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Comparative Chinese Democracies

In unintentional defiance of political scientists and the entirety of the West, hundreds of millions of Chinese citizens believe that the PRC is already a democracy.[1] Similarly, PRC citizens ranked their political regime as among the world's most legitimate in the 2000's, leading the world in satisfaction with the direction of their country in 2008.[2] While the concept of democracy became more inclusive since the Third Wave of democratization, it is apparently easier to exclude these Chinese citizens, numbering far greater than the entirety of the U.S., than to consider the possibility of democracy without multiparty competition, national elections, and fully liberal civil and political rights.

This comparative, theoretical essay is composed of several parts, each showing that

1 See Guo's chapter, "Institutional Accumulation and Gradual Substitution: The Dynamics of Developmental Democracy in China", pg. 173, in Huang (Ed.). China compares quite favorably with Japan, with almost twice as many people (10.1%) claiming that the PRC is a full democracy. If 77% of the PRC believes they live in a democratic state, that adds up to over a billion people who, in Shin's words, "misperceive" their regime type.

2 86% approved of China's direction in 2008, likely buoyed by the olympics but still far ahead of #2, Australia, at 69%, according to Pew. Given that the legitimacy ranking comes from one of Chinese democracy's most fervent prognosticators, Bruce Gilley, this apparent anomaly deserves more explanation than he gives in his 2009 book, *The Right to Rule*. Notably, Eastern European countries with far more recognizably democratic institutions are almost uniformly ranked the least legitimate. While a term such as legitimacy could be more clearly linked with performance and good governance than something as institutionally defined as democracy, economic growth does not appear to be a substitute for democracy in garnering support for a particular regime. Instead, by Gilley's own measures, economic performance may be more important.

China and culturally Chinese polities have thought about democracy in ways which diverge from the liberal form most familiar to the West. The first section, on *what* democracy is, lays out liberal democracy as a combination of procedures and values, challenged in the 1990's by the "Third Wave" of democratization. The second section argues, somewhat provocatively, that space must be made in the definition for performance-based criteria. Examples abound in the 2000's of poorly governed democracies and countries, Singapore and the PRC foremost among them, which have sustained economic success and are perceived by majorities of their citizenry, if few others globally, as *performing* democratically. Finding neither an institutional nor a perceptual focus satisfactory in exclusion of the other, the third section proposes that the "background concept" of democracy be defined systematically by whether a majority feels the government meets three requirements: consultation, responsiveness, and accountability.[3] Different models suggested by Baogang He are outlined in this section with regard to how the contemporary

3 Going from a background concept to a systematized one is the first step down in Adcock & Collier's Figure 1 (Conceptualization and Measurement: Levels and Tasks) on pg. 531. Through the conceptualization process, the primary research term is taken from a "broad constellation of meanings and understandings" to "a specific formulation of a concept...commonly involv[ing] an explicit definition." This is done "through reasoning about the background concept, in light of the goals of research."

cases of Taiwan, Singapore, and the PRC approximate each model and address my three definitional requirements differently.

After establishing that democracy means different things and makes its empirical presence known in divergent contexts, theoretical hypotheses will be presented as to the reasons why polities democratize. A fourth section asks *why* democracy, however it is conceptualized, is appealing from different ideological foundations, each emphasizing democratization as an end in itself or a means to a higher priority like state strength and good governance. Two historiography sections show the origins of Chinese democratic discourse and brief experiments with political liberalization, this study's preferred term for the introduction of mass elections, civil and political rights. The goal of these sections is to illustrate how different reasons for democratizing and a largely unsuccessful attempt at liberalizing the Chinese political system in the early 20th century combined to foster a very different concept which persists today. Contemporary cases of Taiwan, Singapore, and the PRC are then introduced to expand upon how each consults, responds to, and is held accountable by citizens. After a final, comparative discussion, the study will conclude that

the PRC, while not yet a democracy in any objective sense, may be on a trajectory toward a deliberative form of democracy which rejects many liberal institutions, thereby recognizable mostly by Chinese citizens, with whose values these uniquely Chinese institutions are congruent and perceived as democratic.

