

Democracy Deficit in China : A Choice or Foreordained?

Trissia Wijaya
Graduate School of International Relations, Ritsumeikan University
E-mail: trissiawijaya92@gmail.com

Abstract : *This paper attempts to analyze both internal and external determinants which influence the persistence of the democracy deficit in China, as Beijing successfully suppressed its people's demands for democratic change and freedom. This paper also examines how the longevity of one-party regimes has simply made democracy such a forgettable discourse. Meanwhile, this paper argues three watersheds of undemocratized China. First, the historical precedence has shown that attempts of electoral democracy have not been successful in China. Second, there is an absence of constructive engagement toward China by external powers, such as the European Union and the United States (henceafter, "US"). Third, democracy lacks strong support from large sections of Chinese society. This paper also sees the another perspective of how the monopolized power of Chinese Communist Party (henceafter, "CCP") has been substituting the implementation of liberal democracy through the meritocracy system and creating the dependencies of middle class to government.*

Keyword : CCP, Kuomintang (KMT), constructive engagement, meritocracy, democracy, People's Republic of China (PRC)

Abstrak : Artikel ini mencoba untuk menganalisa determinan baik secara internal dan eksternal yang menyebabkan defisitnya demokrasi di Tiongkok, dimana Beijing telah sukses mengunci keinginan rakyatnya akan demokrasi dan kebebasan. Artikel ini juga membahas bagaimana rezim satu partai yang bertahan lama seakan membuat demokrasi seperti wacana yang terlupakan begitu saja. Artikel ini melihat ada tiga dasar penting yang menyebabkan Tiongkok tidak demokrasi. Pertama, temuan sejara membuktikan bahwa upaya demokrasi elektoral tidak cocok dengan kompleksitas di Tiongkok. Kedua, tidak adanya keterlibatan konstruktif terhadap Tiongkok oleh kekuatan eksternal, seperti Uni Eropa dan Amerika Serikat. Ketiga, kurangnya dukungan dari sebagian besar masyarakat Tiongkok akan pentingnya demokrasi. Artikel ini akan melihat perspektif lain tentang bagaimana kekuatan monopoli dari Partai Komunis Tiongkok lebih mengunggulkan sistem meritokrasi daripada demokorasi liberal dan pada akhirnya menciptakan ketergantungan kelas menengah terhadap pemerintah.

Kata Kunci : Partai Komunis Tiongkok, Kuomintang (KMT), keterlibatan konstruktif, meritokrasi, demokrasi, Republik Rakyat Tiongkok

Introduction

China is a disappointing country ; it disappoints optimists because it disproves the notion that authoritarianism is incompatible with significant economic development, and it disappoints pessimists because they do not expect authoritarian regimes to be durable. There are too many paradoxes while talking

about the democracy in China. *First*, according to Adam Przeworski and Michael Alvarez in *What Makes Democracies Endure* (1996), the effect of socioeconomic change – rising literacy, income, and urbanization rates, along with improvement of technologies – will greatly reduce the legitimacy of autocratic rule and foster demands for greater

democracy.²²² Based on the statistical analysis, authoritarian regimes become progressively more unstable and are likely to become more democratic once income per capita rises above 1000 US dollars.²²³ The statistical data also shows that only few authoritarian regimes can survive once per capita income hits more than 6000 US dollars. But, this hypothesis is yet to be proven in China. China's income per capita is regarded as within 'the zone of democratic transition' due to its per capita income of around 9100 US dollars, compatible with the income level of South Korea and Taiwan in the mid-1980s, both of which were on the edge of their democratic transition.²²⁴ Again, it means nothing than empty sheet in China.

Second, Confucianism is often considered as an obstacle for generating a supportive spirit of democracy as some critics argue that it may legitimize dictatorships.

However, this stigma had been successfully broken in Taiwan. Taiwan is always mentioned as a primary example of a Chinese nation that is strongly influenced by the Confucian values, but still able to develop a democratic regime.²²⁵

Third, the 2014 Umbrella Movement that awakened Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement had little impact on China. By the end of 2014, the Umbrella Movement in Hongkong that opposed the pro-Beijing government mobilized grass-root for the urgent needs of democracy.²²⁶ A Chinese 'Arab Spring', as some commentators predicted, did not take place and had little impact in awakening mainland China's democracy civil society organizations. If we were to compare the Umbrella movement with the movements pushed forward by previous generations that

²²² Adam Przeworski and Michael Alvarez, "What Makes Democracies Endure", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol.7 No.1 (1996), p.40.

²²³ *Ibid*, p.41.

²²⁴ The entry shows China's GDP on a purchasing power parity (PPP) basis divided by population as of 1 July in 2013. In 2014, projecting growth rates suggests China's size when measured in PPP may surpass the United States. See more at <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2014-04-30/china-set-to-overtake-u-s-as-biggest-economy-using-ppp-measure>.

²²⁵ David C.Kang, "Stability and Hierarchy in East Asian International Relations 1300-1900 CE", in *The Balance of Power in World History* (New York : Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) pp.219-223. See also Larry Diamond, "Why China's Democratic Transition Will Differ from Taiwan's", in *Political Change in China: Comparison with Taiwan*, edited by Bruce Gilley and Larry Diamond (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2008), pp.243-245.

²²⁶ Richard C.Bush, "Hong Kong : Examining the Impact of the Umbrella Movement", *Brookings Brief*, December 3rd, 2014, <http://www.brookings.edu/research/testimony/2014/12/03-hong-kong-umbrella-movement-bush>.

aggressively demanded for the democracy through the Tiananmen Tragedy in 1989, this loose movement indirectly reflects the mainland China's 21st century generation's reluctance to transform their nation into a democratic state, despite of any limited access of information or Beijing government's forte in publicity.²²⁷

Fourth, democratic peace theory is quite disenchanting for the case of China. The theory argues that democracies are more peaceful only in their relations with other democracies since they will not go to war with one another.²²⁸ Political specialists have vividly construed this idea to China that beyond internal change, the democracy could also be a solution to some of China's foreign

policy troubles, as China's neighbors do not trust Beijing and harbor deep suspicion towards China's intentions and foreign policy aims.²²⁹ In fact, it is far-fetched, but China's economic power has proved its grandiosity over democracy, as it has successfully converted the European Union (henceafter, "EU") interests, which initially required China to uphold the human rights, into a strategic partnership – that shows the EU's intentions in pursuing interests with China that are of mutual benefit and subsided the issue of human rights.²³⁰

Many scholars have attempted to predict the future of democracy in China. A case in point to the question should not be 'will or not', instead it would be more challenging to further ask ourselves, "Why has the government, to this day, continued to embrace authoritarianism and why do the Chinese people continue to believe in the legitimacy of its government?. How have

²²⁷ In 1989, unarmed students took to Tiananmen Square to call for government accountability, freedom of press and other pro-democracy causes. They were met by China's People's Liberation Army, which shot automatic gunfire into the crowd. *See more*. Albert Chang, "Revisiting the Tiananmen Square Incident," *Stanford Journal of East Asian Affairs*, Vol.5, No.1, (2005), pp.9-12.

