, 2009; Zhang et al., 2002). Under such conditions, even when there are industrial enterprises that have a sense of ecological responsibility and are willing to invest in pollution treatment, they may face unfair economic

competition and be eliminated from the market by those that do not follow suit, and pursue market profits for their own sake because of long-term and high-cost operations (Wang, 2008).

The rise of materialism and individualism in the industrial circle is merely one of the adverse effects brought about by the government's market socialism reforms in the ecological sphere. Driven by market profits, examples of ecological destruction are not uncommon, such as illegal transactions of rare animals and plants (China Daily, 2018c), real estate developers' uncontrolled development and abuse of land resources, and cancer caused by water resource deterioration because of sewage discharge (Lin & Shao, 2019). Lu (2008) summarises the consequences of infinite exploitation of ecological resources for the pursuit of economic growth as a vicious cycle of "mass production – mass consumption – mass abandonment" (p. 5). Lin and Shao (2019) argue that the primary trigger for these cases lies in the increasing social orientation towards materialism, individualism, and money worship. Influenced by this negative social trend, the endless demand for development for profits has caused environmental damage, resulting in severe ecological deterioration, and ultimately human beings themselves suffering harm (Lin & Shao, 2019).

The increasing ecological problems caused by the rise of individualism and materialism is acknowledged in the ascendant official discourse of a harmonious and sustainable relationship between economic growth, energy conservation, and environmental protection, which is also embedded in the core socialist value of harmony (Luo & Li, 2019; Qin & Zhang, 2020; Qin, 2015; Zhang, 2018; Zhang, 2020). For instance, in his response to a media inquiry regarding ecological pollution, the Former Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao urged governments at all levels to not only focus on economic growth but also take into consideration energy conservation and environmental protection when setting economic development goals (China.com.cn, 2006; Wang, 2008). Chinese President Xi Jinping also points out that "we should have both clear

waters and green mountains because they are as good as mountains of gold and silver"
(China.com.cn., 2019, n.p., my translation, also see in Luo & Li, 2019).

5.2 The Political Sphere

It can be argued that the rise of materialism and individualism brought about by China's market socialism reforms within the context of global capitalism is seen in the increasing number of corruption cases in the political sphere. Research reveals that there has been an expansion in the scale and scope of political corruption (Li, 2018; Sohu.com, 2017; Yang, 2014). For instance, official statistics show that 47,650 officials at all levels were confirmed corrupt in 2016, with more than 70% of them (35,457) being related to money-oriented crimes such as bribery and money laundering (Li, 2018). The number of officials involved in money-oriented corruption is more than 25,000 in 2017 (Sohu.com, 2017) and in excess of 37,800 in 2018 (Zhao, 2019). Another report entitled *Current Situation, Trends, and Governance of Provincial and Ministerial Official Corruption in China (1986-2014)* (Yang, 2014, my translation) shows that in the 28 years from 1986 to 2014, 181 officials at provincial and ministerial or higher levels were exposed for wealth-led corruption. Moreover, an investigation into the corruption of top officials revealed that more than 35 secretaries or deputy secretaries of the Communist Party at the provincial level, the highest or second-highest leader of a province, have been exposed for corruption since the 18th National People's Congress [NPC] held in 2012, of which 91.7% or so were cases of money-oriented political corruption (He, 2020).

The government's recent ascendant discourses also acknowledge this rise of political corruption following the establishment of a socialist market economy. *Corruption*, as a keyword, has been continuously emphasised at the country's five successive NPCs held, until now, every five years from 1997 until 2017. For example, the 15th NPC held in 1997 regards official corruption as the primary threat to the very survival of the Party, the nation, and society:

The fight against corruption is a grave political struggle vital to the very existence of the Party and the state. Our Party can never be daunted and vanquished by any enemy. But the easiest way to capture a fortress is from within, so in no way should we destroy ourselves. If corruption cannot be punished effectively, our Party will lose the support and confidence of the people (NPC, 1997, n.p., translation provided by the Chinese Academy of Translation).

The 16th NPC held in 2002 noted that "the order of the market economy has to be further rectified and standardized. Public order is poor in some places. […] corruption is still conspicuous in some places" (NPC, 2002, n.p., translation provided by the Chinese Academy of Translation). The government has successively shown its commitment to fight against corruption in its 17th, 18th, and 19th NPCs held in 2007, 2012 and 2017 respectively:

The CPC never tolerates corruption or any other negative phenomena. This is determined by its nature and purpose. Resolutely punishing and effectively preventing corruption bears on the popular support for the Party and on its very survival and is therefore a major political task the Party must attend to at all times (NPC, 2007, n.p., translation provided by the Chinese Academy of Translation).

There are a lot of difficulties and problems on our road ahead. […] the fight against corruption remains a serious challenge for us. We must take these difficulties and problems very seriously and work harder to resolve them (NPC, 2012, n.p., translation provided by the Chinese Academy of Translation).

Disciplinary inspections have cut like a blade through corruption and misconduct; they have covered every Party committee in all departments at the central and provincial levels. No place has been out of bounds, no ground left unturned, and no tolerance shown in the

fight against corruption (NPC, 2017, n.p., translation provided by the Chinese Academy of Translation).

Research has explored the factors that cause political corruption (He, 1998; Jia, 2018; Li, 1994). By investigating the narratives of the officially released investigation reports on the cases of official corruption since 2012, Jia (2018) summarises the roots of these corruption crimes into eight main categories. They include (1) power transactions (exchanging power for power or money, see also in Yu & Zhou, 2019), (2) virtue-power mismatch (such as keeping mistresses, see also in Liao et al., 2017), (3) power abuse (using power for personal gains, such as individual recreational activities paid for from public funds, see also in Zhou, 2019), (4) two-faced political behaviours (verbally claiming to be clean and upright but ignoring or committing corruption in action, see also in NPC, 2017), (5) political falsification (such as falsifying or boasting of personal political achievements and contributions, also see in Zhao, 2019), (6) selective execution (fulfiling only part of official duties and obligations, also see in He, 2020), (7) "surrounding hunting" (in Chinese, *weilie*; being surrounded and infected by interest groups or gangland criminal organisations and becoming their prey, also see in He, 2020; Zhao, 2019), and (8) improper relationships (a mild degree of 'surrounding hunting', being bribed by friends, relatives, and people around; such as political family corruption, also see in He, 2020). It can be seen that more than half of these categories (1, 2, 3, 7, 8) are about money-oriented political corruption, which is also the reason why the relevant research argues that "attention should be paid to combating corruption in particular governmental units, such as the departments and bureaus that take charge of intensive funds, resources, and assets (Zhou, 2019, p. 46, my translation).

Existing literature (He, 2020; Li, 1994; PRCCW, 1991; Yu & Zhou, 2019) attributes the increase in political corruption cases to China's market socialism reforms for several reasons. First, China's establishment of a socialist market economy has made individual interests

recognised and therefore resulted in the formation of a triumvirate of the state, society, and individual (Li, 1994). This provides a precondition in relation to the economic system that enables many officials to use their power entrusted to them to maximise individual interests at the expense of national and social ones (Li, 1994). Moreover, although a market system has been established, its supporting systems such as the *Financial Supervision System*, the *Social Credit System* (see Chapter Six), have not yet been completely set up, which provides a condition for political corruption such as power-for-money transaction (Li, 1994; Yu & Zhou, 2019). Furthermore, a socialist market economy addresses market allocation and state macroeconomic control at the same time (see Chapter Four), but it does not clarify the boundary between the two (He, 2020). This has resulted in some officials intervening excessively in the areas such as production, investment, tax, and trade in the name of state macroeconomic control for personal economic benefits (He, 2020). For instance, a study on political corruption carried out by Liao et al. (2017) reveals that real estate developers use economic benefits to bribe government departments in a bid to obtain more official support and to lessen political obstacles in real estate declaration, land approval, and related businesses. All these factors contribute to the "rapid alliance of power and money" (He, 2020, p. 71, my translation), the transactions between money and power, leading to the commodification of power and an increase in political corruption cases (PRCCW, 1991; He, 2020).

It can be argued that China's market economic reforms contribute to the increase of political corruption, which further results in a rise of materialism and individualism in the political sphere. Specifically, a market economy has contributed to the commodification of power towards materialism, which has further intensified individualism, seen in that officials pay more attention to their own gains at the expense of discharging their administrative obligations to the people and society. This argument resonates with the relevant literature (e.g., Dai, 2013; Huntington, 1968; Johnston, 2005; Yu & Zhou, 2019). Huntington (1968) points out in his

analysis of corruption in developing countries that modernisation leads to corruption because modernisation provides economic opportunities for corruption. Following Huntington, Yu and Zhou (2019) suggest that China's transformation from a planned economy to a market economy has opened new sources of wealth and power, represented by the cases of using money to purchase power, or to sell power for wealth. Johnston (2005) argues that in areas where the number of economic opportunities overtakes that of political chances, those ambitious politicians who are lacking in personal financial resources, driven by wealth and money, use their power to pursue wealth. Under such conditions, politics is equated with power, power is equated with benefits, benefits are equated with exchanges, and as a result, power-for-money, power-for-sex, power-for-power deals are naturalised and taken for granted (Dai, 2013).

5.3 The Cultural Sphere

The government's national strategy of *Reforming and Opening Up* in 1978 that was underpinned by its ideology of market socialism is comprehensive – not only in the economic sphere but also in the cultural sphere (Xu, 2018). Former Chinese Leader Deng Xiaoping advocated that "while creating a highly material civilisation, we must raise the scientific and cultural levels of the entire nation, creating a fruitful and colourful cultural life for people, and building up an advanced cultural and spiritual civilisation[16] with socialist characteristics" (Deng, 1993, p. 208, my translation).

The Chinese society before the market socialism reforms was to some degree culturally and spiritually barren. This is because cultural production at that time followed a planned economic route and was thus very prescriptive:

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[16] Cultural and spiritual civilisation refers to the full development of various cultural undertakings such as literature and arts, press and publication, radio and television, health and sports, libraries, and museums, etc.

Here I have some novels written in the period of the Cultural Revolution. I myself do not like reading them because of the dry words, the inadequate writing skills, the loss of artistic and aesthetic elements, and the simple 'knowing the end from the beginning' plots. The movie industry is the same, full of monotonous rather than vivid and exciting themes. I myself refuse to watch movies which are so annoying and boring (Deng, 1975, cited in Leng & Wang, 2004, p. 360, my translation).

The government's resolution to solve this cultural backwardness was to modernise cultural production by introducing market mechanisms into the cultural sphere (Xu, 2018). This is seen in Former Chinese Leader Deng Xiaoping's comments on modernisation, "we must address ourselves to the problem of both material and spiritual civilisation without any letup" (Deng, 1993, p. 25, my translation). However, this has resulted in some negative consequences, seen in the deterioration of local cultural ecology and the marketisation of artistic works and workers (Deng, 1993; Shi, 2010; Sun, 2019; Wang, 2008; Xu, 2018; Jia, 2018).

China's market socialism reforms have unintentionally brought about a deterioration in the country's cultural ecology (Gao, 2007; Jia, 2018; Wang, 2008; Xu, 2018; Yu, 2010). Under a socialist market economy, the central government's evaluation of the performance of the lower levels of government is often attached to economic development (Chen et al., 2011; Wang, 2008; Xu, 2018). This has transformed a large number of local governments into economic constructors rather than cultural developers because cultural and spiritual civilisation is difficult to quantify and evaluate. This creates difficulties for these local governments to express their achievements and contributions, when compared to using economic growth, which provides visible quantitative outcomes (Wang, 2008). As a result, most concerns of local officials about cultural development remain at a symbolic level, referred to "verbally" or "merely in the documents" (Xu, 2018, p. 31, my translation). This further leads to the inadequacy of artistic productions resulting from insufficient official investment in cultural

construction[17] (Xu, 2018). This is also the form of political corruption, selective execution, mentioned above, given that some officials only fulfil administrative duties in certain fields (Jia, 2018). Former Chinese Leader Deng Xiaoping describes this as "one hand is hard but the other soft", referring to the notion that economic development has been accelerated while cultural and spiritual civilisation has been left out (Deng, 1993, p.25, my translation).

What is worse, some local governments, for the pursuit of the materialistic goal of economic growth, have carried out commercial activities in a way that undermines or commercialises cultural production (Gao, 2007; Xu, 2018; Xu, 2011; Yu, 2010). For instance, some regional governments have to an extent demolished local historical heritage and cultural relics, seen in their efforts in reconstructing and commercialising historical sites in a bid to attract more tourists to boost the local economy (Yu, 2010). Some local governments have applied extreme market tactics to invigorate local tourist industries, such as hiring fake Buddhist monks, nuns and Taoists, charging extra money for fortune-telling in some local ancient temples and Taoist mountains, which is often a free service as a cultural and recreational Buddhist or Taoist activity (Xu, 2018).

That the deterioration of the country's cultural ecology has resulted from the market socialism reforms is also seen in the commercialisation of artistic production. Contemporary artistic creation in China is subordinate to commerce, seen in that most goods and services are commercially managed in the name of artistic production (Lu, 2008). For instance, some traditional Chinese festivals such as the Double Seventh Festival (on July 7th, also known as Chinese Valentine's Day), which are essential parts of Chinese culture, have been commercialised as opportunities for sales and promotions (Lu, 2008). Furthermore, driven by

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[17] Cultural construction refers to the development of various artistic undertakings such as literature and art, press and publication, radio and television, health and sports, libraries and museums that play a fundamental role in the country's cultural and spiritual civilisation.

financial profits, merchants and media in China also vigorously promote foreign festivals, notably Valentine's Day and Christmas for commercial exploitation (Lu, 2008). Moreover, Former Chinese Leader Deng Xiaoping (1993) notes that "an unhealthy tendency has spread in the literature and arts productions [...] many artistic works with inferior quality such as pornographic novels were created for making money" (Deng, 1993, p. 43, my translation).

Xu (2018) attaches the commodification and marketisation of artistic works to the country's development of a socialist market economy, arguing that the more market-oriented, the worse the quality of cultural products. What is worse is that authentic artistic works with intense artistry and high aesthetic values may ultimately be supplanted by the inferior (Xu, 2018) according to Gresham's theory of *Law of the Monetary Systems* – bad money drives out good in the market (Gresham, cited in Guy, 2019). Therefore, Lin and Shao (2019) advocate that Chinese cultural workers bear in mind artistic concerns because low-quality works like pornographic novels can easily distort people's views and undermine good morals.

The cultural reforms towards market socialism under the conditions of a socialist market economy have also transformed an increasing number of cultural workers such as filmmakers, artists, and writers, into businesspeople (Xu, 2018). As a result, money and the market, to an extent, become the pursuit of artistic workers, transforming them into businesspeople who have fewer social and aesthetic concerns compared to the desire for economic interests (Shi, 2010; Xu, 2018). For instance, some media workers use pornography, violence, horror movies and websites, to obtain higher audience ratings in pursuit of market share and economic output, without concern for the harmful effects these products may bring to adolescents and society (Shi, 2010; Zhou, 2010). Moreover, "power-for-money" deals in the political sphere have also entered the cultural field, turning some officials into "artists" (Sun, 2019, p. 1, my translation). For instance, some officials sell their calligraphy works at very high prices to cover up the fact

of power-for-money deals, causing the devaluation of real artistic works and the deterioration of the ecology of the calligraphy and painting market (Sun, 2019).

5.4 The Social Sphere

It can be argued that the recent outbreak of the two scandals surrounding contaminated milk powder and a pseudo vaccine bear witness to the influence brought about by China's market socialism reforms in the social sphere. In September 2008, infant milk powder produced by the country's Sanlu company caused kidney stones in many infants (China Daily, 2008). As of the end of December 2008, the number of children with an abnormal urinary system caused by drinking Sanlu milk powder reached 296,000 (China Daily, 2009a). Official investigations show that in order to maximise market profits, Sanlu milk powder producers incorporated melamine in raw milk in a bid to reduce the costs of transporting milk and raw materials, worker wages, and company operations (China Daily, 2009b). A decade later, in July 2018, to pursue money for its own sake, the country's Changchun Changsheng Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd. produced doctored vaccines, of which 250,000 or so were injected into children's bodies (China Daily, 2018a). The vaccine incident has drawn sharp criticism from the public as well as a crisis of social and moral trust (China Daily, 2018b). Shao (2018) argues that these two scandals are particularly horrifying because they concern indispensable commodities related to people's wellbeing, such as food and medicine.

Shao (2018) argues that the two scandals are just the tip of the iceberg regarding the negative influences brought about by the country's market economy reforms. For instance, in the country's transformation from a planned economy to a socialist market economy, its medical and pharmaceutical system has been gradually privatised (Jia, 2018). Many publicly owned hospitals and pharmaceutical enterprises have been progressively transformed into privately-owned ones through internal restructuring or absorption of external private capital (Jia, 2018).

As a result, the operation of these privatised hospitals follows market rules rather than central government unified planning, enabling some companies like the vaccine and milk powder producers to improve market efficiency and optimise economic profits at the expense of the welfare and health of consumers (Shao, 2018). This is because the market has no function of self-purification, especially in the wake of enormous profits, even though market allocation is not that rigid compared to centralised planning in allocating resources (Jia, 2018). Moreover, the market values brought about by these reforms has even resulted in the marketisation of marriage, with Messrs Gao (tall), Fu (rich), and Shuai (handsome) becoming the soul mates of a vast majority of females today (Lin & Shao, 2019). Under such conditions, material wealth rather than love becomes a priority in marriage markets; that is, men and women of marriageable age will likely pay more attention to material aspects than authentic feelings of love, the economic benefits rather than the consequent household responsibilities (Lin & Shao, 2019).

The adverse effects resulting from China's market socialism reforms as exemplified in the foregoing examples may also lead to a social crisis of trust and love (Chen & Yuan, 2018; Jia, 2018). Jia (2018) argues that people's confidence in domestic, medical, or food products is difficult to recover once it has collapsed. This also explains why an increasing number of Chinese consumers turn to overseas markets to purchase infant milk powder products (Jia, 2018). Such scandals as contaminated milk powder and pseudo vaccines mentioned above threaten the development of social integrity in contemporary China (Chen & Yuan, 2018). This also explains why some scholars argue that it is the very time to build up a *Socialist Credit System* (see Chapter Six) that is compatible with a socialist market economy (Cai, 2020; Liu, 2012; Shao, 2018).

5.5 The Educational Sphere

China's market socialism reforms have led to the introduction of market mechanisms into the educational sphere. Existing research suggests that "Chinese universities have begun to adopt managerialist practices to improve their performance, in particular their research productivity, so that they can be favourably ranked in international university ranking exercises." (Guo et al., 2020, p. 3). Under such circumstance, university academics become "increasingly accountable in terms of their performance evaluation (e.g., their research output)" (Guo et al., 2020, p. 3). However, along with the implementation of this managerialism, some adverse effects have emerged where there occurs an increasing tendency towards the pursuit of academic profits for their own sake (Du et al., 2012; Shi, 2010; Zou, 2002).

Existing literature demonstrates a rise in the number of academic anomalies and research misconduct cases to survive academic performance evaluation and gain higher salary, such as producing under-researched, unrealistic research findings, falsifying, occupying, or infringing other's research achievements, pursuing quick academic success and instant research outcomes, vulgarising academic criticism, and bureaucratising research-related works like research grant applications, utilisation, supervision, and evaluation (Du et al., 2012; Jia, 2007; Shi, 2010; Wu, 2004; Xu, 2018; Yao, 2010; Zou, 2002). For instance, Shi's (2010) research reports that it is not uncommon for academic reviewers to be morally corrupted by wealth, accepting money to endorse journal articles during the review process. Shi (2010) also finds that a vicious circle has been taking shape in the country's research field – those scholars who do not actually engage in scientific research can successfully obtain economic support by bribing research fund reviewers, resulting in those who have the real intention and ambition to conduct scientific research failing to secure research funds. Xu's (2018) study discloses that some teachers accept or even demand *blessing money* (in Chinese, hongbao) from students and parents of students in exchange for returns like higher academic scores; others set up extracurricular tutoring

classes in order to accumulate extra wealth. Zou's (2002) study suggests that academic misconduct such as forging research experiences, plagiarising others' research findings, or submitting one paper to multiple journals has become *a new normal* in China's research community.

The rise of research misconduct resulting from the pursuit of academic profits under the conditions of a socialist market economy is also seen in the increasing number of official documents that address this problem. A search of the webpage of China's Ministry of Education has found more than a thousand pieces of information on strengthening academic ethical procedures (the exact number is 1044, data retrieved on January 19, 2020). The country's Ministry of Education has released more than 30 official documents or policies that address academic ethics since 2000, of which I take only a few – the most recent ones – as examples (see below).

> *Opinions on Strengthening and Improving the Construction of Teachers' Moral Education in the New Era* (Issued by MoE on December 6, 2019, my translation).

> *Measures for Dealing with Violations of Moral Ethics of Primary and Middle School Teachers (2018 Revision)* (Issued by MoE on November 14, 2018, my translation).

> *Guide to the Treatment of Teachers' Unethical Behaviours in Colleges and Universities* (Issued by MoE on November 14, 2018, my translation).

> *Guide to Conduct Moral Education in Primary and Secondary Schools* (Issued by MoE on August 22, 2017, my translation).

A review of the literature (Du et al., 2012; Jia, 2007; Yao, 2010; Wu, 2004) which examines the reasons behind the academic misconduct finds two shared causes to the problem, including (i) the inappropriate academic competition underpinned by market mechanisms, and (ii) scholars' weak awareness of academic integrity and self-discipline somehow resulting from an

enfeebled social culture of integrity and the absence of ethical education. These two factors also reflect the government's motivation to propose and promote the core socialist value of integrity, to foster integrity via the education system, and to establish the *Social Credit System* for contemporary Chinese society (Cai, 2020; Kostka, 2019; Yao, 2010, see Chapter Six). In doing so, the government aims to create a morally healthy social environment, a social context that helps to cultivate academic and ethical integrity within the educational sphere (Yao, 2010).

5.6 Chapter Conclusion

China's economic reforms towards market socialism since the 1970s have resulted in a pervasive shift in social orientation towards individualistic and materialistic values in the ecological, political, cultural, social, and educational spheres. Paradoxically, these reforms have successfully pulled China out "from a closed backwater to an open centre of capitalist dynamism with sustained growth rates unparalleled in human history" (Harvey, 2007, p. 1). Yet this rise of individualism and materialism along with these reforms has the potential to undermine the government's socialist values. To address this problem, I argue that the government has been promoting and upholding new and invigorated core socialist values since 2012, especially by incorporating them into the education system, aiming to develop them into *socialist collective representations* for modern Chinese society so as to foster people's socialist way of thinking and being. Chapters Four and Five aim to answer the first research sub-question, "Why does the Chinese government promulgate the core socialist values in contemporary society?".

In the next chapter, I take one of the twelve core socialist values, integrity, as an example to explain (i) in what ways the government has created the values, (ii) how the government communicates the values to the communities to develop the socialist collective representations,

and (iii) how the values help to revitalise the government's ruling ideology of market socialism

by addressing the rise of individualism and materialism discussed in this chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

SOCIALIST COLLECTIVE REPRESENTATIONS

Chapters Four and Five outlined and discussed the Chinese government's ideology of market socialism. In these two chapters, I used Althusser's (2001) sociological concept of *ideology* to understand, theorise, and explain how the ideology of market socialism has helped to incorporate a market economy that is in nature capitalist with respect to production and consumption into China's socialist politics, to form a socialist market economy. These changes towards marketisation in the economic sphere have brought about a social trend towards materialism and individualism, seen pervasively in the country's economic, ecological, political, cultural, social, and educational spheres. Paradoxically this, in turn, has the potential to undermine the government's socialist values and its ruling ideology of market socialism.

This chapter concerns the core socialist values promulgated by the government in 2012. The purpose of the government was to popularise the values by cultivating them within each citizen, mainly through the education system, with the aim of forging a social trend towards a revitalised form of socialism (NPC, 2012). I use Durkheim's sociological concept of *collective representations* to theorise and explain how one of the twelve values, integrity, fulfils the function of developing what I term *socialist collective representations* for contemporary Chinese society.

I focus on the value of integrity for several reasons. On the global scale, the value has turned out to be a comparatively prominent concept "in research on government and governance, as well as in actual policymaking at all levels" (Huberts, 2018, p. S18). In China's context, the value has become an indispensable normative social value (Chen & Wang, 2003; Feng & Yang, 2019; Jin & Yang, 2015). Moreover, this value has a heritage appeal and performed a crucial role in pre-modern Chinese society (Chen & Wang, 2003; Zhang, 2016).

I argue that when creating the core socialist value of integrity, the government has actually drawn on two forms of cultural understanding. One is the Chinese heritage understanding of integrity as a *personal virtue* which I term *virtuous integrity,* and the other is a modern secular understanding of integrity as part of the *social contract* that promotes the development of a market economy globally which I term *contractual integrity*. As a result, the core socialist value of integrity demonstrates an integration of *virtuous integrity* and *contractual integrity*, becoming a value that I term *integrity as a contractual virtue.*

The government's anchoring of China's re-commitment to its socialist values in its ancient and revered cultural heritage is likely to be an effective strategy for enhancing nationalism. A nationalism deeply embedded in the past is designed to provide the counter to the individualistic and materialistic forces brought about by the country's market economy reforms and to enhance the ruling ideology of *market socialism* for contemporary society. This chapter aims to answer the second research sub-question – "In what ways has the Chinese government created the core socialist values?"

6.1 Virtuous Integrity in Traditional Chinese Culture

I examine in this section the meaning of the traditional Chinese cultural ethos of integrity and explain how integrity remains a personal virtue that I term *virtuous integrity* in pre-modern Chinese society.

Different from the other ancient civilisations in the world like ancient India or ancient Egypt, Chinese civilisation is one that has never been disrupted (Zhang, 2019). In this uninterrupted civilisation, integrity has been one essential value since the country's birth (Wang, 2015). The heritage ethos of integrity originates from ancient Chinese theocracy in which the king, in pursuit of an excellent climate for agricultural activities, held ceremonies to worship gods because they were believed to oversee an abundant harvest (Zhang, 2016). The earliest record

of integrity is seen in a written literary work of traditional Chinese culture entitled *Zuo Zhuan*, where it says that "because gods are not one or two, not all of them can access oblations. For this reason, gods can only count on those followers who have *integrity* and can provide *regular* sacrificial offerings to the altar"[18] (emphasis added, Zuo, 2018 [approximate 430-386BC], n.p., my translation).

Since the Spring and Autumn Period (770-221BC), the concept of integrity has captured the attention of Confucian philosophers. Confucius regards integrity as indispensable pedagogic content, believing that "the edification of the four qualities of etiquette, benevolence, loyalty, and *integrity* contribute to changing a rough person into a gentleman"[19] (emphasis added, Confucius et al., 2018 [approximate 770-221BC], n.p., my translation). Following Confucius, Mencius (2018 [approximate 250-150BC]) regards integrity as one of the five moral principles that provide a life creed for gentlemen, which later were theorised as part of the Confucian doctrine of "three cardinal guides and five constant virtues"[20] (Dong, 2018 [approximate 179-104BC], n.p., my translation). According to this doctrine, integrity, together with benevolence, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom, is a constituent of the five constant virtues underpinning pre-modern Chinese society. Later, with Confucianism promoted as a leading ideology in successive dynasties, integrity became one of the most profound social value norms in ancient China (Wang, 2015; Zhang, 2016). Wang (2015) concludes that integrity is pervasively regarded as *an individual virtue* in ancient China, including *three layers of meaning* (i) being honest, (ii) complying with promises, and (iii) keeping words and deeds consistent. I explain the three layers of meaning in turn.

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[18] Translated from the Chinese text: 鬼神无常享，享于克诚。言鬼神不保一人，能诚信者则享其祀。

[19] Translated from the Chinese text: 子以四教：文，行，忠，信。

[20] Translated from the Chinese text: 三纲五常。

6.1.1 Being honest

Being honest refers to being truthful to others, heaven, and oneself, which finds expression in three heritage fables. The first fable, entitled *Guoji Waiting for Keeping Promises*,[21] relates an anecdote from the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220). The protagonist of the story is Guoji, the Bingzhoumu[22] of the Dynasty. Once he passed by a town called Meiji where hundreds of children riding bamboo horses welcomed him there. These children also asked him about the exact date that he would arrive at Meiji on his returning journey and promised to welcome him there again on that day. Guoji told the children his specific return date and promised to meet up with them again then. Later he returned one day in advance but stayed in the suburb outside of the town for one night in a bid to keep his promise to the children. From then on, the fable has been used to emphasise personal honesty to others.

The second fable is named *Refusal to Accept Bribes*[23], and comprises an anecdote from the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220). The protagonist of the anecdote is called Yangzhen, the Taishou[24] of the Eastern Han Dynasty, famous for being upright and righteous. Yangzhen once recommended that Wangmi become the governor of Changyi County because he noticed Wangmi's competence to govern. To express his gratitude, Wangmi later sent Yangzhen ten pounds of copper[25] at midnight, hoping Yangzhen would accept the copper and saying "it is midnight now; nobody knows about the copper"[26] (Fan et al., 2018 [approximate 432-445], n.p., my translation). However, Yangzhen refused Wangmi's gift, saying that "the gods in the

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[21] My translation. The fable is 郭伋待期 in Chinese, extracted from *The Biography of Guoji* included in *Book of the Later Han* written by Fan et et. (2018 [approximate 432-445]).

[22] An official post in ancient China, the equivalent of today's municipal governor in China.

[23] My translation. The fable is 却金暮夜 in Chinese, extracted from *The Biography of Yangzhen* included in *Book of the Later Han* written by Fan et et. (2018 [approximate 432-445]).

[24] An official post in ancient China, equivalent to the provincial governor in China today.

[25] Copper was used as money in that society.

[26] Translated from the Chinese text: 幕夜无知者。

heaven know, the earth knows, you know, and I know"[27] (n.p., my translation). Meanwhile, Yangzhen told Wangmi that he recommended him as an official because of his talents to administrate, not for money. From then onwards, this fable has been used to address one's honesty to heaven (gods).

The third fable, titled *Jizha Keeps the Tacit Promises to the Dead*[28], is an anecdote from the Eastern Zhou Dynasty (770-221BC). The hero of the story is Jizha, the fourth prince of the State Wu. Jizha was once dispatched to visit State Jin on behalf of his father, the king, with his father's sword as a keepsake. On his journey to State Jin, he visited Xu Guogong, the king of State Xu. When he met up with Xu Guogong, Xu Guogong cherished the sword that he carried even though Xu Guogong did not ask him for it. However, he recognised Xu Guogong's desire for the sword at that moment and promised in his heart to offer it as a gift to Xu Guogong after completing his visit to State Jin. Unfortunately, Xu Guogong had passed away when he returned to State Xu. In the end, Jizha left the sword beside the tomb of Xu Guogong as a gift in order to keep the unspoken promise to him. From then on, the fable has been used to highlight personal honesty to oneself.

6.1.2 Complying with promises

Complying with promises is the second layer of meaning of heritage integrity as a personal virtue (Wang, 2015). The earliest reference to integrity linked with commitments is recorded in a Confucian doctrine included in a traditional Chinese literary work entitled *The Confucian Analects*[29]. The doctrine is in the form of a conversation between Confucius and his disciple

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[27] Translated from the Chinese text: 天知，地知，你知，我知。

[28] My translation. The fable is 季札挂剑 in Chinese, extracted from *Records of the Grand* written by Si Maqian (2018 [approximate 145-86BC]).

[29] *The Confucian Analects*, in Chinese 论语, is one of the classic works of the Confucian school, a record of the words and deeds of Confucius and his disciples, consisting of 20 chapters and 492 doctrines, reflecting Confucius' political opinions, ethical thoughts, moral concepts, and educational principles. It is, together with *The Great Learning, The doctrine of the Mean, The Works of Mencius* called The Four Books in ancient China.

named Zigong. Zigong asks Confucius three questions. His first question is – What are the elements which can help a ruler succeed in governing a country? Confucius answered the question by stating that a ruler governs a country successfully with three treasured weapons: sufficient food, a strong army, and fulfilled promises to his people. Zigong's second question is about making choices – Which one would it be if you had to remove one of the three? Confucius answered – the army. Zigong's last question is also about making choices – Which one would it be if you had to remove one of the two remaining? Confucius's answer to the question is very definite – the food. He explained his straightforward rationale: having enough food is not that important compared to keeping promises because death comes to all men. However, a regime will by no means survive without a ruler who keeps his promises to his people, and in turn, gains enough trust and support from the people.

6.1.3 Keeping words and deeds consistent

Keeping words and deeds consistent is the third layer of meaning of heritage integrity as a personal virtue (Wang, 2015). The earliest entry concerning the consistency between words and deeds is found in the book *The Confucian Analects* (Confucius et al., 2018 [approximate 770-221BC]), where there is a story about Confucius and his disciple Zaiyu. Zaiyu can speak eloquently and often brags about himself as a diligent person in front of Confucius, which Confucius believes to be true. However, later Confucius finds Zaiyu to be very lazy. Confucius realises that he should evaluate students based not only on what they say but also on what they do. Since then, "listening to his words by watching his deeds" [30] (Confucius et al., 2018 [approximate 770-221BC], n.p., my translation) has become one of Confucius' famous doctrines (Wang, 2015).

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[30] Translated from the Chinese text: 听其言而观其行。

Another story that mentions the consistency between words and deeds comes from the novel *New Anecdotes of Social Talk*[31], written in the South and North Dynasties (386-589). The story is about two people – Huaxin and Wanglang – who both had a literary reputation but without official posts. Once, they hurried to flee from a group of robbers by boat. They met up with another person who wanted to take the same boat with them. Confronted with the person's request, Huaxin felt very embarrassed and hesitated while Wanglang straightforwardly agreed to offer help and directly invited the person to the boat. Later, when the robbers nearly caught up with them, Wanglang wanted to get the person off the boat in a bid to speed up to get rid of their pursuers. However, Huaxin insisted on carrying the person. From then onwards, this story is used to address the importance of keeping words and deeds consistent.

To summarise, the meaning of integrity as a personal virtue which I term *virtuous integrity* has been taking shape in the process of social development. As a heritage value, it has become an ethical requirement for self-discipline, a moral code for interpersonal communications, and a value ideal for cultivating within a person moral sensitivity (Jin & Yang, 2015; Wang, 2015; Xia, 2003). Although this traditional value of virtuous integrity became pervasive in pre-modern Chinese society, it remained limited in the scope of moral concerns at the personal level (Jin & Yang, 2015; Li, 2012; Lv, 2002; Xia, 2003). This is because violations of the value did not result in severe or substantial punishments but merely self-reproach (Jin & Yang, 2015). Therefore, Jin and Yang (2015) argue that this value of virtuous integrity from traditional Chinese culture is powerless in regulating mass social interactions in modern society, especially when confronted with issues such as interest disputes brought about by economic activities. What underpins mass economic production, consumption, market exchanges, trade,

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[31] *New Anecdotes of Social Talk*, in Chinese 世说新语, is a book written by Liu et al. (2018 [approximately 420-581]), mainly recording the anecdotes of the famous aristocrats from the end of the Han Dynasty to the Southern and Northern Dynasties, comprising three volumes, including 36 topics such as virtue, speech, political affairs, literature.

and business (global and local) is the value of integrity as part of the social contract (Xia, 2003). I explain in the next section how integrity as part of the social contract promotes the development of a global market economy in the modern secular world.

6.2 Contractual Integrity in Modern Market Culture

China's socialist market economy is capitalist in nature, in which the market plays a dominating role in resources allocation and distribution (Brødsgaard & Rutten, 2017; CGTN, 2019, see also Chapter Four). Therefore, I argue that China's socialist market economy, as a market economy, is not only underpinned by the heritage Chinese culture where integrity was a *personal virtue* but also by the modern secular market culture that regards integrity as part of the *social contract* – I term this concept *contractual integrity*. I use this term in my thesis to refer to the long-standing value of integrity as embedded in *the social contract* which in turn is intrinsic to the development of capitalist market economies all over the world.