Before comparing democracy in the several supra-provincial polities ruled by various Chinese cultures and regimes, I need to define the central and contested term, democracy. The linguistic roots, government by and for the people, are the best place to start, as there is universal agreement on little else. To interpret "by and for the people," I must begin by drawing from leading political theorists before turning toward the unconventional. As will be emphasized throughout this essay, the PRC claims to be democratic on terms which are radically different than those in conventional definitions, and as in Singapore, surveys show that a majority of citizens agree with these claims. While the definitional requirement that a democracy governs *for* the people is not novel—most regimes have claimed this since government began or divine right ended—government *by* the people is subject to myriad

institutional interpretations.[4]

Q: *What's* Democracy? A: Liberal Institutions. As the historical sections will show, liberal democracy has a been a moving target, as even the most "liberal" regimes of the 19th century would be considered repressive and exclusive by 20th century standards.[5] Some combination of procedures and values adds up to a maximal definition of democracy in its best, fullest form, but as many newly democratized states struggled to implement and cultivate them in the 1990's to the present, there has been as much debate about what the best form of democracy is as what the lowest threshold is to cross into recognizable rule by and for the people.[6] Most theorists offering minimalist definitions of democracy hesitate to reduce the concept to a single, essential institution, but studies which have done so tend to focus on the institution of elections. For his particular focus on social choice, and possibly also for ease of measurement, William Riker's *Liberalism against Populism* states that voting

4 In Lijphart's introduction to the institutionally focused *Patterns of Democracy* he seems satisfied with the vague "government by and for the people" as a starting point and notes that every country in his study interprets these differently, as reflected both procedurally and substantively (value-based).

5 That vanguard liberal democracies have largely been the same, Western states throughout modern history, however, might be understandably frustrating for states which have improved democratically by leaps and bounds but can never seem to gain admission into the gentleman's club of democratic core states, almost all in the West.

6 Not sure how much space to spend outlining procedures like ("free and fair") elections, rule of law, majority rule, popular deliberation and participation; values including liberties, equality of individuals, government transparency, minority rights, etc. Presumably these are very familiar to the reader, and elections are what I want to focus on most.

is the “central act” of democracy, the necessary (but not sufficient) democratic institution in which the elements of participation, liberty, and equality fit together coherently.[7] A polity without elections, by Riker's definition, could not possibly be democratic.

In the popular imagination, elections do have pride of place for being the most obvious and objectively present or absent democratic institution. The major impediment of one of this study's cases, Singapore, has been that while popular satisfaction with national elections is high, as they've become both more “free and fair,” electoral defeat has yet to cause a single turnover in the governing party. And even if the Singaporean system were to meet the magic “two-turnover rule” by which some scholars denote consolidated democracy,[8] liberals assert that smooth procedures could not compensate for the liberties which the society obviously lacks.

Philippe Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl call the singular focus on the presence or

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7 Riker, pg. 5, further states that “all democratic ideas are focused on the mechanism of voting”, but many polities which have elections still fail to be democratic because the voting does not facilitate popular choice. McGann's work in *The Logic of Democracy* would also fall into the camp of Dahl's critics who think democracy is a fine ideal but practically impossible, as when consensus does not obtain (which describes the vast majority of situations), either a non-consensual decision must be made or the status quo will be forced upon the whole.

8 Przeworski is credited with popularizing the idea of democracy as a political system in which “parties lose elections,” though Andreas Schedler (pg. 73) criticizes the “demanding” two-turnover test for excluding single-party dominant systems described by T.J. Pempel.

absence of voting institutions “electoralism”, whereby other essential values are wrongly subordinated to procedural concerns.[9] While it is easy to agree that elections are essential to the most familiar, liberal form of democracy, too often the two are conflated. Two less scholarly examples of electoralism might also be offered by the many Westerners who haven't taken a political science class and see elections as the single most important democratic institution, perhaps the only necessary one, while a majority of PRC citizens use the modifier “Western-style” to describe liberal democracy based on competitive campaigns and voting.[10] As the case of Taiwan will show, however, exactly what set of conditions is sufficient is much harder to agree on, because even polities with fully functional democratic institutions can fail to imbue a feeling of popular empowerment.

Democratic theory since 1990 has also taken what John Dryzek calls a “deliberative turn” and become highly critical of liberal democracy's reliance on the electoral institution. Elections alone, by the account of deliberative democracy theorists, produce a thin, almost

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9 While the democratic values they enumerate are widely agreed upon, it is much more difficult to claim, as in the case of a procedural definition, a single principle which is so much more important than the others as to be essential.

10 Calhoun's *Neither Gods Nor Emperors* contains an amusing anecdote in defense of 1989 student protesters whose autocratic behavior is said by some to betray a lack of comprehension of the democratic process: he says that when a Westerner is asked what democracy is, s/he is likely to give a very brief answer that boils down to “elections,” while many students in 1989 were eager to answer the question with lengthy expositions on Rousseau and other classic theorists.

superficial democracy which tends to be elitist and capitalist as a result of its minimal connection to the people.[11] Kay Schlozman and her frequent collaborators, Sidney Verba and Henry E. Brady, in their 2012 book, *The Unheavenly Chorus*, concur with the critique that affluent people both vote and wield far more power in liberal democracy than the principle of majority rule implies. As the results of the Third Wave and Arab Spring have both been somewhat disappointing so far, varying from stalled, illiberal, or simply ineffective, the belief in voting as political panacea has taken a belated tumble in the popular imagination.[12] Elections have, in sum, come to be criticized for empowering elite oligarchies rather than the people, for burnishing the legitimacy of authoritarian rulers, and failing to meaningfully engage regular people in politics. If their insufficiency was never in doubt, their necessity to democracy is also worth questioning.