²²⁸ This idea of democratic peace dates back centuries, at least to Immanuel Kant and other 18th-century Enlightenment thinkers. On the empirical side, some propose that democracies are more peaceful in their relations with all other states in the system ("monadic" democratic peace); some propose that democracies are more peaceful only in their relations with other democracies ("dyadic" democratic peace).

²²⁹ Edward Friedman and Barrett L. McCormick, *What if China Doesn't Democratize?: Implications for War and Peace*, (London: Routledge, 2015), pp.5-6.

²³⁰ Katinka Barysch, Charles Grant, and Mark Leonard, "Embracing the Dragon : The EU's partnership with China", *Center for European Reform*, 2011, pp.3-4.

authoritarian policies won the hearts of its people? Why are the powerful democratic countries unable to impose China to adopt democratic values, as they have done in countries like Myanmar and Zimbabwe?”.

The aim of this paper is to explore and examine the factors that contribute to the durability of China's authoritarian regime by taking the historical and institutional approaches into account, in accordance with the constructivist perspective. This paper also uses statistical data to analyze further the ultimate determinant that correlates the importance of democracy in the eyes of Chinese citizens. Therefore, the remainder of this paper is summarized as follows : Section 1 will review the history of electoral democracy in China in order to identify why public support for democracy in the present day is not strong ; Section 2 discusses the absence of external power in influencing China's democracy and the internal power of CCP ; Section 3 will look at the relationship between the CCP and the middle class, an actor which has traditionally been a force of change in society ; and Section 4 concludes the main findings.

The Historical Perspective : Incomplete Legacy?

While discussing the paths that China takes towards development, President Xi Jinping has firmly said in a speech delivered during a visit to Europe in 2014, “You know if the shoe fits only if you try it on yourself. Only the Chinese people have the right to say whether China's development path is correct.”²³¹ This Xi's new narrative is basically highlighting two important message to the world. First, there will be no liberalisation under Xi and his party, the ruling CCP, and there was no such thing as “universal values” (such as freedom, democracy and human rights). People's democracy is the life of socialism, and developing socialist democracy is the unswerving goal of the nation and CCP.²³² Second, the party should

²³¹ John Ruwitch, “Xi Jinping says multi-party system didn't work for China”, *Reuters*, April 2nd, 2014, <http://in.reuters.com/article/2014/04/02/china-politics-xi-jinping-idINDEEA3101U20140402>.

²³² In building socialist democracy, China has always adhered to the basic principle of combining the Marxist theory of democracy with the realities of China, assimilated the democratic elements of its traditional culture and institutional civilization, and borrowed from the achievements of other societies. People's democratic system was adopted in the first PRC Constitution in 1954.

be proud of itself and have confidence in its historical right to rule. Tracing back the history, Xi with his 'shoe' analogy is logically acceptable, considering China with its 5,000 years civilization had considered and adopted many political system, from constitutional monarchy, imperial restoration, parliamentarism, a multi-party system, and a republican system, but none worked, except for the current authoritarian regime under the CCP.²³³

The historical findings show that China had taken democracy into consideration and even adopted it – simply justifying Xi's message. The democratization was incubated in the late Qing period (1840 AD – 1911 AD) and took shape in the Republican period (1912 AD – 1949 AD).²³⁴ Until the mid 19th century, the Qing Dynasty and its elites had strongly believed that China was supreme in the civilized world, while all foreign countries were barbarian. At that time, there was a tributary relationship between Qing and

foreigners. Once a foreign ruler agreed to pay tribute to the Emperor in Beijing, he explicitly acknowledged that Chinese civilization was the most advanced in the world, and the Confucian system with the Emperor at its heart, was the core culture.²³⁵ However, the self-confident was gradually turned into deepening humiliation by China's consecutive military defeats – starting from China's first unequal treaty signed with the United Kingdom after its defeat in the Sino-British Opium War in 1842, while Hong Kong was handed over to British control and simultaneously culminating in its crushing defeat by Japan in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895. As the result, these sequential events were the watershed of China's democratization.²³⁶

Accordingly, based on the belief that “Japan has taken the West's excellence in education as its model in fostering nation and its people”, Qing government abruptly

²³³ Ren Jingjing, “China's democracy to prosperity”, *China Daily*, May 30th, 2015, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2014-05/30/content_17552856.htm.

²³⁴ Kerry Brown, “Assessing Democracy Assistance : China”, Project Report under United Nations Democracy Fund and Taiwan Foundation for Democracy, May 2010, p.2.

²³⁵ Kim Kwong Chan and Alan Hunter, “Religion, Culture, and Confucius Institutes in China's Foreign Policy”, in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Chinese Foreign Policy*, edited by E.Kavalski, Farnham : Ashgate, 2012, pp. 135-136.

²³⁶ Bruce Gilley, *China's Democratic Future : How It Will Happen and Where It Will Lead*, (New York : Columbia University Press, 2005), pp.243-244.

abolished the 1,200 years old-civil service examination in 1905 and replace it with a three-tier modern school system of primary schools, secondary schools, and colleges – a system modeled on that of Westernized Japan during Meiji Restoration.²³⁷ Thus, one unexpected results of education reforms during late period of Qing, was the declining optimism in Confucianism and the further motivation of many Chinese elites to learn Western democracy as a means to build China into a powerful modern state.²³⁸

The word “democracy” or *minzhu* is relatively new in Chinese. It was introduced to China by an elite reformer, Liang Qichao in 1889 and in the early 1900s, democracy had the same meaning as it did in the West. The optimistic view of democracy was “a means of communication between people and government” which could effectively unleash

the power of public participation in aimed to establish the unity of will and effort of individuals and to promote the collective welfare.²³⁹ Consequently, the democracy would secure the survival of China from Western imperialism. This idea was developed into the electoral democracy, which stipulated in the Qing's 'Provincial Assembly Regulations' and 'Provincial Assembly Election Regulations'.²⁴⁰

The first Chinese experiment with elections was in 1909. The law restricted suffrage to the adult men who held the proper educational, social, or economic credentials and limited the right to vote to male Chinese nationals over the age of twenty-five who were living in their province of ancestral residence and had either : (1) managed a public welfare organization ; (2) earned a degree from Western style middle school ; (3) held the higher degree than recently abolished civil service examination system ; (4) held a position in the civil or military bureaucracy ;

²³⁷ Civil services examination was initially instituted as an empire-wide education institution by China's imperial rulers in the Sui Dynasty (581 AD – 618 AD). The original purpose of the system was to limit alternative center of power, mainly the landed aristocracy. In the Song Dynasty (260 AD – 1279 AD), the landed aristocracy was permanently replaced by a new class of “scholar-officials” who were exclusively selected through civil service examination where the examinees' mastery of the Confucian classic was tested.