Weber (2005[1905]) suggests that integrity as an indispensable value included in the Protestant work ethic (especially Calvinism) has contributed to the growth of modern secular capitalism. The Protestant belief that links piety and integrity to wealth is one of the fundamental aspects of the Protestant ethic that enabled a large number of Protestants to deviate from religious life and to start to live a secular life, developing business and engaging in trades and accumulating wealth:

> Real piety favours the success of a trader by insuring his integrity and fostering habits of prudence and forethought, important items in obtaining that standing and credit in the commercial world, which are requisites for the steady accumulation of wealth (Weber, 2005 [1905], p. 260).

The Protestant integrity that accelerated the development of modern capitalism is contractual (Jin & Yang, 2015). This is seen in that integrity as part of the social contract has become a

guiding principle for dealing with commercial, judicial, or social lawsuits since the beginning of capitalist development, especially seen in the Mediterranean maritime market trades and business after the medieval age (Jin & Yang, 2015). For instance, in Shakespeare's (2003) famous play, *the Merchant of Venice*, judges use integrity as a critical standard to settle a commercial lawsuit. Since then, integrity has remained a vital part of the social contract, the fulfilment of which is compulsory and obligatory, as Mill illustrates:

> Though society is not founded on a contract, and though no good purpose is answered by inventing a contract in order to deduce social obligations from it, everyone who receives the protection of society owes a return for the benefit, and the fact of living in society renders it indispensable that *each should be bound to observe a certain line of conduct towards the rest*. […] These conditions society is justified in enforcing, at all costs to those who endeavour to withhold fulfilment. Nor is this all that society may do (emphasis added, 2001[1859], p. 106).

In this way, the value of integrity becomes pervasive because "peace, concord, and equality are enemies to political refinements. When men are honest and simple, their very simplicity prevents their deception; they are not to be imposed on by sophistry, but are too artless even to be duped" (Rousseau, 1893[1762], p. 149). This value that I term *contractual integrity* later becomes a moral code that everyone as an "economic man" (Smith, 2007[1776], n.p.) in the commodity and market economy period should follow. Smith (2007[1776]) regards everyone in the market period as an "economic man" (n.p.) in nature who has the natural right to pursue individual interests. Smith (2007[1776]) suggests that "it is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest" (n.p.). Smith (2007[1776]) argues that one "moral sentiment" (p. 1) that guides humans as economic man is what I term *contractual integrity* because "it is not in being rich

that truth and justice would rejoice, but in being *trusted and believed*, recompenses which those virtues must almost always acquire" (emphasis added, p. 148).

The value that I term *contractual integrity* is also connected to the realisation of individual freedom. In the process of social formation, individuals, based on the principle of contractual trust, cede their natural freedom and entrust it to society (Rousseau, 1893[1762]). The delegated governors of society, following the rule of contractual integrity exercised in the entrusted freedom from the individuals and on behalf of those individuals, ensure the running of the social order and guarantee the freedom of those individuals (Rousseau, 1893[1762]). Smith (2005[1759]) points out it is in the nature of humans to pursue individual freedom and nobody can deny or reject it because "this self-deceit, this fatal weakness of mankind, is the source of half the disorders of human life" (p. 140). Smith also (2005[1759]) suggests that the value of integrity as part of the social contract is a natural and rational choice made by the individual in the process of social formation because the existence of society can better assist individuals in achieving personal freedom. Some more recent researchers (Chen & Wang, 2003; Jin & Yang, 2015) believe that Smith's elaboration on freedom further legitimises the role that the value of integrity, as part of the social contract, plays in the realisation of personal freedom – especially the economic freedom, in the modern market economy period. This is because the value that I term *contractual integrity* can enable different market entities which are independent from, or even unknown to, each other to pursue profits freely in the market through fulfilling contracts to others successfully (Chen & Wang, 2003; Jin & Yang, 2015).

To summarise, one of the values underpinning the establishment of capitalism is what I call *contractual integrity*, which also exerts a strong influence on the development of a global market economy in the modern period (Cai, 2020; Chen & Wang, 2003; Jin & Yang, 2015; Li, 2012; Lv, 2002; Zhang, 2016). I argue that China is not immune to this. Along with the government's market economic reforms in the 1970s, China has embraced the value of

contractual integrity and made it *a socialist collective representation* for modern Chinese society. My argument also resonates with the relevant existing literature (e.g., Li, 2012; Lv, 2002; Yang, 2002). Li (2012) argues that the Chinese cultural value of integrity has evolved from kinship-based in traditional folk society to principle-led in modern society. Integrity has been transformed from a personal virtue in traditional Chinese culture to a universal interpersonal principle brought about by commodity exchanges in modern market culture (Lv, 2002). In this way, the traditional value of integrity as a personal virtue goes beyond moral kinship, entering the public sphere of modern Chinese society as a more general and universal interpersonal principle (Yang, 2002).

So far, I have explained two forms of cultural understanding of integrity. One refers to what I term *virtuous integrity* from traditional Chinese culture and the other denotes what I call *contractual integrity* that underpins the modern market economy. In the next section, I use Bernstein's (2000) concept of *recontextualisation* as an explanatory tool to elucidate how the two forms of understanding of integrity have been recontextualised according to the official ideology of market socialism and thus become *a socialist collective representation of integrity as a contractual virtue*. I also elucidate the vital role that this collective representation plays in Chinese society today.

6.3 The Socialist Collective Representation of Integrity as a Contractual Virtue

In this section, I examine the meaning of the core socialist value of integrity, explaining how this meaning was officially recontextualised by drawing on two forms of cultural understanding of integrity. In this way, the socialist value of integrity demonstrates apposite integration of what I term *virtuous integrity* from the Chinese heritage culture and *contractual integrity* that

underpins a modern market economy, becoming what I term *a socialist collective representation of integrity as a contractual virtue*.

Existing research on integrity provides a base for my argument (Chen & Wang, 2003; Fan, 1993; Feng & Yang, 2019; Jiao, 2002; Li, 2012; Lv, 2002; Wang, 2015; Yang, 2002; Zhang, 2016). For instance, Fan (1993) argues that accompanying China's modernisation there is not only a highly developed socialist economy founded on mass-market exchanges but also an established socialist polity which creates a new type of integrity. Zhang (2016) claims that China's integrity today is neither the same as its heritage culture where integrity as a personal virtue overtook the pursuit of individual interests, nor similar to the long-standing integrity ethos underpinning a market economy where integrity is used as a contractual tool to maintain smooth and successful market operation. Feng and Yang (2019) suggest that the core socialist value of integrity, in essence, not only recognises everyone's freedom to optimise self-interests under the conditions of a socialist market economy but also serves as a moral code for each Chinese person to observe in the processes of wealth creation and accumulation.

In the following sections, I elaborate on how the *socialist collective representation of integrity as a contractual virtue* performs a function in modern Chinese society from three main perspectives. The three refer to (i) integrity as an ascendant political discourse at the National People's Congresses [NPCs] in China, (ii) integrity as a theoretical principle underpinning China's socialist market economy, and (iii) integrity as a code of conduct regulating social interactions. In doing so, I demonstrate how the *socialist collective representation of integrity as a contractual virtue* helps to diminish increased materialism and individualism. It does this by symbolically invoking people's moral sensitivity towards integrity, penetrating political, economic, and social spheres for example.

6.3.1 Integrity: an ascendant political discourse at China's National People's Congresses

The core socialist value of integrity has moved out into society mainly through the country's NPCs held every five years since 2012. The NPC, as China's highest organ of state power, performs essential functions, such as amending and deliberating on the constitution, electing or dismissing the president, vice-presidents, president of the Supreme People's Court, president of the Supreme People's Procuratorate, and defining foreign policy (Hu et al., 2017). I provide below two long quotes from the government report at the 18[th,] and 19th NPC, held in 2012 and 2017 respectively, to show how the discourse of the twelve core socialist values (integrity is one of them) is taken seriously by the government and communicated to the community from the political sphere. I provide the two quotes here also because they are clear in showing how the government promulgates the content of the values, addresses the significant role the values play in modern society, and articulates the crucial function that the education system plays in promoting and transmitting these values.

> Core socialist values are the soul of the Chinese nation and serve as the guide for building socialism with Chinese characteristics. *We should carry out thorough study of and education in these values and use them to guide social trends of thought and forge public consensus.* […] *We should carry out extensive education about our ideal and conviction, and rally the people under the great banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics. We should vigorously foster China's national character and promote the underlying trend of the times, intensify education in patriotism, collectivism and socialism, and enrich people's cultural life and enhance their moral strength.* We should promote *prosperity, democracy, civility, and harmony*, uphold *freedom, equality, justice* and *the rule of law* and advocate *patriotism, dedication, integrity, and friendship*, so as to cultivate and observe core socialist values. We should maintain leadership and initiative in theoretical work, provide correct guidance, enhance our ability to guide public opinion,

and strengthen the influence of the underlying trend of thought in our country (emphasis added, NPC, 2012, translated by China Academy of Translation, n.p.).

Core socialist values represent the contemporary Chinese spirit and are a crystallization of the values shared by all Chinese people. We will focus on fostering a new generation capable of shouldering the mission of national rejuvenation; we will offer them better guidance, expose them to practice, and *provide institutional guarantees. We will draw on core socialist values to guide education, efforts to raise cultural-ethical standards, and the creation, production, and distribution of cultural and intellectual products, and see that all areas of social development are imbued with these values and that they become part of people's thinking and behaviour.* To this end, we will encourage extensive public involvement, making our officials take the lead and starting with families and children. *We will draw on China's fine traditional culture, keep alive and develop its vision, concepts, values, and moral norms, and do so in a way that responds to the call of our era.* With this we will see that Chinese culture maintains its appeal and evolves with the times (emphasis added, NPC, 2017, translated by China Academy of Translation, n.p.).

The government has anchored its commitment to foster these values from itself to set an example to society (Feng & Yang, 2019). For example, the government has taken resolute action against the practices of formalism[32], bureaucratism[33], hedonism, and extravagance since

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[32] According to China's Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, formalism refers to the political phenomenon of occupying an administrative post but not fulfil the post responsibility. For example, a party member deliberately exaggerates his political achievements when reporting to his superiors and never fulfils what he promised to do for the people.

[33] According to China's Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, bureaucracy refers to the political phenomenon of regarding merely power itself, rather than the reality, as the starting and ending points of power operation. For example, a Party member blindly surrenders to the power of his superiors without considering whether the command from his superiors is right or wrong, or without considering the actual needs of the people he serves. This may cause a severe waste of human, material, and financial resources and therefore, result in a negative impact on society.

Xi acceded to the leadership in 2012 (NPC, 2017). This commitment to construct political integrity is evident in the President's speech from 2018:

> The Communist Party adheres to the principle that the Party should govern itself strictly, purify the political ecology of the Party, persist in the correct conduct and self-discipline, vigorously punish formalism, bureaucracy, hedonism and extravagance, severely punish corruption with a zero-tolerance attitude, and win an overwhelming victory in the fight against corruption (Xi, 2018, n.p., my translation).

Jin and Yang (2015) argue that such political wrongdoings of formalism, bureaucracy, hedonism and extravagance (also see Chapter Five, the political sphere) are a violation to political integrity, weakening the credibility of the government, disrupting public order and social norms, and undermining the fairness of resource allocation. Wang (2015) regards the government's commitment to fighting against corruption as an example of its resolve to construct political integrity, showing the self-improvement and development of the country's socialist political system. The core socialist values of integrity provide spiritual and ideological support for eliminating political corruption, purifying the communist environment, and building up a socialist integrity culture (Wang, 2015).

My empirical data reveals that the political efforts to promote the core socialist values into modern Chinese society have been successful, seen from three perspectives. First, the values have been recontextualised into the official recontextualising field in terms of policymaking, referring to, in my research, the policy propositions, subject concepts, content, and competencies contained in the two policies that I analyse in Chapter Seven. Second, the values have also entered the pedagogic recontextualising field (Chinese language classes and teachers' minds) in relation to the six teacher participants' conceptualisations of the values, the lesson propositions, concepts, content, pedagogy, competencies, and student participation in the class

(see Chapter Eight). Furthermore, my empirical investigation shows that one of these twelve core socialist values, integrity, has been recontextualised into the everyday practices of the school I investigated through its management system, curriculum system, and extracurricular activities (see Chapter Eight). Third, these twelve core socialist values have permeated Chinese society pervasively. For example, the values have been made visible in everyday life, such as at bus stops, in metro stations, in hotel lobbies, at public resorts, at open recreational centres, in residential communities, at parks, and in schools (see Chapter Nine).

In the next two sections, I focus on the value of integrity to examine and explain how the ascendant political discourse of the core socialist values perform a role in the economic and social spheres of modern Chinese society as what I term *socialist collective representations*.

6.3.2 Integrity: a theoretical principle underpinning China's socialist market economy

The core socialist value of integrity theoretically underpins China's socialist market economy. Yang (2002) argues that the development of a socialist market economy has been a significant factor in legitimising the demand for integrity as a universal principle. As a market economy, China's economy, involving countless market entities, takes market mechanisms, such as supply and demand and charging for scarcity, as a primary means for resource allocation and commodity circulation (Brødsgaard & Rutten, 2017); "every man thus lives by exchanging, or becomes in some measure a merchant, and the society itself grows to be what is properly a commercial society" (Smith, 2007[1776]), n.p.). The desire of pursuing economic interests relies on the smooth and successful running and operation of the market, which further requires different market players, most of them unfamiliar with each other, to observe market agreements with honesty (Zhang, 2016).

Chinese people's sensitivity to integrity, however, has faced intense challenges since the implementation of the national strategy of *Reforming and Opening Up* in 1978, especially after

the country became affiliated to the WTO in 2001 (Feng & Yang, 2019). There is a higher risk of the moral code of integrity being broken down and weakened when confronted with the temptation of increasing global market opportunities, and more extensive and higher economic profits (Feng & Yang, 2019). For instance, Yang and Pei (2015) suggest that failure to follow market rules and to demonstrate integrity in market economic activities has become a significant factor in explaining why some *made in China products* have been labelled *copycat* or *inferior* in the global market in recent years.

Feng and Yang (2019) suggest that China can integrate into the global market economy more deeply, extensively, and comprehensively if and only if its domestic businesses retain a sense of integrity and observe global market regulations. If economic entities do not follow market rules and fulfil their social and moral responsibilities to others to whom they relate, the market will fall into chaos (Feng & Yang, 2019; Jin & Yang, 2015). Not following moral responsibilities may further result in the potential to undermine the country's socialist market economy that provides a platform for everyone to navigate individual profits through economic exchanges (Feng & Yang, 2019; Jin & Yang, 2015; Wang, 2015). As is demonstrated by the cases of the contaminated baby milk powder and the pseudo vaccines I mentioned in Chapter Five, market producers' inability to observe market rules and lack of moral sensitivity become a significant factor in the pursuit of market profits for their own sake without considering the health and wellbeing of the consumers.

My empirical data regarding the salary disputes between teachers and schools also illustrate the consequences of dishonesty (see Chapter Nine). In the teacher interviews, one teacher interviewee, who had the experience of working in private schools, suggested that some private schools in China failed to pay teachers' salaries in accordance with the salary standards agreed in advance. They attributed this to the schools' lack of integrity and non-fulfilment of a fair salary contract. In this case, the schools' lack of integrity has resulted in economic disputes,

not only damaging their reputation but also endangering teachers' working enthusiasm. This demonstrates the overwhelming need to promote and uphold the *socialist collective representation of integrity as a contractual virtue* in the contemporary period. This is also what I will extend in the next section – how the core socialist value of integrity becomes a code of conduct that regulates social interactions in modern Chinese society.

6.3.3 Integrity: a code of conduct regulating modern social interactions

The Chinese government hopes that the core socialist value of integrity regulates social interactions in the country's market socialism period. Social interactions that constitute the meaning of human existence and contribute to the formation of society are paramount to the development of humankind (Jin & Yang, 2015). For instance, as early as the primitive stage of human existence, social interactions have enabled human beings to survive nature by living a relational life – humans living in caves interact and cooperate in acquiring necessary living materials for the maintenance of sustainable growth (Marx (2009[1859]).

Marx (2009[1859]) argues that people's social interactions are impacted by the change of people's living conditions because "the changes in the economic foundation lead sooner or later to the transformation of the whole immense superstructure" (n.p.). The development of market socialism in China demonstrates this. Along with the national strategy of *Reforming and Opening Up* and the establishment of a socialist market economy, the country's economy has continuously grown, and communication technologies have rapidly developed (Feng & Yang, 2019). These changes in the economic base have shifted modern Chinese People's social interactions from closed and single, to open and diverse; the virtual and physical interpersonal space is expanding, and social interactions become increasingly individualised, flexible, and diversified (Feng & Yang, 2019). Coupled with China's opening up to the outside world since the 1970s, especially its admission to the WTO in 2001, the acceleration of market competition

and the expansion of national trade and business has intensified the mobility of labour, resulting in a rise in the alienation of social interactions between people (Feng & Yang, 2019). This alienation has been further strengthened by the development of cyberspace and e-commerce platforms in the contemporary period where indifferent cyber social interactions have become a new character of modern social interactions (Feng & Yang, 2019).

The increase of indifference and individualisation in contemporary social interactions also seems to be a significant factor in pushing interpersonal communication towards utilitarianism (Feng & Yang, 2019). Researchers find that modern social interactions centre more on economic interests rather than being connected to blood, kinship, clan, or gentlemen's agreement as they did in traditional Chinese society (Feng & Yang, 2019; Jin & Yang, 2015; Li, 2012; Lv, 2002). For instance, in the preceding chapter, I exemplified that modern marriage in China has to a great extent become enslaved to wealth, especially as seen in the increasing desires of the young Chinese generation to marry Misses Bai (white), Fu (rich), and Mei (beautiful), and Messrs Gao (tall), Fu (rich), and Shuai (handsome) (Lin & Shao, 2019). Researchers (e.g., Feng & Yang, 2019; Jin & Yang, 2015) also attribute the materialisation of people's social interactions to the development of a socialist market economy in China, arguing that the temptation of large and higher economic profits has to a great extent marketised social interactions of people today. Such an increasingly utilitarianism also put the value of integrity under continuous challenges and tests (Feng & Yang, 2019).

The political intent of promoting the core socialist value of integrity also reflects awareness of the problem and increasing attention to the cultivation of moral sensitivity in the period of market socialism (Hao & Huang, 2019). Wang (2015) suggests that the government aims to foster the value of integrity in modern Chinese society as a valuable personal virtue, a gold asset for economic enterprises, a moral code for social interactions, and an indispensable part of the country's soft power.

In cultivating within each Chinese citizen a moral sense of integrity, the government has institutionalised *the socialist collective representation of integrity as a contractual virtue* in recent years. For instance, the government decided in 2013 to establish a *Social Credit System* [SCS] (Cai, 2020; Kostka, 2019). The SCS aims to create a digital credit portfolio for each Chinese citizen for credit checking purposes, and thus to provide critical references for social administration such as bank loan application, processing, and management (Kostka, 2019). The government's construction of the SCS is theorised as an "institutional turn" in the country's integrity management (Gong, 2011, p. 671). I argue that this official action reflects the astuteness of the Chinese government in devising, in Bernstein's (2000) words, an *instructional discourse* of integrity, to attempt to regulate the symbolic sphere in this way. My empirical investigation of teacher interviews also demonstrates how integrity has been recontextualised as part of the social contract through institutionalising the school's management system and extracurricular activities (see Chapter Nine).

6.4 Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, I have elucidated how the government has built the core socialist value of integrity into *a socialist collective representation of integrity as a contractual virtue* by recontextualising two forms of cultural understanding. One refers to traditional Chinese cultural integrity as a personal virtue which I term *virtuous integrity*. The other is the modern secular market cultural integrity which remains part of the social contract underpinning a market economy which I call *contractual integrity*. I have also explained how the core socialist value of integrity has been communicated to the various communities as a central political discourse at the National People's Congresses in China and has played a role in the economic and social spheres of modern Chinese society.

The next chapter is about the first of the three empirical investigations in this study – the

analysis of two curriculum policies. I use the sociological concept of *recontextualisation* to understand and theorise how the core socialist values are recontextualised into what Bernstein (2000) terms *the official recontextualising field* – referring to the two curriculum policies that I analyse. I also explain how this recontextualisation helps to cultivate an idealised type of young generation for taking on China's great socialist cause.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE OFFICIAL RECONTEXTUALISING FIELD

CURRICULUM POLICY ANALYSIS

In the preceding chapter, I used Durkheim's sociological concept of *collective representations* and took the core socialist value of *integrity* promulgated in 2012 as an example to theorise and explain how integrity was officially created by drawing on two forms of cultural understanding. One is the Chinese heritage ethos of integrity as a *personal virtue* and the other is the modern marketised value of integrity as part of the *social contract.* My purpose was to demonstrate how *the socialist collective representation of integrity* was officially recontextualised as a *contractual virtue* in the period of market socialism. This process or mechanism of recontextualisation is the government's method to engender nationalism and revitalise the ruling ideology of market socialism for contemporary Chinese society. I argue the government aims to diminish the individualistic and materialistic forces that have resulted as by-products of the country's market economy reforms since the 1970s. The government has cleverly anchored this recontextualising process – the recommitment to the core socialist values – by linking the country's ancient and revered cultural heritage to modern principles that underpin a socialist market economy.

This chapter is about the first of the three empirical investigations in this thesis – the study of two curriculum policies published in 2018, replacing policies written in 2003. The two remaining investigations comprise class observations (see Chapter Eight) and teacher interviews (see Chapter Nine). The two curriculum policies to be analysed in this chapter are (i) the *Curriculum Plan for Senior High School Education (2017 Edition)* [*Plan*] (MoE, 2018a) – an overall plan used for overwriting curriculum standards for specific subjects, and (ii) the *Curriculum Standard for Chinese Language (2017 Edition)* [*Standard*] (MoE, 2018b) – the

curriculum standard used for the Chinese Language subject included in the senior high school programme throughout China. I use Van Dijk's (2001) *critical discourse analysis* as the investigative method, a *Four-Dimensional Analytic Schema* I create by drawing on the *Curriculum Design Coherence Model* [CDC Model] (McPhail, 2020a; Rata & McPhail, 2020; Rata, 2019, 2021) as the actual analytic schema for policy analysis, and Bernstein's (2000) sociological concept of *recontextualisation* as the explanatory tool to explore the *official recontextualising field* [ORF]. The analysis aims to find out how the government's ascendant ideals encapsulated in the core socialist values are recontextualised into these two official curriculum policies: the *Plan* and the *Standard*. Both policies are exemplars of the wider policy approaches.

I approach the analysis by (i) offering a description of both policies, (ii) presenting the newly emerged features in both policies, and (iii) examining and explaining the mechanisms of recontextualisation through which the official pedagogic discourses, the core socialist values, are represented in the two policies in relation to the newly emerged policy features. This chapter aims to answer the third research sub-question: "In what ways are the core socialist values recontextualised into China's contemporary curriculum policies?"

7.1 Curriculum Policies: A Description

In this section, I offer a detailed description of the two policies that I analyse. As I noted in Chapter One, the government's campaign of promoting and upholding the core socialist values proposed in 2012, has gradually led to profound reform in the country's senior high school education, with implications for curriculum prescription, content, pedagogy, and evaluation (MoE, 2018a). The curriculum reform, launched formally in 2013, culminated in the release of 21 official educational policies for the country's senior high school education in 2018, including an overall Curriculum Plan at the national level and twenty respective Curriculum

Standards for each of the twenty subjects[34] included in the senior high school programme (MoE, 2018, also see Chapter One). The overall Curriculum Plan played a guiding role in the development of the twenty Curriculum Standards for particular subjects (MoE, 2018a). Because my study focuses on the Chinese Language subject, I chose the following two policies to examine:

- *Curriculum Plan for Senior High School Education (2017 Edition)* [*Plan*] (MoE, 2018a)

- *Curriculum Standard for Chinese Language (2017 Edition)* [*Standard*] (MoE, 2018b)

7.1.1 The *Plan*

The *Plan*[35] (MoE, 2018a) plays a guiding role in defining the *Standard* used for the Chinese Language subject. The *Plan* consists of seven parts (see *Figure 7.1*).

Part	Content
Preface	This part starts with a brief introduction to China's curriculum policy reform history since 2003, followed by a short account of the context within which the *Plan* was issued. Then it introduces the guiding ideology and the fundamental principles used for reforming the *Plan*. Following this is a section which summarises the new changes in the *Plan*. The end of this part provides an outline of the new features contained in the curriculum standards for each subject included in China's senior high school programme.
Part I: Curriculum Objective	This part addresses the question: what type of citizen does China want to cultivate within each student in the senior high school education?
Part II: Curriculum Structure	This part includes five subsections. The first subsection introduces the components of China's senior high school programme. A description of three components (compulsory, required-optional, and optional) packaged in each subject constitutes the second subsection. The third subsection presents the subjects contained in the programme and clarifies three types of credits (compulsory, required-optional, and optional) required for the completion of each subject. The fourth subsection describes how to allocate the total teaching hours of each subject into the three academic years of the programme. The last subsection gives the overall credits required for the completion of the programme.

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[34] The twenty subjects included in China's senior high school programme include Chinese Language, Mathematics, History, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Information Technology, Japanese Language, Fine Art, Sports and Health, Geography, Russian Language, French Language, Music, General Technology, Spanish Language, English Language, German Language, Art, and Thought and Politics.

[35] This is my translation because the official English version of this policy is unavailable.

Part III: Curriculum Content	This part introduces the criteria for making and designing the curriculum content of the subjects contained in the programme.
Part IV: Curriculum Implementation and Evaluation	This part gives suggestions for the implementation and evaluation of the curriculum standards for each subject in terms of, for instance, textbook making, pedagogy, examination organising, and curriculum resources development and utilisation.
Part V: Curriculum Implementation Support	This part pinpoints an effective way to offer external assistance for implementing the curriculum standards for each subject, for instance, enhancing teacher education, perfecting the construction of school infrastructure and classroom facilities, and consolidating financial support.
Part VI: Curriculum administration and supervision	This part indicates a system within which the educational sectors at relatively higher levels guide and supervise their subordinates in implementing the *Plan* and the Curriculum Standards for each subject.

Figure 7.1 The content of the *Plan*

7.1.2 The *Standard*

The *Standard* [36](MoE, 2018b) is formed under the guidance of the *Plan*, consisting of eight

parts (see *Figure 7.2*).

Part	Content
Preface	This part starts with a brief introduction to China's curriculum policy reform history since 2003, followed by a short account of the context within which the *Plan* was issued. Then it introduces the guiding ideology and the fundamental principles used for reforming the *Plan*. Following this is a section which summarises the new changes in the *Plan*. The end of this part provides an outline of the new features contained in the curriculum standards for each subject included in China's senior high school programme.
Part I: Nature and Guiding Principles	This part first explains the nature of the subject, followed by an introduction of the guiding principles for making and designing the *Standard*.
Part II: Competencies and Objectives	This part first introduces the core subject competencies addressed by the *Standard* and then states the objectives to be achieved by implementing the *Standard*.
Part III: Curriculum Structure	This part introduces the curriculum structuring criteria, the curriculum components, and the credits required for the completion of the subject.

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[36] This is my translation because the English version of this policy is unavailable.

Part IV: Curriculum Content	This part divides the curriculum content into 25 learning modules, with an introduction to the content of each model, as well as the learning goals and pedagogical tips for each module. It also provides detailed requirements for students in learning each module.
Part V: Curriculum Evaluation	This part introduces the way to conduct the curriculum-based evaluation. It first defines curriculum evaluation and then proposes a five-level evaluation schema, with a detailed description of the criteria for each level provided. It links the evaluation schema to different types of examinations (college entrance examinations/academic proficiency tests/ mid-term examinations/final examinations) at different levels (national/ provincial/school).
Part VI: Recommendations for Curriculum Implementation	This part includes five suggestions given by the policymakers. The first suggestion refers to curriculum pedagogy and evaluation. The second suggestion regards methods on how to evaluate the curriculum through two crucial examinations – *the college entrance examination* at the national level and *the academic proficiency test* at the provincial level. The third suggestion concerns curriculum-oriented textbook creation and compilation. The fourth suggestion is for developing and utilising curriculum-related learning resources. The last suggestion pinpoints ways for educational sectors at the local level to implement the curriculum.
Appendix	This part provides a catalogue including traditional Chinese classics, poems, dramas (suggested to be recited by students), and selected readings of foreign and Chinese contemporary and modern works of literature (recommended to be used in classroom practices). It provides a supplement to Part IV.

Figure 7.2 The content of the *Standard*

7.2 Curriculum Policies: New Features

Following on from the introduction of the two curriculum policies and the description of their content in the last section, in this section, I identify and summarise the features that were not present in earlier policies, such as the newly emerged terms *core socialist values* and *core competencies* that appear in both policies. I also use excerpts from the policy texts to illustrate these features.

7.2.1 The frequently highlighted terms

The *Plan*, as an overall plan for China's curriculum policymaking, stipulates that the 2018 curriculum reform aims to build up "a curriculum system with Chinese characteristics for senior high school education" (MoE, 2018a, p. 1). The reform considers not only the problems that occurred in the use of previous policies but also draws on "the valuable experience of

curriculum practices in the past decade" (MoE, 2018a, p. 1). The reform aims to remedy the weakness of the old curriculum policies by issuing new ones that not only conform to the changing classroom conditions but also resonate with dynamic social contexts:

> [The old curriculum policies] need to be overwritten and reformed against new societal changes. These changes include the rapid development of the country's economy, science, and technology, the profound vicissitudes in social life, the evolution of China's principal social contradiction[37], the new needs imposed by the contemporary society to education such as improving the overall quality of the civic and cultivating human capabilities for the modern era (MoE, 2018a, p. 1).

Under the guidance of the *Plan* and informed by the goal of building "a curriculum system with Chinese characteristics for senior high school education" (MoE, 2018a, p. 1), some new features have emerged in the policy text of the two curriculum policies (the *Plan* and the *Standard*). I have drawn attention to these features by noting the frequency in the text (see *Figure 7.3*). The connection between these terms and their role in incorporating the core socialist values into the *Plan* and the *Standard* is discussed below in my analysis. At this point, I draw attention to two terms: *core competencies*, a term favoured in the education trends promoted by UNESCO since the 1990s (Lourie, 2020), and *traditional Chinese culture*, suggesting heritage culture's increasingly significant role in socialism with Chinese characteristics.

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[37] Principal social contradiction: The Sixth Plenary Session of the Chinese Communist Party's 11th Central Committee held in 1981 points out that the principal contradiction in China is the contradiction between the growing material and cultural needs of the people and the backward social production (means of production, production process, and products). The 19th National People's Congress of the Chinese Communist Party held in 2017 suggests that the principal contradiction facing Chinese society has evolved because the development of socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era. What China now faces is the contradiction between unbalanced and inadequate development and the people's ever-growing need for a better life.

Term	English Translation	Frequency in Policy Text (times)
核心素养	core competencies	62
社会主义	socialism	55
传统文化	traditional Chinese culture	41
社会主义先进文化	advanced socialist culture	20
革命文化	revolutionary culture	14
文化自信	cultural self-confidence	11
社会主义核心价值观	core socialist values	10

Figure 7.3 Frequently highlighted terms in the two curriculum policies

7.2.2 Policy text excerpts where the terms are located: some examples

In this section, I provide some excerpts from the policy texts as examples to note the contexts in which each of these terms appears. In doing so, I offer a general introduction to these terms for my later analysis and explanation of them.

Concerning the terms *core competencies*, *traditional Chinese culture*, *revolutionary culture*, and *advanced socialist culture*, the *Standard* describes that

> the Chinese Language curriculum places the development of *core competencies* as its core. […] the curriculum aims to guide students to inherit fine *traditional Chinese culture* and *revolutionary culture* consciously, learn from the culture of the other nationalities in the world willingly, and participate in the construction and transmission of *advanced socialist culture* with Chinese characteristics actively (emphasis added, MoE, 2018b, p. 2).

Regarding the terms *socialism* and *core socialist values*, the *Plan* states that

> the curriculum reform fully upholds the Communist Party's leadership, follows the socialist educational track, recognises the guiding role of Marxism, and embeds 'Xi Jinping's Thought on *Socialism* with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era'. […] the reform intends to guide students to form correct world outlooks, life views, and values, to boost the confidence of the young generation towards the country's socialist theories,

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institutions, cultures, as well as the socialist road with Chinese characteristics […] the curriculum reform undertakes the fundamental tasks of developing *socialism* with Chinese characteristics and of nurturing and practising the *core socialist values.* Therefore, the reformed curriculum has carried forward and drawn on fine traditional Chinese culture to create advanced socialist culture (emphasis added, MoE, 2018a, p. 2).

Regarding the term cultural *self-confidence*, the *Standard* describes that

the Chinese Language curriculum aims to, by focusing on developing the four core competencies, assist students in strengthening *cultural self-confidence* and developing an optimistic attitude towards life. It seeks to guide students to understand and observe the Communist Party's core socialist values intentionally and consciously and in this way to lay a solid foundation for their comprehensive and lifelong development (emphasis added, MoE, 2018b, p. 5).

In addition to these frequently addressed terms, the first and second appendices of the *Standard* (MoE, 2018b, pp. 54-57) promulgate a list of texts about the heritage culture and advanced socialist culture, either in the form of assigned or recommended content for reading and memorising. The text range includes traditional and modern Chinese poems, verses, songs, poetic essays, dramas, novels, and selected doctrines of Confucianism. The heritage culture accounts for more than 80% of the total memorising content.

Informed by these new terms, my analysis of the *Plan* and the *Standard* focuses on the ways in which the core socialist values have been inserted, or to use Bernstein's (2000) words, *recontextualised* into both policies. I regard policy statements as the site where political intentions and policy implementation meet. I wanted to know just how the *Plan* and the *Standard* aligned with the government's intentions. Bernstein's (2000) idea of *recontextualisation* (also see Chapter Three) and Durkheim's (2001[1912]) theorisation of

knowledge differentiation (2001[1912]) provide two apposite theoretical tools to consider the insertion of the values into the *Standard* thereby enabling me to *test* the extent to which the government's intentions and the policy implementation align. At one level, the two concepts of *recontextualisation* and *knowledge differentiation* enable me to identify the mechanisms by which the core socialist values are inserted into the *Standard*. At a more general level, these two concepts enable me to theorise the process as the normalisation of ideology in the creation of a country's collective representations. For these reasons, I devote the next section to discussing the two concepts.

7.3 Conceptual Tools and the Analytic Schema

This section introduces the two concepts, *recontextualisation* and *knowledge differentiation*, that enable me to theorise the ways in which the core socialist values have been inserted into the *Plan* and the *Standard*. Drawing on both concepts, I designed an Analytic Schema to guide my actual analysis of the mechanisms of this insertion.

7.3.1 Recontextualisation

Bernstein's concept of recontextualisation provides the first apposite theoretical tool to examine how the core socialist values are adapted, that is, recontextualised, for insertion into the education system (also see Chapter Three). Bernstein (2000) proposed three fields within a structure he termed *the pedagogic device*, a mechanism for the production, reproduction and transformation of culture. He argues that the device acts as "a symbolic regulator of consciousness" in a given society (p. 38). The three fields refer to the field of production (discourse creation), the field of recontextualisation (discourse transmission), and the field of reproduction (discourse acquisition and evaluation) (Bernstein, 2000). Of the three, the field of recontextualisation, which connects the fields of production and reproduction, is most useful for my purposes. This field is the site for the alignment (or misalignment) between policy

intentions and implementation. My interest is to investigate this recontextualisation field in order to analyse the extent to which the political discourse of the core socialist values is adapted in ways that enabled them to be: first, included in the *Plan* and the *Standard*, and second, included in such a way as to be implementable. This required looking closely at the rules, logic, contexts, or principles of recontextualisation or alignment. Durkheim's (2001[1912]) theorisation of *knowledge differentiation* helps to identify more specifically *what* has being recontextualised and the principles guiding the recontextualisation.