If we develop an admittedly unorthodox definition which is institutionally flexible, elections are not at all necessary for democracy. An even more radical position is taken by anarchists, such as Benjamin Ginsberg and Brian Martin, whose chapter *Democracy without*

11 See Gaus & Kukathas, pg. 145, where Dryzek inveighs against liberal democracy's electoralism and later summarizes democratic supplements and alternatives.

12 Arguably, in the Middle East and even Latin America, the expectation that voting will reduce political violence by mediating social conflicts has a long way to go before being met.

Elections suggests that voting may even be anti-democratic.[13] While most Chinese people equate anarchy with *luan,* or chaos, the worst-case scenario conjuring memories of a tumultuous twentieth century, Chinese critics of this liberal democratic institution often echo such radical Western thinkers.[14] My three Chinese cases of Taiwan, Singapore, and the PRC offer a culturally similar set of polities in which elections are in declining order in the governments' democratic claims, and in the last two cases, a uniquely Chinese model of democracy may be in the making.

If adhering to scientific standards of classification, to label something a democracy objectively, the term must have at least one necessary, defining characteristic. Prevailing conceptions generally hold the institution of mass elections for national leadership to be decisive for establishing a dichotomy between democracies and non-democracies. This is not surprising, as elections are indeed universal among Western democracies. It is also not a coincidence that these liberal exemplars are generally thought to be the closest approximations of polyarchy, Dahl's practical model which also resembles an end point for procedural "political development" according to many Western-based political scientists.[15] In the popular imagination of Westerners as well, "free and fair" elections are all but necessary as the primary democratic indicator, yet few scholars use such a singular focus.

An additional complication which has challenged the the liberal consensus on a necessary set of institutions, the Third Wave of democratization has, if anything, shown that

13 Regarding elected officials, Martin notes that, "Once elected, the representative is released from popular control but is continues to be exposed to powerful pressure groups, especially corporations, state bureaucracies and political party power brokers." (pg. 124). The large size of national electorates especially makes elections an ineffective democratic institution, disempowering the grassroots. This resonates with both populist, PRC critiques and possibly also with Schlozman, Verba, and Brady.

14 At some point a large section should probably enumerate the problems the CCP has with national elections, but I'm afraid the PRC case section will become bloated if it is inserted there.

15 If Mao Zedong is still the primary Chinese democratic theorist, there is now plenty of room for someone in the contemporary PRC to replace him. "Asian Values" or "socialist democracy" are, in my assessment, vaguely defined distractions which don't engage Western democratic theory on its own terms. Without including non-Western thinkers, democratic theory as a whole remains parochial, subject to the same, harsh critique as is Almond & Verba's pioneering work on political culture: that it was a self-congratulatory justification of post-WWII America.

elections cannot be operationalized as a dummy variable.[16] While streamlined for sophisticated, often quantitative, methodologies, dichotomous definitions are necessarily more superficial and have been shown by Zachary Elkins not to predict important results of democracy very well.[17] While Samuel Huntington has popularized the term "authoritarian" to be democracy's antithesis, China's past and present complicate this clear opposition, and terminological imprecision can make *which* dichotomy one chooses as important as one's evidence to establish cases on one pole or the other.

A spectrum made up of various democratic institutions and values, by contrast, is generally more valid for capturing meaningful variations in the *degree* of democracy within a given polity. Such a goal, in terms of Diamond and Morlino which will be mirrored in the next section, would measure the "quality of content" for democratic institutions: how close to an ideal do the processes and professed values of polity x measure up? If one is in need

16 This is to say that elections vary greatly in their quality, and Dahl suggests that if the electorate is not congruent with the population, candidates are not chosen by the people, or if elections are not sufficiently contested/contestable, the procedural minimum of polyarchy is not met. Most "new" democracies falter procedurally to some degree and are thereby branded with an adjective of incompletion, of the sort Collier and Levitsky describe.