²³⁸ *op.cit*, p.12.

²³⁹ Lawrence R.Sullivan, *Leadership and Authority in China 1895-1976*, (New York : Rowman and Littlefield, 2012) pp.12-13.

²⁴⁰ Joshua Hill, “Voter Education : Provincial Autonomy and the Transformation of Chinese Election Law”, *East Asian History and Culture Review*, No.7, 2013, pp.9-10.

(5) owned a minimum of 5,000 yuan of real estate or commercial capital. Several occupations were also barred from participations, such as government officials, police, active duty soldiers, monks, and students, as well as the mentally disordered and those using opium.²⁴¹ This indirect election was carried out within two stage of election process. First, voters did not directly elect representatives but instead voted for an intermediate group of electors who would then be responsible for the final selection. Second, the winner of the election determined by a mathematical formula would run for the secondary stage election and then become the new provincial assemblymen.²⁴²

After Qing dynasty collapsed, this fundamental structure of Qing electoral law was adopted by the new government of the Republic of China under Sun Yat Sen's leadership. The indirect system was still maintained but there were number of revisions on voters' conditions.²⁴³ Adult men at

least twenty-one years of age who had lived in the same voting district for at least two years, and either 1) had graduated from a Western-style primary school , 2) owned 500 yuan or more in real estate, 3) paid annual direct taxes to the central government in excess of 2 yuan. It laid the groundwork for a sizeable expansion of the electorate from the fewer than two milion persons in 1909 to nearly forty-three million in 1912.²⁴⁴

Unfortunately, this electoral democracy left the traumatic experiences among Chinese. In the national elections held in February 1913 for the new bicameral parliament, Song Jiaoren (Sun Yat Sen's associates) under the flagship of Kuomintang (henceafter, "KMT") or Nationalist Party won a majority of seats. Yuan Sikai, the Qing's officials, had Song assassinated in March and this was followed by assassination of several pro-revolution generals. In turn, the KMT was dissolved and widespread rebellions ensued, leading the nation to break up into warlord fractions, and numerous provinces declared independence.²⁴⁵

²⁴¹ *Ibid*, pp.10-11.

²⁴² *Ibid*, p.22.

²⁴³ Jamie P.Horsley, "Development of Electoral Democracy in China", in *Understanding China's Legal System : Essays in Honor of Jerome A.Cohen*, edited by C. Stephen Hsu,(New York : NYU Press, 2003), pp.323-324.

²⁴⁴ William A.Joseph, *Politics in China : An Introduction*, (London : Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 52-54.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid*, pp.55-58.

Few years later, political elites had been courageously struggling for democratization in China. By the early 1920s, Sun Yat Sen reestablished the KMT and decided to push his party to thoroughly repudiate the 1912 consitutional system and its electoral laws. To replace it, the Nationalist advocated universal adult suffrage, as well as addressing Four Rights of People – the right to vote, the right to recall, the power of initiative, and the power of referendum. On May 5, 1936, the Nanjing government promulgated a draft constitution after years of negotiation, revision, and controversy. This constitution envisioned the election of a National Assembly selected through an election process, that would be “universal, equal, direct, and based on a secret ballot”. The general election was scheduled for July 1937.²⁴⁶

Nevertheless, the democracy was not about to give its place in China. The window of opportunity to protect the Republic of China and support nationalist party ideologies was unexpectedly diminished. A skirmish

between Chinese and Japanese forces at the Marco Polo Bridge near Beijing on July 7, began a crisis that led to the two countries' final slide into war.²⁴⁷ The elections were abandoned in the midst of a fight for national survival. Furthermore, where the general election were held from late November 1947 to early January 1948, it was largely contested by the CCP, which led to war and the exodus of KMT to Taiwan.²⁴⁸

At first glance, Chinese experiences in electoral democracy may appear to be nothing more than a footnote in twentieth century history. However, the bloodshed experiences on democracy have produced the distinct legacy for the government and its people as a system that is incompatible with China's complex society and politics. First, none of China's 20th and 21st century leaders could ever claim to rule by an electoral mandate, as they may believe that electoral democracy will not

²⁴⁶ Chung Gi Kwai, *The Kuomintang-Communist Struggle in China 1922-1949*, (New York : Springer Science & Business Media, 2012), pp.24-28.

²⁴⁷ Robert Weatherley, *Making China Strong: The Role of Nationalism in Chinese Thinking on Democracy and Human Rights* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p.100.

²⁴⁸ Taiwan and mainland China had been seperated for over six decades since the ending of the Chinese Civil War in 1949, since then the two sides lifted the ban on travel and trade toward the end of 1980s. However, by the end of 2010, the cross-strait relations on economics and cultural exchange has rapidly proliferated into a torrential flow.

work in China, and may either lead to the turmoil and coup d'etat or the emergence of incompetent leaders. This has also been apparently predicted by Liang Qichao. Before the end of Qing over China, Liang's enthusiasm about democracy which obtained during his exile in Japan, was dramatically changed into scepticism after his direct exposure in US' democracy. Unimpressed by the talent of American politicians and deploring the inefficiency of elections, as well as observing that Chinese diaspora participation in US election and organization had always led to chaos and disorder, Liang optimically defended for the authoritarianism as a necessary means to build China into a modern state.²⁴⁹ In his post-American tour essay, *On Enlightened Despotism*, Liang exquisitely describes the democracy's incompatibility to Chinese's conditions :

“Were we now to resort the rule – Freedom, Constitutionalism, Republicanism – it would be the same as committing national suicide. Those things would be like wearing summer grab in winter or furs in summer : beautiful without doubt, but unsuitable.

²⁴⁹ Zhao Suisheng, *China and Democracy: Reconsidering the Prospects for a Democratic China*, (London: Routledge, 2014), p.41.