7.3.2 Knowledge differentiation

Knowledge differentiation provides the second theoretical tool for me to research the mechanisms of recontextualisation through which the core socialist values have been inserted into the *Plan* and the *Standard.* My analysis suggests that this insertion is achieved mainly by emphasising sociocultural knowledge. This type of knowledge permeates both policies and can be traced back to the government's core socialist values. This type of knowledge sits in contrast to disciplinary knowledge that has context-independent epistemic structures, systems, and procedures which are generally less influenced by sociocultural ideologies (Bernstein, 2000). For my analysis to be clear, I need to explain in some detail this differentiation of knowledge.

Durkheim categorises knowledge into two types, "sacred and profane" (2001[1912], p. 36), a distinction now described as being between *disciplinary knowledge* (also variously called conceptual, academic, theoretical, epistemic, scientific, cognitive, propositional, substantive, subject, powerful knowledge, or vertical discourse) and *sociocultural knowledge* (also variously named folk, everyday, experiential, commonsense, context-dependent, spontaneous, practical knowledge, or knowledge by acquaintance, or horizontal discourse) (Bernstein, 2000, 2003; Bertram, 2012; Deng, 2015; Maton & Moore, 2010; Moore, 2007, 2013; Muller, 2000; Ormond, 2017; Rata, 2012; Vernon, 2020; Wheelahan, 2010, 2015; Winch, 2014, 2017; Young

& Lambert, 2014; Young & Muller, 2010, 2011, 2013; Young, 2008, 2010, 2013). According to these contemporary writers, both types of knowledge are structured differently and have different components, characteristics, and functions.

Disciplinary Knowledge

The *thought products* or *objects* of the disciplines (disciplinary knowledge) are developed according to accepted methods and procedures consisting of generalisable concepts (Popper, 1978, 1981). These concepts are organised in logical patterns or epistemic structures as concepts are built in relation to other inferred concepts (Brandom, 2000). For example, the word *capitalism* as a concept in the social sciences infers many other concepts, such as *social class division*, *means of production*, *ownership*, *proletarian*, *bourgeoisie*, and *exploitation*; the concept *social class division* infers those who have *ownership* over the *means of production* as *bourgeoisie* and those who are *exploited* as *proletarian*. Increasingly complex theories are created as conceptual patterns or epistemic structures are expanded (Rata, 2018). For instance, by linking *capitalism* to another episteme such as *socialism* or *communism*, the larger episteme of *socioeconomic system* is generated and is then available for critique.

Theoretical concepts constituting disciplinary knowledge take a number of forms. The two forms which concern me are *knowledge-that* and *knowledge-how* (Winch, 2013, 2014). Knowledge-that refers to more abstract concepts which have explanatory power over the principles and rationales of knowledge-how; knowledge-how is produced to explain and demonstrate the concrete application of knowledge-that at the disciplinary level, consisting of specific rules, processes, procedures, and skills of the knowledge domain (Winch, 2013, 2014).

Disciplinary knowledge is structured according to two basic principles. The first principle is what Winch terms "epistemic ascent", referring to the logical interrelationship between associated inferential concepts in any given epistemic structure (2013, p. 128, 2014, p. 47). The

second principle refers to the order of those concepts which Bernstein theorises as "vertical relations" (2000, p. 34); that is, the permutations and combinations of a discipline's concepts follow a lower-order to higher-order hierarchical sequence (Vygotsky, 1962). For instance, the concept of *repeated addition* (3×8=24) in Mathematics is understandable only after the concept of *addition* (8+8+8=24) because the operation of the former depends on the logic of the latter. These two principles that structure disciplinary knowledge have been further theorised into one logic, "conceptual progression" (Rata, 2016, p. 172).

Due to its unique structure, disciplinary knowledge enables a person to generalise and think abstractly beyond the context-specific sociocultural boundaries by acquiring and using disciplinary concepts (Young & Muller, 2013). For example, a person living today may use the disciplinary concept of *feudalism* to theorise ancient China's social structure. Therefore, the acquisition of disciplinary knowledge entails the separation of the knower and the knowing processes (Moore, 2007). A knower can communicate and express ideas in the symbols of disciplinary concepts, even without having to experience the material or subjectively lived local life-worlds (Beck, 2014). In this way, disciplinary knowledge "enables humanity to liberate itself from the limitations of experiential or context-dependent knowledge alone" (Rata, 2016, p. 171). It is also in this way that disciplinary knowledge can liberate individual students from the limitations of their physical and living worlds by acquiring more context-independent, generalisable and universalisable epistemic concepts. When disciplinary knowledge, in Young's (2008) terminology, *powerful knowledge*, is provided for students, it can help to achieve educational justice and equity as it provides them with the means to think in abstract ways. Realist educationalists argue therefore that schools should provide students with access to disciplinary knowledge and a curriculum enriched with *powerful knowledge,* rather than sociocultural knowledge which consists of context-dependent values, beliefs, and ideals and is

often influenced by social, ethnic, and ideological imperatives (Maton, 2014; Muller, 2000; Rata, 2012, Young, 2008).

Sociocultural Knowledge

In contrast to disciplinary knowledge, sociocultural knowledge consists of unexamined everyday concrete beliefs, values, norms, opinions, ideas, concepts, and ideologies (Rata, 2012). Unlike disciplinary knowledge, sociocultural knowledge does not have a clear epistemic structure of concepts and connected content which is traceable to the discipline. In other words, sociocultural knowledge is *not* made up of systemised concepts that have a lower-to-higher order or an abstract-to-concrete structure; instead, its concepts and content with competencies that follow are culturally derived or ideologically generated. Therefore, sociocultural knowledge is traceable to culture and ideology, not to a specific discipline. It has no internal conceptual, epistemic structures that provide the means for the development of systemised context-independent thought (Rata, 2012).

Bernstein argues that sociocultural knowledge (what he terms *horizontal discourse*) has "a direct relation to a material base, these meanings are wholly consumed by the context. These meanings are so embedded in the context that they have no reference outside that context" (2000, p. 30). This is also demonstrated by my analysis that the sociocultural knowledge embedded in the Chinese language curriculum is traced back to the government's core socialist values, rather than disciplinary concepts of the discipline of Chinese Linguistics.

Because sociocultural knowledge is located within a specific context, its acquisition requires linking the knower to material knowing processes, settings, and environments of the knower's experience of, involvement with, and understanding of local life-worlds. As Bernstein argues, horizontal discourses (sociocultural knowledge) "are related not by integration of their meanings by some coordinating principle, but [they] are related through the functional relations

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of segments or contexts to the everyday life" (2000, pp.158-159). In other words, meaning generated from sociocultural knowledge depends highly on the sociocultural contexts in which the knower exists. For example, Christian culture is always tied to its followers. The most important prerequisite for the existence of Christianity is that its followers believe in the existence of God. Without this ideological and cultural context, Christianity would disappear.

Sociocultural knowledge has two main functions. The first is to cultivate within people sociocultural beliefs, values, ideals, and norms that unite them in a racial, kin, social, or ethnic group. The second function is, through fulfilling the first function, to provide a sense of psychological and sociocultural belonging to members within that group (Rata, 2012). For instance, in some local colleges in New Zealand where the majority of the students are Pacific and Maori in origin, the teaching of sociocultural knowledge such as "indigenous and Pacific languages and musical, cultural and performing traditions" has helped to reach the colleges' educational goal for individuals' "coming together" and for "community building" (Wood, 2014, p. 10). My policy analysis of the *Plan* and the *Standard* demonstrates this. The government has inserted its core socialist values into the Chinese curriculum through an orientation towards sociocultural knowledge to cultivate a socialist gaze within the young generation so as to "enhance national cohesion and creativity" (MoE, 2018b, p. 1).

Sociocultural knowledge is context-dependent, so its structuring principle in the curriculum is situated *outside* context-independent disciplinary concepts. Such a structuring principle, external to disciplinary knowledge, can be theorised as an "external organiser" (McPhail & Rata, 2016, p. 55). Moreover, compared to a conceptually rich curriculum, a curriculum which is oriented towards sociocultural knowledge often highlights subject content rather than subject concepts and takes *topic, theme, or relevance approaches* to the selection, organisation, and arrangements of subject content (McPhail & Rata, 2016). These sociocultural components such as topics and themes are structured in what Bernstein (2000) called "horizontal relations" (p.

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34). My policy analysis illustrates this. The *Standard* allocates the subject content of the Chinese Language curriculum into 25 learning modules with different themes; the only interconnection between the 25 modules is *three strands of culture* (sociocultural knowledge) rather than a vertical epistemic structure of disciplinary concepts.

I have elaborated at some length the differentiation between disciplinary knowledge and sociocultural knowledge. This knowledge differentiation has proved to be significantly valuable for the development of my argument in the subsequent chapters. My analysis of the *Plan* and the *Standard* (MoE, 2018a, 2018b) reveals that both policies have forged the Chinese language curriculum emphasising sociocultural knowledge which is traceable to the government's core socialist values. These values have bound the curriculum knowledge to China's socialist context, rather than to disciplinary dimensions of Chinese linguistics and literature which are more context-independent and less influenced by the socialist ideological imperatives.

Standing with those realist educationalists, I argue that schools should differentiate the two types of knowledge and regard disciplinary knowledge as the core for curriculum making and designing (Beck, 2014; Maton, 2014; McPhail, 2020a; Moore, 2013; Muller, 2000; Rata, 2012, 2017; 2021; Vernon, 2020; Young & Muller, 2011, 2013; Young, 2008). This is because a curriculum where prominence is given to sociocultural knowledge is likely to confine students' knowledge to specific sociocultural contexts of local life-worlds, rather than developing their awareness of the limitations of subjective personal vision, life backgrounds, and political ideology. Moreover, the epistemic structures of disciplinary knowledge provide quite different affordances for learning from sociocultural knowledge. Academic knowledge is structured through systems of interrelated concepts that generate an epistemic structure. Context-independent, generalisable, and universalisable epistemic concepts can cross time and space enabling students to develop more profound imagination and creativity (Bernstein, 2000; Rata,

2012, 2018, Young, 2008). This type of knowledge is also constantly reviewed and critiqued in academic communities worldwide, whereas sociocultural knowledge is founded on cultural belief. My argument also resonates with Polanyi (1969) who argues that the purpose of education should be to help individuals obtain universally intellectual development that enables them to explore the universe freely. Moreover, the elaboration of the *knowledge differentiation* allows me to identify *sociocultural knowledge* as the mechanism for the *recontextualisation* of the core socialist values in the *Plan* and the *Standard*. Next, I explain how I used both concepts to create a *Four-Dimensional Analytic Schema* to study both policies and to further identify the mechanisms of recontextualisation.

7.3.3 The Four-Dimensional Analytic Schema

Drawing on the two concepts of *recontextualisation* and *knowledge differentiation*, I designed a *Four-Dimensional Analytic Schema* to pinpoint the mechanisms of recontextualisation contained in the *Plan* and the *Standard*. This schema was adapted from the *Curriculum Design Coherence Model* [CDC Model] (McPhail, 2020a; Rata & McPhail, 2020; Rata, 2019, 2021). The CDC Model is a useful analytical device for this context because it takes disciplinary *knowledge* as its focus. The CDC Model was created as a means to identify and organise the epistemic structure of disciplinary-derived curriculum knowledge for teaching, that is, to identity disciplinary-derived propositions, concepts, content, and competencies to create curriculum coherence. Previously the CDC Model has been used to analyse the constitution of disciplinary knowledge (e.g., Rata & McPhail, 2020). However, my adaptation also allows the CDC Model to be applied to analyse sociocultural knowledge. The concept of *sociocultural knowledge* has proven invaluable in enabling me to understand the link between the core socialist values as expressed in the *Plan* and the *Standard* and the way in which they appear as actual curriculum knowledge. In turn, the analytic schema adapted from the CDC Model's four elements (see *Figure 7.4*) enabled me to identify the type of knowledge given dominance in

the *Plan* and the *Standard*. Specifically, the four elements provided the criteria for me to identify policy propositions, subject concepts, content, and the resulting competencies in both policies as sociocultural knowledge. The analytic schema is presented in *Figure 7.4*, with illustrations of how each criterion links to the features of the *Plan* and the *Standard* (see *Figure 7.3*).

Criteria (Elements)	Content	Link to Knowledge	Link to the new Features of the *Standard* (the frequently highlighted terms, in bold italic below, see *Figure 7.3*)
curriculum policy propositions	curriculum policy propositions state the focus of a subject	what the focus of subject knowledge is	Both curriculum policies that I analyse focus on cultivating an idealised type of knower who becomes a qualified ***builder and successor*** of China's ***great socialist cause*** through undertaking the fundamental tasks of developing ***socialism***, promoting the ***core socialist values,*** and enhancing ***cultural self-confidence*** of the young generation.
subject concepts	subject concepts build policy propositions into a system of related ideas	what subject knowledge means	Influenced by the policy propositions, both curriculum policies indicate that ***traditional Chinese culture, revolutionary culture,*** and ***advanced socialist culture*** are the subject concepts and content which help to develop ***socialism***, to spread ***core socialist values***, and to enhance ***cultural self-confidence***. (My analysis shows that both policies to some extent interweave subject concepts with content)
subject content	subject content materialises the generality of subject concepts into their particularity	what subject knowledge actually is	
subject competencies	subject competencies are used to apply subject concepts and subject content	what can be done with subject knowledge	The curriculum policies highlight ***four core competencies***: (i) acquiring the Chinese language, (ii) developing the Chinese way of thinking, (iii) cultivating appreciation and love towards ***Chinese culture*** via developing aesthetic dispositions, attitudes, and values, and (iv) developing the ability and generating the enthusiasm to understand, inherit, and transmit ***Chinese culture***

Figure 7.4 The Four-Dimensional Analytic Schema (after Rata, "Knowledge-Rich Teaching: A Model of Curriculum Design Coherence" in *British Educational Research Journal* (vol. 45, issue 4, 2019, 14-33; also with reference to the two curriculum policies that I analyse, see above)

In the next section, I use the schema to analyse and identify the ways in which the core socialist values were recontextualised into the *Plan* and the *Standard* in relation to the four criteria of the schema.

7.4 Analysis: the Mechanisms of Recontextualisation

My analysis reveals that the core socialist values were recontextualised into the *Plan* and the *Standard* through what I identify as three mechanisms of recontextualisation: (i) policy propositions, (ii) subject competencies, and (iii) subject concepts and content. I explain each in turn.

7.4.1 The first mechanism of recontextualisation: policy propositions

The policy propositions contained in the *Plan* and the *Standard* provide the first mechanism of recontextualisation. The policy propositions of the *Plan* are seen in the statement that the curriculum reform strives "to cultivate the young generation into builders and successors of China's great socialist cause" (MoE, 2018a, p. 2). To achieve this goal, the *Plan* requires all the subjects encompassed in the senior high school programme to undertake the fundamental task of (i) "developing *socialism* with Chinese characteristics", (ii) "nurturing and practising the *core socialist values*", (iii) "carrying forward and drawing on *fine traditional Chinese culture* to create an *advanced socialist culture*", and (iv) "boosting the *confidence* of the young generation towards the country's *socialist theories, institutions, cultures,* as well as *the socialist road with Chinese characteristics*"(emphasis added, p. 2). These frequently addressed terms such as *socialism*, *socialist values*, *socialist theories*, *socialist institutions*, and *socialist cultures* explicitly reflect that the *Plan* has an orientation towards sociocultural knowledge which is traceable to the government's socialist ideological imperatives rather than epistemically-derived disciplinary concepts.

Playing a guiding role in the creation of Curriculum Standards of specific subjects, the *Plan* has passed on its sociocultural-knowledge-oriented proposition to the *Standard*. The policy proposition for the *Standard* states that the educational goal of the Chinese language curriculum is to "inherit and transmit *Chinese culture* and thus to enhance national cohesion and creativity"

(emphasis added, MoE, 2018b, p. 1). The policy proposition is further extended in how the *Standard* provides statements on (a) the nature of the curriculum, and (b) the four policymaking principles underpinning its reform. I find that these statements contain a sociocultural knowledge orientation.

(a) The nature of the curriculum

The *Standard* defines the Chinese Language curriculum as a comprehensive and practical curriculum used for teaching "Chinese language and characters, with the fundamental nature of the unity of *instrumentality* and *humanity*" (emphasis added, MoE, 2018b, p. 1). "*Instrumentality* refers to teaching Chinese in the real linguistic environment and through authentic language activities that enable students to deepen love towards and understanding of the language, to master grammar, and to use the language properly" (emphasis added, p. 1). Thus, instrumentality emphasises the curriculum's function in enabling the context-dependent practical use of Chinese – everyday, and sociocultural knowledge. *Humanity* denotes "the cultivation of growing *interest* in the Chinese language and of deepening *love* towards *Chinese culture*", which depends on "transmitting the *core socialist values,* cultivating aesthetic taste, accumulating *cultural knowledge*, and understanding *cultural diversity*" (emphasis added, p. 1). The prescribed nature of the curriculum orients the policy propositions of the *Standard* towards sociocultural knowledge because the combination of instrumentality and humanity is for a sociocultural purpose; to "inherit and transmit *Chinese culture* and thus to enhance national cohesion and creativity" (emphasis added, p. 1).

(b) The four policymaking principles

The *Standard* includes *four policymaking principles* underpinning its reform. I find that each of these principles also contains a sociocultural knowledge orientation. The first principle focuses on the sociocultural function of the curriculum in educating people by defining the

Chinese language and culture as "the spiritual home of Chinese people" (MoE, 2018b, p. 2). It thus highlights the curriculum's "unique and irreplaceable strength in inheriting and carrying forward *traditional Chinese culture*, *revolutionary culture*, and *advanced socialist culture*, in cultivating *cultural self-confidence*, and in promoting *cultural innovation*" (emphasis added, p. 2). On this basis, the *Standard* stipulates that the reform of the curriculum aims "to adhere to the ideal of *socialism with Chinese characteristics*, to carry forward the *national ethos*, to integrate the transmission of the *core socialist values*, and to cultivate students' deep *love* for the Chinese civilisation, the country, the people, and the Chinese Communist Party" (emphasis added, p. 2).

The second principle highlights the cultivation of the four *core competencies* (I analyse these below). I argue that this is for a sociocultural rather than for an academic disciplinary purpose; that is, the development of these core competencies is "to enable students to participate in the construction and transmission of *advanced socialist culture with Chinese characteristics* actively and willingly" (emphasis added, p. 3). The third principle emphasises students' personal experiences and highlights the need to strengthen the sociocultural connection between the curriculum content and students' *local life-worlds* and thus to develop the language competencies that enable them to "participate in society more readily and actively" (emphasis added, p. 3). The fourth principle addresses the importance of the curriculum's response to the broader sociocultural changes in China. For instance, the policy encourages teachers to develop new curriculum resources to incorporate "advanced media, innovative technologies, and new methods" into their pedagogy, so that the curriculum can keep up with external sociocultural changes (p. 3).

My analysis of the four policymaking principles of the *Standard* indicates that the propositions for the Chinese language curriculum are statements of mainly sociocultural knowledge rather than statements derived from and emphasising disciplinary knowledge. This is particularly seen

in that the *Standard* defines cultural inheritance as the mission, culture transmission as the purpose, students' living environment and experience as the knowledge source, and response to sociocultural changes as the goal of teaching the curriculum. This emphasis on sociocultural knowledge aims to develop a particular type of knower rather than being overly concerned with *what will be known* by using disciplinary knowledge (Maton, 2014); that is to say, the ultimate goal of the curriculum is "to cultivate the young generation into builders and successors of China's great socialist cause" (MoE, 2018a, p. 1, 2018b, p. 2). It is also this sociocultural knowledge orientation that enables the recontextualisation of the core socialist values, which is sociocultural knowledge in nature (see above), into the *Standard*.

I also find that the policy propositions have influenced the subject competencies, concepts, and content prescribed in the *Plan* and the *Standard*. I examined the subject competencies before researching the subject concepts and content because the development of the former has significant implications on the creation of the latter according to the *Plan* and the *Standard* (MoE, 2018a, 2018b).

7.4.2 The second mechanism of recontextualisation: subject competencies

The second mechanism of recontextualisation of the core socialist values lies in the four *core competencies* prescribed in the *Standard*. This recontextualisation process operates through the curriculum evaluation practices that emphasise these competencies, such as the Gaokao – China's annual National College Entrance Examination (CEE).

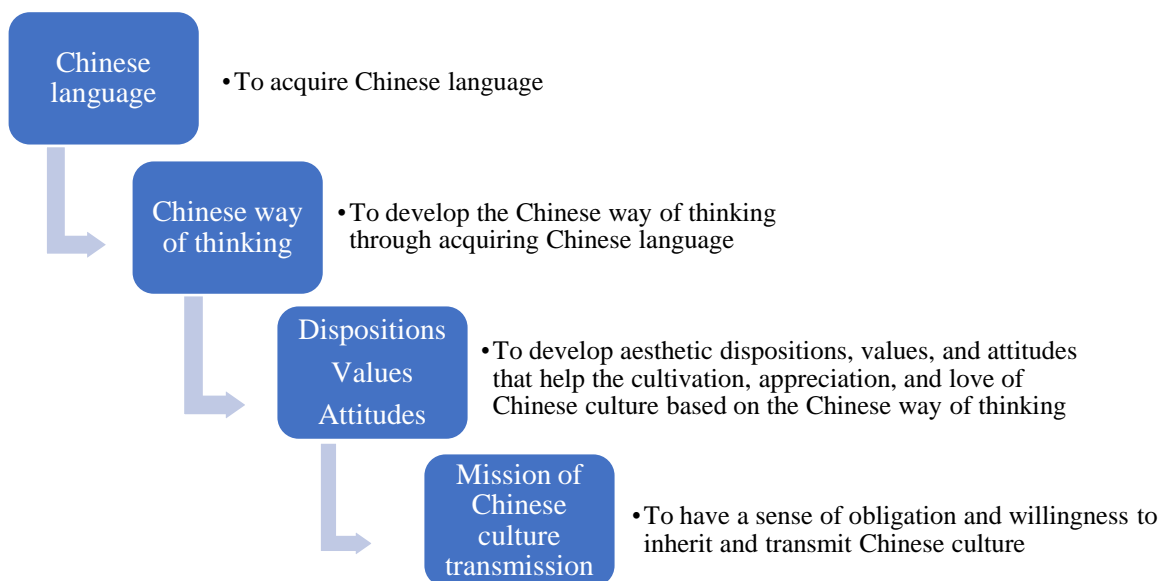### *The four core competencies*

One of the implications of China's curriculum reforms is the development and clarification of core competencies (MoE, 2018a). According to the *Plan*, "the curriculum reforms have integrated the previous *three-dimensional objectives* (knowledge and skills, processes and methods, and dispositions, attitudes and values)" into the *core competencies* which embed "the

expected values, needed dispositions, and critical abilities that students should develop after learning a subject" (p. 4). Furthermore, "centred on the development of core competencies, the reforms have rewritten subject content, redesigned pedagogic references, and updated suggestions for curriculum evaluation and textbook compilation" in light of these competencies (p. 4). These efforts aim to enhance the potential of each senior high school subject curriculum in developing the prescribed core competencies; thus this "enables students to grow *socialist values and beliefs*, to have a sense of civic responsibility, to cultivate scientific and *cultural dispositions*, and to develop abilities to communicate and cooperate, and to be able to conduct independent and lifelong learning" (emphasis added, p. 3).

Led by the *Plan*, the *Standard* defines the core competencies of the Chinese language curriculum as "a crystallised reflection of its value in educating people" (MoE, 2018b, p. 4), which assist students in "forming *correct outlooks* and values, *desired dispositions*, and developing critical abilities" (emphasis added, p. 4). Specifically, the *Standard* identifies and promulgates four core competencies:

> (a) acquisition of the Chinese language, (b) development of the *Chinese way of thinking*, (c) cultivation of appreciation and love towards *Chinese culture* through developing aesthetic dispositions, attitudes, and *values*, and (d) development of the ability and generation of enthusiasm to understand, inherit, and transmit *Chinese culture* (emphasis added, p. 4).

These four competencies make visible how the core socialist values carried by Chinese culture (advanced socialist culture, traditional Chinese culture, and revolutionary culture) permeate the *Standard* in terms of subject competencies (I explain these three strands of culture below). The recontextualisation is demonstrated in four procedural and progressive steps, as shown in *Figure 7.5*.

Figure 7.5 The four competencies addressed in the *Standard*

As seen in *Figure 7.5*, the ultimate goal in developing the four competencies is to inherit and transmit Chinese culture. The attainment of this goal relies on students' "appreciation and love towards *advanced socialist culture*" and their "willingness to participate in [its] construction" (emphasis added, MoE, 2018b, p. 3). In this way, to develop these competencies is to expose students to *advanced socialist culture*.

The concept of *advanced socialist culture* is used as the most concise and crystallised expression of *Chinese culture* in the contemporary period (Jiang, 2019; Liu, 2015; Liu, 2012; Luo & Bao, 2014; Qu, 2016; Yuan, 2008; Zhao & Sun, 2016). Advanced socialist culture refers to excellent practical experience and spiritual achievements that the Chinese people have achieved in the construction of socialist modernisation under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party [CCP] since the founding of modern China in 1949 (Jiang, 2019; Liu, 2015). According to contemporary writers, advanced socialist culture is developed based on the critical inheritance of *traditional Chinese culture* produced before the establishment of the CCP in 1921, and *revolutionary culture* created after the establishment of the CCP and before the

founding of modern China in 1949 (Duan, 2012; Kong, 2015; Li & Zhou, 2014; Li, 2013; Li, 2015; Liu, 2015; Liu, 2018; Wei, 2012; Yang, 2014; Zhao et al., 2016. I also mention these *three strands of culture* later in my analysis of the subject concepts and content). Advanced socialist culture takes traditional Chinese culture and revolutionary culture as its basis, adherence to the guiding position of Marxism as its nature and orientation, contemporary Chinese society as its historical and social setting, and the march towards a socialist culture that faces modernisation, the world, and the future as its development goal (Jiang, 2019; Liu, 2015).

The core socialist values and advanced socialist culture intertwine with each other, performing a vital role in education and socialist practices in contemporary China. Wang (2015) argues that the extent to which the values can guide China's socialist construction and cultural innovation determines the competitiveness of the country's advanced socialist culture, and of socialism as a global ideology today. Therefore, to adhere to socialism that centres on the core socialist values, in turn, requires giving full play to the guiding role of advanced socialist culture in educating people (Xi, 2020). This is because nurturing the values depends in the final analysis on nurturing human minds and souls (Sun, 2013). The key to achieving this is to cultivate within people socialist dispositions, outlooks, and life values that embed the ideology of advanced socialist culture (CCPPD, 2018). In China's senior high school Chinese language teaching context, this includes utilising Chinese language and literary works such as poetry, fables, novels, prose, dramas, literature about traditional Chinese culture, revolutionary culture, and advanced socialist culture (also see my analysis of the 18th learning module below) to achieve this aim.

The *intimate* connections between the core socialist values and advanced socialist culture also reflect the necessity to take the transmission of the values as a principal approach to develop the core competencies for culture transmission as prescribed in the *Standard*. I also argue that

the four core competencies contained in the *Standard* have exerted an influence on the orientation towards the core socialist values contained in the curriculum evaluation practices.

The impact of the four core competencies on curriculum evaluation

The recontextualisation of the core socialist values is also extended through the guiding role that the prescribed core competencies play in the curriculum evaluation. The *Standard* explicitly defines itself as "a valuable reference for curriculum evaluation" (MoE, 2018b, p. 49). Evaluation processes are expected to "take the development of the four core competencies as a focus" (p. 49).

These core-competencies-oriented suggestions for curriculum evaluation as described in the *Standard* have helped to recontextualise the core socialist values into the evaluation practices, especially seen in the College Entrance Examination (CEE). For instance, the two terms of *core socialist values* and *traditional Chinese culture* have been privileged when proposing topics for CEE Chinese writing (Cai & Han, 2019). Chinese writing often accounts for at least 40% of the entire score of the exam and is regarded as playing a crucial and indispensable role in the CEE Chinese test (Zhang, 2019; Zou & Lu, 2019). The CEE aims to select those young people with "lofty socialist ideals, moral integrity, better educational background, and a good sense of self-discipline" as successors of the great socialist cause to continue for higher education (Zhang, 2019, p. 16, my translation). This finding also resonates with Zhao (2020) who argues that China's suyang (competencies)-based senior high school curriculum reforms have contributed to "the instrumentalization of [Chinese] language and culture as objects of [curriculum] knowledge" (p. 105). This aims to "inculcate in students a strong national and cultural identity, [and] patriotism" (Zhao, 2020, p. 106), and a "firm belief and faith in the [CCP's] leadership and socialist system" (Law, 2014, p. 341).

To summarise, the four core competencies prescribed in the *Standard* were developed to fulfil the ultimate goal of enabling the young generation to inherit and transmit *Chinese culture* through learning the Chinese Language subject (MoE, 2018b). This goal is consistent with the policy propositions of the *Standard*; "to inherit and transmit *Chinese culture* and thus to enhance national cohesion and creativity" (emphasis added, p. 1). My analysis demonstrates that the four core competencies contained in the *Standard* offer the second mechanism of recontextualisation to promulgate the core socialist values in terms of subject competencies as well as subject concepts and content (explained below) to realise the sociocultural goal set up for the Chinese language curriculum.

7.4.3 The third mechanism of recontextualisation: subject concepts and content

My analysis reveals that the sociocultural-knowledge-oriented policy propositions and subject competencies prescribed in the *Standard* have exerted an influence on policymakers' selection, creation, and organisation of subject concepts and content towards sociocultural knowledge. According to the CDC Model (McPhail, 2020a; Rata & McPhail, 2020; Rata, 2019, 2021), subject concepts denote how the subject propositions are built up into ideas; that is, subject concepts denote the structure or systems of concepts that comprise a disciplinary or subject area. Subject content refers to the specific pedagogic content that embeds the subject concepts, such as texts, videos, images, topics, exercises, and textbooks. Subject propositions that regulate the focus of subject concepts and content characterise different knowledge orientations, either centring on disciplinary knowledge or sociocultural knowledge. Therefore, the subject concepts and content that specialise and materialise the subject propositions are also structured differently from each other with different knowledge orientations.

The subject concepts and content prescribed in the *Standard* are shown in the form of 25 learning modules with discursive and divergent themes, such as "*Contemporary Cultural*

Participation, *Practical Chinese Reading and Communication*, and *Appreciation of Chinese Revolutionary Works*" (MoE, 2018b, p. 9). The link between these modules, as explicitly pointed out by the *Standard*, is *three strands of culture*:

> The curriculum consists of three components, compulsory, required-optional, and optional content. The three components are further arranged into 25 learning modules. *Three strands of culture – traditional Chinese culture, revolutionary culture,* and *advanced socialist culture* – run throughout the three components and the 25 learning modules (emphasis added, MoE, 2018b, p. 9).

For each of the 25 learning modules, the *Standard* also provides (i) objective and content, describing the specific teaching objective and content of a module, and (ii) pedagogic tips, providing teachers with suggestions on the teaching methods and use of curriculum resources (MoE, 2018b).

My analysis of the overall text of the *Standard*, especially the descriptions of each learning module, indicates that the interconnections between the 25 modules can be captured by what Bernstein calls "horizontal relations" (2000, p. 34); that is, these learning models are theme-based and not organised according to principles of disciplinary conceptual progression; a "vertical" epistemic structure (Bernstein, 2000, p. 34). This is clear for two reasons. The three strands of culture running *throughout the 25 modules* are sociocultural constructs and lack the vertical relations that characterise disciplinary knowledge (explained above). Second, *within each module*, the objective, content, and pedagogic tips contained in the *Standard* orients the teaching towards sociocultural knowledge, rather than epistemically-structured knowledge internal to an academic discipline. This is demonstrated by the close-up analysis of the 18th learning module (see below).

A close-up analysis of the 18ᵗʰ learning module

The module is themed *Appreciation of Chinese Revolutionary Works*. At the very beginning of this module, the *Standard* states "this module aims to help students appreciate Chinese revolutionary works, understand the history of China's revolution, modernisation, and socialist construction" (MoE, 2018b, p. 28). In doing so, it aims to "cultivate within students love towards the CCP and the country" (p. 28).

The *Standard* then describes the objective and content of the module in *three points* (my analysis reveals that the policymakers, to an extent, intermingle module objectives with content and with the proposed pedagogic tips for teaching the module). First, students select a poem written by any socialist revolutionist under the guidance of teachers and then read it intensively and write up a reading report. On this basis, teachers organise students to share their reading experiences as a means to further understand the revolutionary ethos and excellent qualities of these revolutionaries and their impact on life today. The second point is similar to the first one, except that the required reading is changed from a poem to a literary work of some length that depicts how the CCP leads the broad masses of the people in the course of China's revolution, modernisation, and socialist construction. The last point is about the skills (such as how to use reading materials and how to write a reading report) that students should learn through the first two points.

Two of the above three points are explicitly related to China's revolutionary culture, which is sociocultural knowledge. Although the third point which emphasises skills such as reading and report writing may call on specialised disciplinary knowledge such as particular writing strategies and methods, the ultimate goal for teaching the module centres on acquiring certain predetermined sociocultural values as the outcome. This is made clear as described at the very beginning of the module; to "cultivate within students love towards the CCP and the country"

(MoE, 2018b, p. 28). This also aligns with the overarching goal of the curriculum reforms to educate "qualified builders and successors of the great socialist cause" (MoE, 2018a, p. 1, 2018b, p.2).

In the last section of the 18th module, the *Standard* proposes three pedagogic tips for teaching the module. The first tip considers how teachers should guide students in selecting reading materials. In particular, teachers are required to pay attention to "the connection between the characteristics of selected reading works and the *reality of students' lives* in a bid to choose apposite works for each student" (emphasis added, MoE, 2018b, p. 29). The second tip concerns the use of local curriculum resources. For example, teachers are encouraged to "fully apply local curriculum resources, such as patriotism education bases[38], revolutionary or military museums, face-to-face dialogues to local revolutionary predecessors or heroic model figures, to help students deepen their understanding of China's revolutionary history" (emphasis added, p. 29). The last tip introduces how to deepen and enable a more comprehensive understanding of revolutionary culture. The *Standard* asks teachers of the subject to encourage their students to "have academic conversations with teachers of other relevant subjects, such as History, and Thought and Politics[39], on China's revolutionary culture" (p. 29).

These pedagogic tips in the *Standard* draw on a context-dependent knowledge approach to the teaching of the module. For instance, the second and third tips allow students to deepen their understanding of revolutionary culture through the navigation of their local life-worlds (museums, patriotism education bases, and conversations with local people and teachers of

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[38] This refers to the cultural bases such as local museums, memorial halls, art galleries, and historic sites at different provinces and regions in China designated by the country's Ministry of Civil Affairs for civic education since 1995.

[39] It is a subject included in China's senior high school programme, like the subject of Citizenship Education in the West. Its major content includes 'economy and economic life', 'politics and political life', 'culture and cultural life', and 'society and social life'.

relevant subjects) rather than coming into contact with disciplinary subject knowledge such as historical documents and histories. In this way, the module highlights context-dependent knowledge of students' life context (Rata, 2016), rather than the disciplinary knowledge structured from an academic rationale. This context-dependent approach to the knowledge in the module is further emphasised by a student-centred, interest-led, and experience-driven approach to both curriculum content and pedagogy. This is particularly clear in the first tip that encourages teachers to link the selection of reading works to "the reality of students' lives" (MoE, 2018b, p. 29).