17 A dichotomy can, of course, have multiple classification requirements. However, if all requirements are also dichotomous in terms of presence or absence, the definition of democracy quickly becomes maximal, coming to exclude all but a handful of developed, liberal states in the West (depending on the definitional stringency, possibly even excluding the U.S. for being an outlier in several categories such as income inequality, lagging in welfare provisions, etc.). Universal agreement on one essential institution is also far more likely than a universal set, and despite Dahl's polyarchy being a standard approximation, the prominence of elections in it requires rejection of states like the PRC.

of mutually exclusive categories, based on what Sartori calls "classical concepts" prizing opposition, a spectrum may also be divided in half into democracies and non-democracies. These could rest not only on an arbitrary cut-off point or threshold but also according to where existing examples tend to clump together.[18] It is also worthwhile to be able to adjust the cut-off point to take into account standards changing over time, advocate generally that the existing pool of democracies should be expanded or contracted, or that certain cases deserve different categorization than the scholarly consensus.[19]

A spectral definition, in sum, allows for considerations of nuances and small reforms which may make a polity more democratic (i.e. responsive to popular demands and thereby effectively governed by or in accordance with them) but may not have been undertaken with the explicit goal of democratization. Improving governance, for example, is likely to be a universal goal pursued by all states and is by no means equivalent to political liberalization. This non-teleological point is very important when considering erstwhile

18 This is to suggest that country cases ranked along a spectrum according to a "fuzzy set" of institutions which are important or facilitative for democracy, but each less than absolutely necessary in a particular form, would yield something like a Polity score or Freedom House designation, with the democracy/non-democracy line drawn somewhere deemed reasonable by the researchers.

19 Objectively defined dichotomies may serve large-N studies better, but a study such as this which seeks to explore the concept of democracy in more depth can only do so if some subjectivity is allowed.

"authoritarian" states obsessed with stability: they may well find multiple benefits in creating or strengthening institutions which connect the government to the people but have no intention of reforming all the way to "full," liberal democracy.

Conceptualized differently, a dichotomized definition, which this study seeks to avoid, would be an essentialized or minimalist one, whose primary benefit would be enlarging the population of democracies to the point where statistical analyses would be better able to draw samples, at the cost of concept validity. Reliance on the presence or absence of a single institution as *the* indicator of democracy is the only objective way to exclude polities categorically, but ultimately the distinction tells us very little about the quality of the democracy or if it is wrongly excluding some unconventionally democratic states. A democratic spectrum hews closer to a Weberian ideal type, combining multiple categories to which existing polities can be compared. Such would still require some subjective, if not arbitrary, hierarchy of each element's importance to the concept of democracy, not to mention an evaluation of both the quality and distance from the ideal (Dahl's polyarchy, perhaps[20]) in each polity under scrutiny. Furthermore, if we can do without bipolarity of the spectrum altogether, we are better able to understand different forms of democracy which may contain contradictory elements.[21]

In summary, defining democracy by the presence or absence of institutions has the advantages of being objectively empirical, considering both processes and values. Unfortunately, a universal set of these to make a dichotomous distinction as a democracy or

20 While Dahl apparently intended his unwieldy term, polyarchy, to approximate actually existing polities which approach but do not reach an ideal of democracy, close inspection of any country would likely render polyarchy itself also an unattained (possibly unattainable) ideal rather than a standard.

21 This will be clearer when considering the three models of Chinese democracy originally proposed by Baogang He. As two of the three lack national elections, they would be excluded by convention from democratic status. Put differently, some polities which claim to be democracies may have a "poison pill" element like a hegemonic or unelected party in power. Similarly, some see acts like torture or capital punishment as fundamentally incompatible with democracy.

non-democracy does not exist and is likely impossible. Furthermore, institutional definitions tend to leave out performance and popular perceptions, as when corrupt or otherwise flawed democratic institutions lead "the people" to doubt that the locus of power lies with them and not somewhere else. Under a strictly institutional definition, a regime is still a democracy even when democracy doesn't work.

A minimal definition, in Riker's case, leads to a minimal conclusion about what democracy can accomplish: even the explicit act of voting cannot reveal popular will. Especially in representative democracies with candidate-centered elections, policy "mandates" are more rhetorical, even sometimes illusory or delusional, than substantively proven by the results of elections.[22] For an example of an alternative, Communist China's rhetoric, at least, agreed that elections are an unreliable way of finding out what people want; the "mass line" sought and championed by Mao was to be functionally equivalent to popular will but ascertained by non-electoral means.[23]

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22 I'm thinking here of recent elections where Obama (or Clinton) felt that their electoral victories revealed an American public wanting "change". While rhetorically appealing, "change" is vague enough to mean anything, whereas a clear mandate would suggest a desire for something in particular. George W. Bush also claimed, after he prevailed in an evenly divided 2004 electorate, that he had a mandate to privatize social security, among other dubious statements.

23 Whether the concept should be praised as a flexible, viable alternative to popular will revealed by elections or criticized

By Riker's own account, the liberal model can, at best, ensure that governments who govern against popular will not govern long, as these unpopular administrations will inevitably lose elections.[24] While riots and revolutions can also be effective at "throwing the rascals out" of top positions, losing an election is likely a less costly method for both state and society than "democracy by other means".[25] In both cases, "the people" who proudly take part in these political acts may have loftily naïve beliefs about what they can accomplish: what is needed for the people's participation to have an effect, for the people to rule, is a responsive and accountable government.