The Chinese people must for now accept authoritarian rule ; they cannot enjoy freedom.”²⁵⁰

Liang's narrative is admittable by reviewing how Qing Dynasty collapsed only six years after the abolition of civil service examination , a system that had endorsed the “ non - hereditary” 考 选 in examination for 1 , 2 0 0 years – was replaced by the bloodsheed out of electoral democracy . As the result , meritocracy is preferred as a means to choose state officials , over electoral democracy which until this day ,is still favored amongst Chinese citizen (would be discussed on the next chapter)²⁵¹ .

Second , China's current political condition might be perceived as an incomplete legacy of what Sun Yat Sen has predicted before .Early 1 9 s2 0 s, Sun strongly believed that the people of China would require a period of time in which they were trained to exercise democracy .This period was called 'Three Stages of Revolution' .At the very first phase ,there would be nothing

²⁵⁰ Liang Qichao, “Kaiming Zhuanzhi Lun (On Enlightened Despotism)”, in *Liang Qichao Quanji* (Complete Works of Liang Qichao) Vol.3, 1999, Beijing Chubanshe.

²⁵¹ Daniel A.Bell, *The China Model: Political Meritocracy and the Limits of Democracy*, (New Jersey : Princeton University Press, 2015), pp.54-56.

less than a dictatorship to diminish completely the old form of imperial government .Second stage was regarded as “ political tutelage”while the state would still be a military autocracy but the people would be trained to understand democracy, by allowing them to obtain the regional autonomy. The third stage will see the strengthening of democratic institutions and the dismantling of military autocracy .Each county having achieved complete local self - government would elect one delegate . A national congress consisting of the total number of the elected delegates would then draft the constitution .After this ,the people would elect a president and parliamentary delegates to organize the central government .²⁵²

Prior to 1949, China had reached the end of the first phase and would embark on the second stage . However , the Nationalist attempts to institutionalize idea origination in the provincial autonomy movement were failed but its legacies had bear fruit after 1949 in Taiwan . Meanwhile ,the People's Republic of China (henceafter , “ PRC”) has

continuously been maintaining the second stage and might not progress the third phase , as its homegenous populations do not have much offers , interests , and expectations despite of wealth and prosperity .

Weak Opposition to CCP Rule

Taiwan's experiences have demonstrated that it is possible for a hegemonic party to engineer a peaceful and gradual transition away from one party authoritarianism on the basis of a sucessful record of economic modernization, in which democracy finally emerges. It is also agreeable to recall Taiwan's success in consolidating democracy as a means to justify the possible existence of democracy in PRC , due to its 'Chinese-ness'. The people of Taiwan in their daily lives have preserved and practiced Chinese social customs ; dietary habits; notions of life, death, fate and the supernatural ; and family-based ethicism – simply proved their Chinese-ness is compatible with the values of democracy.²⁵³

²⁵² Fu Zhengyuan, *Autocratic Tradition and Chinese Politics*, (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp.152-153.

²⁵³ Taiwan is considered as the first and only democracy in a culturally Chinese society. *See more.* Yun-Han Chu, “China and East Asian Democracy : The Taiwan Factor”, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol.23 No.1, January 2012, pp.42-56.

Beside that, from the government side, at the initial path of development, both Taiwan (KMT) and CCP emerged with the aims of rebuilding state and society out of the ashes of imperial China and saving the nation from predatory imperialist power. As self-proclaimed rulers of China, a nationalist KMT, and socialist CCP, both superimposed themselves onto the state and society, establishing institutional hegemony. Along with the advancement, KMT had benefited from the state's export-led industrialization strategy, since Chiang Ching Kuo, the second generation of Taiwan leadership, built up Taiwan through ambitious projects and deviated from the classic Leninist model, which finally contributed to the consolidation of democracy.²⁵⁴ On the other hand, by tracing its grandiosity on economic achievement, CCP has also almost drawn closer to those kind of regime transition. Yet, while recent aspects of modernization might accommodate democracy to thrive, all in all, the current regime will not allow it.

²⁵⁴ Bruce J. Dickson, "Dilemmas for Party Adaptation: the CCP's Strategies for Survival," in., *State and Society in 21st-Century China: Crisis, Contention, and Legitimation* edited by Peter Hays Gries and Stanley Rosen (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), pp. 141–158.

Against this background, China seems to do very well. At an average of 9 percent growth per year over the past sixteen years, the Chinese economy was the fastest growing in the world; market reform had been deepening; foreign investment continues to pour in allowing large amounts of Chinese products to be exported. Much of the booming economy and increasing bargaining power, of course hinges upon the CCP's grip on power in China.²⁵⁵ However, beyond this long-standing authoritarian regime, there are two main key factors that both internally and externally provide a comparative benchmark for China to justify the value of authoritarianism, which also can bring prosperity to its people as well as procuring the framework to deal with democratic and non-democratic government.

(1) The absence of constructive engagement

The idea of constructive engagement originated during the administration of American President, Ronald Reagan to

²⁵⁵ Malcolm Cook, "China's Power Status : East Asian Challenges for Xi Jinping's Foreign Policy", *China Quarterly of International Strategic Studies*, Vol.1, No.1, p.105.

describe his approach towards South Africa. It emphasized intergovernmental cooperation, lending South Africa financial resources to foster its economic development, and repudiating the use of sanctions to punish South Africa for its apartheid policy. In doing so, the economic reforms would produce larger middle class and the societal pressure to stimulate the gradual change of political reform.²⁵⁶

This normative intention has ever been developed to engage with China as well by European Union, though recent economic concerns took precedent over EU's normative goals on China. According to the 1995 strategy, the EU's first objective was to "socialise China into the kind of international order that the EU supports", which includes support for the UN, adherence to international agreements on the environment, and the fight against the proliferation of nuclear and other

weapons.²⁵⁷ The EU's second objective therefore is to help China's internal transition. It vows to work with China in many practical ways, including progress towards full integration in the world market economy, strengthening of civil society, poverty alleviation, environment protection, human resource development, scientific and technological development, information society, trade and investment co-operation. They fork out millions of euro to help China's transition; and they foster trust through political dialogues, joint military exercises or human rights projects.²⁵⁸ But on the other hand, Chinese authorities have become rather good at exploiting commercial rivalries for political purposes. Further, Beijing can be tough and determined at the negotiating table. As the result, the EU's day-to-day dealings with China are not systematically linked to those objectives anymore.²⁵⁹ Indeed, China's

²⁵⁶ Other democratic countries in the past have also attempted to use constructive engagement to approach authoritarian states, such as Prime Minister of Canada, Jean Chretien who urged Cuba's government to effectively support movement in Cuba towards a peaceful transition for representative governments, human rights, a more open economy, and reintegration into the Western Hemisphere. *See more.* Robert A. Manning, "Constructive Engagement; South Africa: Why Leon Sullivan gave up his 'Principles'." *U.S. News & World Report*, 15 June 1987.