Rata's (2017) theorisation of "facilitation teaching" (p. 1003) can better capture this context-dependent knowledge approach embedded in both the module content and the proposed pedagogic tips contained in the *Standard*. Facilitation teaching takes a *teaching the child* approach that emphasises the personal experience, interests, preferences of students, and the local life-worlds where they live, rather than a *teaching knowledge to the child* approach that highlights teachers role in establishing the disciplinary foundation for knowledge in a pedagogic context (Rata, 2017). Such pedagogy, which is tightly bound to students' life settings, is likely to deprive them of the epistemic dimension of a subject and thus create a "vacuum" in the matter of knowledge content and sequence (McPhail, 2016a, p. 534). Groff (2012) theorises this pedagogy as a *socio-constructivist approach* to education where "learning is understood to be importantly shaped by the context within which it is *situated* and is *actively constructed* through *social negotiation* with others" (p. 3, italics in the original).

A close-up analysis of the 18th learning module shows that the *Standard* takes a sociocultural knowledge orientation in terms of subject concepts, content, and pedagogy. This is the third mechanism of recontextualisation, enabling the core socialist values which are in nature sociocultural knowledge to enter the *Standard*. This echoes the sociocultural knowledge

orientation of the *Standard* in terms of policy propositions and subject competencies as discussed above.

7.5 Chapter Conclusion

I have applied a conceptual methodology and used Bernstein's concept of *recontextualisation* and Durkheim's *theorisation of knowledge differentiation* as theoretical tools to analyse the *Plan* and the *Standard* in this chapter. I have aimed to identify and explain the mechanisms of recontextualisation through which the Chinese government has recontextualised its ascendant political ideals of the core socialist values into the education system in terms of curriculum policymaking. My analysis has shown that both the *Plan* and the *Standard* contain features embedding the values. This has been achieved through three mechanisms of recontextualisation operating with a sociocultural knowledge orientation that results in an internal consistency between the policy propositions, the subject concepts and content, and the subject competencies contained in both policies. This sociocultural knowledge orientation embedded in both policies is also a reflection of the government's strong will to insert its core socialist values into the education system and thus "to cultivate the young generation into qualified builders and successors of the great socialist cause with all-round moral, intellectual, physical, and aesthetic development" (MoE, 2018a, p. 1, 2018b, p.2).

The next chapter reports on the second of the three empirical investigations in my study. I use Bernstein's sociological concept of *recontextualisation* as an analytical and explanatory tool to deal with my empirical class observation data. I identify the extent to which the core socialist values embedded in both policies (the *Plan* and the *Standard*), appear to be influencing the pedagogic recontextualising field, that is, influencing and shaping teachers' practices in classrooms. I also explain the mechanisms through which the six teacher participants recontextualise the values into their pedagogic discourses and classroom communications.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE PEDAGOGIC RECONTEXTUALISING FIELD

CLASS OBSERVATION

The preceding chapter discussed the first of the three empirical investigations in this research. My findings revealed that the government's core socialist values have been recontextualised into both curriculum policies (the *Plan* and the *Standard*) that I analysed in relation to the policy propositions, the prescribed subject concepts, content, and competencies. I found an emphasis on sociocultural knowledge that aims to cultivate within members of the young generation a socialist worldview and to transform them into an idealised type of knower: a qualified builder and successor of China's great socialist cause.

This chapter concerns the second of the three empirical investigations – class observations. I design a *Six-Dimensional Analytic Schema* and use it to analyse the data. In my analysis, I also employ *thematic analysis* as the investigative method and Bernstein's (2000) idea of *recontextualisation* as the macro-level theoretical concept. Other disciplinary concepts such as *disciplinary knowledge*, *sociocultural knowledge*, *instructional teaching*, and *facilitation teaching* (see Chapter Seven) are used to identify, thematise, theorise, and explain themes of significance embedded in the empirical data. I examine the extent to which the everyday classrooms are implicated in the politics of the government's core socialist values and explain how the values are recontextualised into the in-class pedagogic communications. The empirical data of class observations at the six research classrooms with the six teacher participants from the research school is discussed. This chapter aims to answer the fourth research sub-question – "In what ways, and to what extent, are the core socialist values recontextualised into the curriculum policy practices?"

8.1 The Six-Dimensional Analytic Schema

In this section, I elucidate how I developed a *Six-Dimensional Analytic Schema* for the analysis of the class observation data by drawing on relevant theoretical concepts from the literature and by referring to the empirical class observation data themselves. The six dimensions include *lesson proposition*, *lesson concepts*, *lesson content*, *lesson competencies*, *lesson pedagogy*, and *lesson participation*. I explain my rationale for the design of the six dimensions.

The first four dimensions are drawn from the four elements of the *Curriculum Design Coherence Model* [CDC Model] (McPhail, 2020a; Rata & McPhail, 2020; Rata, 2019, 2021) that I introduced at some length in Chapter Seven. I made some changes to the CDC Module, enabling it to fit my research context. To be specific, I renamed the CDC Model's four elements of *knowledge proposition*, *knowledge concepts*, *knowledge content*, and *knowledge competencies* respectively as *lesson proposition*, *lesson concepts*, *lesson content*, and *lesson competencies*.

I draw on the four elements of the CDC Model for four reasons. First, they are sufficiently abstract to be able to refer to and categorise a considerable amount of my empirical lesson observation data. Second, they contribute to the identification, analysis, and explanation of *the mechanisms of recontextualisation* through which the core socialist values are embedded in the observed classes (see the next section). Third, they offer consistent dimensions between the official recontextualising field (referred to in my case as the two official curriculum policies: the *Plan* and the *Standard*, see Chapter Seven) and the pedagogic recontextualising field (referred to in my case as class observations in this chapter) because I have applied them in analysing the two curriculum policies in the preceding chapter.

The fifth dimension of *lesson pedagogy* discusses how the teacher participants teach lesson concepts and content in the real classroom context. I mainly draw on Rata (2017, following

Winch, 1998) and discuss two teaching approaches, referring to "instructional teaching" (p. 1009) and "facilitation teaching" (p. 1003) that I have explained in the preceding chapter. I refer to the two teaching approaches because (i) they are embedded in the empirical class observation data, and (ii) they serve as a "translation device" (McPhail & Lourie, 2017, p. 288) to analyse and explain the recontextualising mechanisms that allow the core socialist values to enter the pedagogic recontextualising field.

According to Rata's (2017) theorisation, the *instructional teaching* approach focuses on teaching generalisable, universalisable, and context-independent *disciplinary knowledge* (read more in Chapter Seven). Nevertheless, this approach recognises the importance of creating a motivating, engaging, pedagogy in providing access to disciplinary knowledge, but the approach addresses teachers' role in first setting up an epistemically structured knowledge base for students in the classroom (Rata, 2017; McPhail & Rata, 2016). The *facilitation teaching* approach, on the other hand, emphasises teaching context-dependent knowledge such as unexamined cultural norms, beliefs, experience, and life philosophy in a student-centred, interest-oriented, and experience-focused approach to curriculum content and pedagogy (Rata, 2017; McPhail & Rata, 2016). In this approach, the teacher primarily plays a facilitation role in organising students to select and generate the lesson content based on their knowledge of local-life worlds, personal interests, and sociocultural experience (McPhail & Rata, 2016).

The above-discussed five dimensions contribute to the formation of an initial analytic schema. I applied the initial schema to identify and categorise these dimensions in the data, analysing various manifestations of the recontextualising mechanisms encapsulated in the class observation data. In this process, I found that there are omissions of some recontextualising practices that are embedded in the data but could not be coded by the initial schema. For instance, in my analysis, I found that a student's perception and expression of cultural values might be either strengthened or reshaped by that of students' peers in classroom interaction,

such as group discussion, and question and answer sessions. To address this point, I refined the initial schema by adding a sixth dimension of *lesson participation*. This refers to inter-student communications in the observed classes.

After the *Six-Dimensional Analytic Schema* was created, it was further tested against the class observation data until further coding of the data yielded no new changes to it. Such iterative refining processes and procedures were necessary to develop a sensitive and well-fitted analytic schema. This schema not only allows dimensions of the mechanisms of recontextualisation to establish prevalence or absence but also enables me to use concepts from the discipline of sociology of education to explain the empirical. In summary, I present the schema in *Figure 8.1*.

Dimensions	Content
Lesson proposition	Lesson proposition states the lesson focus, which is seen not only in teachers' lesson plans (the designed teaching objectives) but also in their actual pedagogic practices in class.
Lesson concepts	Lesson concepts build the lesson proposition into coherent systems of meaning, seen in the disciplinary concepts taught in a lesson.
Lesson content	Lesson content packages lesson concepts into specific teaching materials, primarily seen in the lesson texts used in class.
Lesson pedagogy	Lesson pedagogy is the means to teach lesson concepts and content. I focus on examining two pedagogic approaches of *facilitation teaching* and *instructional teaching*.
Lesson competencies	Lesson competencies concern how students apply lesson concepts/content acquired, seen both in the teachers' lesson plans (the designed competencies to be developed), and in students' lesson participation.
Lesson participation	Lesson participation recognises students' contributions to the lesson, seen in their interactions in teaching activities such as group discussion, and question and answer sessions.

Figure 8.1 The Six-Dimensional Analytic Schema (after Rata, "Knowledge-Rich Teaching: A Model of Curriculum Design Coherence" in *British Educational Research Journal* (vol. 45, issue 4, 2019, 681-697)

8.2 Analysis: the Mechanisms of Recontextualisation

In this section, I apply the *Six-Dimensional Analytic Schema* to identify, describe, analyse, and explain how each of the six observed classes recontextualises and transmits the core socialist values in relation to the six dimensions. My identification and illustration of the mechanisms demonstrate how the sociological concept of *recontextualisation* interacts with and carries other disciplinary concepts (e.g., *sociocultural knowledge* and *facilitation teaching*) in creating the *mechanisms of recontextualisation* within the curriculum policy practices.

8.2.1 The six observed classes: a one-by-one analysis

Now, I analyse and explain the mechanisms of recontextualisation by describing the empirical data collected from the six observed classrooms in turn. The findings are tabulated into six figures (from *Figure 8.2* to *Figure 8.7*), with each of them linked to one of the six observed classes. I use the present tense in my descriptions of the six observed classrooms so as to create an immersive effect for the reader by making them as vivid and lifelike as possible. I use the respective pseudonyms Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, Rachel, John, and Jean for each of the six teacher participants to protect their identity.

The first class (Teacher: Isaac; Student No.: 47)	
Lesson length	40 minutes
Student grade	Year 10 (Grade One at the senior high school stage in China)
Lesson proposition	The lesson focuses on assisting the students in **understanding Confucius' life wisdom** through learning words and phrases in the given text.
Lesson concepts/ content	Isaac bases the lesson on **two Confucian doctrines about life wisdom** covered in a text[40] included in the textbook[41]. I present the content below.

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[40] This is the third text covered in the textbook entitled *Chinese Language: Selected Readings of Ancient Chinese Philosophers*. The textbook is one of 20 officially designated textbooks that must be used in various combinations in the senior high school Chinese Language programme (from Year 10 to Year 12) throughout the province where I conducted my research. This text consists of 12 Confucian doctrines on life wisdom in the form of either a monologue or a dialogue. I only provide the ones taught in the observed classes.

[41] China's senior high school Chinese Language programme uses 20 designated textbooks created under the guidance of the national curriculum policies entitled *Curriculum Standard for Chinese Language (2017 Edition)* (MoE, 2018b). They are jointly edited by the Affiliated Curriculum Research Institute of the Chinese People's

| | | 1. *The Master said to You[42]: Shall I teach you what knowledge is? Say yes when you know; and say no when you do not; – this is knowledge.[43]* |
| | | 2. *The Master said: When a man never asks himself 'What shall I think of this?' and 'What shall I think of that?', I can indeed do nothing with him.[44]* |

Lesson procedures (lesson concepts/content; lesson pedagogy; lesson competencies; student participation)	1st step (appr.5 mins)	Isaac briefly introduces Confucius' biography by playing a short video. He explicitly states **the significance that Confucian thoughts play in modern society** without any specific illustrations of the statement.
	2nd step (appr.8 mins)	Isaac invites two students to read the two Confucian doctrines, corrects their pronunciation errors, explains any polyphonic characters[45], elucidates the meaning of individual words or phrases, and guides the students in translating them into the modern Chinese language.
	3rd step (appr.9 mins)	Isaac organises the students into groups to discuss the two doctrines and to answer the two questions (i) "What do the two doctrines tell you?" and (ii) "What life wisdom can you learn from them?"
	4th step (appr.1 6 mins)	Isaac asks each group to assign a leader to share their answers with the rest of the class. In this process, **he offers no comments at all.** I summarise into four points the students' answers. First, the two doctrines tell people how to deal with ignorance. Confucius believes that being intelligent is not about being omniscient, but about frankly admitting one's ignorance. Second, smart people can accept ignorance squarely and take the initiative to learn hard and minimise it. Third, teachers are useful if and only if their students are willing to communicate actively with them. Fourth, one compelling way to acquire new knowledge is to admit that "I do not know".
	5th step (appr. 2 mins)	Isaac concludes the lesson by asking the students **to not act upon what they have not mastered** and encouraging them **to take the initiative to reduce the unknown by learning more**.
An analysis of the entire lesson		The lesson focuses on Confucian life wisdom (lesson proposition). Isaac takes a facilitation-teaching-oriented approach, seen in that 25 out of 40 minutes of the lesson time (3rd & 4th steps) was devoted to student-oriented discussions (lesson pedagogy). The lesson aims to strengthen students' understanding of Confucian life wisdom (lesson

[42] You refers to the name of one of Confucius's disciples.

[43] My translation. The original Chinese text is: 子曰：由，诲女知之乎？知之为知之，不知为不知，是知也。

[44] My translation. The original Chinese text is: 子曰：不曰如之何，如之何者，吾末如之何也已矣。

[45] "A polyphonic character is a type of character that has more than two pronunciations. In modern Chinese, the polyphone is about one tenth of all Chinese characters, and the modern Chinese dictionary contains about 982 polyphones". This quotation is from the webpage of *Hanbridge Mandarin* (https://www.hanbridgemandarin.com/article/chinese-phonetic/classifying-chinese-polyphonic-characters/). Webpage accessed on July 20, 2020.

competencies) through learning the two Confucian doctrines (lesson concepts/content). The two doctrines are used by Isaac in guiding the students to generate advice for their everyday life (lesson concepts/content/competencies). Views generated from students' discussions are related to either learning attitudes or life values (student participation).

Figure 8.2 The first class

The second class (Teacher: Rebekah; Student No.: 47)	
Lesson length	40 minutes
Student grade	Year 10 (Grade One at the senior high school stage in China)
Lesson proposition	The lesson focuses on assisting the students in recognising *the importance of being honest* through learning and understanding the text.
Lesson concepts/content	The text used by Rebekah presents six Confucian doctrines (see below) 1. *The Master said: Keep what you say and carry out what you do.*[46] 2. *The Master said: I wish for the old to live in peace and comfort, friends to trust each other, and the young to be taken good care of.*[47] 3. *The Master said: How can a person establish in society without honesty? How can a large carriage be made to go without the crossbar for yoking the oxen to or a small carriage without the arrangement for attaching the horses?*[48] 4. *The Master said: What you do not want to be done to yourself, do not do to others.*[49] 5. *The Master said: A man can enlarge the principles which he follows; those principles do not enlarge the man.*[50] 6. *The Master said: At fifteen, I set my heart upon learning. At thirty, I planted my feet firm upon the ground. At forty, I no longer suffered from perplexities. At fifty, I knew what the biddings of Heaven were. At sixty, I heard them with docile ears. At seventy, I could follow the dictates of my own heart; for what I desired no longer overstepped the boundaries of right.*[51]
Lesson procedures (lesson concepts/content; lesson pedagogy; lesson	1st step (appr. 5 mins)	Rebekah asks the students to read aloud three times each of the foregoing six doctrines projected onto a screen.
	2nd step (appr. 4 mins)	Rebekah divides the students into groups and tasks them with discussing the pronunciation, words, phrases, and sentences, and identifying any confusing or ambiguous phonetic or semantic points.

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[46] My translation. The original Chinese text is: 子曰：言必信，行必果。

[47] My translation. The original Chinese text is: 子曰：老者安之，朋友信之，少者怀之。

[48] My translation. The original Chinese text is: 子曰：人而无信，不知其可也。大车无輗，小车无軏，其何以行之哉？

[49] My translation. The original Chinese text is: 子曰：己所不欲，勿施于人。

[50] My translation. The original Chinese text is: 子曰：人能弘道，非道弘人。

[51] My translation. The original Chinese text is: 子曰：吾十有五而志于学，三十而立，四十而不惑，五十而知天命，六十而耳顺，七十而从心所欲，不逾矩。

competencies; student participation)	3rd step (appr. 5 mins)	Rebekah discusses and explains the problematic linguistic points.
	4th step (appr. 7 mins)	Rebekah asks the students to translate the six doctrines into modern Chinese first and then to discuss their understanding of them within the group.
	5th step (appr. 17 mins)	Rebekah asks each group to appoint a leader to share the group's findings with the class. After that, the students are allowed to hold a free discussion session for five minutes. **Rebekah does not offer any comments in this step.** I categorise and summarise the views generated from the students' discussions into six points below.

1. Integrity is a traditional Chinese virtue that is still beneficial for modern society. Therefore, everyone should display it. For example, students should behave themselves and not copy others in examinations even though there is no proctor present. Drivers should not exceed the speed limit even when there is no speed camera there.

2. A harmonious campus relies on the virtue of integrity, that is, students, teachers, and schools should act honestly. The students cite the example of a real news scandal to support this argument. In the scandal, an unqualified (lower-scored) student from China's Shandong Province becomes eligible to enter the university because she replaced her Gaokao[52] score with that of another (higher-scored) student, resulting in that other student forfeiting the chance to receive tertiary education. The students regard this event as a failure in China's social credit system because dishonesty has emerged in the Gaokao, which itself is reputed to be the fairest examination in China.

3. The virtue of integrity is one of the critical qualities that establish a person in society. The students cited the stories of US presidents Washington and Nixon to support this statement. Washington is famous worldwide for being frank to his father after his cutting down of the beloved cherry tree of his father. As a result, his father praised his honesty as being more precious than all the cherry trees in the world. On the contrary, Nixon is notorious for lying in the Watergate Scandal and was forced to resign from the presidency.

4. Integrity, as the most beautiful nonverbal language between people, is precious because it only takes a second to lose the trust of others but many years to gain it. The students cite one ancient Chinese fable to support this. The hero of the story is Zengzi, renowned for being upright and honest. |

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[52] The Gaokao refers to the unified annual national College Entrance Examination (CEE) in China.

		His wife once promised their son that they (She and Zengzi) could kill the only pig[53] the family had to make pork[54] for him if the child would obey her words. Later, when Zengzi was ready to kill the pig because his son was very obedient, his wife stopped him, saying "I was just kidding our son". Zengzi insists on killing the pig, saying to his wife: "Never kid kids; they are sensitive. If you, as a mother, deceive the child, he will learn from you and deceive others. Parents need to set a good example for their children."
		5. Being honest requires a person to keep his/her commitments to others. In support of this, the students cite the story of US President Lincoln. In his youth, he once promised the slaves in the southern city of New Orleans that he would emancipate them if he were to become the president because he saw that they were mistreated. Later, he did indeed abolish slavery when he came to power.
		6. Being honest requires a person to abide by social rules and contracts without exception. The students went on to cite the case of King Zhouyou in Chinese history. King Zhouyou, as a joke, once ordered his soldiers to light the beacon fire[55] on the town tower to win his favourite concubine Baosi. When the assembled army found that Zhouyou had deceived them, they felt outraged and lost faith in him. Later, when there was a real military invasion, the army ignored the lit beacon fire. This led to the kingdom's collapse and Zhouyou's suicide. Students cite the story as a case to demonstrate the consequences for violation of any social contracts or conventional rules.
		In this stage, I found that the students' perceptions of the epistemological understanding of integrity are influenced by each other. For example, in the course of reporting, some groups strongly believe that being honest relies on internal self-awareness, rather than external forces. In contrast, others overwhelmingly take the opposite stance. However, in the free discussion session, the students reached the agreement that both the external forces such as social regulations or political rules and the internal forces within each individual, such as personal awareness, determination, and initiatives to be honest, contribute to the increase of social integrity.

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[53] Pigs were important in past agrarian society because raising pigs was an important income source for agricultural families.

[54] Pork was a delicacy in past agrarian society where food resources were not abundant at all.

[55] The beacon fire was used as a signal for warning any approaching enemy and as an order to summon any army scattered in different regions of the kingdom for potential battles.

	6th step (appr. 2 mins)	Rebekah concludes the lesson by highlighting that a person can not gain a foothold in society without honesty and by encouraging the students to be honest in everyday life.
An analysis of the entire lesson		The lesson focuses on the importance of being honest (lesson proposition). The lesson content comprises six Confucian doctrines (lesson concepts/content). Rebekah uses them in organising the students to produce advice/lessons for daily life (lesson concepts/content). Rebekah takes a facilitation-teaching-oriented pedagogy, seen in that she devoted 29 out of 40 minutes of lesson time (1st, 4th, & 5th steps) to student-led activities (lesson pedagogy). The lesson helps to strengthen students' understanding of the importance of being honest (lesson competencies), seen in that most of the views generated from the students' discussions are about either the value of the virtue of integrity or the way to remain honest (student participation).

Figure 8.3 The second class

The third class (Teacher: Jacob; Student No.: 48)	
Lesson length	40 minutes
Student grade	Year 11 (Grade Two at the senior high school stage in China)
Lesson proposition	The lesson aims to assist students in understanding the underlying meaning of the text. In this process, students are guided to think critically about ***the meaning of life and to consider which sphere of living they will pursue.***
Lesson concepts/content	The text used is entitled *Spheres of Living*[56] covered in a designated textbook entitled *Chinese Language: Appreciation of Chinese Cultural Classics.* The text writer is a famous Chinese philosopher, Feng Youlan (1895-1990). The text discusses four spheres of living. I summarise the content of each living sphere below. *[The innocent sphere] A person's living sphere becomes innocent if he/she simply lives according to his/her instinct or the custom of society without self-consciousness or explicit understanding about for what he/she is living, just like a child or primitive person.* *[The utilitarian sphere] A person reaches a utilitarian sphere of living if he/she is overly obsessed with the self and does everything for the self without any concerns about the others to whom he/she relates.* *[The moral sphere] A person enters a moral sphere of living if he/she recognises others and regards the self as a member of society to which the others relate. Guided by such ontology, the person will do everything for the sake of righteousness rather than personal interests; thus, everything the person does has a moral significance.* *[The transcendent sphere] A person who inhabits a transcendent sphere of living will not limit his/her understanding of life within a specific society. He/she considers the self not only as a member of society but also as a member of the universe. He/she is self-conscious and willing to do everything for the benefit of the universe.*

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[56] Translated from the Chinese title: 人生的境界.

	1st step (appr. 4 mins)	Jacob asks the students to skim and scan the text, to familiarise themselves with the content, and to pick out any sentences challenging to understand.
	2nd step (appr. 4 mins)	Jacob communicates with the students about the sentences in order to decide the ones to be analysed in the class.
Lesson procedures (lesson concepts/content; lesson pedagogy; lesson competencies; student participation)	3rd step (appr. 30 mins)	Jacob explains the three selected sentences in turn. I set out the sentences and the discussions about them below. [1st Sentence] Different people may do the same thing, but each of them has a different understanding of what they are doing; that is, their spheres of living are divergent. Therefore, what they are doing also has different meanings to each of them. [57] Jacob explains the sentence using interactive questions and answers. First, Jacob asks the students the question; "Is it the same when a child and an entomologist observe insects on the grass?" After 17 conversational turns with four students, Jacob sums up that a child sees insects instinctively without a clear sense of what he/she is doing. This belongs to the innocent living sphere. However, an entomologist observes insects often for a research purpose. Jacob then asks the students another question; "Do the following two real estate developers remain in the same living sphere? Why?" (the first developer says: "When the construction work is completed, I hope residents can remember that it is me who turned the original wasteland into a cost-efficient and affordable high-rise." The second developer says: "I hope that residents feel happy and comfortable when living there.") After 23 conversational turns with five different students, Jacob simply concludes that the first developer lives in the utilitarian sphere of living while the second in the moral living sphere without explaining his rationale for the conclusion. He also encourages the students to act responsibly towards society and others rather than remaining in the utilitarian and innocent living spheres. [2nd Sentence] At present, you may live in the innocent and utilitarian living spheres. Still, it would be optimal if you strive to pursue the moral and transcendent spheres of living.[58] Jacob uses interactive questions and answers to analyse and interpret this sentence for the students. He first makes a statement that current Chinese society is in a situation of spiritual devaluation and moral decline where most

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[57] The sentence is excerpted from the original text and translated by me from the original Chinese language: 不同的人可能做相同的事，但是各人的感觉和理解程度不同，所做的事对于他们也就各有不同的意义。每个人各有自己的人生境界。

[58] The sentence is excerpted from the original text and translated by me from the original Chinese language: 自然境界、功利境界的人，是人现在就是的人；道德境界、天地境界的人，是人应该成为的人.

people remain in the utilitarian living sphere rather than the moral and transcendent ones. Jacob then asks seven students to illustrate the statement by examples. I categorise and present the examples given by students in three groups below.

The first group of examples concerns news events about contaminated milk powder and pseudo-vaccine, of which the leading cause, the students believe, is the blind pursuit of economic interests and the abandonment of responsibility for consumers' health. The second group of instances is related to ecological damage and global warming, which the students believe to be the consequences of an overemphasis on economic growth, resulting in environmental destruction and ecological devastation. The final group of examples refers to the young Chinese generation's mentality of pursuing fame and fortune. Specifically, the students opine that many young people want to be singers and actors because such occupations are believed to be a shortcut to wealth and fame. Many young single people want to marry Misses Bai (white), Fu (rich), and Mei (beautiful), and Messrs Gao (tall), Fu (rich), and Shuai (handsome). I have discussed these examples in Chapter Five, where I introduced the status-quo of market socialism in China today.

Jacob then tells the class that there is another type of individual in both past and present who lives in the moral and transcendent spheres of living (no one challenges this statement). He then asks a further five students to back this statement up by naming some of these characters and by citing their famous and popular sayings as well. The answers given by the five include Confucius (a Chinese philosopher who says that "righteousness comes before profits"[59]), Qu Yuan (a poet and statesman in Chinese history who says that "the road to being a moral person is long and its cultivation is far away, but I will never stop seeking it up and down"[60]), Fan Zhongyan (a Chinese poet and statesman who says that "worry before the people and enjoy after the people"[61]), Lu Xun (a modern Chinese poet who says that "head bowed like a willing ox, I serve the people whole-heartedly"[62]), Zhu Geliang (a statesman who says that "I will bend my back to the task of serving the people until my last breath"[63]).

Jacob concludes by making an overall comment on the students' answers to the two questions. He explicitly states that "I asked you to answer these two

[59] My translation. The original Chinese text is: 先义而后利。

[60] My translation. The original Chinese text is: 路漫漫其修远兮，吾将上下而求索。

[61] My translation. The original Chinese text is: 先天下之忧而忧，后天下之乐而乐。

[62] My translation. The original Chinese text is: 俯首甘为孺子牛。

[63] My translation. The original Chinese text is: 鞠躬尽瘁，死而后已。

		questions in order to help you distinguish the two types of living spheres (the innocent/utilitarian vs the moral/transcendent). I did this in the hope that you could gain more clarity in respect of your life pursuits. I hope you can learn from these outstanding figures, and be edified by their stories, deeds, and spirit, and be someone who pursues the moral and transcendent living spheres in everyday life." [3rd Sentence] A person does not need to stand out from the ordinary or to create miracles to live a moral or transcendent life. Instead, to be extraordinary is to do the ordinary to the extreme. A person can make a difference in their life as long as they focus on a moral/transcendent life pursuit.[64] To explain this sentence, Jacob tells the class a story. After the 7.6-magnitude earthquake ravaged Wenchuan County, Sichuan Province in China, a wealthy investor withdrew all his investments from the earthquake-stricken area, which caused even more local people to lose their jobs, thus making their lives even more difficult. In contrast to this, a journalist of very modest means took the lead in donating for the earthquake-stricken people. He also did his utmost to actively report the hardship of the local people to move others to donate for them. Jacob then asks the students the question; "which one is respectable, the investor or the journalist? Why?" After 15 conversational turns with six students, Jacob affirms and praises all of the six for their unanimous choice of the journalist as the person they respect. Jacob then states that "a person without power and wealth can be a saint, while a person of high social position or with a vast fortune can be a small person in terms of the living spheres." Jacob also links the incident to Confucianism by adding that "every ordinary person can be as moral as Saint Yu" [65], and encourages the students always to bear social and moral concerns in mind, and to pursue the moral and transcendent spheres of living.
	4th step (appr. 2 mins)	Jacob briefly comments on the homework the students submitted and assigns new homework to them.
An analysis of the entire lesson	The lesson focuses on the meaning of life (lesson proposition). Jacob takes an instructional-teaching-oriented approach, seen in that 36 out of 40 minutes of lesson time (2nd, 3rd, & 4thsteps) are led by him (lesson pedagogy). The text used in the class is about the four living spheres (lesson concepts/content). Jacob focuses on the sociocultural	

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[64] Excerpted from the original text, translated by me from: 为了成为圣人，并不需要做不同于平常的事。他不可能表演奇迹，也不需要表演奇迹。他做的都只是平常人所做的事，但是由于有高度的觉解，他做的事对于他就有不同的意义.

[65] Excerpted from Xunzi, "荀子", one of the Confucian classic works. I translated the sentence from '涂之人可以为禹'. Yu, as a sage-king, is as famous as Confucius in traditional Chinese culture.

dimensions included in the text, seen in that his teaching content is centred on the meaning of life (lesson concepts/content). Views produced by students are about the meaning of life (student participation; lesson concepts/content). The lesson helps the students to remain in an appropriate sphere of living (lesson competencies). However, Jacob does draw on some disciplinary concepts and structures to underpin the lesson on values. He uses a bifurcation between two types of living spheres (the innocent/utilitarian vs the moral/transcendent); a utilitarian approach to life as compared to a moral one.

Figure 8.4 The third class

The fourth class (Teacher: Rachel; Students No.: 46)	
Lesson length	40 minutes
Student grade	Year 11 (Grade Two at the senior high school stage in China)
Lesson proposition	This lesson focuses on helping students ***pursue a lofty meaning of life*** through learning and understanding the four spheres of living depicted in the text.
Lesson concepts/content	The text used is the same as that utilised by teacher Jacob
Lesson procedures (lesson concepts/content; lesson pedagogy; lesson competencies; student participation)	1st step (appr. 6 mins) This lesson begins with a student delivering a speech they had prepared for homework. The speech describes a dialogue between Jack (a shepherd boy from a remote poverty-stricken village) and George (a journalist who interviews Jack) (see below). *George: Why do you herd sheep?* *Jack: To make money.* *George: What is the money used for?* *Jack: To marry a girl.*[66] *George: What is the purpose of marrying a girl?* *Jack: To have children.* *George: What is the purpose of having children?* *Jack: To pass on to them the job of herding sheep.* Based on discussions in the dialogue, the student speaker concludes that a person should pursue a lofty meaning of life. Then Rachel briefly comments on the way the student dealt with the theme. She acknowledges the final statement made by the student as an excellent one. Rachel, in the follow-up interview, shared the purpose of asking the students to deliver a speech in class (see Chapter Nine)
	2nd step (appr. 5 mins) The students are asked to read through the text, pick out descriptions about the four spheres of living, and then answer the question (below) projected onto a screen. The question is: What might the responses of people from the four living spheres be to the scenarios of (i) seeing a thief reaching his hands into

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[66] In China, a man often pays a woman a certain amount of "blessing money" (dowry) as a betrothal gift before he marries her.

		someone else's pocket on the bus, (ii) picking up someone's lost money, (iii) noticing someone falling into water, and (iv) seeing someone writing graffiti on the Great Wall of China.
	3rd step (appr. 8 mins)	Rachel asks the students to discuss answers to the question in groups.
	4th step (appr. 20 mins)	Each group is asked to choose a leader to report their discussion results in turn. Rachel also asks other groups to comment or supplement. In this process, **Rachel gives no comments or feedback at all**. I summarise the students' reports into four points below. First, everyone has a living sphere, reflected in his/her language, behaviours, life views, and world outlook. A living sphere is like the fragrance of flowers which can be immediately detected though it is invisible to the naked eye. Second, the innocent living sphere refers to not knowing or understanding the meaning of being and doing. People from this sphere may praise the stealing skills of a thief when seeing him putting his hands into someone's pocket. They may throw the money lost by others into the dustbin as rubbish when picking it up. They may think that a person whom they see struggling in water is practising swimming skills. They may learn from others to write graffiti on the Great Wall when seeing them doing the same. Third, people from the utilitarian living sphere are so obsessed with personal interests that they may stay indifferent when seeing a thief reaching his hands into someone's pocket. This is because, according to their perceptions, interventions to theft may bring extra trouble for themselves. They may keep for themselves someone's lost money when picking it up. They may turn a blind eye to a drowning person because saving others in water may put their lives at risk. They may do nothing when seeing someone writing graffiti on the Great Wall because it is not a wall of their houses. Fourth, people from moral and transcendent living spheres have higher moral sensitivity. They give priority to social rather than personal benefits. They will stop a thief from stealing others immediately when seeing it because they perceive theft as a threat to society. They will try every means to seek out the owner when picking up someone's lost money. They will cast about for ways to save a drowning person no matter that person is Chinese or a foreigner because they treat others' lives as equal and precious to theirs. They will stop a person from writing graffiti on the Great Wall without any hesitation when seeing it because they treat it as their civic obligation and social responsibility to protect cultural heritage.

	5th step (appr. 1 min)	Rachel concludes the lesson by encouraging the students **to reflect on their spheres of living** and **to pursue a lofty meaning of life** (remaining in the moral and transcendent living spheres).
An analysis of the entire lesson		This lesson focus on the meaning of life (lesson proposition). The lesson is about the four spheres of living embedded in a text from the designated textbook (lesson concepts/content). When using the text, Rachel focuses on the sociocultural dimensions, such as the meaning of life, thoughts and actions of people from the four living spheres (lesson concepts/content). This is also seen in that views produced by the students are also in line with these sociocultural dimensions (lesson concepts/content; student participation). Rachel takes a facilitation-teaching-oriented approach, seen in that 39 out of 40 minutes of lesson time (1st, 2nd, 3rd, & 4th steps) are devoted to student-led activities (lesson pedagogy). The lesson helps the students reflect on the meaning of life (lesson competencies).

Figure 8.5 The fourth class

The fifth class (Teacher: John; Student No.: 47)	
Lesson length	40 minutes
Student grade	Year 12 (Grade Three at the senior high school stage in China)
Lesson proposition	This lesson focuses on teaching skills about how to capture appropriate perspectives in dealing with the material-reading-based Chinese writing task included in the Gaokao[67].
Lesson concepts/content	John draws on the material-reading-based writing task (see below) in the CEE mock test held by the research school and uses it as the lesson content. *[The reading material] Zhai Tianlin, a Chinese film and television star with a PhD degree, was accused of plagiarism by members of the country's microblog community after he posted his post-doctoral admission letter from Peking University on Weibo[68] on January 31st, 2019. The official investigation into his academic history revealed that he had committed massive plagiarism in his degree and some other published academic papers. As a result, the Beijing Film Academy, the university where he graduated, revoked his doctorate. Under enormous pressure, he also apologised publicly. Some people think that Zhai has taken the blame himself because of his academic misconduct, others suggest that he had accomplices and advocate for a further thorough investigation into those who helped him publish his papers and obtain a doctoral degree while committing his massive plagiarism, and still others believe that Zhai's scandal is by*

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[67] The Gaokao refers to the unified annual national College Entrance Examination (CEE) in China. Teachers John and Jean had just finished marking students' compositions in the CEE mock test held by the school. Both their classes focus on skills to deal with one of the common forms of writing tasks included in the Gaokao – the material-reading-based Chinese language composition. They taught Year 12 students who were about to attend the Gaokao at the end of the academic year.