Baogang He cites the legacy of disastrous PRC mass movements to suggest that no contemporary regime can afford to ignore negative policy feedback without disastrous consequences, but even liberal democracies' relationship with public opinion is mixed. Despite a near universal aversion to "tyranny of the majority," the most important indicators of democracy are that governments will solicit the people's views in some way, basically follow the will of the people as best it can, or face consequences. To the extent this is true, populists would describe the regime as democratic, though popular will and procedures to

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for its lack of institutional specificity, subsequent leaders seem to have done a better job than Mao at following (rather than dictating) the mass line.

24 This can be used as an argument against term limits, as the accountability mechanism might only function where the same candidate can be elected indefinitely. Voters might also punish a party, but in both cases the results are mixed—incumbents generally win reelection even when sizable portions of their constituencies think they are doing terribly. As impeachment is even rarer than incumbent defeat, the likelihood of a woefully incompetent or unpopular leader maintaining office through the end of an elected term is still very high.

25 This is not to suggest that "other" democratic means than elections need be violent or retroactive. Other institutions can do the same and, as proponents of deliberative democracy argue, may be more effective for discussing and implementing policy than elections. In other words, simply because elections are ineffective or insufficient revelatory institutions is no reason for governments, regardless of their regime type, to cease their attempts to gauge citizens' views on issues which affect them. Nor should the notion of a democratic, "popular will" be abandoned; rather, ascertaining what the majority desires on any issue is the primary task of all regimes with democratic pretensions. The necessity of elections is what needs to be challenged.

know it remain unspecified. We are still left, then, with two minimalist definitions of democracy: an institutionally rigid and inadequate one based on the presence or absence of elections (leaning liberal), or what this study proposes (leaning populist), an institutionally flexible one based on the government consulting with and responding to the public, held accountable to the same public for failures. After considering the elements of performance and perception in the next section, I will return to these points.

Q: *What's* Democracy? A: Good Governance & Popular Perception. The field of political science has long paid a great deal of attention to the presence and performance of institutions such as elections in identifying democracy. Arguably, this focus has contributed to a neglect of overall performance, of the decisions of leaders and their execution, all of which should affect democracy's expected advantage in terms of good governance. Rather than agreeing that advanced democracies would all inevitably become welfare states with extensive economic redistribution, as Joseph Schumpeter predicted many decades ago, Elizabeth Perry finds a tradition of economic providence being the primary sign of good governance in China, while Shin shows that this is the key to both

Chinese and Taiwanese popular conceptions of democracy. In contrast to the previous section, emphasizing institutions, the following will examine what Diamond and Morlino call "the quality of results," based on Shin's 2012 findings that East Asians tend to assign greater importance to this not only when evaluating their regimes' governance, but also democracy itself.

Given definitional disputes which render impossible the task of finding a single, essential or minimal institutional requirement for democracy, it is tempting to revert to the linguistic roots of the word as the determinant. "By the people" should include taking the people's beliefs seriously: if the population believes it is living in a democracy, the polity should be considered as one.[26] Rejection of this possibility or rigidly holding to, say, a requirement of national elections would create the apparent contradiction of people who do not want democracy—at least not yet, in the empirical case of many PRC citizens. Thus, this study will make its evaluations based on both familiar democratic institutions and democratic claims of the ruling regime (as well as the extent to which the public believes such claims). Generally, it is the goal of this study to investigate the popular but by no means universally admired, Chinese-led regimes as practicing their own, unique forms of democracy, rather than as authoritarian, non-democracies.[27] It will also consider the

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26 Solely considering the view of the population, from an institutional standpoint, is quite unsatisfactory, of course. I only want to suggest that ignoring it completely is at least equally distasteful. Institutionally, I concur with Baogang He that calling the tenuous consultative reforms and experiments of the PRC "democratization" "lets the authoritarian CCP off the hook too easily." What he calls "radical" deliberative democratic theory, however, does suggest that deliberative institutions can be a democratic alternative to popular elections—allowing an authoritarian system of choosing leadership to remain in place while meeting all other requirements of democracy.

27 Depending on the direction of the paper, attention may also be paid to what Coppedge et al. find in "all usages" of the term "democracy", namely that sovereignty is presumed. In accord with a resonant and central democratic claim by the PRC (and occasionally against Taiwan and its Western allies), Coppedge et al. include as a definitional element that "[a] polity, however large or small, must enjoy some degree of self-government in order for democracy to be realized." While this may be assumed to be obvious, Singapore's small size, Taiwan's contentious status, and the PRC's self-perception as a beleaguered victim of past humiliation and injustice all figure in the question of rhetorical and actual

possibility, sometimes accusation, that liberal democracy in Taiwan is somehow unsuited to Chinese culture, is too chaotic, or perhaps is ultimately less democratic than some states which do not have competitive national elections.