²⁵⁷ Katinka Barysch, Charles Grant, and Mark Leonard, "Embracing the Dragon : The EU's partnership with China", pp.6-7.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid*, p.8.

²⁵⁹ Sophie Meunier, "Political Impact of Chinese Foreign Direct Investment in the European Union on Transatlantic Relations", *European Parliament Briefing Paper*, 4 May 2012, Princeton University, pp. 6-7, http://scholar.princeton.edu/sites/default/files/meunier_final_0.pdf.

strong bargaining power in negotiating table with democratic nations, has successfully converted the intention of constructive engagement into strategic partnership without taking the sensitive issues such as freedom and human rights into account.

For all reasons, due to its status as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, there is no way for US and its allies to impose the human rights sanctions toward China. In turn, China has often used its status as one of veto power holder to try and block initiatives for intervention, especially within the cases of human rights violations.²⁶⁰ On the one side, its veto power diminishes any normative intention to transform CCP's authoritarian soul into a democratic one. On the other hand, this is the core part of how China itself has more promising deals with other non-democratic regime (such as Myanmar) to exert the constructive engagement. Its expansionist influence has been encouraging economic and political investment in Myanmar. As a reply, Myanmar

will geopolitically protect China's interest in regional (ASEAN) and China will maintain the asymmetric dependency by using its veto power in UN Security Council to block initiatives for Responsibility to Protect toward Myanmar as well as strengthening its fundamental policy of Principle of Peaceful Coexistence.²⁶¹

In the regional level, the absence of constructive engagement can be seen through ASEAN. The Southeast Asia's proximity to China offers a valuable explanation for the persistence of the authoritarian rule, particularly in Myanmar and Cambodia. China has purportedly taken particular interest through closer economic engagement. In doing so, on the one side, the constructive engagement toward Myanmar by ASEAN to gradually transform the nation into democratic one is less meaningful than the asymmetric engagement between China and Myanmar. On the other hand, there is also

²⁶⁰ See more at United Nations Library, "Security Council – Veto List", the data from 1946 - 2014 available at <http://research.un.org/en/docs/sc/quick>.

²⁶¹ From 1954 until this present, China's decisions of foreign policy derives from the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, comprising : (1) mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, (2) mutual non-aggression, (3) non-interference in each other's internal affairs, (4) equality and mutual benefit, (5) peaceful coexistence.

great difficulty for some Western powers, such as US, to encourage the strengthening of democracy in China through multilateral organizations, particularly ASEAN, which prioritizes the principle of non-interference that stipulated in ASEAN Charter 2008.²⁶²

(2) Meritocracy produces more accountable government than democracy does.

Larry Diamond in *The Spirit of Democracy* has argued that democratic consolidation should be seen as taking place in two dimensions namely normative and behavioral, and at three levels, comprising political elites, political organization (such as parties, movement and civic organization), and the mass public. However, democratization faces some stumbles in China, as it falls short of consolidation at the political elites (and also the mass public which would be discussed at the next sub-chapter).²⁶³

²⁶² Fenna Egberink, "ASEAN, China's Rise, and Geopolitical Stability in Asia", *Clingendael Paper*, No.2, 2014, Netherlands Institute of International Relations, pp.16-18.

²⁶³ Larry Diamond, *The Spirit of Democracy: The Struggle to Build Free Societies Throughout the World* (New York: Times Books, 2008), pp.25-26.

In Japan and South Korea, the emergence of constitutional institutions predated the shift towards democracy. Again, it was the existence of a strong state to build those institutions that prevented countries from devolving into the electoral autocracies.²⁶⁴ In contrast, China is a liberalising autocracy that uses meritocracy to produce more accountable government rather than pushing for the advancement of a democratic regime. Meritocracy is used by the CCP as a means for it to deliver the needs of its people while ensuring that its own power is preserved.²⁶⁵

Without much fanfare, Beijing has introduced significant reforms into its way of governance and established an elaborate system of what can be called "selection plus election", or familiarly as meritocracy to replace the electoral democracy. There are three underlying reasons for reviving and reinterpreting this political ideal within a Chinese context. First, political meritocracy has been a basic theme in the history of

²⁶⁴ *Ibid*, p.29.

²⁶⁵ Daniel A.Bell, *The China Model: Political Meritocracy and the Limits of Democracy*, pp.63-65.

Chinese political culture, and continues to be central to its real politics. As a civilized state that strongly holds the value of Confucianism, the political meritocracy is the decent answer of how to elevate 'the worthiness' within the political practices and institutions.²⁶⁶

Second, based on the aforementioned historical findings, the democracy, especially the Western style, is a flawed political system and meritocracy is one of best alternative to remedy some of its imperfections. It provides the platform that assuming everybody should be educated. In doing so, an important task of the political system is to select leaders with an above average ability to make morally informed political judgement, as well as to encourage as many talents cadre to participate in politics, instead of holding elections without any promising competencies.²⁶⁷

Third, the CCP itself has become more meritocratic organization over the last three decades or so. It is also undeniable fact that China's dramatic rise over the past three decades is inseparable from this meritocratic

system.²⁶⁸

As well as how Qing Dynasties had influenced the political system in current China, this idea is also inherited from the previous dynasties in ancient China. The political meritocracy was institutionalized by means of the imperial examination system that put successful candidates on the path to fame and power. Furthermore, this system is continuously inherited by CCP to this day.²⁶⁹

Given by the fact, as defined by Shi Tianjian and Lu Jie, since the last decades, this mechanism also initiates the “guardianship discourse” among government and Chinese people. The majority of Chinese people endorses “guardianship discourse”, to identify high quality politicians who care about the people's demands, take people's interests into consideration during decision making process, and issue the good policies on behalf of their people and society.²⁷⁰

Since the last three decades, the CCP's

²⁶⁶ Daniel A.Bell, *China's New Confucianism: Politics and Everyday Life in a Changing Society*, (New Jersey : Princeton University Press, 2010), p.2-3.

²⁶⁷ Kerry Dumbaugh, *Understanding China's Political System*, (Pennsylvania: Diane Publishing, 2010), p.6.

²⁶⁸ Daniel A.Bell, *China's New Confucianism: Politics and Everyday Life in a Changing Society*, p.10.