[68] Weibo is China's largest and most popular on-line social networking and microblogging platform. It is like Facebook and Twitter used by Western online communities.

		no means an exception, and people must rethink the construction of the social credit system. *[The writing requirements] What is your opinion of the above incident? Based on reading the material, you are required to select a perspective, determine your stance, clarify a genre, develop a title, and write up a composition of no less than 800 words. Do not quote the given material.*
Lesson procedures (lesson concepts/content; lesson pedagogy; lesson competencies; student participation)	1st step (appr. 6 mins)	John begins the lesson by commenting briefly on the students' examination performance (the average score, the highest and lowest score, the number of students in each score band). After that, John distributes the marked examination papers to the students one by one, announcing the score of each student to the rest of the class (no written feedback provided except for ticks and cross for each text item and a total score).
	2nd step (appr. 5 mins)	John asks the students to reread the examination material (the writing task) and to note down any of their thoughts on the potential writing perspectives that can be generated from the reading material given by the task.
	3rd step (appr. 5 mins)	John asks the students to share their findings in groups.
	4th step (appr. 7 mins)	John asks each group to assign a leader to report their findings. As students are speaking, John notes down their ideas on the blackboard in the form of keywords, **without giving any comments**.
	5th step (appr. 12	John interprets from his notes 16 themes to students (see below). *1) integrity is the foundation of life.* *2) integrity, as a personal virtue, leads to a successful life.* *3) let the flower of integrity bloom in your heart.* *4) be sincere to others and be faithful to yourself.* *5) be down-to-earth and frank.* *6) integrity is precious.* *7) be trustworthy to others and stand by faith and integrity.* *8) let the wind of integrity flow freely across the school campus.* *9) a school should stand by integrity.* *10) a country cannot exist without honest people.* *11) integrity is more precious than a PhD degree.* *12) an integrity crisis is ongoing in China.* *13) the inheritance of the value of integrity contributes a significant factor to the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.* *14) it is imperative and urgent to build up a social credit system.* *15) be lenient and tolerant of those who made a mistake before.* *16) shall society give a second chance to people for dishonesty?*

	6th step (appr. 4 mins)	John groups the 16 themes into four in relation to possible writing perspectives (see below), without teaching any skills or sharing his rationale for such categorisation. John explains why he did not do this in the follow-up interview (see Chapter Nine). 1) integrity as a personal virtue (the first seven themes). 2) the connections between integrity and China's degree-awarding system (the 8th to 11th themes). 3) the relationships between integrity and China's construction of the Social Credit System (including the 12th to 14th themes) (read Chapter Six about the Social Credit System). 4) reaction to dishonesty (including the 15th and 16th themes).
	7th step (appr. 1 min)	John ends the lesson by concluding that "I have demonstrated the way to capture potential writing perspectives from the given reading material. I hope you guys can do some relevant writing exercises after class."
An analysis of the entire lesson	This lesson focuses on writing skills (lesson proposition). John takes an instructional-teaching-oriented approach (lesson pedagogy), seen in that he guides the lesson in at least half of the lesson time (22 out of 40 minutes, see 1^{st,} 5^{th,} 6^{th,} 7th steps). The lesson is based on a news event used for the examination writing task (lesson concepts/content). Although part of the lesson content may call for critical rather than subjective thinking derived from disciplinary knowledge, such as "*you are required to select a perspective, determine your stance, clarify a genre, develop a title, and write up a composition*", this call is overshadowed by John's teaching pedagogy which allows almost all of the lesson content to be based on sociocultural opinions of the students or the teacher's summarisation and categorisation of these opinions. Specifically, John first asks the students to read, discuss, and report personal ideas on the news incident and then translates 16 themes from their opinions. Opinions from the students (student participation) and themes distilled by John are sociocultural knowledge, such as integrity as a personal virtue, attitudes towards and reaction to the dishonest (lesson concepts/content). The lesson is designed to focus on skills of capturing appropriate perspectives in dealing with the material-reading-based writing task. However, the teacher does not explicitly provide the strategy, seen in that he categorise themes into groups to generate possible writing perspectives, without explaining to the students his rationale for classification (lesson proposition; lesson pedagogy; lesson competencies). As a result, some of the students might not apply the thinking skills inherent in the categorisation to their composition because they could not link a theme to a certain writing perspective (lesson competencies). Regardless, the students gained some ideas on the value of integrity and the role it plays in society (lesson competencies).	

Figure 8.6 The fifth class

The sixth class (Teacher: Jean; Student No.: 49)		
Lesson length	40 minutes	
Student grade	Year 12 (Grade Two at the senior high school stage in China)	
Lesson proposition	The lesson focuses on teaching skills to deal with the CEE Chinese composition task by commenting on students' writings in the CEE mock test held by the school.	
Lesson concepts/content	The same as that used by teacher John	
Lesson procedures (lesson concepts/content; lesson pedagogy; lesson competencies; student participation)	1st step (appr. 4 mins)	Jean introduces the lesson theme – learning CEE Chinese writing skills. She also briefly comments on the students' writing performance [69]in the mock test (the average, the highest, and the lowest score).
	2nd step (appr. 19 mins)	Jean reads three high-scored compositions from the students to the rest of the class, asking them to choose from each of the three writings one writing skill that they like the best. Every time she finishes reading a composition, Jean invites five students to share their ideas, without giving any substantive comments except for some phatic responses such as "well done", "good job", and "good". A total of 15 students have shared their ideas in this step. Points that they like the best cover a wide range, including the use of creative titles, a wide range of vocabulary, voices, tenses, topic sentences, stories, sub-headings, genres, conjunctions for coherence, rhetorical devices (simile, metaphor, personification, parallelism), the ways of making statements, the techniques of dealing with the given materials, and writing perspectives (there are repetitive answers from the 15 students).
	3rd step (appr. 15 mins)	Jean makes additions to the answers of the students by saying that "I want to supplement to the list of writing skills you guys mentioned above. My ones are **even more important** than those." I summarise the three writing strategies mentioned by Jean and present them below. 1. Jean asks the students to diversify the use of examples in support of a statement or argument (appr. 2 mins) 2. Students may earn extra scores for their compositions by drawing on traditional Chinese literature (poems, songs, verses, novels, speeches, Confucian doctrines) in dealing with the CEE Chinese composition task (appr. 3 mins). 3. Jean reminds the students to pay attention to their values, attitudes, and outlooks when writing up the CEE Chinese composition. She explicitly tells them that the purpose of the CEE Chinese composition simultaneously examines their writing competence, critical thinking ability, and sense of citizenship. She reminds the students to be careful in

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[69] Students will not get detailed, personal feedback but only a simple score on their writing.

		dealing with the negative dimensions embedded in the given reading materials for writing, for which she explained her reason in the follow-up interview (see Chapter Nine). Meanwhile, she points out that it would be better for students to insert into their compositions the themes of the times (such as fine traditional Chinese culture, revolutionary culture, advanced socialist culture, and the core socialist values) because this leads to a higher score (appr. 10 mins).
	4th step (appr. 2 mins)	Jean concludes the lesson by assigning new homework to the students, outlining what is required.
An analysis of the entire lesson	The lesson focuses on the CEE Chinese language composition skills (lesson proposition). Jean takes an instructional teaching approach to teach; seen in that she leads the entire lesson procedures (lesson pedagogy). Although the students (student participation) have mentioned some writing skills or strategies that may call for disciplinary knowledge, such as the rhetorical or linguistic aspects needed in Chinese writing, these points picked up by students were not expanded or given weight by Jean. Two of the three writing strategies highlighted by Jean concern sociocultural aspects of Chinese language writing, such as how to use traditional Chinese culture (the 2nd strategy, appr. 3 mins) and how to keep a positive attitude in dealing with Chinese writing tasks (lesson concepts/content, the 3rd strategy, appr. 10 mins). Jean's emphasis is given to the third strategy because she spends more time (appr. 10 mins) on this, although the first strategy she mentions (appr. 2 mins) may help the students to develop critical or reflective thinking about how to support arguments or statements in Chinese language writing (disciplinary knowledge). Surprisingly, the third writing strategy emphasised by Jean suggests that she regards the writing competence and critical ability (cognition or capabilities which should be based on the acquisition of disciplinary knowledge) as a cognitive means for the students to work out the positive sociocultural attitudes, values, and outlooks desired for the CEE Chinese language compositions. The lesson helps the students to develop writing skills for Gaokao, especially skills about how to manage cultural and value aspects embedded in the CEE Chinese writing task (lesson competencies).	

Figure 8.7 The sixth class

8.2.2 The six observed classes: an integrated analysis

In this section, I provide an integrated analysis of the six observed classes and link the findings to the outcomes of the curriculum policies analysis (see Chapter Seven), and to the other two overarching concepts of *ideology* and *collective representations* that I used to create the research theoretical framework for my study (see Chapter Three). In doing so, I explain the

internal consistency between the six observed classes and the underpinning rationality of recontextualising the core socialist values into the real classroom practices.

Drawing on the individual analysis of the mechanisms of recontextualisation in each of the six observed classes, I conclude that the government's core socialist values have entered the pedagogic practices in the classroom through an emphasis on sociocultural knowledge with respect to the lesson proposition, concepts, content, pedagogy, competencies, and participation. To be specific, in terms of the lesson propositions, these observed classes focus on themes such as Confucian life wisdom, spheres of living, traditional Chinese culture as a writing focus, and the correct attitudes a student is supposed to take in CEE Chinese language composition. These themes themselves are predominately sociocultural knowledge (values, beliefs, cultural norms). Concerning the lesson concepts/content, the sociocultural knowledge-oriented lesson proposition is inserted and packaged into specific lesson materials covered either in the designated textbooks used for teaching the curriculum (such as Confucian doctrines, the text entitled *Spheres of Living*) or the curriculum evaluation practices: examinations (such as the news event used by the material-reading-based writing task). This finding also resonates with the existing research (Cai & Han, 2019; Chang, 2020; Chen, 2007; Ding, 2017; Gao, 2015; Lin, 2016; Liu, 2017; Wang, 2017; Xie, 2019; Zhang, 2019; Zou & Lu, 2019) which reveals that moral education in the form of transmitting and promoting socialist worldviews and values, traditional Chinese culture, revolutionary culture, and advanced socialist culture has been inserted into the textbook-based senior high school Chinese language classrooms and into the Chinese language writing tasks included in the unified annual national College Entrance Examinations in China.

With respect to the lesson pedagogy, two pedagogic approaches help to teach the lesson concepts/content. The first is a facilitation-teaching-oriented approach (teachers Isaac, Rebekah, Rachel, and Jean), in which most of the lesson concepts/content is presented through

student-led activities (such as group discussions, speech-delivering, and reporting). The second approach is an instructional teaching approach (teachers Jacob, John, and Jean), in which the teacher leads students in generating most of the lesson concepts/content. I find that the pedagogic outcomes of the two approaches (the lesson concepts/content) comprise sociocultural knowledge because the in-class activities (either student-led or teacher-led) are about sociocultural dimensions (Confucian life wisdom, the importance of being honest, the attitudes towards life pursuits) embedded the in the prescribed teaching materials.

As to student participation, a considerable number of views generated from students, such as understanding concerning Confucian life wisdom, reflections on the spheres of living, and attitudes towards dishonesty, are located within sociocultural dimensions of knowledge. As a result, the lesson competencies that students appeared to develop from the six classes analysed to a great extent are connected to the sociocultural knowledge, such as how to deal with personal ignorance, how to react to dishonesty, how to act upon what has not yet been mastered, how to set up moral and transcendent life pursuits, how to understand the meaning of integrity, how to be honest in life, and how to manage personal attitudes and views towards negative news in the CEE Chinese language composition.

This sociocultural knowledge orientation found in the six observed classes (the pedagogic recontextualising field) also echoes my findings in the official recontextualising field, referring to the analysis of the two curriculum policies: the *Plan* and the *Standard*, in Chapter Seven. The *Standard* defines the fundamental feature of the Chinese Language curriculum as "the unity of *instrumentality* and *humanity*" (emphasis added, MoE, 2018b, p. 1). *Instrumentality* addresses the goal of teaching the Chinese language in an actual authentic linguistic environment for everyday use (MoE, 2018b). *Humanity* denotes "the cultivation of growing *interest* in the Chinese language and of deepening *love* towards *Chinese culture*" through

accumulation, acquisition, and development of cultural knowledge, aesthetic taste, social values, and socialist worldviews (MoE, 2018b, p. 1).

In my analysis of the class observation data, I found that academic dimensions which may call for the teaching and acquisition of disciplinary knowledge are mentioned. For example, the lesson content of John's class required students to *select a perspective, determine a stance, clarify a genre, develop a title, and write up a composition*. This requires epistemic and critical thinking ability in relating to writing. The student participation in Jean's class also generated epistemic points regarding the use of rhetorical devices, the strategies of making statements, and the techniques for dealing with the given reading materials for writing. Rebekah organised the students to discuss the pronunciation, words, phrases, and sentences to identify any confusing or ambiguous phonetic or semantic points and then she explained the problematic linguistic points to students. However, the mention of these academic dimensions which help the students to acquire disciplinary knowledge of Chinese linguistics appeared to be insufficient in the six observed classes.

My analysis suggests that the lack of access to epistemic structures and dimensions of disciplinary knowledge in the six observed classes occurred for three major reasons. First, the six teacher participants did not devote enough lesson time to the teaching of epistemic aspects. They focused on the humanity purpose of the Chinese Language subject in most of the lesson time. This is seen in that most of their pedagogic communications orient students to discussions of the sociocultural aspects, such as the meaning of life, Confucian life wisdom, the value of having moral and transcendent life pursuits, and the desired attitudes needed for CEE Chinese Language writing. Second, although some teachers devoted a small proportion of the lesson time to teach the linguistic aspects of the Chinese language, they did this for a pragmatic purpose (instrumentality), such as correcting students' pronunciation, explaining semantic ambiguities, and teaching applied skills for writing, rather than for an epistemic purpose of

assisting the students in developing the context-independent disciplinary concepts of the Chinese Linguistics. Third, the mention of epistemic aspects of disciplinary knowledge is for a sociocultural purpose. For example, in Jean's class, she treated the critical thinking ability which should be developed through the acquisition of disciplinary knowledge as a cognitive method for students to work out a positive sociocultural attitude in CEE Chinese language writing. This is based on her critical analysis of the previous zero-pointed Gaokao compositions and her finding that those compositions, whose writers have presented a negative attitude towards society in their CEE Chinese language writings, are often marked down (see Chapter Nine).

My interviews indicate that the six teachers' emphasis on sociocultural knowledge rather than disciplinary knowledge in the observed classes is influenced by their perceptions of the Chinese Language curriculum and Chinese cultural awareness. For example, Isaac believes that the Chinese language class plays a vital in carrying forward the Chinese culture. Rebekah regards the Chinese Language curriculum as a platform for students to learn heritage Chinese culture in contemporary society. Jacob thinks that as a Chinese language teacher, he is responsible for teaching his students the Chinese language skills needed for their sociocultural participation. Rachel argues that that the curriculum plays an important role in carrying forward the core socialist values, which are in nature sociocultural knowledge. John treats the teaching of the Chinese Language curriculum as a way to cultivate the students' sense of mission towards Chinese cultural transmission. Jean acknowledges the role the Chinese Language curriculum plays in helping students to learn the sociocultural knowledge needed for navigating their local life-worlds (see Chapter Nine).

The teachers' acceptance of the sociocultural function of the Chinese Language curriculum is also linked to their experiences as teachers and their perceptions of their local life-worlds. For example, the importance of the core socialist values (sociocultural knowledge) has been

cultivated and emphasised in various forms of training programmes such as pre-service teacher education and annual regular teacher training projects (see Chapter Nine). Furthermore, these core socialist values have been pervasively permeated into their livings contexts, appearing in bus body advertisements, at public resorts, on school bulletin boards, and at open civic recreational centres for example (see Chapter Nine). I argue that it is this familiarity with the values that has overshadowed the six teachers' critical and reflective thinking of the values and weakened the presence of disciplinary knowledge in their classes.

This sociocultural knowledge orientation found in the curriculum practices in the classroom helps to achieve the internal consistency between the lesson proposition, concepts, content, competencies, pedagogy, and participation in the six observed classes. Such an internal sociocultural-knowledge-oriented consistency contributes to educating and cultivating an idealised type of knower who with a socialist gaze can take on the country's great socialist cause as a "qualified builder and successor" (MoE, 2018a, p. 1). In doing so, these Chinese language classes help to transmit and promote the ascendant political ideals of the core socialist values, to strengthen what I call *socialist collective representations* for Chinese society today, and thus to consolidate the government's ruling ideology of market socialism in the contemporary period.

8.3 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has analysed and explained the mechanisms of recontextualisation through which the core socialist values have permeated the country's curriculum practices – in my case, this is achieved in some senior high school Chinese language classes.

Informed and guided by Bernstein's concept of *recontextualisation*, I first formulated a *Six-Dimensional Analytic Schema* by drawing on several theoretical concepts from the discipline of the sociology of knowledge and by applying these to my empirical class observation data. I

then used the schema to analyse and explain the *mechanisms of recontextualisation*. My findings have revealed that there is an orientation towards sociocultural knowledge (beliefs, values, outlook, dispositions, norms, and culture) in terms of the six dimensions of the lesson proposition, concepts, content, pedagogy, competencies, and participation. This sociocultural-knowledge orientation contributes to creating mechanisms to recontextualise and transmit the core socialist values into the pedagogic practices in the classroom. In these processes of recontextualisation, a type of knower with a more profound socialist worldview and a certain moral sensitivity is likely to be developed to take on the country's great socialist cause.

In the next chapter, I report on teacher interviews to investigate (i) how the six teacher participants perceive the function of the Chinese Language programme at the senior high school in China, (ii) what their attitudes towards the relevant national Chinese Language curriculum policies are, (iii) how they conceptualise the ascendant political ideals of the core socialist values, and (iv) what their responses to the observed classes are.

CHAPTER NINE

THE PEDAGOGIC RECONTEXTUALISING FIELD

TEACHER INTERVIEWS

The preceding chapter discussed the outcomes of the second of the three empirical investigations in this research – class observations. The findings revealed that the government's core socialist values have been recontextualised into the classrooms through an emphasis on sociocultural knowledge in relation to the six dimensions of the lesson proposition, concepts, content, competencies, pedagogy, and participation. Three strands of culture, traditional Chinese culture, revolutionary culture, and advanced socialist culture, interweaving with the core socialist values, have contributed to this orientation. This emphasis on sociocultural knowledge contributes to the cultivation of socialist worldviews and pursuits within the young Chinese generation, cultivating them as qualified builders and successors of the country's great socialist cause.

In this chapter, I present the findings of the last of the three empirical investigations: teacher interviews. I conducted interviews with each of the six teacher participants, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, Rachel, John, and Jean, after I observed their classes. I designed the interview questions by drawing on the conceptual tools that I have used and the empirical data of the curriculum policies and the class observations (see Chapters Seven and Eight). The questions include four areas regarding the teachers' (i) conceptualisation of the core socialist values and recognition of them in the school practices, (ii) their perceptions of the focus of the country's Chinese Language programme at the senior high school, (iii) their evaluation of the two curriculum policies that I have analysed in Chapter Seven, and (iv) their comments on the observed classes (see Chapter Eight). I examine the empirical teacher interview data and report the findings in relation to these four areas of the interview questions. This chapter contributes to answering

the fourth research sub-question: "In what ways, and to what extent, are the core socialist values recontextualised into the curriculum policy practices?"

9.1 The Core Socialist Values: Teachers' Perceptions

Four of the semi-structured interview questions are about the teachers' perceptions of the core socialist values. I report my findings in relation to the four questions.

9.1.1 Are you familiar with the core socialist values?

I designed this question to examine the extent to which the six teacher participants are familiar with the core socialist values. The investigation reveals that the teachers are very familiar with the values, with four of the teachers capable of reciting them in the order of the official text. Furthermore, five of them mentioned that most of their students could recite the content of the values as well.

The interview data revealed four significant factors to explain this. First, the six teachers have participated in various forms of teacher training at different levels (national, provincial, and school), where the values are essential content of teacher professional ethics. Second, the values have been written into the officially designated textbooks as basic civic moral norms and therefore become a part of the lesson content in the classroom. This echoes the *Plan* (MoE, 2018a) that I analysed in Chapter Seven, prescribing that the newly-released curriculum policy has guided other educational endeavours such as textbook creation and teacher education. Third, the school has inserted the values into student extracurricular activities. For instance, the school often holds a variety of activities with the values as a theme, such as Chinese speaking contests, cultural knowledge contests, and The Reading Month (I further explain these activities later). This resonates with the national policy (people.cn., 2013b) that requires schools at all levels to insert the values into the development of school culture. Fourth, the values are extra pervasive in everyday life, such as at bus stops (Pic. 1), in bus body advertisements (Pic. 2), in metro

stations (Pic. 3), in hotel lobbies (Pic. 4), on the front entrance LED displays of commercial or administrative buildings (Pic. 5), in urban outdoor advertisements (Pic. 6), on billboards along inter-city highways (Pic. 7), at public resorts (Pic. 8), at open recreational centres (Pic. 9), in residential communities (Pic. 10), at core-socialist-value-themed parks (Pic. 11), and on school bulletin boards (Pic. 12[70]). This finding resonates with Gow's (2017) research where the researcher found that the core socialist values have permeated every corner of modern Chinese society.

Picture 1

Picture 2

Picture 3

Picture 4

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[70] All the pictures were provided by the six teachers. I categorised the pictures and presented twelve of them here due to space limitations.

Picture 5

Picture 6

Picture 7

Picture 8

Picture 9

Picture 10

Figure 9.1 Pictures embedding the core socialist values in everyday life

9.1.2 How do you understand the role of the core socialist values in modern Chinese society?

I designed this question to investigate the six teachers understanding of the role of the core socialist values in modern Chinese society. The six teachers have a positive attitude towards the role of the values, thinking they are necessary to promote and uphold. They appear to be uncritical in their acceptance of the values because they have been well-trained in these values such as through the annual regular teacher training programmes held by their school (see below). In their opinion, these values play an essential role in modern society for various reasons.

The values help to strengthen national unity by serving as uniform normative ideals at the national level.

> *China has a large population made up of 56 different ethnic groups. Each of them has its unique culture, costumes, values, and beliefs. Therefore, the country needs a uniform values system to provide shared ideals for the people, thus consolidating the sociocultural foundation for the country's existence, and enhancing national cohesion (Jacob).*

The values help to lead the social value trend. "*We need the core socialist values to lead the social value trend because modern Chinese society is a society where multiple individual (similar or different) values coexist, and sometimes individual values differ significantly.*" (Rachel). Researchers (e.g. Liu, 2005; Tian, 2013; Zhang, 2011) attribute the pluralistic values of modern Chinese society to the country's national strategy of *Reforming and Opening Up* since the 1970s. China's socialist market economy reforms which follow the national strategy have enabled China to enter the global market as a major player, thus promoting China's economic globalisation and modernisation (Liu, 2005; Tian, 2013; Zhang, 2011; Zhou, 2005). However, as a result, globalisation has allowed different values, such as individualism and mercantilism, to become a new emphasis in society (Tian, 2013; Zhang, 2011; Zhou, 2005). Modernisation has further widened economic differentiation between individuals, leading to the diversification of their values (Liu, 2005). In this way, modern Chinese society has become a society with pluralistic values. This also echoes my primary argument where I claim that the core socialist values help to forge the social consensus and to enhance the social cohesion by providing Chinese people with shared normative ideals which help to develop and strengthen what I term *socialist collective representations*. My primary argument is also in line with official discourses, suggesting that the principal contradiction of current Chinese society is between the people's growing material and cultural needs and the imbalance and inadequacy of spiritual development (NPC, 2012). Therefore, the 19th National People's Congress held in 2012 advocates that attention should be paid not only to economic modernisation but also to spiritual civilisation (sociocultural modernisation) (NPC, 2012).

The values help to cultivate an idealised type of citizen.

> *Modern Chinese people generally tend to be utilitarian and impetuous, eager for success, fame, and fortune. Therefore, it is conducive to use the core socialist values to guide civic education in producing idealised citizens. For example, the values of patriotism,*

dedication, integrity, and friendliness at the civic level clarify the idealised and expected type of citizen that the society aims to cultivate through education (Isaac).

The values help to embed traditional Chinese culture and thus to maintain the Chinese civilisation.

Although the core socialist values only consist of 24 Chinese characters, their content is rich and profound. The values are the concentrated expression of traditional Chinese culture and the vivid exposition of Chinese cultural values and beliefs in contemporary society. Every Chinese person should remember and practise the values (John).

To summarise, the teacher interview data concerning the role of the core socialist values align well with the ascendant political discourses. For instance, Chinese President Xi argues that "if the people have faith, the country will have power, and the nation will have hope" (people.cn., 2015a, n.p., my translation). The core socialist values are the beliefs of the Chinese people and the source from where the Chinese nation's power comes (people.cn., 2014b).

9.1.3 How do you understand the core socialist value of integrity?

This interview question asks how the six teacher participants understand the core socialist values by taking integrity as an example. I focused on the value of integrity for a number of reasons. On the global scale, the value has turned out to be a comparatively prominent concept "in research on government and governance, as well as in actual policymaking at all levels" (Huberts, 2018, p. S18). In China's context, the value has become an indispensable normative social value (Chen & Wang, 2003; Feng & Yang, 2019; Jin & Yang, 2015). Moreover, this value has a heritage appeal and performed a crucial role in pre-modern Chinese society (Chen & Wang, 2003; Zhang, 2016). I categorised four themes of significance from the participants' answers to this question. I present each of the four themes in turn.

The first theme is about treating integrity as *a requisite quality for teachers*. For example, Rebekah argued that "*having integrity is one of the ways in which a person becomes fully human and one of the essential qualities that one should have as a teacher*". Rachel said that "*the creed of integrity always warns me, as a teacher, that I cannot easily make promises to students, and I should match my words with my actions once promises are made to students*". Isaac suggested that "*as a teacher, I should not conceal my real thoughts and feelings, lie, or cheat in front of my students*". Jacob expressed that *"as a teacher, I should keep my promises to students and be responsible for them. This can help me build my trustworthiness in front of my students"*. Jean questioned that "*If I, as a teacher, cannot remain upright and reliable in front of students, how can I expect them to learn from the example that I set them to be an honest and trustworthy person?"*.

The second theme is about regarding integrity as *one of the necessary qualities for the ideal student* in society. For instance, John believed that "*Integrity is a fundamental value that a student should have to establish in society*". Jacob stated that "*the lack of integrity will limit the student's further development, just as a building will collapse sooner or later if its foundation is unstable*". Rachel noted that *"I often urge my students to be honest and trustworthy. I do this because when I was a student, my teacher did the same to me too"*.

The third theme regards taking integrity as *a virtue that complements the legal and institutional systems*. This is typically seen in the long story given by Isaac.

> *The outbreak of COVID-19[71] in China is under control at this moment. However, there have been overseas outbreaks, especially in Italy. Therefore, China has stepped up border inspections, requiring every passenger to fill out a health declaration card when*

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[71] This data came from an extra online correspondence with two of the six participant teachers after the formal face-to-face teacher interviews.

crossing the border and to go into a self-quarantine period of fourteen days. Of course, the completion of all these procedures depends on the individual because relevant laws and regulations are unavailable. Under such a situation, self-honesty is particularly essential because dishonest practices may cause substantial social panic. For example, in the city where I live, a man surnamed Guo is confirmed to have COVID-19. However, the epidemiological investigation into this person found that he had deliberately concealed his Italian travel history after returning from Italy and failed to isolate himself as required for two weeks. What is worse, he had travelled to a lot of places such as flower markets, bars, and supermarkets with a high fever by taking public transportation such as subways, buses, and taxis. His dishonest behaviour and lack of a sense of social responsibility have resulted in harmful consequences. From what I know, 24 people in close contact with him, including his mother and colleagues, were officially required to undergo self-isolation for two weeks. The building (at least five companies inside) where he works was closed for two weeks to carry out disinfection work. The opening date of all local educational institutions, including kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, and colleges and universities was postponed for two extra weeks. When I mentioned this person in my online class recently, almost all my students expressed their anger towards him. Students in my class reached a consensus that such dishonest behaviour is undesirable. This case can illustrate that the virtue of integrity is particularly crucial in areas not covered by laws.

The fourth theme regards taking integrity as *part of the social contract underpinning the legal and institutional systems*. This theme is embedded in the story told by Jean during the interview.

Upon obtaining my master's degree, I came to this city to attend a job interview to be a teacher. The interview advertisement said that successfully recruited teachers would be paid CNY12,000 to 15,000 (aboutNZD 2600-3200) per month. However, after I officially

joined the school for half a year, I found that my average monthly salary is only CNY7,800 (about NZD1700). Excluding personal income tax and other miscellaneous fees, I get less than CNY6,500(about NZD1400) per month. I also communicated with other teachers about this, and their situation is like mine. The school does not speak of integrity, which greatly influenced my enthusiasm for teaching.

Furthermore, from what I learnt from my colleagues working in other schools in this city, their salaries are also less than advertised. For instance, I have a female friend who teaches Chinese in a private middle school. The school promised to increase her salary immediately upon completing her three-month internship. However, she was paid as an intern teacher for one and a half years, although she had been recruited as a regular employee at the end of the first three months. That means her payment has been reduced by nearly 30% compared to the monthly salary paid for a regular employee. She has no way to deal with such economic loss because there is no uniform salary standard promulgated.

I feel disappointed and pained that schools lack integrity in keeping up the payment standard as they promised. I think that the municipal government should introduce a unified salary standard to supervise schools' salary payments. The government should also take action, for example, legislation, to punish those dishonest schools as mentioned above.

These four themes of significance also reflect how the core socialist value of integrity has been recontextualised by the six teachers as what I term a *contractual virtue* (see Chapter Six). This recontextualisation of integrity as a *contractual virtue* reflects an integration of (i) what I call *virtuous integrity* in traditional Chinese culture (see the first three themes which treat integrity as a requisite quality for teachers, one of the necessary qualities for the ideal student, and a

virtue that complements the legal and institutional systems), and (ii) what I term *contractual integrity* in modern secular market culture (see the fourth theme which regards integrity as part of the social contract underpinning the legal and institutional systems).

These four themes reveal that there is an alignment between the official recontextualising field and the pedagogic recontextualising field in terms of recontextualising the value of integrity as a contractual virtue (see Chapter Six). This also indicates that the six teachers have been influenced by the two forms of cultural understanding of integrity mentioned in Chapter Six: traditional Chinese cultural ethos of integrity as a personal virtue and modern secular market cultural value of integrity as part of the social contract.

In traditional Chinese culture, especially Confucianism, where the virtue of integrity is a key heritage concept (Chen & Wang, 2003). According to Confucian doctrine, "a teacher is a person who should propagate the doctrine, impart knowledge, and resolve doubts" (Han, 2018 [768-824], n.p., my translation). Of the three capabilities listed by Han, propagating the doctrine comes first and is the most significant (Han, 2018 [768-824]). As another Confucian doctrine states, "How can a person establish themselves in society without honesty?" (Confucius et al., 2018 [approximate 770-221BC], n.p., my translation, this doctrine appears also in the student textbook, see Chapter Eight). Edified by Confucian culture and doctrine from birth, the interviewees unsurprisingly regard socialist integrity as a personal virtue.

In modern secular market culture, integrity is regarded as part of the social contract. Modern Chinese society is based on a socialist market economy that follows the fundamental capitalist market laws and enables the market to play a dominant role in resource allocation and distribution (Brødsgaard & Rutten, 2017; Harvey, 2007). As a market economy, a socialist market economy comprises countless numbers of market entities; the market is subject to mechanisms such as supply and demand, and charging for scarcity as a primary means for

resource allocation and commodity circulation and exchange (Brødsgaard & Rutten, 2017). The desire of each market entity to pursue economic interests relies on the smooth and successful running and operation of the market (Jin & Yang, 2015). In turn, this requires different market players, most of them unfamiliar with each other, to observe economic contracts honestly and to fulfil their economic and moral responsibilities to others to whom they relate in the market (Feng & Yang, 2019; Zhang, 2016). Living in the period of socialist market economy, the interviewees unsurprisingly regard socialist integrity as part of the social contract.

9.1.4 What school and/or personal practices, in your opinion, embody the value of integrity?

I designed this question to examine the extent and in what ways the core socialist value of integrity has been recontextualised into the pedagogic recontextualising field. My analysis suggests that integrity as a contractual virtue has permeated the PRF to a great extent, mainly through three mechanisms of recontextualisation in the school: (i) the management system, (ii) the curriculum system, and (iii) extracurricular activities. I explain each of the three in detail to show this all-pervasive permeation of the core socialist value of integrity in the school context, the PRF.

(i) The management system

According to the teacher interviews, the school's teacher and student management systems offer the first mechanism of recontextualisation to embed integrity as a contractual virtue.

Teacher Management System. The interviews found that the school has taken the inspection and supervision of teachers' integrity as a routine task and has integrated integrity into its teacher management system. For example, some teacher interviewees said that the school has conducted integrity education in pre-service teacher education as well as the annual regular

training programmes for all teachers. The school has institutionalised teachers' integrity and morality as a basic rule, a strongly visible part of the regulative discourse. For instance, in the school's annual teacher review and assessment practices, *'those teachers with moral problems such as academic plagiarism will have their annual assessment grade*[72] *lowered as a punishment for dishonest and immoral behaviour'* (Data from Isaac). According to Rachel, the school's annual assessment grade is important to the teachers because it is linked to their salary. Moreover, John and Rebekah mentioned that the school has specifically set up the Advanced Moral Award, annually recognising those teachers with high moral quality and integrity, including financial rewards. According to Rebekah, "*the establishment of the Advanced Moral Award is to cultivate sensitivity towards integrity in the teacher community*".

These actions indicate that the school has actively responded to national educational policies which aim to improve and strengthen teachers' moral values (also see Chapter Five). These policies include, for example, *Opinions on Strengthening and Improving the Construction of Teachers' Moral Education in the New Era* (Issued by MoE on December 6, 2019, my translation), *Measures for Dealing with Violations of Moral Ethics of Primary and Middle School Teachers (2018 Revision)* (Issued by MoE on November 14, 2018, my translation), and *Guide to Conduct Moral Education in Primary and Secondary Schools* (Issued by MoE on August 22, 2017, my translation).

Student Management System. In addition to renewed attention to teachers' moral education, the school also attaches importance to cultivating within students the value of integrity. According to the teacher interviews, the school regards integrity education as a routine task of

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[72] The annual assessment refers to the school's comprehensive evaluation of the annual work of the academic staff at the end of each academic year. The content of the assessment covers (i) morality, mainly assessing political, ideological performance, and professional ethics, (ii) capability, mainly assessing the performance of duties, the quantity, quality, and efficiency of tasks completed, the level of academic results achieved, and contributions to local communities, and (iii) diligence, mainly assessing work attitude, diligence, and dedication. The assessment results are usually presented in three assessment grades: excellent, qualified, and unqualified.

student management. Specifically, the school has established an integrity portfolio for each student. The portfolio contains (i) an integrity pledge letter (written by each student to promise to abide by campus rules and regulations), (ii) academic performance descriptions which mainly record whether students have academic misdemeanours, such as plagiarism or cheating, (iii) credit records, including a basic record of a student's reward and punishment in the school, such as key scholarships and honorary titles obtained, or other non-academic misconduct such as bullying or defaulting tuition fees. According to the six teacher interviewees, the integrity portfolio has a significant impact on students' school life and their awareness of integrity, especially their participation in students organisations at both the school and the class levels. I introduce these student organisations before explaining how the value of integrity operations within them.