It may be offered methodologically that, as Chinese tradition is said to value interpersonal relationships over institutions such as the rule of law, simply noting the presence (and assessing the quality) or absence of democratic institutions would not be a sufficient approach in trying to compare Chinese democracies. Claims of each regime's leaders and surveys of the population on the type and level of democracy should also be taken into account.[28] In short, as critics of liberal democracy as a universal model have noted[29], there may be genuine belief among both Chinese leaders and people that experimenting with Chinese-derived solutions to political problems in Singapore and the PRC is preferable to wholesale and immediate political liberalization. In other words, strange-sounding concepts as Confucian democracy, “intraparty” democracy, economic democracy, and social democracy deserve to be taken seriously, or at least not excluded from a democratic categorization simply because they don't include national elections.

A definition based solely on popular perception, while still empirical, much simpler, and able to accommodate contradictions, might be too closely tied to good governance, with any popular, participatory regime being viewed as democratic by citizens who didn't major in political science. Survey evidence is also unstable, so basing democratic status solely on the vagaries of public opinion is not viable either, as any group considering itself to be “the

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sovereignty, figuring heavily in the democratic claims of each. The case sections will include a paragraph on this.

28 Chu et al.'s *How East Asians View Democracy* and Shin's recent works with the Asian Barometer will figure prominently here, though such large surveys are particularly vulnerable to questions of concept validity.

29 I'm thinking of Daniel Bell's *Beyond Liberal Democracy* here, but I need to read it more carefully to see if he actually claims that the current PRC may actually be something of a democracy already. I do remember that he defends the current regime as performing better than a liberal Chinese democratic state might in several regards.

people" might retract a democratic evaluation simply because the group does not like a particular leader or policy. A polity could be a democracy one day, a non-democracy the next, and this study certainly agrees that there is far more to democracy than popularity. Given Doh Chul Shin's recent findings that an entire region of the world defines democracy in terms of performance, substantively rather than procedurally, good governance and popular perception as such cry out for some kind of definitional inclusion.

The most dangerous, obvious objections to including popularity in the definition are the historical examples of Hitler, Stalin, and Mao, each a popular dictator for a regime which valued popular political participation very highly.[30] Wouldn't their popularity require them to be considered democratic leaders, by a definition which takes government performance and public opinion more strongly into account? Beyond the obvious fact that each of these was an ideologue for fascism and communism (the last two with their own names forever immortalized as totalitarian forms), these highly autocratic leaders not only told their people

30 Oft-forgotten is the Chinese fascism of the Blue Shirts Society, led by Chiang Kai-shek, who was less successful building his own personality cult during the Nanjing Decade of GMD rule. Any ideological social movement based on an idolized leader who promises to deliver the people to a kind of utopia, nationalist or otherwise, can be categorically excluded from democratic status—despite the possibility of rising to great popularity, the people supporting such movements have a master, rather than being masters of their government.

what to do, but also what politics itself would be for their regimes. Power clearly flowed from the top down, rather than the bottom up; their regimes were little more than single-generation absolute monarchies with a modern ideology and participatory requirements chained together. Despite clean streets and trains that ran on time, good governance as a means to legitimacy paled in comparison to the role of ideological fervor. Arguably, some treat liberal democracy with the same kind of enthusiasm, but when forced on a population, empowerment of the people is similarly unclear.[31]

In short, this study recognizes that people in East Asia tend to define and perceive democracy differently, that these differences call for expanding the number of qualifying cases by minimizing definitional requirements, but that popular perception of government performance would make an even worse single indicator than the presence or absence of elections alone. The following section offers a definition centered on both democratic process and performance, on which the three cases of this study will be compared. This will bridge institutional and perceptual criteria to address why some liberal democracies are not

31 If democracy-ism could be an ideology, its peak may have come under the neoconservatives behind Bush, Jr.'s presidency.

seen as democratic, while also providing an ideal for non-electoral democracies to strive toward. As the next section will argue, dichotomous classification as a democracy or non-democracy should, if retained as valuable information rather than the "most useless concepts in the academic research of our time", be tested on more levels than simply the presence or absence of a single, liberal institution.[32]

My own definition for this study: Consultation, Responsiveness, and Accountability. As a social fact, democracy is subject to multiple definitions, each with its own institutional requirements, elements which are more important than others.[33] China has spent decades pointing out flaws in "Western-style" or "bourgeois" democracy with the dual intent of making it less attractive to Chinese citizens and suggesting that other institutions may better serve the people's needs. Through propaganda, if the PRC can convince its people that the much-criticized, liberal form is not democracy, whereas the PRC is, China creates a country-dependent social fact.