²⁶⁹ Benjamin A.Elman, *Civil Examinations and Meritocracy in Late Imperial China*, (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2013), pp.1-3.

²⁷⁰ Shi Tianjian and Lu Jie, “The Battles of Ideas and Discourses Before Democratic Transition: Different Democratic Conceptions in Authoritarian China”, *International Political Science Review*, Vol.36, No.1, 2014, p.23.

focus has shifted to the task of good governance led by reliable and virtuous political leaders, the selection and promotion mechanisms of the CCP have become more meritocratic. In the 1980s, talented students were reluctant to join the CCP and most of them were the provocators of Tiananmen tragedy in 1989 which demanded democracy and a more liberal China. Ironically, it is a different story today. College campuses are the main sources of promising cadres for CCP. Number of top schools like Tsinghua University, 28 percents of all undergraduate students, 43 percent of graduate seniors and up to 55 percents of graduate student were CCP members in 2010.²⁷¹

Interestingly, although China never claims itself as the democracy state, but there is an element of democracy found within the system, namely transparency. It is hard not be impressed by the rigorous selection process for the higher levels of government officials. For example, the Secretary General of the

Organization Department of the CPC Central Committee.²⁷² The selected procedure is tough but explicitly promising for the sake of future of nations and the people. First, there is a nomination process, not only for the candidate, but also for the retired cadres. Those who received many nominations could move to the next stage. Second, there is an examination. To guarantee that the process runs fairly, the examination papers would be put in the corridor so that public can judge the result. There is also the oral examination with an interview panel comprising ministers, vice-ministers, and university professors. The transparency is ensured by the attendance of ordinary staffs who work for the General Secretary, to supervise process throughoutly. Three candidates with the highest score are selected for the next stage and will be checked by personnel department to assess his/her performance and virtue. The final result is determined by the committee consisting of 12 ministers who each has a vote, and the recommended candidates require two-third

²⁷¹ Daniel A. Bell, "Political Meritocracy is a Good Thing: The Case of China", *Huffington Post*, 21 August 2012, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/daniel-a-bell/political-meritocracy-china_b_1815245.html.

²⁷² Emilie Frenkiel, "Choosing Confucianism: Departing from the Liberal Framework", in an Interview with Daniel A. Bell, September 10th, 2012, <http://www.booksandideas.net/Choosing-Confucianism-Departing.html>.

majority to be passed. This is how the meritocracy is perceived by China as a means to guarantee the rights of its people in expecting the talented and reliable 'guardian' by delegating the vote through the performance assessment and decision of aforementioned 12 ministers.²⁷³

Zhang Wei Wei, an infamous author of *The China Wave : Rise of a Civilizational State*, sarcastically illustrates that, with the meritocratic governance of China, it is inconceivable that people as weak and incompetent as George W.Bush or Yoshihiko Noda of Japan could ever get to the top leadership position.²⁷⁴ Xi Jinping can be epitomized. Before appointed as the Chairman of CCP and the President of PRC, Xi Jinping served as the governor of Fujian Province, a region known for its dynamic economy and as party secretary of Zhejiang province which is acknowledged for its rapidly growing private sector, and Shanghai, China's financial heart and business hub with

a powerful state-sector. These experiences in fact proved the quality of Xi to manage area with total population of over 120 million and an economy larger than India's. He was then given another chance to serve as vice president under Hu Jintao's administration to understand the state and military affairs both at national and international level.²⁷⁵

On the side of continuity with the past, although CCP is still a selective political elite consisting of about 8 percent of the population, but it embraces the unbeatable commitment to maintain the best qualities of political elites. The CCP regime is unencumbered by the kind of institutional and ideological commitments that had constrained the KMT. The CCP has also committed itself to the development of "socialist democracy" which irreplaceable by other form of government to pursue the nation wealth.²⁷⁶ Party members answer to tight political discipline from the party leadership in Beijing and remained accountable. As said by Prime Minister Li Keqiang, "Holding

²⁷³ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁴ Zhang Weiwei, "Meritocracy versus Democracy", *New York Times*, November 9th, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/10/opinion/meritocracy-versus-democracy.html?_r=0.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁶ C.Fred Bergsten, et al., *China's Rise : Challenges and Opportunities* (Washington DC : Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2009), pp.58-60.

down a job without doing a stroke of work and accomplishing nothing is a typical example of official corruption, and these officials should be held responsible".²⁷⁷

Indeed, in the Beijing's point of view, Abraham Lincoln's ideal of "government of the people, by the people, and for the people" does not meet the objectives of Chinese people who substantially requiring the 'good' governance (in their definition), competent leadership, and capable in satisfying the citizenry, instead of electoral democracy that might hardly produces the "best from the best" political candidate for 'representing' people's rights.²⁷⁸

Lack of Willingness to Support Democracy Amongst Citizenry

In 1989, Tiananmen square protest galvanising students, workers, and intellectual across China confronted the authoritarian rule. They were lacked the right

to vote, could not freely criticize the government and faced restrictions on whom they could worship. Human rights was at stake and China's press was under the strict supervision of the government and promoted no viewpoints in opposition to CCP power. Idealistic language about 'centralized democracy' was seen as empty sloganeering. Twenty-six years later, apparently the Chinese still cannot vote for national leaders, or even freely criticise the government. The condition has worsened as number of social media are blocked and many intellectual and activists who against the CCP administration (for instead, Falun Gong) had been jailed without any toleration. The expectation that more wealth in China would lead to more democracy, has been frustated as the one-party rule still persists.²⁷⁹

Thus, this is an interesting fact to be raised. The world simply demands China for being democratized, while contradictively the citizens do not always draw the same stark contrast between democratic and

²⁷⁷ "Chinese Premier Again Blasts Lazy Officials as Corrupt", *Reuters*, July 9th, 2015, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2015/07/09/uk-china-economy-corruption-idUKKCN0PJ08S20150709>.

²⁷⁸ Zhang Weiwei, "Meritocracy versus Democracy", *New York Times*, November 9th, 2012.

²⁷⁹ Benjamin Herscovitch, "The East in Authoritarian: Why China Will Not Democratise", *Policy Brief*, Vol.3 No.1, 2014, The Centre for Independent Studies, pp.13-14.

authoritarian regimes that political scientists normally do. Many Chinese now feel pride in the CCP's model of authoritarian development, as they are simply forgetting how the Tiananmen tragedy killings showed the people's army and CCP could open fire on the people themselves. All in all, there are some determinants within Chinese's perception that has been benefited the long-standing power of CCP.