Student organisations at the school include the Youth League, the Student Association, the Student Union, and the National Flag Guard Team (also see Chapter One). The Youth League is led by the school committee of the Chinese Communist Party, mainly responsible for cultivating and delivering new student members for the Party. The Student Association refers to various cultural, artistic, and academic groups formed by students voluntarily, such as chess, photography, and painting clubs, school choirs, and different sports clubs. It is composed of students from different classes and year levels who have similar interests. The Student Union, as the leading student organisation in the school, serves as the bridge between the school administration and students. For example, it is responsible for collecting suggestions and opinions from students and reporting them to the school management in a bid to solve any difficulties for students in their campus life. The National Flag Guard Team is mainly responsible for the regular national-flag raising ceremony held by the school. It comprises 10 students from different classes who have survived multiple layers of interviews. Most of the Chinese senior high (public/private) schools often hold a national-flag raising ceremony

weekly or every two weeks (I extend this point below).

In addition to the student organisations at the school level, there is also a student management team in each class. Senior high schools in China usually have enrolments of hundreds or thousands of students. To facilitate the management of such a large number of students, schools often allocate students of the same year to different administrative classes. For example, the research school has more than forty administrative classes of students from three grades (Year 10 to Year 12)[73]. There are about 14 to 16 administrative classes in each grade (year level) and more than 50 students in each class. The school appoints one headteacher for each administrative class, responsible for the overall affairs of the class, such as collecting tuition fees, holding class meetings, inspecting students' dormitories, conducting moral education, arranging students to compete with other classes in activities such as sports games and subject knowledge competitions held regularly by the school. Usually, headteachers also teach one academic subject to the class.

To facilitate the management of the students in the class, headteachers are allowed to set up a student management team in the class. This team usually comprises ten students, namely the monitor (responsible for the overall business of the class), the class secretary of the school Youth League (responsible for communicating with student organisations at the school level on behalf of the class and announcing to the class any notifications from the school), and the student representatives of the main disciplinary subjects (responsible for facilitating each subject teacher's teaching work such as collecting and handing out homework).

How is integrity as a contractual virtue recontextualised into the PRF through these student organisations at both the school and the class levels? Firstly, according to the teacher

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[73] China's education system is a five-tier model, including kindergarten, primary school (from Year 1 to Year 6), junior high school (from Year 7 to Year 9), senior high school (from Year 10 and Year 12), and tertiary education.

interviewees, students with *"integrity stains"* in their integrity portfolio (words used by Jacob and Rachel, referring to dishonest records), according to the school rules and regulations, will not be allowed to serve as leaders of student organisations at the school level. Becoming a member of the school-level student organisations, especially a leader, means more opportunities for leadership training and practice, and greater possibilities of obtaining scholarships and other honorary titles. Secondly, the school does not allow students with, to use Jean's words, *"tainted integrity"*, to be eligible for the honorary titles such as 'Ethical Models' and 'Three Good Students' (good in study, attitude, and health) and related bonuses in the school's annual academic evaluation. Thirdly, at the class level, John and Jacob claim not to appoint *"morally dirty students"* (words from Jacob) as members of the student management team in the class. According to the teacher interviewees, students in the class management team are more likely to be awarded honorary titles such as 'Ethical Models' and 'Three Good Students' in the annual academic evaluation.

It is through the management of student organisations in this way that the school has inserted the core socialist value of integrity into the student management system as a contractual virtue. These student organisations also play a significant role in the school's extracurricular activities that offer another mechanism for the recontextualisation of the core socialist values (I explain later).

(ii) The curriculum system

In addition to the management systems, the school's curriculum system provides the second mechanism of recontextualisation allowing the core socialist value of integrity as a contractual virtue to enter the PRF. This curriculum system, in my research, is mainly related to textbook content, lesson content, pedagogy, and curriculum evaluation.

The value of integrity has been recontextualised into the textbook content and lesson content.

For example, Isaac and Rebekah note that they prefer to draw on the integrity-related textbook content to cultivate students sensitivity to integrity in the classroom. The example they both mentioned is the Confucian doctrine *"The Master said: how can a person establish in society without honesty? How can a large carriage be made to go without the crossbar for yoking the oxen to or a small carriage without the arrangement for attaching the horses?'* (Chinese Language textbook, RZB, 2005, p. 21; Rebekah also mentioned this doctrine in the observed class). In addition, Rachel said that "*I often devote a certain amount of class time for students to deliver a speech and the core socialist value of integrity has been frequently mentioned in their speech topics*" (this also matches the class observation data, see Chapter Eight). Jacob said that he has incorporated the values into the lesson content when teaching those texts concerning the values:

> *I remember there is a text entitled* The Inaugural Speech Delivered by the President of Peking University[74]. *When I taught it to students, I not only explained the speech-delivering skills and speechwriting methods included but also highlighted the text content, especially the lines where the writer described the unhealthy tendencies in Peking University at that time, such as learning perfunctorily, cheating in examinations, and showing no respect for teachers. I organised students to discuss such tendencies and the undesirable consequences by linking them to the discussions of the reality in the school. In doing so, I aimed to teach my students to be honest people who respect others and get along with each other genuinely.*

This finding also resonates with Vickers (2009) who argues that the Chinese government is *"selling"* its developmental ideology of socialism with Chinese characteristics to the senior high school students through the curriculum and textbooks (p. 523). Collectively, this data

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[74] Translated from the Chinese title: 就任北京大学校长之演说.

suggests the value of integrity has been recontextualised into the PRF as textbook and lesson content.

The teacher interviews also showed that integrity has been recontextualised into teachers' pedagogy in the classroom. For instance, Jean noted that she has incorporated the cultivation of integrity into role-playing. In her words, *"I help students understand the value of integrity with empathy by asking them to play different roles, like dishonest businessmen, blackmailed low-paid workers, poor students defrauded by the internet, and to offer reflective thinking about the roles they played"*.

The recontextualisation of integrity in the PRF is also achieved through curriculum evaluation practices. For example, Rebekah, John, and Jean acknowledged that integrity has been proposed as a topic for Chinese language speaking or writing tasks contained in the various (monthly, mid-term, and final) examinations organised by the school. This resonates with my findings of policy analysis (see Chapter Seven), which indicates that the term of *core socialist values* (integrity is one of the values) has become a core term used in the topics of the Chinese writing tasks contained in China's annual national college entrance examination [CEE] (Cai & Han, 2019).

To summarise, the teacher interviews indicate that the value of integrity has been recontextualised into the pedagogic recontextualising field in terms of the school's curriculum system, including textbook use, lesson content, pedagogy, and curriculum evaluation. This recontextualisation is also embedded in the extracurricular activities held by the school which I turn to next.

(iii) Extracurricular activities

The various types of extracurricular activities held by the school offer the third mechanism through which integrity is recontextualised into the PRF. Rich extracurricular activities are held

for students every semester. These activities are mainly sponsored by the school leadership, and organised and undertaken by the student organisations at both the school and the class levels as mentioned above. According to the teacher interview data, the school holds a regular national flag-raising ceremony fortnightly. In the ceremony, all administrative personnel, academic staff, and students gather on the playground. The students from the school's National Flag Guard Team escort the national flag to the platform, raising the national flag with the National Anthem playing. Both staff and students present sing the national anthem with accompaniment (flag-raising ceremonies are a common routine in China's educational institutions at all levels). In the ceremony, one leader representative will report on major events held in the preceding week. These include key school-level lectures, school meetings, activities, examinations, and weekly student attendance inspection results at the class level, weekly student dormitory[75] inspection results (this also connects to the mobile flag competitions I discuss below). Meanwhile, one student representative will deliver a keynote speech.

According to my interviews, the keynote speech topics often respond to the themes of school activities or traditional festivals in the week or the month, or major social events, renewed educational policies and discourses of the moment. For instance, the speech topic of *the importance of integrity and reading* responds to the school's activities of Integrity Month and Reading Month, the topics of *protecting the environment* and *patriotism* relate to the two traditional festivals of the National Arbor Day (March 12) and National Day (October 1) respectively. The topic *to be a moral person* relates to the national official educational campaign of moral education. The topic of *becoming a great scientist* and *space exploration* correspondingly link to the COVID-19 outbreak and the launch of China's Shenzhou series of

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[75] The school is a boarding school. Students have two days off to go home every two weeks and board at school the rest of the time. The school has two apartment buildings for boys and girls. The division of dormitory is also based on the administrative class to facilitate the management of students by class headteachers and dormitory administrators.

spacecrafts.

The teacher interviews showed that the school regularly holds three main extracurricular activities which consider the core socialist value of integrity. The first is Integrity Month. The school designates one month as the Integrity Month in each academic year and holds a series of sub-activities related to the theme, such as a speech contest, expert lectures, and cultural performances. The second activity is Integrity-based Examination Week, the last week of each semester. Student meetings are held at both the school and the class levels to teach students the importance of integrity in relation to examinations. The school also posts integrity-themed banners, slogans, and blackboard newspapers to discourage students from cheating and to encourage them to sit for examinations honestly. In particular, the school holds a special meeting for Year 12 students every year before they attend the National College Entrance Examination. At the meeting, the school leaders and teachers not only give instructions about the examination but also encourage the students to be honest in the examination.

The third activity is the mobile flag competition. Every two weeks, the school selects two classes and one student dormitory and awards them the three mobile flags of 'Pacemaker of Learning', 'Pacemaker of Morality', and 'The Most Harmonious Dormitory'. The three mobile flags are often awarded at the national flag-raising ceremony and the value of integrity underpins the school's selection criteria of these three awards.

In addition to the above three regular extracurricular activities, the school also organises other extracurricular activities that focus on integrity, such as organising students to visit local communities to interview and learn from local paragons of morality and encouraging students to conduct investigations on social phenomena of dishonesty. In the words of John, *"these extracurricular activities are aimed at enriching the campus integrity culture and fostering students' sense of integrity, thereby improving the quality of moral education"*. This finding

resonates with Zhang and Luo (2016) who argue that extracurricular activities comprise an important component of China's senior high school life and play an important role in teaching students school norms and values. These extracurricular activities provide the third mechanism of recontextualisation through which the value of integrity enters the PRF.

In the next section, I examine and explain how the six teachers' conceptualisation of the government's ascendant ideals of the core socialist values has influenced their perceptions of the role that the Chinese Language curriculum plays in modern society.

9.2 The Role of the Senior High School Chinese Language Curriculum: Teachers' Thought

One semi-structured interview question is about the six teachers' perceptions of the role of the Chinese Language curriculum: "How do you perceive the role that the senior high school Chinese Language curriculum plays in modern Chinese society?" I designed this question because I have found an emphasis on sociocultural knowledge in terms of policy/lesson propositions in both the official recontextualising field (the two curriculum policies analysis, see Chapter Seven) and the pedagogic recontextualising field (the class observation, see Chapter Eight). I wanted to investigate how the six teachers understand the role of the Chinese Language curriculum. That is, I wanted to determine whether they took a disciplinary approach, or a sociocultural one, or both. Their responses to this question can also elaborate their teaching focus in the classroom. I categorise and tabulate the six teachers' answers to this question in *Figure 9.2* below.

Focus	Frequency	Empirical teacher interview data (excerpted)
Society and culture	Six times	*The curriculum plays a vital role in inheriting and carrying forward our unique Chinese culture. For example, the Chinese character culture, such as the calligraphy and lettering arts.* (Isaac) *The curriculum serves as a platform to learn heritage culture in contemporary society. For instance, students get access to understand the traditional Chinese ethos through learning Confucian classics in the Chinese class.* (Rebekah) *The curriculum plays a role in helping students acquire the language skills needed for social participation and develop the verbal ability to participate in society.* (Jacob) *The curriculum plays a role in nurturing the core socialist values. For example, through reading Chinese revolutionary works and learning about the sufferings of the Chinese people in the warring period, students could learn to cherish the hard-won foundation of the country, and the happy and peaceful life today. In this way, the curriculum helps students understand the core socialist value of patriotism.* (Rachel) *The curriculum plays a role in cultivating Chinese language talents which can take on the cultural construction mission and pass it on to the next generation.* (John) *The curriculum plays a role in providing cultural knowledge in the form of poems, stories, and biographies for students to understand themselves and to explore their local life-worlds.* (Jean)
Chinese language grammar	Two times	*The curriculum plays a vital role in helping students lay a solid foundation of Chinese language skills in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation.* (John) *The curriculum plays a role in introducing students to different genres, such as traditional and modern poetry, drama, novels, and Confucian doctrines.* (Rebekah)

Future career	Two times	*The curriculum plays a vital role in laying a solid knowledge foundation for students, especially for those who want to further their study on Chinese-language-associated majors such as journalism, linguistics, literature, translation, and interpretation, as well as for those who are willing to work in these fields as writers, teachers, journalists, and editors for example.* (Isaac) *The curriculum plays a vital role in helping students to develop professional skills and competencies needed by employers, such as oratory skills, copywriting ability, workplace pragmatic competence, and language skills required for PPT design and business communications.* (Rachel)
Research	One time	*The curriculum plays a role in developing students' language competence needed to conduct academic research. As we all know, scholarly tasks, such as reading and writing journal articles, reporting research projects, and presenting in conferences, require language competence as a base.* (Jean)
Others	One time	*The curriculum plays a vital role in maintaining the dominant position of the Chinese language in our country, thus helping to resist foreign language (especially English language) hegemony.* (Jacob)

Figure 9.2 Teachers' perceptions of the role of Chinese Language curriculum

Figure 9.2 reveals an orientation towards sociocultural knowledge embedded in the six teachers' perceptions of the role of the Chinese Language curriculum. This is seen in three aspects. First, they all mentioned the sociocultural function of the Chinese Language curriculum in carrying forward Chinese culture (Isaac), teaching the Chinese heritage culture (Rebekah), cultivating talented builders and successors of the country's cultural cause (John), and responding to explore the local lifeworld (Jean) for example.

Second, this emphasis on sociocultural knowledge is also embedded in the way they answered this question during the interview. As can be noticed from *Figure 9.2*, each of the teachers gave two answers to the question. However, five of them (Isaac, Rebekah, Rachel, John, and Jean) only offered one answer at the beginning, and their first answers are presented under the "focus of society and culture" in *Figure 9.2*. They gave me the second answer under my further questioning – "Anything else?", "More answers?", "Is that all?" It seemed that the sociocultural

function of the Chinese Language curriculum had been ingrained in their minds and had become a natural focus that they take for granted. Only one of them, Jacob, offered two answers to the question without my further questioning. Jacob first mentioned the role that the Chinese language plays in resisting the language hegemony of other languages. He then linked the importance of Chinese language teaching to its function in developing the verbal ability of students to participate in local life.

Thirdly, the sociocultural prominence is also seen in the way that the participants addressed the place of disciplinary knowledge in helping the Chinese Language curriculum perform its sociocultural functions. There is some mention of disciplinary knowledge in the data shown in *Figure 9.2*. For instance, Rebekah and John emphasised teaching Chinese language literacy (such as language skills in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation, and different genres). Jean, Rachel, and Isaac highlighted the role of Chinese language learning in laying a solid knowledge foundation for students to conduct academic research, to further studies on relevant majors, and to acquire professional competence. However, these answers were given when I questioned them further (as I have explained above). Therefore, these answers somehow served as a complement to their initial responses. For example, Rebekah first expressed that the curriculum should focus on teaching Chinese heritage culture in the contemporary period (a sociocultural function). She then explained that learning different genres, such as traditional poetry, drama, novels (disciplinary knowledge) can help to work towards this goal. John said that focusing on teaching Chinese language listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation skills (disciplinary knowledge) can lay a solid knowledge foundation for students. Hence, they become "*talented*" (a word from John) builders and successors of the Chinese cultural cause (a sociocultural function). Isaac highlighted the role that the Chinese language plays in cultivating language competence for further studies in universities (especially for Chinese-language-based journalism, linguistics, literature majors) (noting the possible

significance of disciplinary knowledge). Nevertheless, he explained that the flourishing of Chinese language-based disciplines in universities was most importantly about passing on Chinese culture to the coming generation at the university level (a sociocultural function).

This finding is also consistent with the sociocultural knowledge orientation that I found through my empirical investigations of policy analysis in Chapter Seven and class observations in Chapter Eight. This consistency in terms of the orientation towards sociocultural knowledge embedded in the empirical data of curriculum policies, class observations, and teacher interviews also helps to explain how the core socialist values, which are sociocultural in nature (see Chapter Seven), are recontextualised into the curriculum policies and policy practices in China. It is also in this way that the values were used to develop and consolidate what I termed *socialist collective representations*, becoming part of the sociocultural knowledge included in and reproduced by the country's education system. This also resonates with Rata's (2018) statement that knowledge produced and reproduced in schools "does more than serve itself. Its main purpose is to provide society's shared reality and, by doing so, justify its role as a major source of the collective representations that are this reality" (p. 26).

In the next section, I analyse and explain how this sociocultural emphasis influences the six teachers' evaluation of the two curriculum policies that I have investigated (see Chapter Seven).

9.3 The Curriculum Policy: Teachers' Evaluation

Four interview questions are about the six teachers' evaluation of the *Standard* (MoE, 2018b) that I analysed in Chapter Seven. I did not examine their evaluation of the *Plan* (MoE, 2018a) because it is used as an overall guiding policy in making respective Curriculum Standards for each of the twenty subjects included in the country's senior high school programme, rather than as a policy designed for the use of teachers in teaching a specific curriculum for a specific subject.

The four interview questions were designed to examine the six teachers' (i) overall evaluation of the *Standard*, (ii) understanding of the *three strands of culture* emphasised in the *Standard* (traditional Chinese culture; revolutionary culture; and advanced socialist culture, also see Chapter Seven), (iii) views on the *four competencies* highlighted in the *Standard* (acquisition of the Chinese language; development of the Chinese way of thinking; cultivation of appreciation and love towards Chinese culture through developing aesthetic dispositions, attitudes, and values; and development of the ability and generation of the enthusiasm to understand, inherit, and transmit, also see Chapter Seven), and (iv) comments on the pedagogic tips provided in the *Standard* (e.g., a cultural-responsive pedagogy, a pedagogy linking to student life experience, and a pedagogy that helps students engage with local curriculum resources such as the museums, see more in Chapter Seven). Points (ii), (iii), and (iv) were based on the findings of the curriculum policy analysis (see Chapter Seven). I report on the results in relation to the four points.

9.3.1 What is your overall evaluation of the *Standard*?

The six teachers unanimously expressed their familiarity with the *Standard* as they had become familiar with it through various forms of teacher training. Moreover, their overall evaluation of the *Standard* is relatively high. This appears to be for five main reasons. First, the *Standard* clarifies the role of the Chinese Language curriculum in inheriting Chinese culture, which helps the teachers understand the curriculum nature and determine their teaching focus (Rebekah, Rachel, John, and Jean expressed this view). Second, the *Standard* divides the Chinese Language curriculum into compulsory, required-optional, and optional components, with the first two components prescribed as the focus of the Gaokao[76]. This assists the teachers in guiding students to prepare for the Gaokao (Isaac, John, and Jean conveyed this view). Third,

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[76] The Gaokao refers to the annual uniform national College Entrance Examination (CEE) in China.

the *Standard* elucidates the vital role that three strands of culture (see above) play in teaching the curriculum, which helps teachers in managing the class content (Jacob, Rachel, John, and Jean expounded this view). Fourth, the *Standard* described four core competencies (see above) to be developed through teaching the curriculum, which offers clear direction for teachers' lesson pedagogy and lesson evaluation (Rebekah, Rachel, John, and Jean presented this view). Fifth, the *Standard* addresses some of the students' problems in learning the curriculum (Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, Rachel, and John aired this view). As John said, "*most of my students do not have a solid foundation in traditional Chinese cultural knowledge. The policy provides a list of required readings of traditional Chinese culture for students to memorise. This might help to solve this problem.*"

In addition to the overall positive data about the *Standard*, the six teachers also offered some negative comments. First, two of them (John and Jean) think some language contained in the *Standard* is too general to be understood. As Jean explained,

> *I think that the policy text is somewhat abstract. The policy repeatedly emphasises the term 'fine traditional Chinese culture'. Nevertheless, it does not give a clear definition of what it is and what concepts should be encapsulated in this term. For instance, according to my knowledge, the traditional Chinese cultural concepts of 'mean' and 'perseverance' go against each other with respect to their semantic sense. The former means that one should learn the strategy to compromise because, according to Confucianism, "doing too much is as bad as doing too little[77]". While the latter could refer to that, a person should try the best to manage or to accomplish something and never compromise or give up. As a result, I have no idea which of the two concepts I*

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[77] Translated from the Chinese text: 过犹不及.

should incorporate into my lesson. I think the policy should define the term 'fine traditional Chinese culture' more explicitly by clarifying its specific content.

Second, four teachers (Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, and Rachel) think that the *Standard* does not provide enough readings of traditional Chinese culture for students to memorise. As Rebekah expressed,

Although the textbook contains enough texts of traditional Chinese culture, many of them are not on the list required for students to memorise. According to the policy, this means these texts are not the target content of the College entrance examination. As a result, my students are not active and serious in learning these texts. However, in my opinion, the traditional Chinese readings themselves are very abstract and difficult to understand if students do not take them seriously or memorise enough of them as their knowledge base. Not to mention that students can love and inherent them. In this case, to develop the competence of cultural inheritance and transmission is just empty talk.

To summarise, the six teachers, in general, give a positive assessment of the *Standard*, thinking it is useful in (i) adhering to the cultural-inheritance-and-transmission goal of the curriculum, (ii) guiding students' preparation for the Gaokao, (iii) promoting the three strands of culture as the curriculum content, (iv) developing the core competencies, and (v) addressing various problems which emerge in students' subject learning processes. In the next section, I examine their assessment of items of significance that characterise the *Standard*.

9.3.2 How do you understand the idea that the policy emphasises the three strands of culture?

This question[78] examines to what extent the teachers support the inclusion of the *three strands of culture*, traditional Chinese culture, revolutionary culture, and advanced socialist culture, into the Chinese Language curriculum. These three strands of culture have contributed to the emergence of the sociocultural knowledge orientation seen in the two curriculum policies I analysed (see Chapter Seven) and the six classes I observed (see Chapter Eight). The six teachers unanimously addressed the necessity to integrate the three strands of culture into the curriculum. I summarise six reasons for this derived from the empirical data.

First, the three strands of culture are the source of national awareness that provides students with a sense of psychological belonging. As Jacob said, "*to get to know the three strands of culture helps students to understand themselves as Chinese and to clarify their Chinese identity.*"

Second, the three strands of culture help to increase life wisdom. As Rebekah explained,

> *a Chinese sage once said that 'histories make people wise'[79]. The three strands of culture, as precious historical materials, comprise ancient, modern, and contemporary Chinese cultural knowledge. They include lots of value ideals and life wisdom that can guide students to conduct critical thinking of their lives and help them establish a correct worldview and life outlook.*

Third, the three strands of culture help to increase students' *cultural self-confidence*. As John suggested,

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[78] I identified the three strands of culture in the policy when I asked them the question.

[79] My translation, the original text is: 读史使人明智.

the three strands of culture are a brilliant exposition of China's five-thousand-year-old civilisation. They can reflect a more comprehensive, three-dimensional, and more glowing Chinese history. Learning them helps students understand the profound history of Chinese culture and increase their cultural self-confidence and sense of pride in Chinese culture.

Fourth, teaching and learning the three strands of culture can help students accumulate cultural knowledge and prepare for the Gaokao. *"It is necessary to incorporate the three strands of culture into the class because they occupy a considerable proportion of the Gaokao".*(Jean)

Fifth, learning the three strands of culture is conducive to inheriting them and helping students deepen their understanding of themselves and their local lifeworlds.

The three strands of culture, especially traditional Chinese culture, contain a considerable amount of the thoughts of the ancients, such as their attitudes towards others and perspectives of understanding the world. Learning these ideas enables students to open new doors to self-understanding, to see the world from another angle, and to rebuild their relationships with the external world. This also helps to pass on to students life wisdom and the human spirit of our ancestors. (Rachel)

Sixth, the three strands of culture can help students to recall and understand their emotions.

I was brought up by my grandfather, who was a Red Army soldier,[80]during the Chinese revolutionary period. When I was little, he told me lots of revolutionary stories. He died a long time ago. Every time I miss him, I will read revolutionary literary works. This gives me the feeling that he is by my side and still alive. Therefore, I will introduce the

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[80] Red Army, also referred to as the Chinese Red Army of Workers and Peasants, is the name of a Chinese army led by the Communist Party during the revolutionary period.

three strands of culture in my class. Some day they may be useful for my students to recall their emotions (Isaac).

To summarise, the six teachers acknowledge the inclusion of three strands of culture into the Chinese Language curriculum, seen in their unanimous positive assessment of it. The reasons they expounded for this orientation address the sociocultural function of the subject in (i) providing psychological belonging to students, (ii) teaching them life wisdom, (iii) enhancing their cultural self-confidence, (iv) assisting them in accumulating knowledge about Chinese culture, (v) helping them inherit Chinese culture and deepen understanding towards themselves and the outside world, and (vi) offering a context from which to recall and understand their feelings. In the next section, I examine the six teachers' assessments of the four *core competencies* developed by the policy for the subject teaching.

9.3.3 How do you understand the idea that the policy repeatedly emphasises four core competencies for Chinese language teaching?

This question examines how the six teachers understand the *four core competencies*[81] prescribed in the *Standard*. My interview with the six teachers reveals that they are satisfied with the inclusion of the four core competencies into the *Standard*. I set out some reasons they gave for this.

First, the four core competencies help to reset the target of the senior high school Chinese language teaching in China (John and Jean expounded this view). As John said,

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[81] I told the six teachers what the four core competencies refer to in the policy when I asked them the question. The four core competencies are: "(a) acquisition of the Chinese language, (b) development of the Chinese way of thinking, (c) cultivation of appreciation and love towards Chinese culture through developing aesthetic dispositions, attitudes, and values, and (d) development of the ability and generation of enthusiasm to understand, inherit, and transmit Chinese culture" (MoE, 2018b, p. 4).

it is getting increasingly pervasive that senior high school Chinese language education has become examination-oriented. It makes the Chinese language teaching very dull and utilitarian; students are mechanised as robots for fitting into the Gaokao factory, and teachers become mechanicians to provide the best service for the student robots. Under such conditions, it is of considerable significance to develop the four core competencies, which helps teachers to relocate the Chinese language teaching in the moral and cultural dimensions rather than merely in the examination arena.

Second, the four core competencies provide references to teaching (Rebekah, Jacob, and Rachel expressed this view). As Rachel said,

in the past, when encountering a biographic text, I focused on explaining to students the skills in describing a person. However, influenced by the prescribed competency to develop students' aesthetic dispositions, attitudes, and values, I now pay more attention to analysing the personalities of characters and the social context in which the characters live when dealing with a biographical text. In doing so, I aim to help students develop an expected attitude in knowing others and society.

Third, the four core competencies help to transmit Chinese culture (Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, John, Jean conveyed this view). As Isaac noted,

stimulated by the prescribed competence to inherit and transmit Chinese culture, I regard my students as the main body and the classroom as the leading platform for cultural inheritance and transmission. Therefore, I focus on bringing as much cultural knowledge as possible into my class when I design my teaching content. For example, when I introduce China's Dragon Boat Festival to students, I also bring in to the class other

festivals such as the Spring Festival, the Lantern Festival, and the Qingming Festival[82].
In doing so, I aim to help students accumulate Chinese cultural knowledge and cultivate
their interest and love towards the culture.

Fourth, the four core competencies help to address some of the students' problems in learning the Chinese language (Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, Rachel, and John presented this view). As Rebekah suggested,

> *based on my observation of the students in the class, I found some common issues with them in learning Chinese. First of all, their language skills are feeble; some of them make simple mistakes when using the Chinese language. Most of them do not know how to use honorific and euphemism to express politeness. Furthermore, some of them do not have the aesthetic ability, seen in that they treat the more expensive as having a higher value. Moreover, some of them lack Chinese cultural knowledge. For instance, in their compositions, they often mismatch the historical figures with their famous sayings and personal stories. Fortunately, the four core competencies prescribed in the policy addressed these problems.*

To summarise, the six teachers are satisfied with the four core competencies developed by the *Standard*, and the reasons they set out reveal a sociocultural emphasis in their perceptions of the function of these competencies. Specifically, they think the four competencies can help teachers to (i) change the examination goal of Chinese language teaching into the sociocultural purpose of the subject in moral education, (ii) embed moral education into the classroom, such as conducting in-class discussions about values, ideals, personalities, and attitudes, (iii) assist students in acquiring and accumulating knowledge about Chinese culture, and (iv) improve

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[82] The Qingming Festival, also known as the Ching Ming Festival or the Tomb-Sweeping Day, is a day for the Chinese to worship their ancestors and to commemorate their deceased family, friends, and relatives.

students Chinese language skills and lay a solid foundation of Chinese culture for them. In the next section, I investigate how the six teachers respond to the pedagogic tips given by the policy for the reference of teachers.

9.3.4 Are you familiar with the pedagogic tips given by the *Standard*? [83]If you are, what do you think of them?

The six teachers acknowledged their familiarity with the pedagogic tips mentioned in the *Standard*, such as linking the lesson content to "the reality of students' lives" (MoE, 2018b, p. 29), encouraging students to understand the meaning of a lesson by discussing with teachers of other relevant subjects (also see Chapter Seven). They have studied them systematically in various types of teacher training at different levels (national/provincial/school). Furthermore, four of the six teachers (Isaac, Rebekah, John, and Jean) gave a positive assessment of the tips, one neutral (Rachel), and one negative (Jacob). I tabulate their views in *Figure 9.3* below.

Teacher	Comments (excerpts from the empirical data)
Isaac	*They [the tips] are useful because they emphasise the central position of students in the classroom. My teaching philosophy is that "by giving a person a fish and you feed the person for a day; by teaching the person how to fish, and you feed the person for a lifetime". That is, teaching students a specific point of knowledge in class is not as effective as helping them to develop an ability to learn that knowledge point by themselves. Therefore, it is necessary to adhere to students' central position in the classroom and to enable them to develop a self-learning ability by being masters of the class.*
Rebekah	*I think that the tips are beneficial to students because they highlight a heuristic and discussion-based approach to teaching, which helps to improve student participation in class.*
John	*I acknowledge the tips because they focus on the construction of a close connection between the class content and students' everyday life. In this way, the tips can help students to apply what they learn in practice to life and vice versa.*

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[83] I mentioned some of the pedagogic tips provided in the policy when I asked them the question in a bid to recall their knowledge of them.

Jean	*They are useful because they help to integrate into the class the four core competencies developed for the subject.*
Rachel	*As far as I am concerned, teaching methods vary from teacher to teacher. There is not a one-size-fits-all method that is the best. Therefore, I refer to the tips given by the policy but never rely too much on them. To me, a better teaching method is the one adapted to my students. I think my approach is more acceptable to them. For instance, most of my students express that the speech session that I used in my class is very beneficial to their Chinese language learning.*
Jacob	*The tips are sort of so specific that they may limit teachers' creativity and imagination in teaching.*

Figure 9.3 The six teachers' comments on the pedagogic tips included in the *Standard*

To summarise, the six teachers generally give a positive assessment of the pedagogic tips provided in the policy, seen in that four of them rated the tips as useful. The reasons provided by them reveal their preference for a facilitation-teaching-oriented approach to pedagogy (Rata, 2017), seen in that they think a student-led and student-life-based approach is conducive to improving their class participation, which therefore enhances the cultivation of the four core competencies. In the final section, I discuss with the six teachers the classes that I observed.

9.4 Teachers' Responses to the Observed Classes

I asked the teachers to comment on the classes I observed[84]. The question is, "Do you have anything to explain, supplement, reflect, or comment concerning the observed class (such as your interactions with students, your lesson design, your comments)?" I report on the main ideas from their answers to this question in *Figure 9.4* below.

Teacher	Focus	Content	Views (excerpts from the empirical data)
Isaac	Lesson pedagogy	Isaac explained his way of interacting with students.	*I did not interrupt their (the students) discussions because I wanted to hear their real voices. I worried that any of my remarks would influence their opinions.*

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[84] For each of the teacher participants, the class observation and the interview were carried out on the same day. I did so so that they could easily recall the lesson.

Rebekah	Student participation	Rebekah discussed the students' ways of answering questions.	*Luckily, they (the students) did use examples to support their ideas in the class. This is because I often ask them to use stories, statistics, sayings from or views of famous people to support their ideas in a bid to improve the quality of class discussion and develop their ability of reasoning.*
Jacob	Lesson pedagogy	Jacob explained his rationale for using interactive questions and answers.	*I seldom carry out student group discussions in my class. Based on my experience, some of them become lazy when doing group tasks because they rely too much on the group members. Therefore, I prefer to use interactive questions and answers in my class. This allows me to extend any possible knowledge points or topics by multiple rounds of questioning and answering; thus, it helps them (the students) to deepen their understanding of a question or a viewpoint."*
Rachel	Lesson content	Rachel explained the reasons for doing a speech section in each of her classes.	*I often devote the first five minutes of each class for them (the students) to deliver a speech, aiming to help them develop speaking skills, accumulate topics and resources for the CEE Chinese language composition, and keep a positive attitude and correct values towards Chinese culture and in personal life. Permissible topics for speech often include (domestic/international) news reviews, life anecdotes, stories about famous people (scientists, historical figures, heroes, philosophers), Chinese language and culture, environment protection, afterthoughts of texts included in the textbooks, etc.*
John	Lesson content	John did not think his class was successful.	*I had planned to focus on teaching the methods to capture appropriate perspectives in the given materials. However, after I collected themes from students, I found that the class had nearly ended. I had no time to teach students in detail the skills to capture possible perspectives from the themes that they gained from their group discussions but presented them the perspectives that I summarised from the themes directly."*
Jean	Lesson content	Jean shared her reason for asking students to keep a positive attitude in writing up the Gaokao compositions.	*The reason why I stressed to them (the students) in the class to maintain a positive attitude in college entrance examination composition is based on my observation. I have read some of the zero-pointed Gaokao compositions officially released. I find that these writings often have a common problem; that is, their writers presented a negative attitude towards society. For example, they are too pessimistic or sociopathic, or present antihuman attitudes in their compositions.*

Figure 9.4 Teachers' responses to the observed classes

To summarise, the teachers' responses to the observed classes show an internal consistency between how they understood the *Standard*, how they behaved in the observed classes, and

how they reflected on the observed class. For example, Isaac rated the pedagogic tips given by the policy as useful because they enable students to be "*masters of the class*". This explains why he paid particular attention to the *student voice* in his class. Rachel found that her students sometimes mismatch historical figures with their stories and famous sayings. That is why she consistently devotes ten minutes of the class for students to deliver a speech about prominent figures. Jean asks students to pay attention to taking a positive attitude in their Chinese language writings; this is based on her study of the past CEE Chinese writing outcomes. The requirement of ideological correctness is not only for student writers but also for teachers. "Chinese academics in humanities and the social sciences are also urged to be aware of ideological correctness in their publications" (Guo et al., 2020, p. 6).