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32 In the closing section of Zhao's edited volume on the rule of law as an alternative to political liberalization of the PRC, Pan Wei responds to his critics with this excoriation which leaps off the page: "*Democracy* and *authoritarian regime* have become the two most useless concepts in the academic research of our time." (pg. 254)

33 By "social fact" is meant something which is a fact only because a large, coherent group of people believes it to be so, in John Searle's sense. Money is one of the most common examples, whereby objects take on extra value beyond their material composition because people choose to use them as currency. This contrasts with a "brute fact" like a mountain, whose existence, though perhaps not meaning, is completely independent of human perception and agreement.

Beyond the term's linguistic roots, a universal set of necessary and sufficient conditions for democracy to obtain has yet to be agreed upon, as previously stated. Despite this, some polities are widely seen to be non-democratic, unfree, and authoritarian. This study's aim is firstly to contest the certainty with which the label "undemocratic" is applied to Chinese-led regimes in the PRC and Singapore, while comparing them to the more recognizably democratic regime in Taiwan. To accomplish these comparisons within a democratic framework, this study's systematized definition of democracy relaxes institutional requirements in the first section, incorporates perceptual factors in the second, while attempting to retain empirical objectivity.

In terms of performance, democracy is defined in this essay as consisting of three necessary elements: consultation, responsiveness, and accountability (C,R,A henceforth). Each can be measured in terms of both what is promised in the polity's constitution and what the regime actually delivers. By "consultation" is meant asking the population what it wants, including any means to ascertain the will of the majority.[34] "Responsiveness" is simply acknowledging what the majority has requested by enacting policy or otherwise taking action in line with the request whenever possible, and in a timely fashion.[35] "Accountability" includes taking responsibility for implementation of policies, especially when they fail to achieve the intended results. An accountable government, including its individual members, accepts and faces consequences of failures and malfeasance concurrent with what the majority deems appropriate.[36]

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34 Consultation with the public does not mean that all policies originate from the people. The government can and is very likely to make either specific or general proposals to "get the ball rolling." Starting with the people might be a deeper form, but asking them what they think of a government policy is still consultative. For Weller, in Gilley & Diamond's comparative volume, the democratic importance is less a matter of explicit consultation than maintaining "the mechanisms that allow information to flow up the political hierarchy" (pg. 118).

35 The government can respond to public opinion in a number of ways. Negatively, it can be recorded and then suppressed, with punishment of leaders who expressed it. Recording but ignoring it would not count as a response. The government may acknowledge it (publicly) but downplay it in favor of a the government's agenda and preferences, as when a leader is prompted to give a speech or make a statement but do nothing else substative. The bare minimum for democratic responsiveness would be for the government to explain why the people are wrong, why their proposals and preferences are impractical, unreasonable, or unaffordable. The most democratic response would be to draft formal policy proposals and statements based on public opinion or otherwise take actions requested by it. Advocating within government for public opinion to be heeded would also be a clearly democratic response.

36 Borowiak's 2011 book, *Accountability and Democracy*, offers the concept of "critical accountability" which prefers that the government be "answerable" to, rather than "punishable" by, the populus. The subtle difference in the third element

While minimal, such a definition is institutionally flexible enough to accommodate the beliefs of millions of PRC citizens who believe that their country has made great progress in democratizing since the 1970's, is more democratic than Taiwan, or is already a democracy. A combination of C,R,A could be enough to foster a sense that the people rule, as would be expected from any "people's republic." Similar to liberal expectations, government "for the people" in the C,R,A definition assumes that governments which don't perform up to the people's expectations will be told this, heed the people's suggestions, or face losing control of government and individual positions within it. Popular participation in this process clearly satisfies the requirement that government also be "by the people."

Looming large over this and the historical sections is the role of political participation, which is obviously required by C,R,A, though again taking a flexible form. Authoritarian states are said to have a much lesser role for the people in the political process than either democracy or totalitarianism, so any sense among the population that they have a role to play in bottom-up influence on policy might edge a polity like the PRC to be perceived

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accords with the nuance in the previous factor, responsiveness, whereby the government must at least acknowledge popular demands publicly. In both cases, rather than doing exactly as any group claiming to be "the people" demands (which could quickly approach mob rule and a tyrannous majority), any deviance from public opinion must simply be justified. Also notable in his book is that elections play only a minor role toward the goal of accountability, with other, deliberative and sanctioning institutions figuring more prominently.

differently from within than from without. Tianjian Shi and, more recently, Benjamin Read would be first in line to suggest that citizens of Beijing, at least, find their participation to be meaningful, but it is worth asking whether this feeling extends far beyond the capital.