(1) The common trust and confidence to government

Over the last decades, how PRC's citizens trust their political institution more highly than citizens do in countries whose political systems are democratized, are seemingly indestructable. This is proven by the quantitative findings issued by East Asian Barometer (EAB).²⁸⁰ The research conducted national random survey in 2002 in five new democracies (Mongolia, Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand), one established democracy (Japan), one quasi

democracy (Hongkong), and one authoritarian system (China). Among these eight political system, public satisfaction with the regime is surprisingly highest in authoritarian China, lowest in democratic Japan and Taiwan, and fragile in the other new democracies.²⁸¹ The survey asked five questions to estimate the level of support for democracy (as shown in Table 1).

Table 1 :
The Level of Support for Democracy
in 2002 (%)

Democracy is...	China	Hong Kong	Japan	Mongolia	Philippines	South Korea	Taiwan	Thailand
Desirable for our country now*	72.3	87.6	87.1	91.6	88.1	95.4	72.2	93.0
Suitable for our country now*	67.0	66.8	76.3	86.3	80.2	84.2	59.0	88.1
Effective in solving the problems of society†	60.5	39.0	61.4	78.4	60.7	71.7	46.8	89.6
Preferable to all other kinds of government‡	53.8	40.3	67.2	57.1	63.6	49.4	40.4	82.6
Equally or more important than development§	40.3	19.6	44.0	48.6	21.8	30.1	23.5	51.3
None of the above	13.6	7.2	5.7	1.4	1.5	0.7	13.0	0.5
All of the above	17.8	7.0	23.4	25.9	6.7	15.7	7.4	35.6
Mean number of items supported	2.9	2.5	3.4	3.6	3.1	3.3	2.4	4.0
NOTES * 6 or above on a ten-point dictatorship-democracy scale of where the country should or could be now. † Dichotomous variable. ‡ Trichotomous variable recoded into a dichotomous variable. § Five-way variable recoded into dichotomous variable.								

Source : Eric C. Chang and Yun-han Chu, "Regime Performance and Support for Democratization", Working Paper Series No.7, Asian Barometer, <http://www.asianbarometer.org/newenglish/publications/workingpapers/no.7.pdf>

²⁸⁰ The Asian Barometer (ABS) is an applied research program on public opinion on political values, democracy, and governance around the region.

²⁸¹ Yun-Han Chu, et al., "Asia's Challenged Democracies", *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol.32, No.1, January 2009, pp.144-146. For the methodology and full findings of the firstwave surveys, see Yun-han Chu et al., eds., *How East Asians View Democracy* (NewYork: Columbia University Press, 2008).

In all countries except Taiwan and China, the majorities (87 percent or more) claimed a desire for democracy by choosing a score of 6 or above. The result also exhibits that though the desire of Chinese to live on democracy in the future was higher, but they have not yet believed that their country was ready for it. Especially, in all culturally Chinese societies (China PRC itself, Hongkong, and Taiwan), a significant number was sceptical about the suitability of democracy which reflects the influence of their common cultural values which primarily accentuate the order and harmony as emphasized by Confucianism. Respondents also seem to greatly support development over democracy. Across the region, particularly China, democracy lost favor to economic development by a wide margin. It was proven that although PRC's respondents prefer to the democracy, but it was not perceived as the viable political system which able to underpin the economic development and prosperity.

Moreover, compared with the result in 2002, the EAB recent data obtained in 2006-2008 is showing a downward trend of support for democracy among Chinese people, while

Taiwan and Hongkong have increased. Ironically, 82 percent of Chinese respondents believed the nature of the regime had changed into a democratic direction since the start of Deng Xiaoping's reform in 1979. The quantitative data in 2006-2008 also exhibits the general stability of idea developed in 2002 where the level of trust in local institutions was lower than in central institutions. The survey estimated that 17 percent of respondents did not trust the court, 21 percents did not trust local government, and 23 percent did not trust civil servants.²⁸² A case in point is, this result merely proved two underlying factors. Firstly, bearing into mind, people in China trusted the political institutions that were away from their daily lives more than the institutions with which they have regular contact. This portrays how the citizen's obedience toward central government had such been destined since the beginning of their civilization, as well as how the Chinese mentality that believed the emperor is 'Son of God' (as part of Confucianism) during ancient

²⁸² Shi Tianjian, "China: Democratic Values Supporting an Authoritarian System" in Yunhan Chu, Larry Diamond, Andrew J. Nathan, and Doh Chull Shin, eds., *How East Asians View Democracy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), pp. 209–237.

China, even if the local officials are bad.²⁸³ Secondly, the Chinese respondents are in favor with the current regime since their own conceptions are embarked from distinctive benchmark, namely Mao Zedong's leadership. The Cultural Revolution carried out during Mao Zedong's regime was more miserable than the current situation so, understandably, the increase in freedom and prosperity which they have enjoyed since post-Mao's leadership is seen as a form of democratization and considered as a better way of life (as summarized in Table 2).²⁸⁴

Table 2 : Perception of Past and Current Regime in China 2008 (in %)

(Percent of respondents)			
REGIME TYPES	1970S REGIME	MID-1990S REGIME	CURRENT REGIME
Very dictatorial (1-2)	9.6	1.2	1.2
Somewhat dictatorial (3-5)	37.1	25.6	10.9
Somewhat democratic (6-8)	17.4	38.9	44.5
Very democratic (9-10)	4.3	6.4	18.4
DK/NA	31.6	28	25.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Mean on a 10-point scale	4.7	6.1	7.2

Notes: N=3184.
DK/NA = Don't know/no answer.

Sources : Tianjian Shi, "China: Democratic Values Supporting an Authoritarian System", p.219

Furthermore, entering the fourth generations leadership under President Hu Jindao in 2011, despite all the changes and continuities, the citizen support toward the authoritarian regime unshakeably remained. It may seem paradoxical that people living in authoritarian political system evaluate their regime level of democratic change more generously than other who living in real democracy, but indeed it is an undeniable fact. Ideally, democracy can be considered normatively consolidated at the mass level if at least 70 percent of the public believe that democracy is preferable than any form of government and if no more than 15 percent prefer an authoritarian regime. On the contrary, as shown in table 3, more than 70 percent of PRC citizen has stronger confidence toward current regime than the real democratic regime. More interestingly, they even value the democracy term under self-made interpretation.

²⁸³ *Ibid*, p.220.

²⁸⁴ Mao launched the so-called Cultural Revolution (known in full as the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution) in August 1966, at a meeting of the Plenum of the Central Committee. It led to the chaos, where some 1.5 million people were killed during the Cultural Revolution, and millions of others suffered imprisonment,

seizure of property, torture or general humiliation. See more at <http://www.history.com/topics/cultural-revolution>.