9.5 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has reported on the third empirical investigation of this research. My examination has revealed an emphasis on sociocultural knowledge in the six teacher participants' (i) perceptions of the role of the core socialist values, (ii) understanding of the focus of the Chinese Language curriculum at the senior high school stage in China, and (iii) assessment of the *Standard* that I analysed in Chapter Seven. The interviews have demonstrated how the three strands of culture – traditional Chinese culture, revolutionary culture, and advanced socialist culture – have interwoven with the core socialist values in creating this orientation towards sociocultural knowledge in the pedagogic recontextualising field, referring to both the observed classes (see Chapter Eight) and the six teacher's minds; this finding is consistent with what I have found in the official recontextualising field (see Chapter Seven). The teacher interview data have also indicated that the six teachers' conceptualisation of the core socialist value aligns with how the value is officially created as a *contractual virtue* (see Chapter Six). That is, the government has recontextualised the core socialist value of integrity as a contractual virtue by drawing on traditional Chinese culture that regards integrity as a personal virtue and the modern

secular marketised culture that treats integrity as a social contract underpinning the market system.

In the next chapter, I connect the empirical findings of the three investigations to the theoretical framework that I formulated in Chapter Three. In doing so, I explain how the empirical findings provide evidence for the identification and illustration of the three sociological concepts of *ideology*, *collective representations*, and *recontextualisation* in the authentic curriculum policies and practices in China. I also explore the research implications, strengths, and limitations and provide suggestions for further research on the topic in that chapter.

CHAPTER TEN

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The preceding chapter reported on the third empirical investigation: teacher interviews. My analysis revealed a sociocultural knowledge emphasis in the six teacher participants' (i) perceptions of the core socialist values, (ii) their understanding of the role of the Chinese language programme at the senior high school stage in China, and (iii) their views about one of the two curriculum policies, the *Standard*, that I analysed in Chapter Seven.

This chapter describes how I connect the three theoretical concepts of *ideology*, *collective representations*, and *recontextualisation* (see Chapter Three) to the three empirical investigations of curriculum policy analysis, class observations, and teacher interviews (see Chapters Seven to Nine). In explaining this interplay between the theoretical and the empirical, I demonstrate (i) how the use of the foregoing three concepts (the theoretical/conceptual level of this study) enables me to produce a hypothetical argument by using the concepts to understand and theorise the significance of the phenomena under investigation (the empirical/material level of this study), and (ii) how the empirical investigations help to verify the hypothetical argument by providing evidence to identify and illustrate the theoretical concepts in reality. The last part of the chapter concludes the thesis by pondering the research, its implications, strengths and limitations, and providing suggestions for further studies.

10.1 The Empirical: an Emphasis on Sociocultural Knowledge

This section summarises the three empirical investigations of curriculum policy analysis, class observations, and teacher interviews conducted in this study. I summarise these findings here to provide an integrated account of the empirical findings from the three investigations discussed in the three independent chapters (Chapters Seven, Eight, and Nine). I discuss how

the educational endeavours, both in the official recontextualising field and in the pedagogic recontextualising field, contribute to the production and reproduction of an orientation towards sociocultural knowledge in Chinese Language education, which I theorise as *socioculturalism.* This socioculturalism helps to recontextualise the government's core socialist values as sociocultural knowledge into the country's education system. This further contributes to the cultivation of what I term *socialist collective representations* and the constitution of an idealised type of knower as a qualified builder and successor of China's great socialist cause (MoE, 2018a, 2018b).

10.1.1 The official recontextualising field

In the official recontextualising field, socioculturalism is embedded through policy propositions, subject competencies, concepts, and content as prescribed in the *Plan* and the *Standard* that I analysed in Chapter Seven. In terms of the policy propositions, both policies recognise the role of China's senior high school Chinese Language curriculum in cultivating qualified "builders and successors of China's great socialist cause" (MoE, 2018a, p. 2; 2018b, p. 2).

This socioculturalism is seen in the policy propositions contained in the *Plan* and the *Standard* analysed in Chapter Seven. For instance, the *Plan* highlights the function of the Chinese Language curriculum in undertaking the fundamental tasks of developing socialism with Chinese characteristics, promoting the core socialist values, carrying forward fine traditional Chinese culture, and cultivating cultural self-confidence in regard to the country's socialist theories, systems, institutions, culture, and socialist road with Chinese characteristics (MoE, 2018a). The *Standard* emphasises the unique and irreplaceable function that the Chinese Language curriculum performs in passing on to the young generation Chinese language and

culture that provide a "spiritual home" to Chinese people, and in boosting people's cultural self-confidence, and in encouraging Chinese cultural innovations (MoE, 2018b, p. 2).

This socioculturalism is also seen in how the *Standard* stipulates the nature of the Chinese Language curriculum. The *Standard* pinpoints that the Chinese Language curriculum features the unity of "instrumentality and humanity" (MoE, 2018b, p. 2). Instrumentality refers to the subject's function in enabling the use of the language in the everyday sociocultural context (MoE, 2018b). Humanity denotes the subject's role in cultivating interest in Chinese language and love towards Chinese culture through learning the curriculum (MoE, 2018b). I argue that it is through the combination of the instrumental and humanistic functions that the Chinese Language curriculum is able to cultivate an idealised type of young generation who, with what I call *socialist collective representations* and Chinese cultural self-confidence, is willing to inherit and carry forward fine traditional Chinese culture, revolutionary culture, and advanced socialist culture. In this way, the Chinese Language curriculum plays a role in enhancing national cohesion and boosting Chinese cultural prosperity (MoE, 2018b).

The prescribed four core competencies contained in the *Standard* also help to strengthen this emphasis on socioculturalism. These four core competencies are: (i) acquiring the Chinese language, (ii) developing the Chinese way of thinking, (iii) cultivating appreciation and love towards Chinese culture through developing aesthetic dispositions, attitudes, and values, and (iv) developing the ability and generating the enthusiasm to understand, inherit, and transmit Chinese culture (MoE, 2018b). These four promulgated competencies show a clear path towards teaching Chinese language curriculum: teaching the Chinese language – developing the Chinese-language-based way of thinking – cultivating appreciation and love towards Chinese culture based on the Chinese way of thinking – developing ability and generating enthusiasm to understand, inherit, and transmit Chinese culture based on the appreciation of the language and culture. In this way, the ultimate goal of teaching the Chinese Language

curriculum becomes embedded in a sociocultural purpose of Chinese cultural inheritance and transmission. I argue that this trend towards socioculturalism aims to cultivate an idealised type of knower who has "an appreciation and love towards *advanced socialist culture* and a willingness to participate in its construction" (emphasis added, MoE, 2018b, p. 3).

In cultivating this idealised type of knower who is willing to inherit and transmit the Chinese culture, the reformed Chinese Language curriculum highlights sociocultural knowledge in terms of concepts and content. For example, the *Standard* distributes the curriculum content over 25 learning modules, themed variously as *Contemporary Cultural Participation*, *Practical Chinese Language Reading and Communication*, and *Appreciation of Chinese Revolutionary Works* (MoE, 2018b). The *Standard* also states explicitly that the linkage between the 25 learning modules is three strands of culture, referring to "fine traditional Chinese culture, revolutionary culture, and advanced socialist culture" (emphasis added, MoE, 2018b, p. 9).

Furthermore, in each of the 25 modules, the suggested pedagogic tips for teaching the module contained in the *Standard* take a sociocultural approach to pedagogy. For instance, the policy requires teachers to pay attention to the connections between the subject content and students' sociocultural life, personal interests, and learning habitus, rather than focusing on the academic dimensions of "conceptually integrated concepts" (McPhail, 2020b, p. 8) that contribute to the development and extension of the cognitive architecture of students (Geary & Berch, 2016; Geary, 2012; McPhail, 2020b; Sweller et al., 2019). The policy also encourages teachers to take the initiative to make full use of local curriculum resources, such as cultural, revolutionary, and military museums, face-to-face dialogues with local revolutionary predecessors or heroic model figures, all aimed to assist students in creating their understanding of Chinese culture and history.

To summarise, there emerges a sociocultural knowledge orientation in the official recontextualising field in terms of the policy propositions, subject competencies, concepts, and content contained in the two curriculum policies that I analysed in Chapter Seven. I argue that such a tendency towards socioculturalism aims to recontextualise the official core socialist values into the curriculum policies so as to develop and strengthen what I term *socialist collective representations*. In this way, these core socialist values can play a role in cultivating an idealised type of knower: a qualified builder and successor of China's great socialist cause (MoE, 2018a, p. 1). My analysis reveals that this socioculturalism in the official recontextualising field has also exerted a subsequent influence on the pedagogic recontextualising field, seen in the perceptions and practices of the six Chinese Language teacher participants.

10.1.2 The pedagogic recontextualising field

The second and third empirical investigations of classroom observations and teacher interviews in the pedagogic recontextualising field display the same sociocultural knowledge orientation as is found in the official recontextualising field. This socioculturalism is embedded in the six teacher participants' perceptions of the role of the Chinese Language programme, their understanding of the function that the core socialist values play in modern society, their responses to the prominent features included in the two curriculum policies that I analysed in Chapter Seven, and their pedagogic practices observed in the classrooms.

This orientation towards socioculturalism is first seen in the six teacher participants' perceptions of the role of the Chinese Language programme. In response to the interview question concerning the role of the Chinese Language curriculum, the six teacher participants mentioned its sociocultural function, such as carrying forward Chinese culture, teaching heritage Chinese cultural knowledge, and providing students with a tool to navigate

sociocultural surroundings. In addition, the six teachers also mentioned the role that disciplinary knowledge plays in helping the Chinese Language curriculum perform its sociocultural function. For instance, one of the teachers, Rebekah, treated the accumulation and acquisition of knowledge of different genres such as traditional poetry, drama, novels, and their specific usages and application (e.g., genre-based reading and writing), an example of disciplinary knowledge, as a way for students to access and carry forward Chinese heritage culture, which is a sociocultural function. However, disciplinary knowledge and its features were overshadowed by the prominence given to sociocultural knowledge.

Acceptance of this socioculturalism is also indicated by the way that the six teacher participants unanimously regard the function that the core socialist values perform in modern society as positive. They willingly incorporate the values into their pedagogic practices. According to them, the values play an essential role in strengthening national cohesion, leading the social value trend of modern Chinese society that consists of pluralistic values, cultivating the idealised type of citizen who exhibits the qualities of patriotism, dedication, integrity, and friendliness, and carrying forward the centuries-old Chinese civilisation. The six teachers also mentioned three mechanisms of recontextualisation through which the core socialist values were inserted into the everyday practices of the target research school. The three mechanisms of recontextualisation refer to the school's management system, curriculum system, and extracurricular activities (see Chapter Nine).

The six teachers' comments on the prominent features included in the two curriculum policies that I analysed (see Chapter Seven) also reflect this sociocultural orientation. They revealed a unanimous approval of the incorporation of the *three strands of culture* that I mentioned above into the curriculum for sociocultural reasons. For instance, they think that the cultivation of the three strands of culture helps students to (i) gain sociocultural and psychological belonging, (ii) learn life wisdom, (iii) generate cultural self-confidence, (iv) accumulate Chinese cultural

knowledge, (v) inherit the Chinese culture and deepen understanding towards themselves and the outside world, and (vi) connect their individual experiences to artistic and cultural works. Furthermore, the six teachers set out some sociocultural reasons to support the insertion of the *four core competencies* [85] into the *Standard* (MoE, 2018b). According to them, the four promulgated core competencies prescribed for the Chinese Language curriculum can help teachers to (i) change the purpose of teaching the Chinese Language curriculum from a utilitarian goal of attending the annual uniform national college entrance examination to the sociocultural goal of cultivating humanistic propositions and qualities, (ii) conduct moral education in the classroom by introducing cultural values, ideals, and norms into classes, (iii) lead students to acquire and accumulate cultural knowledge, and (iv) lay a solid foundation of Chinese culture for students.

This socioculturalism is also embedded in the actual pedagogic practices of the six teachers in the classroom, seen in a sociocultural knowledge orientation in terms of lesson propositions, concepts, content, pedagogy, competencies, and participation. In terms of the lesson propositions, the six teachers emphasise sociocultural themes and discussions, such as Confucian life wisdom, life attitudes and values, and cultural skills useful for the CEE Chinese language composition. These lesson propositions oriented towards sociocultural knowledge (values, beliefs, and cultural norms) are recontextualised and packaged into particular lesson concepts/content, such as reading texts concerning Confucian doctrines and living spheres included in the officially written textbooks, or uniform examinations (e.g., the materials concerning sociocultural events used for writing tasks contained in the examination papers, see Chapter Eight). Two pedagogic approaches were adopted to teach the lesson concepts/content

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[85] The four core competencies refer to (i) acquiring the Chinese language, (ii) developing the Chinese way of thinking, (iii) cultivating appreciation and love towards Chinese culture through developing aesthetic dispositions, attitudes, and values, and (iv) developing the ability and generating the enthusiasm to understand, inherit, and transmit Chinese culture.

which orient towards sociocultural knowledge. The first approach comprised a facilitation-teaching-oriented pedagogy, with most of the lesson concepts/content generated by student-centred pedagogic activities, such as group discussions and speech-delivering. The second approach was an instructional-teaching-oriented pedagogy, in which teachers played a leading role in teaching and guiding students to reproduce sociocultural discourses from the sociocultural-knowledge-oriented teaching concepts/content. Influenced by such sociocultural-knowledge-oriented lesson concepts/content, and led by such pedagogic approaches, most views produced and reproduced by students in the class (student participation) are related to sociocultural dimensions, such as perception of Confucian life wisdom, attitudes towards the spheres of living, and responses to dishonesty (see Chapter Eight). It can be argued that such lessons help students (i) develop sociocultural competencies, (ii) form correct attitudes towards ignorance by understating relevant Confucian philosophy, (iii) react upon dishonesty and set up moral and transcendent life pursuits, and (iv) manage personal attitudes and views towards negative social news or events included in the CEE Chinese Language writing tasks.

To summarise, an emphasis on sociocultural knowledge has permeated the pedagogic recontextualising field, seen in the teacher participants' perceptions of the role of the Chinese Language curriculum and that of the core socialist values, their comments on the two curriculum policies, and their teaching practices in the classroom. This emphasis on sociocultural knowledge which I theorise *socioculturalism* in the pedagogic recontextualising field aligns with that found in the official recontextualising field (see Chapter Seven). I argue that such a tendency towards socioculturalism in both the official and pedagogic recontextualising fields helps to recontextualise the core socialist values, which are sociocultural knowledge in nature (see Chapter Seven), into the country's education system. I also argue that the integration and recontextualisation of the core socialist values into the Chinese Language curriculum policies and practices helps to foster what I term *socialist*

collective representations and to cultivate an idealised type of knower who with these socialist collective representations can take on the country's great socialist cause. In doing so, I argue that the government aims to consolidate its ruling ideology of market socialism in contemporary China. I extend this argument in the next section.

10.2 Linking the Empirical Findings to the Theoretical Concepts

In this section, I deepen my explanation of this trend towards socioculturalism found in the three empirical investigations by linking it to the three theoretical concepts included in the theoretical framework that I created in Chapter Three. In doing so, I aim to explain how a realist approach to research enables me firstly to use disciplinary concepts to look at the phenomena and to hypothesise an argument which generates research questions, and secondly to conduct investigations and use the empirical data as evidence for both the identification and illustration of the theoretical concepts in the real world. By identification, I mean how the theoretical concepts help to anchor my attention to view and review real-world phenomena, referring to the proposal of the core socialist values, the promulgation of the values in social policy, and the reform of the curriculum policies which embed the values in my case. By illustration, I denote how the theoretical concepts become a *translation device* (McPhail & Louire, 2017), helping to theorise and report the empirical data in an epistemic way.

It is the iterative research process between identification and illustration that differentiates the conceptual methodology that I employ from a purely inductive one, one that starts with a theory to prove, or a strictly deductive one, one that begins with real-life experience that is too discursive, familiar, and specific to be systemically theorised and generally conceptualised without drawing on theoretical concepts (Lourie & Rata, 2017; Rata & Tamati, in press). Such a methodology is within the Kantian rationalist tradition where the "united operation" of concepts and content avoids both the idealism of concepts alone and the restrictions of

empiricism (Kant, 1993[1781], p. 69). At one level, concepts such as *ideology, recontextualisation, knowledge differentiation* enable me to examine why and how the government recontextualises the core socialist values into the curriculum policies and practices. At a more general level, these three concepts enable me to theorise the process as the normalisation of ideology in the creation of a country's collective representations. This realist or conceptual methodology helps me to connect valid theoretical concepts to the explanation and theorisation of real-life phenomena; the connection to real life is what makes this study credible sociological research (Maxwell, 2012; McPhail & Louire, 2017; Lourie & Rata, 2017). In the next sub-section, I explain in what ways this connection between the theoretical and the empirical has been constructed in this study.

10.2.1 Real-world phenomena and the identification and theorisation of the phenomena

My attention was drawn to this research by some social phenomena that I explained in Chapter One. These phenomena include (i) the proposal of the socialist values in 2012, (ii) the promulgation of a social policy which enacts the values in 2013, and (iii) the reforms of the curriculum policies since 2013 and the subsequent release of the new curriculum policies which embed the values in 2018. These policies were reformed for use in China's senior high school education, including an overall Curriculum Plan and 20 Curriculum Standards for specific subjects included in the country's senior high school programme. Of these curriculum policies, I choose two as my research focus, referring to the *Plan* and the *Standard* (see Chapter Seven).

In the following sections, I describe each of the three actual phenomena (the material/empirical) by explaining how three sociological concepts of *collective representations*, *ideology*, and *recontextualisation* (see Chapter Three) illuminate the way in which I was able to describe, understand, and theorise the three phenomena theoretically and integrally. I developed a

hypothetical argument which generated the research questions from the argument before conducting real-world empirical investigations.

The Chinese government proposed for the first time a set of core socialist values at the country's 18th National People's Congress [NPC] held in 2012. The government aims to recognise their role of the values as "the soul of the Chinese nation" and to use them "as the guide for building socialism with Chinese characterises" (NPC, 2012, n.p., translated by China Academy of Translation). To achieve this goal, the government argues that "a thorough study of and education in these values" should be carried out so that the values can help to *guide social trends of thought and forge public consensus* (emphasis added, NPC, 2012, n.p., translated by China Academy of Translation).

Durkheim's concept of *collective representations* (2001[1912], p. 18) provides me with the first apposite conceptual tool to understand and theorise the official efforts to create the core socialist values and to use them to "guide social trends of thought and forge public consensus" (NPC, 2012, n.p., translated by China Academy of Translation). I theorise that the core socialist values are a mechanism for producing and strengthening what I term *socialist collective representations*. This is achieved by making the values explicit and using them, particularly in education, to influence and regulate individual thoughts and actions.

Following the birth of the core socialist values, the government promulgated an official policy entitled *Guidance on Upholding and Observing Core Socialist Values* [*Guidance*] in 2013 (people.cn., 2013b, my translation). It is in this document that the government systemically elaborates on how to insert the core socialist values in all sectors of society, and how to expose the values into everyday practices of the Chinese people (people.cn., 2013b). It is also in this document that the vital role that the education system plays in transmitting and reproducing the values is clarified and recognised (people.cn., 2013b).

Althusser's concept of "ideology" (2001, p. 6) provides me with the second apposite conceptual tool to understand and theorise the government's efforts to integrate the values into the education system as a way to employ "the Dominant Ideological State Apparatus" (DISA, p. 21) to maintain its ruling ideology of market socialism for contemporary Chinese society. According to Althusser (2001), education has replaced the Church, which played a dominant role in ideological control in earlier times, becoming the DISA in modern secular society. Utilising the concept of *ideology* also allows me to research further to conduct the first theoretical investigation to identify what the government's contemporary ruling ideology actually is.

The current DISA is linked to and is a development of the Chinese government's implementation of the historic national strategy of *Reform and Opening Up* since the 1970s, which was underpinned by its ruling ideology of *market socialism*. This national strategy has shifted China's economic system from a planned economy dominated by rigid centralised planning to a socialist market economy where the market plays a dominating role in resource allocation (Brødsgaard & Rutten, 2017; CGTN, 2019). Although the economic system has been changed, these economic reforms towards market socialism did not change China's socialist polity (Brødsgaard & Rutten, 2017; Harvey, 2007). However, the development of a socialist market economy has brought along with it some market values, such as the recognition of personal property, the emphasis on free-market competition, and the pursuit of optimising market benefits (see Chapter Four). These values have resulted in an increase in individualism and materialism, seen pervasively in the ecological, political, cultural, social, and educational spheres (see Chapter Five). This social trend towards individualistic and materialistic values has the potential to undermine the socialist values underpinning the country's socialist polity. The use of the two sociological concepts of *ideology* and *collective representations* has enabled me to understand and theorise the government's efforts to promote and uphold the core socialist

values as a method to produce and strengthen what I term *socialist collective representations* so as to counteract the rise of individualism and materialism in contemporary Chinese society. In doing so, I argue that the government aims to revitalise its ruling *ideology* of market socialism adopted since the 1970s in the contemporary period by strengthening the socialist dimensions of this ideology of market socialism.

After the government released and enacted the *Guidance* (people.cn., 2013b) which specifies ways to promote and transmit the core socialist values, especially by incorporating them into the country's education system, China also formally launched the senior high school curriculum reforms in the same year. These reforms culminated in the release of 21 official curriculum policies in 2018, including an overall Curriculum Plan that guides the writing of 20 specific Curriculum Standards for each of the 20 subjects included in the senior high school programme. I analysed two of these 21 policies, the *Plan* and the *Standard*, in my study (see Chapter Seven). The two policies explicitly address the connections between curriculum reforms and the government's core socialist values. For example, the *Plan* points out that "the core socialist values guide the curriculum reforms" (MoE, 2018a, p. 2). The *Standard* describes that "the reform of the Chinese Language curriculum standard adheres to humanistic education and aims to foster the national ethos and also promote the core socialist values" (MoE, 2018b, p. 2). Therefore, I became especially interested in the ways in which the values were inserted into the curriculum policies and the subsequent policy practices. I have explained this in Chapters Seven, Eight, and Nine.

Bernstein's concept of "recontextualisation" (2000, p. 32) provides me with the third apposite conceptual tool to examine (i) in what ways the core socialist values were recontextualised and produced (this is also the second theoretical investigation conducted in this study, see Chapter Six), and (ii) how the core socialist values underpinned by the government's ruling ideology of market socialism were recontextualised into the country's senior high school curriculum

policies and practices (this refers to the three empirical investigations conducted in this study, see Chapters Seven to Nine). Bernstein (2003) argues that pedagogic discourses in the education system are controlled and produced as "a symbolic regulator of consciousness" (2000, p. 37) to allocate and transmit different knowledge, ideology, and power to corresponding groups of people. These pedagogic discourses are generated by both the official and pedagogic recontextualising fields through complex principles of knowledge production, reproduction, and transformation which are guided by recontextualising principles and mechanisms (Bernstein, 2000). Therefore, I used the concept of *recontextualisation* to explore and explain the mechanisms of recontextualisation through which the core socialist values enter the curriculum policies and practices.

To summarise, this research started with a number of social phenomena. Three best-fit theoretical concepts from the discipline of sociology of education provided me with the apposite conceptual tools to understand, theorise, and explain the three real-world social phenomena under investigation. In doing so, I developed a research argument at the hypothetical level and generated the research questions.

10.2.2 The hypothetical argument and the research questions

I separate this section from the last section in a bid to show explicitly and precisely the hypothetical argument that I developed based on the perception, identification, and theorisation of the social phenomena under investigation, as well as the research questions.

The hypothetical argument

China's market economic reforms since the 1970s underpinned by the government's *ideology* of *market socialism* have helped to change a planned economy into a socialist market economy and to retain the country's socialist polity at the same time. Along with the reforms, two significant effects have emerged in the contemporary period. On the one hand, these reforms

have enriched the country and made it the second-largest world economic entity since 2010. On the other hand, these reforms have introduced market values into modern Chinese society, such as the recognition of personal property, the emphasis on free-market competition, and the pursuit of optimising market benefits. These values have further resulted in a rise of individualism and materialism in contemporary society, seen pervasively in the ecological, political, cultural, social, and educational spheres. This shift towards individualistic and materialistic values has the potential to undermine the socialist values that underpin the country's socialist polity. To address this value conundrum, I argue that the government has been intent on promoting and upholding the core socialist values to develop what I call *socialist collective representations*, especially by *recontextualising* the values into the education system. The government aims to (i) use the values to strengthen the country's socialist collective representations so that they help to mediate this increase of individualism and materialism in modern society and (ii) revitalise its ruling *ideology* of market socialism for the contemporary Chinese society. Based on the hypothetical argument, I designed my research questions (also see Chapter One).

Research questions

Primary research question

Why, and in what ways, does China's contemporary education system include the core socialist values promulgated by the Chinese government since 2012?

Research sub-questions

- Why does the Chinese government promulgate the core socialist values in contemporary society?

- In what ways has the Chinese government created the core socialist values?

- In what ways are the core socialist values recontextualised into China's contemporary curriculum policies?

- In what ways, and to what extent, are the core socialist values recontextualised into the curriculum policy practices?

10.2.3 Verifying the hypothetical argument by conducting empirical investigations

I implemented two theoretical and three empirical investigations of curriculum policy analysis, class observations, and teacher interviews to answer the foregoing research questions and to examine the hypothetical argument. In this section, I do not focus on introducing how I designed the fieldwork and collected the empirical data because I have offered detailed descriptions of these aspects in Chapter Two. Here, I focus on answering two questions. The first one is: How did I employ the conceptual tools in the actual processes of analysing and theorising the empirical data? To answer this question, I focus on the difficulties that I encountered in the research process and the solutions that I worked out to deal with these difficulties. The second question is: How do the empirical findings help me answer the research questions and verify the foregoing hypothetical research argument?

Application of concepts in analysis and theorisation: difficulties and solutions

I conducted a total of three empirical investigations in this research in a bid to examine how the Chinese government's core socialist values underpinned by its *ideology* of market socialism, have been recontextualised into the country's senior high school Chinese Language curriculum policies and practices. The overarching conceptual tool that guided the fieldwork and the analysis and explanation of the empirical data is Bernstein's (2000) *recontextualisation*. However, when I used this concept, I encountered two major difficulties. First, I found the concept too abstract and general to be employed to analyse and theorise the discursive and complicated empirical data of curriculum policies, class observations, and teacher interviews.

Second, the concept alone was too abstract to be operationalised as a data analysis tool.

To facilitate the analysis of the mechanisms of recontextualisation embedded in all the three types of empirical data (policy analysis, class observations, and teacher interviews), and to explain the mechanisms in a more tangible, detailed, manageable, and reproducible way, I drew on the *Curriculum Design Coherence Model* [CDC Model] (see Chapter Seven) and other disciplinary concepts from the field of sociology of education, such as *knowledge differentiation*, *facilitation teaching*, *instructional teaching* (see Chapters Seven and Eight). I did this because these concepts are workable and apposite for comprehensively and precisely pinpointing the mechanisms of recontextualisation included in the data (I extend this later). I want to offer more information about how I made each decision in analysing and theorising the empirical data in a bid to improve the credibility of this qualitative research. As some scholars argue, a qualitative researcher can add credibility to the study by providing enough research details to not only demonstrate the research was conducted rigorously and exhaustively but also to allow other researchers to audit the study and to reach similar or comparable conclusions by following the research decision trail (Halpren, 1983; Koch, 1994; Nowell et al., 2017; Sandelowski, 1986).

The introduction of the CDC Model and other theoretical concepts from the field of sociology of education contributes considerably to the actual processes of analysing, theorising, and explaining the mechanisms of recontextualisation through which the core socialist values enter the curriculum policies and practices. For instance, the use of the CDC Model assisted me in working out the dimensions in the policies and teaching data through which the mechanisms of recontextualisation could be made visible. I have explained in detail my rationale for using the CDC Model in Chapters Seven and Eight. Here, I focus on describing how I altered the CDC Model to enable it to fit into my research context and to also respond to my analysis and theorisation of the empirical data.

Specifically, for analysing the first empirical investigation of curriculum policy analysis, I changed one of the four elements, *subject propositions*, into *policy propositions* in a bid to enable it to fit into the context of policy analysis. I did not alter the remaining three elements because they are consistent with the *subject concepts*, *subject content*, and *subject competencies* as embedded in the two policies that I analysed.

In analysing the data collected from the second empirical investigation of class observations, I adapted the four elements of the CDC Model: *subject propositions*, *subject concepts*, *subject content*, and *subject competencies*, into *lesson propositions*, *lesson concepts*, *lesson content*, and *lesson competencies* respectively to make the dimensions applicable to the context of classroom observations. Furthermore, I added two more dimensions to analyse and explain the data which are not part of the CDC Model. The two refer to (i) *lesson pedagogy* that navigates the teachers' pedagogical approach to teaching the lesson concepts/content in the class, and (ii) *lesson participation* that examines and addresses students' contributions, such as discussions, questions and answers, and speech, in the observed classes. I also introduced the two theoretical concepts of *facilitative teaching* and i*nstructional teaching* (Rata, 2017) to the analysis of the *lesson pedagogy* because they are apposite for examining and explaining the pedagogic approaches embedded in the empirical class observation data. I have justified my use of the two concepts in Chapter Eight.

I note here that I did not bring the dimension of *subject pedagogy* into the curriculum policy investigation although one of the policies, the *Standard* (MoE, 2018b), which I analysed mentions some pedagogic tips. This is for two reasons. First, my analysis shows that the policy somehow mingles the subject content with the pedagogy, as has been explained in Chapter Seven. Second, the pedagogic tips included in the policy are specific for teaching each of the twenty specific modules that comprise the subject content of the curriculum. For these two reasons, I categorised the pedagogic tips prescribed in the *Standard* into the dimension of

subject content and analysed them in relation to the subject content in Chapter Seven.

The dimensions adapted from the four elements of the CDC Model used in the first and second empirical investigations of curriculum policy analysis and class observations assisted me in designing the interview questions for the third empirical investigation of teacher interviews. For example, the sociocultural knowledge orientation in terms of *subject concepts/content* (policy analysis) and *lesson concepts/content* (class observation) helped me to anchor my particular interest in ascertaining the six teachers' perceptions of the *three strands of culture*[86]. The sociocultural emphasis in relation to the two dimensions of *policy propositions* (policy analysis) and *lesson propositions* (class observation) drew my attention to the specific exploration and examination of teachers' understanding of the role of the senior high school Chinese language programme in China.

These same dimensions also contributed much to the design of the layers and categories of the interview questions used in the third empirical investigation (teacher interviews). This is also the reason why, in my teacher interview chapter, I took the approach of reporting on the findings in terms of the interview questions rather than a purely semantic analysis method (see Chapter Nine).

As has been explained above, the CDC Model, underpinned by the theoretical concepts from the discipline of sociology of knowledge, provides multiple dimensions that cover most of the curriculum design and implementation processes and practices. These underpinning concepts and the dimensions embedded in the CDC Model helped me to analyse, theorise, and explain the mechanism of recontextualisation included in the empirical data. These mechanisms of recontextualisation have helped to pinpoint the ways in which the core socialist values have

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[86] The three strands of culture refer to fine traditional Chinese culture, revolutionary culture, and advanced socialist culture.

been recontextualised into the curriculum policies and practices with respect to these concepts and dimensions provided by the CDC Model.

I have explained in this section how I enable the concepts (the theoretical/conceptual) and the data (the empirical/material) to be brought into dialogue by analysing, theorising, and explaining the latter by using the former.

Revisiting the research questions and verifying the hypothetical argument

In this section, I explain to what extent and how the two theoretical and three empirical investigations carried out in this study help to answer the research questions and thus to verify the research argument at the hypothetical level.

The first research sub-question, "Why does the Chinese government promulgate the core socialist values in contemporary society?", is answered both theoretically and empirically. Drawing on Althusser's (2001) concept of *ideology*, I conducted the first theoretical investigation to research what the ruling ideology of the Chinese government is for modern Chinese society. I first traced the history of China's economic reforms back to the 1970s to describe how these reforms, on the one hand, enable a socialist market economy where market allocation plays a dominating role to be established in China and, on the other hand, allow the country to retain the country's socialist polity established since its foundation in 1949. I then explained how the government used the *ideology of market socialism* to justify the official decision to conduct change in China's economic pattern from a planned economy to a socialist market economy in the 1970s (see Chapter Four). After that, I explained how some values associated with a market economy have resulted in a rise of individualism and materialism in contemporary Chinese society, a social trend that has the potential to undermine the socialist values underpinning the country's socialist polity (Chapter Four). I then elaborated on how the government's ascendant core socialist values can help to keep in check this social orientation

towards individualistic and materialistic values by serving as the *socialist collective representations* for contemporary Chinese society. In the end, I argue that the government aims to use the core socialist values to strengthen the country's socialist collective representations in a bid to revitalise its ruling ideology of market socialism in contemporary Chinese society. It is through these theoretical discussions that I answered the first research sub-question theoretically. "Why does the Chinese government promulgate the core socialist values in contemporary society?" I argue that the government aims to revitalise its ruling *ideology* of market socialism by using the core socialist values to develop and consolidate what I term *socialist collective representations*. The purpose is to use these socialist collective representations to mediate the increase of individualism and materialism that undermines the country's socialist polity.

My empirical data also helped to answer the first research sub-question. For example, in response to the interview question concerning the role of the core socialist values in contemporary society, the teachers expressed that the values help to (i) strengthen national unity by playing a normative role of national ideals, (ii) embed Chinese culture and maintain Chinese civilisation, (iii) cultivate an idealised type of citizen with the qualities of patriotism, dedication, integrity, and friendship. These reasons reflect how the six teachers, representative of Chinese people, recognise and highlight the sociocultural role of the core socialist values in maintaining social stability by enhancing national cohesion, cultivating the idealised type of citizen, and leading the trend of socialism in the contemporary period.

The second research sub-question, "In what ways has the Chinese government created the core socialist values?", was answered conceptually and empirically. Bernstein's (2000) concept of *recontextualisation* has guided me to conduct a theoretical investigation to examine the ways in which the government recontextualises two forms of cultural understanding in creating the values. In my analysis, I took the core socialist value of integrity as an example. I first

elucidated how traditional Chinese culture regards integrity as a personal virtue, which I term *virtuous integrity*. I then elaborated on how the modern market culture treats integrity as part of the social contract, which I term *contractual integrity*. Following this, I elaborated how the government has recontextualised the core socialist value of integrity as a *socialist collective representation of integrity as a contractual virtue*, a clever integration of *virtuous integrity* and *contractual integrity*. I also discussed how the value of integrity as a contractual virtue was communicated to the citizens and communities as a key political discourse and how it plays a role in the country's economic and social spheres. It is in the course of these discussions that I answered the second research sub-questions. "In what ways has the Chinese government created the core socialist values?" I have shown that the government recontextualises two forms of cultural understanding of integrity in its creation of the core socialist value of integrity, *virtuous integrity* in traditional Chinese culture, and *contractual integrity* in modern secular market culture.

The empirical teacher interview data also contributed to answering the second research sub-question. Based on my discussions of the core socialist value of integrity in Chapter Six, I designed an interview question to examine the six teacher participants' understanding of the core socialist value of integrity. Their answers to the question reveal that they also understand the value of integrity as *a contractual virtue*. For instance, some of them favour the core socialist value of integrity as an indispensable quality for teachers and a requisite disposition that establishes students in society, others treat the value of integrity as a personal virtue that supplements the country's institutional system, and still others regard the value as part of the social contract underpinning the country's legislation and institutionalisation, on which they rely to settle any salary disputes derived from their schools' lack of integrity (violating salary contracts and agreements). Furthermore, according to the six teachers, the research participatory school has taken a somewhat *punitive* approach to achieve positive outcomes of

integrity education by punishing dishonest behaviour in the school in terms of its management system, curriculum system, and extracurricular activities (see Chapter Nine). These school practices have helped to recontextualise integrity into the pedagogic recontextualising field as a *contractual virtue* for teachers and students. This alignment between the official and pedagogic recontextualising fields in terms of understanding the value of integrity as a contractual virtue also reflects that discourses created in the political sphere have exerted an influence on the educational sphere. My third and fourth research sub-questions address this.

The third and fourth research sub-questions, "In what ways are the core socialist values recontextualised into China's contemporary curriculum policies?" and "In what ways, and to what extent, are the core socialist values recontextualised into the curriculum policy practices?" were answered both theoretically and empirically. Theoretically, the introduction of the concepts and dimensions included in the CDC Model and other disciplinary concepts from the sociology of knowledge such as *facilitation teaching* and *instructional teaching* help to theorise and explain the mechanisms of recontextualisation included in the empirical data through which the core socialist values were recontextualised into the curriculum policies and practices at the senior high school stage in China. Empirically I have decoded a sociocultural knowledge orientation from the data collected from the three empirical investigations. This socioculturalism further explains how the core socialist values have entered the education system through a sociocultural knowledge orientation embedded in curriculum endeavours, such as curriculum policymaking and teaching (also see foregoing Section 10.1).

This strong alignment between the findings of the official recontextualising field [ORF] (policy analysis) and the pedagogic recontextualising field [PRF] (class observations and teacher interviews) also indicates that the core socialist values (sociocultural knowledge) have been reproduced and strengthened. Bernstein (2000) argues that where the ORF and the PRF are in alignment, a very strong classification of what valued knowledge is created. It is also this

alignment that enables the Chinese government to produce, recontextualise, and reproduce its core socialist values as sociocultural knowledge so as to use them to develop and strengthen the socialist collective representations that help to consolidate the ideology of market socialism in contemporary China.

By answering the four research sub-questions both theoretically and empirically, I have answered the overarching research question: "Why, and in what ways, does China's contemporary education system include the core socialist values promulgated by the Chinese government since 2012?" It is also through answering these research questions that I am able to verify the research argument that I hypothesised before conducting the empirical investigations.

To summarise, in section 10.2, I elucidated how some best-fit theoretical concepts contributed to the identification, understanding, and hypothetical theorisation of the observed curriculum phenomena and how the fieldwork investigations have verified and illustrated the hypothetical theorisation. The interactive approach of identification and illustration were expressed in three phases: (i) describing, understanding, and theorising the phenomena under investigation by using the best-fit theoretical concepts, as described in subsection 10.2.1; (ii) forming a hypothetical argument and designing research questions based on the hypothesised argument, as presented in subsection 10.2.2, and (iii) conducting both theoretical and empirical investigations to answer the research questions, and verify the hypothetical argument, as explained in subsection 10.2.3. These research procedures are guided by Rata's (2014) *Three Stages of Critical Policy Methodology* in my study (see Chapter Two). It is also the back-and-forth interactions between the theoretical and the empirical that help to avoid a purely inductive or deductive approach to this research. This is because the conceptual methodology that I used neither takes a deductive approach by starting with a theory and proving it in reality nor adopts an inductive method by tying the knowing process purely to the material and constructing the

research findings based on the empirical (Maxwell, 2012; Rata & Tamati, in press). The repeated communications between the theoretical/conceptual and the empirical/material throughout the entire research process make the study an authentic sociological inquiry (Maxwell, 2012; McPhail & Lourie, 2017).

10.3 Implications, Strengths and Limitations, and Suggestions for Further Research

In this section, I first discuss the implications of the research and then examine the research strengths and limitations to offer a critical reflection on the entire study. After that, I conclude the section by providing suggestions for further research.

10.3.1 Implications

I take it as my academic obligation to discuss the importance of knowledge differentiation in response to the implications of this research. I consider this as paramount, and I want to add value to it by discussing it exclusively.

Durkheim (2001[1912]) divides knowledge into two types, namely, *sacred* and *profane*. The former refers to disciplinary knowledge (also referred to as *rational, epistemic, academic, conceptual,* or *propositional knowledge*) created in the Sciences, Social Sciences, Arts, and Humanities disciplines in modern societies; the latter is *sociocultural knowledge* (also referred to as *social, cultural* or *everyday knowledge*) acquired from experience and everyday life (Rata, 2017, see also Chapter Seven). Influenced by the Durkheimian-inspired tradition of knowledge differentiation, diverse discourses that consider the function and impact of disciplinary knowledge tend to produce either a reproductionist or interruptionist view towards the role of education in a capitalist society (Rata, 2018). Specifically, reproductionists regard disciplinary knowledge as the justifying ideology of the existing social-economic system, arguing that education helps to maintain the unequal relations of the system through reproducing unfair

relations by the inequitable allocation of disciplinary knowledge resources (Rata, 2018). On the other hand, interruptionists argue that social-educational justice can be maintained by taking disciplinary knowledge as powerful knowledge and making it universally accessible to successive generations (Moore, 2013; Rata, 2018).

Although China is a socialist country, I argue that its contemporary curricular reforms which began in 2013 might still be influenced by this capitalist reproduction-interruption dualism (Rata, 2018). The reason is that China's socialist market economy underpinning the country's socialist polity appears to share some capitalist and neoliberal perspectives (Brødsgaard and Rutten, 2017; Huang, 2012a, 2012b; Xu, 2011, see Chapter Four). For instance, the country's socialist market economy recognises personal property and emphasises free-market competition mechanisms (Su, 2001). Given the vital role disciplinary knowledge plays in maintaining social and educational equity, I argue that it is crucial for China's educational agents, such as curriculum policymakers, designers, schools, and teachers, to reconsider the purpose behind offering the Chinese Language programme. Should the senior high school Chinese Language education play a role of reproducing a "qualified builder and successor of the great socialist cause" (MoE, 2018a, p. 1) by providing the young generation with a sociocultural-knowledge-oriented curriculum? Or should it play a role in cultivating rational thinkers who, with reasoning ability, can interrupt the existing unequal sociocultural system by providing them with a disciplinary-knowledge-enriched curriculum? Or both perhaps?

Along with other researchers (e.g., Hugo, 2006; Maton, 2014; McPhail, 2013; Muller & Young, 2019; Muller, 2014; Rata, 2012, 2016, 2017, 2018; Vernon, 2020; Winch, 2013, 2014), I take the stance that the pedagogic goal for Chinese Language teachers should be to cultivate "the epistemic self" (Vernon, 2020, p. 27) by providing learners with disciplinary knowledge and assisting them in ascending "the ladder of knowledge" (Hugo, 2006, p. 2006; Vernon, 2020, p.

27) to reach the rational self. I draw on Plato's *love metaphor* to explain the significance of disciplinary knowledge for young people:

> All this before he is of an age to reason; so that when Reason at length comes to him, then, [well-nurtured] as he has been, he will hold out his hands in welcome and recognise her because of the affinity he hears to her [Plato, cited in Vernon, 2020, p. 27]

Based on this metaphor, I argue that providing students with disciplinary knowledge helps them to develop the skill of reasoning, with which they can build judgement and find apposite meaning in their lives. This is more ethical than indoctrinating them with sociocultural knowledge that underdevelops their ability to reason and reduces the opportunity to develop their critical judgements (Geary & Berch, 2016; Geary, 2012; McPhail, 2020b; Sweller et al., 2019). The provision of disciplinary knowledge in education becomes unprecedentedly important, especially after the COVID-19. As Brooks (2021) argues:

> the experience of the [coronavirus] pandemic represented a seismic shift in how *research and robustly validated forms of knowledge* are recognised and valued in society, along with a renewed acknowledgement of the role and place of 'experts' within and across professional and academic domains (emphasis added, p. 23).

This argument is indeed sound in the face of COVID-19, which has taught human beings the lesson that we should rely more on those scientific experts who have a good mastery of disciplinary knowledge to prevent and control the outbreak of any pandemic like COVID-19, rather than on those who lack disciplinary expertise and react to the pandemic according to sociocultural, political, or ideological imperatives. Therefore, I suggest that Chinese curriculum agents, such as policymakers, designers, implementers, and teachers, should note the differentiation of the two types of disciplinary and sociocultural knowledge and provide the young generation with a disciplinary-knowledge-enriched curriculum.

10.3.2 Strengths and limitations

My critical reflection on the research overall suggests several strengths and limitations. The first strength concerns the small research sample. I recruited only six native Chinese language teachers as the research participants, observing them in the classroom and interviewing them after class. Such a small qualitative sample enables me to research their curriculum practices, to examine their understanding of the two curriculum policies in rich detail, and to provide "a thick description or depth of understanding" (Palinkas, 2014, p. 851). This is also one of the distinct strengths of qualitative research – to gain in-depth insights and understanding of humankind, social materiality, and life phenomena (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

However, the small research sample might also be a research limitation. The six research participants were from the same school, a school that took the lead in promoting the country's curriculum reforms and in implementing the promulgated curriculum policies. My findings reveal that the six teachers are quite familiar with the curriculum policies because the teachers had attended various types of curriculum policy training held at different levels (national/provincial/school, see also Chapter Nine). Moreover, the empirical teacher interview data reveals that the school often holds an assortment of cultural activities for students, reinforcing the sociocultural thrust of the new curriculum policies (see Chapter Nine). It is likely that such an educational ecology of the school exerted a strong influence on the teachers' behaviours in the observed classrooms and on their responses to the interview questions in relation to the sociocultural knowledge orientation that I found in the two empirical investigations of class observations and teacher interviews (see above, see also Chapters Eight and Nine).

There is also the perceived limitation that the thesis argument is generated from such a small sample size of only six research participants. As Smith (2018) argues, generalisability is often

identified as a limitation or weakness of qualitative research with smaller sample sizes. Polit and Beck (2010) suggest that qualitative studies are indeed short of generalisability when they are evaluated from the particular type of statistical-probabilistic generalisability. However, it is not the intention of this qualitative research to make the analysis and theorisation to be generalised statistically and probabilistically. The literature suggests that "generalizability is not limited to probability sampling theory because there are different ways of understanding generalisation" (Collingridge & Gantt, 2008, p. 392). Therefore, I argue that my study is generalisable in another way: from the concepts, not directly from the data.

I, along with other scholars (e.g., Bryman, 2004; Ritchie et al., 2014; Neuman, 2003; Sandelowski, 2004; Yin, 2003), argue that case study research can be theoretically and conceptually generalised, also referred to in the literature variously as *analytical generalisation* (Chenail, 2010; Ritchie et al., 2014; Polit & Beck, 2010; Simons, 2014; Yin, 2003), *vertical generalisability* (Stephens, 1982), or *ideographic generalisability* (Sandelowski, 2004). In this study, I am not generalising from the empirical data that I collected, but from the analysis of the empirical data by using theoretical concepts. This theoretical generalisation is embedded in the methodological approach that I took in this study. I use conceptual tools from the discipline of sociology of education, specifically, Althusser's (2001) *ideology*, Bernstein's (2000) *recontextualisation*, Durkheim's (2001[1912]) *collective representations*, Rata's (2014) *Three Stages of Critical Policy Methodology*, and the concepts and categories embedded in the *Curriculum Design Coherence Model* [CDC Model] (McPhail, 2020a; Rata & McPhail, 2020; Rata, 2019) to identify, describe, understand, theorise, and explain the real-world material curriculum policies and practices in China's educational context. This process of using the empirical phenomena as evidence for both the identification and illustration of the theoretical concepts in reality not only enables theoretical generalisation of the research results but also frees my study from a purely inductive or deductive investigation (Maxwell, 2012; Rata &

Tamati, in press). The theoretical generalisation makes this research a case which is able to demonstrate how *collective representations* (the core socialist values) that carry *ideologies* (market socialism) operate in the dominant ideological state apparatus of education through mechanisms of *recontextualisation* in modern society.

With regard to generalisation, I argue that another strength of the research lies in that I have provided rich and thick research description and explanation, such as why the theoretical concepts are apposite for the research and suitable for the data analysis and theorisation and how I connected the theoretical concepts to the empirical phenomena to create, develop, and verify the research argument. Such work gives the research its internal validity (Bryman, 2004). As Bryman (2004) suggests, the validity of generalisation of qualitative research data also depends on the extent to which the theorisation and conceptualisation connect back to the empirical data. This is specifically seen in the extent to which I have provided descriptions about research decision-making in the actual analysis and generalisation that allow readers and other researchers to audit the evidence trail (Bryman, 2004). In the next section, I provide suggestions for further studies.

10.3.3 Suggestions for further research

By drawing on the relevant literature and the research limitations discussed above, I offer three suggestions for further research.

First, further enquiries on this research theme can expand the investigative scope. For example, researchers could access more schools and teachers from different regions or parts of China, or extend the research space to the country's primary or higher educational contexts, to examine whether this socioculturalism is pervasive throughout the entire education system in China. Moreover, researchers could explore whether this socioculturalism is also recontextualised and seen in other subjects included in the county's senior high school programme. Furthermore,

researchers can bring more students' voices into their research, studying and explaining how they perceive the role of the country's Chinese Language curriculum as well as the core socialist values.

Second, future investigators could research Chinese teachers' agency by comparing and contrasting the official and the pedagogic recontextualising fields to examine to what extent and how teachers promote, transmit, reproduce, or resist the official curriculum discourses in their pedagogic practices. Research on teacher's agency over curriculum policies has flourished all over the world (e.g., Chen & Wei, 2019; McPhail, 2016b; Ollerhead, 2010; Robertson & Sorensen, 2018).

Third, further investigators could research the demographic changes in China since the 1970s and explore how the rise of the Chinese middle class has contributed to the government's decision to consolidate the country's socialist polity by inserting the core socialist values into the education system via an orientation towards socioculturalism.

The market economic reforms since the 1970s have led to the differentiation of Chinese social classes and the rise of the middle class (Qin, 2018). With the in-depth development of such market-oriented transformations, the middle class has become a vital force for social stability which usually maintains an attitude of trust towards the government (Li, 2008). However, the premise for this trust is the stable development of the economy and society (Li, 2008). Yet, some recent incidents, such as the scandals of pseudo-vaccine and contaminated milk powder (see Chapter Five), have led to sharp criticism from the public as well as a crisis of social and moral trust (China Daily, 2018b). If such incidents "go viral" (Li, 2017, p. 70, my translation), public anger might be ignited, which may further lead to social panic because many Chinese people, including the middle class, have suffered food and health threats from these negative incidents. I argue that these incidents are to an extent caused by a social trend towards

individualism and materialism; this social trend has caused a number of economic entities such as the producers of the contaminated milk powder and substandard vaccine pay more attention to optimising their market interests, rather than to consider the welfare and health of the consumers (see Chapter Five).

I have developed the argument in this thesis that the Chinese government has put forward the core socialist values in order to keep in check the rise of materialism and individualism. In doing so, the government aims to mitigate potential social panic that may result from incidents such as those mentioned above. In this way, the government can strengthen social stability, which is necessary for the government to gain trust from the growing Chinese middle class. My argument is also consistent with other researchers (e.g., Ma & Chen, 2018; Li, 2008; Zhang et al., 2017). For example, Zhang et al. (2017) reveal that in recent years, the Chinese government has not only focused on improving the political and economic status of the middle class but also committed itself to constructing a better sociocultural environment for the Chinese people. The construction of the Social Credit System since 2013 illustrates this, which displays the government's efforts and commitment to create a social ecology of honesty for people (Cai, 2020, see also Chapter Six). Moreover, Zhang et al. (2017) recognise and emphasise the key role of the country's middle class in promoting and upholding the core socialist values, which is supported by Ma and Chen's (2018) research. Further studies can verify this hypothetical argument by conducting real-world investigations.

10.4 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated how a realist or conceptual approach has enabled me to link the theoretical concepts from the discipline of sociology of education to three real-world empirical investigations of curriculum policy analysis, class observations, and teacher interviews, using the latter as evidence for both the identification and illustration of the former in reality. The

chapter has concluded the thesis by discussing the research implications, strengths and limitations, and by offering suggestions for further research.

10.5 Thesis Conclusion

Confronted with (i) the influence of global capitalist forces, (ii) domestic political instability caused by the aftermath brought about by the *Cultural Revolution* and the death of Chairman Mao, and (iii) economic stagnation resulting from the political instability and a rigid centralised planned economy, the Chinese government started its market economy reforms in the 1970s (see Chapter Four). These economic reforms, underpinned by the official *ideology* of market socialism, have helped to (i) change a planned economy based on rigid centralised planning into a socialist market economy where the market plays a dominating role in resource allocation, and (ii) to retain the government's socialist polity at the same time (see Chapter Four). However, some market values, along with the socialist market economy have resulted in a rise of individualism and materialism in contemporary society, seen in the economic, ecological, political, cultural, social, educational spheres (see Chapters Four and Five). To keep this social trend towards the individualistic and materialistic values in check, the government has produced and promoted its core socialist values to develop and consolidate what I term *socialist collective representations*. It does this by drawing on two forms of culture, traditional Chinese culture and modern secular market culture (see Chapter Six). These core socialist values have been, and continue to be, *recontextualised* into the country's senior high school Chinese Language curriculum policies and practices through an orientation towards sociocultural knowledge in curriculum policymaking and implementation, which I term socioculturalism (see Chapters Seven, Eight, and Nine). In doing so, the government aims to revitalise its ruling ideology of market socialism by exposing the core socialist values to communities and society to develop and strengthen what I theorise *socialist collective representations* in the modern

period. These values signify an idealised type of young generation who can take on the country's great socialist cause.

China is not the only example of this global tendency towards a national value-based education system. Lim and Apple (2015, 2018) suggest that many Asian nations today are attempting to construct and determine *official knowledge* through large-scale curriculum reforms and policymaking and to legitimise such knowledge through a series of curriculum teaching practices. This educational trend has also permeated the rest of the world. For instance, Vincent (2019) finds that "the constitution of British-ness in the UK has been an increasingly visible part of the political discourse throughout this century" (p. 17). Some "fundamental British values" have been introduced and positioned "within the institution and curriculum of a school" as "part of a school's existing duty to develop SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural education)" in response to "concerns about population movements, integration of minorities, cohesion and terrorism" (Vincent, 2019, p. 17). In Maton's words (2009), this global educational tendency focuses more on knower-becoming rather than knowledge-teaching. That is, the education system focuses on what students will become rather than what will be learnt by students through education. This also enables the education system to play its role of "a symbolic regulator of consciousness" (Bernstein 2000, p. 37) in the contemporary period by recasting students into idealised knowers who personify certain expected values.

APPENDIX A. Participant Information Sheet: Teachers

THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
Te Whare Wānanga o Tāmaki Makaurau
NEW ZEALAND

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WORK

School of Critical Studies in Education

Epsom Campus
Gate 3, 74 Epsom Ave
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W education.auckland.ac.nz
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92601
Symonds Street
Auckland 1135
New Zealand

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET for Teachers Participants

Economy, Knowledge, and Education in China

Xiaoming Tian
(Researcher)
x.tian@auckland.ac.nz
WeChat: panoramic-view
Tel: +86 187 107 25773

Prof. Elizabeth Rata
(Main Supervisor)
e.rata@auckland.ac.nz

Dr. Graham McPhail
(Co-Supervisor)
g.mcphail@auckland.ac.nz

Researcher introduction

My name is Xiaoming Tian. I am a PhD candidate from the School of Critical Studies in Education, Faculty of Education and Social Work, the University of Auckland, New Zealand. My supervisors are Professor Elizabeth Rata and Doctor Graham McPhail.

Research project

This study is an investigation into the connections between China's market socialism, its ascendant political ideals of the core socialist values, and its contemporary curriculum reforms at the senior high school stage. I will investigate the connections by exploring relevant literature, analysing associated curriculum policies, interviewing six native Chinese language teachers, and observing each teacher in one Chinese language class. One of the foci of my study is to examine how the Chinese teachers understand and implement the curriculum reform policies in their educational practices. As a teacher from your school that has been involved in the curriculum reform training programmes held by the Chinese government, I sincerely invite you to participate in my research.

Project Procedures and Participant Rights

Your participation will involve:

- an observation of you in one period of Chinese language class
- a follow-up interview of approximately one hour's length

With your permission, the class observations and interviews will be digitally audio recorded. I will position the recording device in the middle at the back of the classroom. I will sit beside the device and take notes of the class without involving myself in any part of the class proceedings or any sort of discussion. During the interviews, the recorder will be turned off if you request it and you may leave the interview, or refrain from answering a question if you wish. When all the data are collected, they will be transcribed verbatim by me. Transcripts will be shared with you to make any revisions or clarifications. There will be a one-month period for the return of the transcripts to me. You have the right to withdraw from the research at any time without giving a reason, but information already provided cannot be revoked once the transcripts have been returned.

Data Storage, Retention, Destruction, and Future Use
While in China, the data – audio digital files and transcripts - will be stored on a password-protected laptop and backed up daily via the University of Auckland dropbox system. The data will be stored for a minimum of six years on a University of Auckland, password protected computer/server. Consent Forms will be stored separately from any data. After the minimum storage time has elapsed, the data will be destroyed by the deletion of files. The Consent Forms will be shredded. Data will be used after analysis for a doctoral thesis, journal publications, and possible conference presentations.

Coercion
I am requesting that the initial e-mail invitation be sent out by an administrator/secretary to the teachers that fit the profile given above. Interested teachers will then contact me directly at which point I will send the Participant Information Sheet and the Consent Form. In this way, any coercion is avoided. Participation in the research is entirely voluntary, and I will request your school head to sign a Consent Form in which he/she gives an assurance that the employment of any teacher participants will not be affected in any way even though he/she is unlikely to know who will be participating.

Confidentiality
While it is unlikely that the school head will know who the six participants in this study will be, given that there is a pool of around 40 teachers who meet the criteria, there is always a small chance that he/she may be able to identify a participant. However, he/she has given an assurance that participation or non-participation will not disadvantage any staff member for any reason. Your identities will be known only to my supervisors and me. Every effort will be made to ensure the reporting of information in the thesis or any subsequent publications will be done in a way that protects the identity of both you and your school. For instance, your personal information (name, gender, ID number) will not be mentioned in the thesis; pseudonyms will be used for both you and your school. However, there is always a small chance a reader may be able to identify you and your school.

Thank you for your time and help in making this study possible. Enquiries about the research can be made to:

Xiaoming Tian	Dr. Graham McPhail	Prof. Elizabeth Rata	Prof. John Morgan
x.tian@auckland.ac.nz PhD candidate in School of Critical Studies in Education, Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand.	g.mcphail@auckland.ac.nz +64 9373 7999 ext. 48511 Senior Lecturer in School of Curriculum and Pedagogy, Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand.	e.rata@auckland.ac.nz +64 9373 7999 ext. 46315 Professor in School of Critical Studies in Education, Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand.	john.morgan@auckland.ac.nz +64 9373 7999 ext. 46398 Head of School of Critical Studies in Education, Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand.

APPENDIX B. Participant Consent Form: Teachers

THE UNIVERSITY OF **AUCKLAND**
Te Whare Wānanga o Tamaki Makaurau
N E W Z E A L A N D

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WORK

School of Critical Studies in Education

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W education.auckland.ac.nz
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92601
Symonds Street
Auckland 1135
New Zealand

CONSENT FORM for Teachers Participants
This form will be held for six years

Economy, Knowledge, and Education in China

Xiaoming Tian
(Researcher)
x.tian@auckland.ac.nz
WeChat : panoramic-view
Tel: +86187 107 25773

Prof. Elizabeth Rata
(Main Supervisor)
e.rata@auckland.ac.nz

Dr. Graham McPhail
(Co-Supervisor)
g.mcphail@auckland.ac.nz

I have read the Participant Information Sheet, and I have understood the nature of the research. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

- I agree to take part in the research – one period of Chinese language class observation and a follow-up interview of approximately one hour's duration.
- I understand participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw at any time without giving a reason up until the time I return the transcript which I will endeavour to do within one month after receiving it. I understand I can request changes/corrections to be made to the transcript. I understand that without my agreement, the interview data will not be used in the reports or any future publications.
- I understand that only the researcher and his supervisors will have access to my identity.
- I understand that data will be kept for six years, after which time it will be destroyed.
- I understand that although every measure will be taken to protect my identity in any written report or oral presentation arising from this project, there can be no guarantee that some readers may identify the participant(s).
- I understand that the school head is unlikely to know who the participants are, but there is always a small chance that he may be able to identify me but he has given

an assurance that participation or non-participation will not disadvantage me for any reason.

☐ I would like the opportunity to check the transcript of my interviews (please tick)
☐ I would like to receive a copy of the final report/paper of the study (please tick)

Name: Signature:

E-mail: Date:

Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on December 2018 for three years, Reference Number 022495.

APPENDIX C. Participant Information Sheet: School Head

School of Critical Studies in Education

Epsom Campus
Gate 3, 74 Epsom Ave
Auckland, New Zealand
T +64 9 623 8899
W education.auckland.ac.nz
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92601
Symonds Street
Auckland 1135
New Zealand

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET for School Head

Economy, Knowledge, and Education in China

Xiaoming Tian
(Researcher)
x.tian@auckland.ac.nz
WeChat: panoramic-view
Tel: +86 187 107 25773

Prof. Elizabeth Rata
(Main Supervisor)
e.rata@auckland.ac.nz

Dr. Graham McPhail
(Co-Supervisor)
g.mcphail@auckland.ac.nz

Researcher introduction

My name is Xiaoming Tian. I am a PhD candidate from the School of Critical Studies in Education, Faculty of Education and Social Work, the University of Auckland, New Zealand. My supervisors are Professor Elizabeth Rata and Doctor Graham McPhail.

Research project

This study is an investigation into the connections between China's market socialism, its ascendant political ideals of the core socialist values, and its contemporary curriculum reforms at the senior high school stage. I will investigate the connections by exploring relevant literature, analysing associated curriculum policies, interviewing six native Chinese language teachers, and observing each teacher in one Chinese language class. One of the foci of my study is to examine how the Chinese teachers understand and implement the curriculum reform policies in their educational practices. As a school that has been involved in the curriculum reform training programmes held by the Chinese government, I am seeking your permission to allow me to interview and observe six Chinese language teachers in your school.

Project Procedures and Participant Rights

The research involves (i) an observation of each participant in one period of Chinese language

class; (ii) a follow-up interview of each participant for approximately one hour individually.

The participants will be identified and invited with your help. Please invite Chinese language teachers in your school who meet the following criteria:

(i) having at least five years' experience teaching Chinese language
(ii) holding at least a bachelor's degree in Chinese language teaching
(iii) having attended the Chinese Language curricular reform training programmes at least twice
(iv) having agreed to be observed in class and being interviewed after class

I am seeking your approval for the following aspects of the research:

- sending out e-mail invitations to suitable teachers via an administrator/secretary. Interested teachers will then contact me directly at which point I will send them a Participant Information Sheet and a Consent Form to sign
- approving me observing and interviewing teacher participants during school hours
- approving the use of space within the school to carry out the interviews
- giving an assurance that the employment of participants will not be affected in any way

With the participants' permission, the class periods and interviews will be digitally audio recorded. I will position the recording device in the middle at the back of the classroom. I will sit beside the device and take notes of the class without involving myself in any part of the class proceedings or any sort of discussion. During the interviews, the recorder will be turned off if requested and the participants may leave the interview or refrain from answering a question if they wish. When all the data are collected, they will be transcribed verbatim by me. Transcripts will be shared with the participants to obtain any revisions or clarifications. There will be a one-month period for the return of the transcripts to me. The participants have the right to withdraw from the research at any time without giving a reason but information already provided cannot be revoked once the transcripts have been returned.

Data Storage, Retention, Destruction, and Future Use
While in China, the data – audio digital files and transcripts - will be stored on a password-protected laptop and backed up daily via the University of Auckland dropbox system. The data will be stored for a minimum of six years on a University of Auckland, password protected computer/server. Consent Forms will be stored separately from any data. After the minimum storage time has elapsed, the data will be destroyed by the deletion of files. The Consent Forms will be shredded. Data will be used after analysis for a doctoral thesis, journal publications, and possible conference presentations.

Coercion
I am requesting that the initial e-mail invitation be sent out by an administrator/secretary to the teachers that fit the profile given above. Interested teachers will then contact me directly at which point I will send the Participant Information Sheet and the Consent Form to them. In this way, any coercion is avoided. Participation in the research is entirely voluntary, and I request that you sign the Consent Form in which you give an assurance that the employment of participants will not be affected in any way even though you are unlikely to know who will be participating.

Confidentiality

The identities of participants will be known only to my supervisors and me, but there is always a small chance that you may be able to identify a participant. Thus you are asked to give an assurance that participation or non-participation will not disadvantage any staff member for any reason. This is indicated on the Participant Information Sheet and the Consent Form for teachers. Every effort will be made to ensure the reporting of information in the thesis or any subsequent publications will be done in a way that protects the identity of both your school and the teacher participants. For instance, the personal information (name, gender, ID number) of the participants will not be mentioned in the thesis; pseudonyms will be used for both teacher participants and the school. However, there is always a small chance a reader may be able to identify a participant or the school.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and for considering the research. Enquiries about the research can be made to:

Xiaoming Tian	Dr. Graham McPhail	Prof. Elizabeth Rata	Prof. John Morgan
x.tian@auckland.ac.nz	g.mcphail@auckland.ac.nz	e.rata@auckland.ac.nz	john.morgan@auckland.ac.nz
	+64 9373 7999 ext. 48511	+64 9373 7999 ext. 46315	+64 9373 7999 ext. 46398
PhD candidate in School of Critical Studies in Education, Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand.	Senior Lecturer in School of Curriculum and Pedagogy, Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand.	Professor in School of Critical Studies in Education, Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand.	Head of School of Critical Studies in Education, Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand.

For any queries regarding ethical concerns, you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 ext. 83711. Email: ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz.

Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on December 2018 for three years, Reference Number 022495.

APPENDIX D. Participant Consent Form: School Head

THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
Te Whare Wānanga o Tāmaki Makaurau
NEW ZEALAND

EDUCATION AND
SOCIAL WORK

School of Critical Studies in Education

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The University of Auckland
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New Zealand

CONSENT FORM for School Head
This form will be held for six years

Economy, Knowledge, and Education in China

Xiaoming Tian
(Researcher)
x.tian@auckland.ac.nz
WeChat: panoramic-view
Tel: +86 187 107 25773

Prof. Elizabeth Rata
(Main Supervisor)
e.rata@auckland.ac.nz

Dr. Graham McPhail
(Co-Supervisor)
g.mcphail@auckland.ac.nz

I have read the Participant Information Sheet, and I have understood the nature of the research. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

- I agree to take part in this research.
- I permit this research to be carried out as outlined in the Participant Information Sheet.
- I agree to ask my secretary to send research invitations to suitable teachers on behalf of the researcher.
- I understand that I may withdraw approval at any time up to the day before the arranged interviews, without giving a reason.
- I am granting the researcher permission to interview teachers from this school.
- I am granting the researcher permission to observe teachers during class hours.
- I understand that neither the participants nor the school will be identified in any written report or oral presentation arising from this research; however, I understand that anonymity and confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.
- I give my assurance that I will not be involved in the class observations and the interviews when they are conducted at the School, and any staff member will not be disadvantaged by participation or non-participation in this research.

☐ I would like to receive a copy of the final report/paper of the study (please tick)

Name: Signature:

E-mail: Date:

Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on December 2018 for three years, Reference Number 022495.

APPENDIX E. Invitation E-mail

Invitation E-mail
Subject: Academic Research Invitation

Dear colleagues,

You are warmly invited to participate in a research project entitled: **Economy, Knowledge, and Education in China**. This project is conducted by Xiaoming Tian in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the PhD degree in education.

Xiaoming Tian is currently a PhD candidate in the School of Critical Studies in Education, Faculty of Education and Social Work, the University of Auckland, New Zealand. His project is an investigation into the connections between China's market socialism, its ascendant political ideals of the core socialist values, and its contemporary curriculum reforms at the senior high school stage. He will investigate the connections by exploring relevant literature, analysing associated curriculum policies, interviewing six native Chinese language teachers, and observing each teacher in one Chinese language class. One of the foci of his study is to examine how the Chinese teachers understand and implement the curriculum reform policies in their educational practices.

The research involves **(i) an observation of each participant in one period of Chinese language class; (ii) a follow-up interview of each participant for approximately one hour individually.**

Those who are interested in the research should meet the following criteria:

(i) having at least five years' experience teaching Chinese language
(ii) holding at least a bachelor's degree in Chinese language teaching
(iii) having attended the Chinese Language curricular reform training programmes at least twice
(iv) having agreed to be observed in class and being interviewed after class

I am sending this email on behalf of Xiaoming. If you are interested in the study, please contact Xiaoming directly via the following ways: Telephone number: +86 187 107 25773, WeChat number: panoramic-view, Email: 1205312203@qq.com, x.tian@auckland.ac.nz.

Best regards,
xxx

Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on December 2018 for three years, Reference Number 022495.

APPENDIX F. Interview Questions

Teacher interviews were semi-structured, including three areas of eleven questions in relation to the core socialist values, the two curriculum policies that I analysed, and the observed classes (see below).

Questions on the core socialist values

Are you familiar with the core socialist values?

How do you understand the role of the core socialist values in modern Chinese society?

How do you understand the core socialist value of integrity?

What school and/or personal practices, in your opinion, embody the value of integrity?

Questions on the curriculum policy

How do you perceive the role that the senior high school Chinese Language curriculum plays in modern Chinese society?

What is your overall evaluation of the *Standard*?

How do you understand the idea that the policy emphasises the three strands of culture?[87]

How do you understand the idea that the policy repeatedly emphasises four core competencies for Chinese language teaching?[88]

Are you familiar with the pedagogic tips given by the *Standard*?[89] If you are, what do you think of them?

Questions on the observed classes

Do you have anything to explain, supplement, reflect, or comment concerning the observed class (such as your interactions with students, your lesson design, your comments)?

Do you have anything else to supplement?

---

[87] I mentioned some of the pedagogic tips provided in the policy when I asked them the question in a bid to recall their knowledge of them.

[88] I mentioned the tree types of culture (see Chapter Seven) when I asked them the question in a bid to recall their knowledge of them.

[89] I mentioned the four core competencies (see Chapter Seven) when I asked them the question in a bid to recall their knowledge of them.

APPENDIX G. Application for Ethics Approval

Research Office
Post–Award Support Services

UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE (UAHPEC)

18-Dec-2018

MEMORANDUM TO:

Dr Graham McPhail
Curriculum and Pedagogy

Re: Application for Ethics Approval (Our Ref. 022495): Approved with comment

The Committee considered your application for ethics approval for your study entitled **Economy, Knowledge, and Education in China.**

Ethics approval was given for a period of three years with the following comment(s):

In the PIS and consent documentation the assurance statement mentions: "assurance that participation or non-participation will not disadvantage any staff member for any reason". Please reword this section so it is inclusive for possible benefits as well as disadvantages, for eg "assurance that participation or non-participation will not affect the (participants/your) employment or relationship with the organisation"

The expiry date for this approval is 18-Dec-2021.

If the project changes significantly you are required to resubmit a new application to UAHPEC for further consideration.

If you have obtained funding other than from UniServices, send a copy of this approval letter to the Activations team in the Research Office, at ro-awards@auckland.ac.nz. For UniServices contracts, send a copy of the approval letter to the Contract Manager, UniServices.

The Chair and the members of UAHPEC would be happy to discuss general matters relating to ethics approvals if you wish to do so. Contact should be made through the UAHPEC Ethics Administrators at ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz in the first instance.

Please quote Protocol number **022495** on all communication with the UAHPEC regarding this application.

(This is a computer generated letter. No signature required.)

UAHPEC Administrators
University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee

c.c. Head of Department / School, Curriculum and Pedagogy
Dr Graham McPhail

Additional information:

1. Do not forget to fill in the 'approval wording' on the Participant Information Sheets, Consent Forms and/or advertisements, giving the dates of approval and the reference number. This needs to be completed, before you use them or send them out to your participants.

2. At the end of three years, or if the study is completed before the expiry, you are requested to advise the Committee of its completion.

3. Should you require an extension or need to make any changes to the project, please complete the online Amendment Request form associated with this approval number giving full details along with revised documentation. If requested before the current approval expires, an extension may be granted for a further three years, after which time you must submit a new application.

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