Table 3 :
Regime Support and Endorsement
of Democracy

Table 1: Regime Support and Endorsement of Democracy

<i>Regime support (Agree or Completely agree)</i>	
Over the long run, our system of government is capable of solving the problems our country faces (RS1)	75.06%
Thinking in general, I am proud of our system of government (RS2)	76.58%
A system like ours, even if it runs into problems, deserves the people's support (RS3)	68.12%
I would rather live under our system of government than any other that I can think of (RS4)	76.18%
<i>Democratic orientation (Agree or Completely Agree)</i>	
Democracy may have its problems, but it is still the best form of government.	76.18%

Source: 2011 ABS III Mainland China Survey (N=3413)
Weighted percentages in cells

Sources : Jie Lu, "Democratic Conceptions and Regime Support among Chinese Citizens", *Working Paper Series* No.66, Asian Barometer 2012, <http://www.asianbarometer.org/newenglish/publications/workingpapers/no.66.pdf>

2) Chinese middle class is a 'product' of CCP

Democracy is characterized differently by the citizen, especially among middle class, as the regime with newly consolidated democracy is considered to be vulnerable to decay and collapse. The middle class of China are open to democracy but they do not possess strong confidence of the democratic system, since they fear that democracy might harm their 'comfort zone' where China's current political and economic stability provide a better place to live. Even without democracy, they have enjoyed the intensification of modernization that already visible in the

current region.²⁸⁵ Referring to the data collected in Beijing, Chengdu, and Xian by academics Jie Chen and Chunlong Lu, more than 90 percent of Chinese middle class support protecting the right to work, education, free information, privacy of personal correspondence.²⁸⁶ In turn, with kind regard of individual rights and freedoms, their interest in political rights and freedom is 'lukewarm'. As much as 75 percent of the Chinese middle class think they do not need to participate in government decision making, and only 25 percent argue multiple parties should be able to contest elections. Furthermore, 86 percent of middle class respect current political system and 83 percent believe the CCP represents their interest, even though the CCP is seemingly to maintain the absolute power.²⁸⁷

What pundits called a 'democratic deficit' seems to craft the tranquility among Chinese middle class. Undeniably, this is a

²⁸⁵ Benjamin Herscovitch, "The East in Authoritarian: Why China Will Not Democratise", p.14.

²⁸⁶ Jie Chen and Chunlong Lu, "Democratization and the Middle Class in China: The Middle Class's Attitudes toward Democracy", *Political Research Quarterly* Vol.64 No.3, 2011, University of Utah, p.707.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid*, pp.708-710.

product of the middle class' dependence on the state. China's economic structure today is far more state centric and state-dominated than China's twenty years ago. The state-owned enterprises still occupy the commanding heights of the economy and most private firms rely on the state actors to ease the resource constraints of China's regulated markets. In addition, state involvement in decision making at the firm level, especially in the areas of corporate governance, labor relations, and finance, remains a core feature of China's state guided capitalism. Accordingly, these eventually lead to the circumstances where the middle classes' future is tied to the Party, as within last few decades, the CCP has been providing the middle-class with jobs and career opportunities within the state apparatus.²⁸⁸ All in all, the CCP has engineered the rise of the middle class through 35 years of economic reforms. Hence, if Chinese are given the opportunity to choose a form of government, there is no reason to not choose a government much like the CCP which has economically fulfilled their needs and

interests. Meanwhile, although the fact displays the overlapping definition among Chinese regarding the 'guardianship' discourse and liberal democracy discourse, but Chinese' optimism might simultaneously thrive as long as the economic expansion would still provide a powerful rationale for the political status quo.

Conclusion

One cannot simply put Taiwan as an acceptable example for China to pursue the democracy. As explained in the previous sub-chapter, the history has created the Taiwan as product of KMT and basically its democratic regime is such predicted and prepared by the party founder, Sun Yatsen and the leader, Chiang Kaisek. On the other hand, the current political system of PRC is considerably as a product of Qing empire and a kind of remedy from the nightmares of the war. Thus, it was far less concerned with democratic consolidation while the winner were always the nationalist, authoritarians, or centralists.

In the case of China democracies itself are not produced by the development of dictatorships neither by highly educated and

²⁸⁸ Benjamin Herscovitch, "The East in Authoritarian: Why China Will Not Democratise", p.16.

more urbanized societies . Accordingly , transitions to democracy are random and is dependent on the level of development as well : not a single transition to democracy can be predicted by the level of development alone . Particularly , based on the statistic data , Chinese citizens exhibit a tantalizing number of their optimism toward current regime and more than 70 percent agree that the democracy is not suitable for the country .

On the other hand, the Chinese government is determined to control China's development in its own way and to establish what it sees as China's rightful place among world powers. It is likely to become more legitimate while the citizen as explained above, is still doubt whether the democracy consolidation can endure along with their enjoyable development or if it would contradictively harm their 'promising' status quo. The synthesis of political elites' unwillingness and the reluctancies of public to consolidate the democracy have been leading China to a circumstance called 'democratic recession'.

From the historical perspective and the cultural embodiement, it is axiomatic to

assume China has been foreordained to be undemocratized, simply by inferencing the articial legacy of dynasties leadership in ancient China and the bitter experience derived from the past attempts of electoral democracy. If China has been foreordained to become a nation based on dictatorship, there was no such way to hit the nail on the head regarding the legacy. On the other hand, for years now, although the fact itself has statistically accentuated the overzealousness of its citizen toward current regime, referring to the aforementioned analysis, it is possible for both government and citizen either to maintain the status quo by eliminating the liberal democracy in the future or to choose the democracy. However, democracy will only be winner over the legacy, if there are three elements coming together – a robust plurality of citizens, a catalytic event that endorses a signal to scattered social forces and a momentum to transform the nation, and a split in leadership where the CCP is at loggerhead.

As sequel of this paper, Alexander Fraser Tyler (1770), has ever cited his theory about “Cycle of Democracy”, emphasizing a

democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of government. A democracy always collapses over lousy fiscal policy, and followed by a dictatorship. China itself had ever experienced this cycle. The democracy had ever almost happened in China under the leadership of KMT (Nationalist Party), but the war that broke out had impoverished the people. As the result, the emerging Communist Party under Mao Zedong met the momentum to patch something up and simultaneously has been obtaining its grandiosity in China until present day. Whether or not there would be a “Cycle of Authoritarianism” in China in the near future, is difficult to predict.

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