Without essentializing cultural differences, one can also conceive of a Chinese "meritocracy" opposed to liberal expectations of equal rights of participation, with implications for whether more popular participation is good or bad for a democratic polity. Within liberalism itself, an elitist/populist split exists in this regard, with some lamenting low voter turnout and others noting the problems full participation would cause. Chinese paternalism veers toward elitist preferences and an illiberal foundation holding that most people are naturally apolitical and would prefer to stay that way. Furthermore, paternalists believe it would be detrimental to social harmony (or politics as a whole) as participation rates approached 100%.[37] Holding paternalistic beliefs, however, does not preclude citizens from believing that their political system is democratic; the system might simply solicit

37 In empirical terms, Chinese paternalists among the population are those who have no qualms about disagreeing with the statement used on the World Values surveys that "politics is for people like me." When asked for their opinions on political matters, they might initially answer, "Why as *me*? I'm just a ___." As described in the second historical section, more substantive responses had to be cultivated by new political experts who'd studied in Japan.

different citizens' input and use it in different ways.[38]

An institutionally flexible definition is necessary to compare this study's three cases, Taiwan, Singapore, and the PRC. But by lowering institutional requirements and increasing the importance of popular perception, the term may become indistinguishable from the concept of "good governance." Neo & Chen's apologetic volume on Singapore's dynamic pragmatism, for example, cites the UNESCAP's definition of good governance as having eight characteristics, which are very close to this study's definition of democracy: "It is participatory, consensus-oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective, and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. It assures that corruption is minimized, that the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of society."[39] To expect an average citizen, regardless of location, to find differences between what this quotation describes and democracy itself would be unrealistic, unless one returns to the dubious necessity of elections. As the historical sections note, political liberalization was enacted to increase C,R,A, at the end of the Qing dynasty, but the desired effects of good governance were not achieved.

An astute reader will have noted that several of the eight "characteristics" listed by Neo & Chen are not included in my definition, and more ominously, liberal readers will surely wonder where "democratic values" fit in. Again, to be minimal, my three-part definition focuses its "by the people" claims on direct connections between the government and the people. Other elements, especially freedoms of speech and association, an uncensored media, and government transparency are highly important *facilitators* of my three requirements but needn't be part of the definition of democracy itself. In the same

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38 Instead of an electorate, for example, Bueno de Mesquita coined the term "selectorate" to describe the group of people within an illiberal polity whose active support is vital to the current leader, short of the entire population. Of course, the historical process by which the electorates of democratic regimes became identical to the population was a long one, and the pejorative "authoritarian" was not even used by excluded groups as much as it is hurled toward the PRC by liberal fundamentalists.

39 Neo & Chen, pg. 53. See also the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific website, www.unescap.org Note some recognizable, liberal elements like minority protection here, but *no mention of elections* by name.

vein, things like the rule of law, political equality among individuals, and minority rights are very nice to have, necessary for liberal forms, but not absolutely essential to popular governance.[40] To be clear, authentic consultation, responsiveness, and accountability may well be impossible without some combination of the facilitators and other values, but admittedly a lot has to go into the category of "nice but not necessary" for the beliefs of PRC citizens to be logically consistent.

Before examining how C,R,A cohere in different forms of democracy, another novel concept with a lot of overlap, the "responsive authoritarianism" James Reilly uses to describe the current PRC regime, is worth considerable attention. The term suggests that only one of the three elements may be obviously present, but considerable conceptual blurring is still likely to result. As previously mentioned, all regimes must respond to sufficiently organized, popular movements, but responding in and of itself does not indicate that the people rule. In the case of Reilly's term, when only responsiveness is present, this suggests that the regime would *rather not* consider the people's preferences, but is effectively forced to do so. The result is "social liberalization without political democratization," whereby government non-response to the people's expressed preferences

40 I expect this paragraph will need further thought, depth, and revision if this study is to be taken seriously by political scientists. I just wanted to address an obvious concern that I may have left these things out by mere negligence.

causes mobilization, described elsewhere as "the Wukan Model".[41] According to Weller, violence may sometimes be the only way to get higher authorities' attention to a non-responsive local government,[42] but although this empowers the people, again retroactively, the reactionary nature of the process hardly seems democratic. Instead, these seem to be what Reilly calls "alternative techniques to assess and respond to select segments of public opinion" while staving off democratization.[43] If consultation and accountability were also evident in these cases, and the objectives of the villagers could be accomplished without violence, this would shade toward this study's definition of democracy. Without them, and with violence in their place, one suspects that greater awareness of events like Wukan would diminish popular democratic perceptions rather than fortifying them.

Violent events and terms like responsive authoritarianism do not harm my argument; rather, they show that while democracy has yet to be achieved in the PRC, trajectories

41 Reilly, pg. 130. Stanley Lubman describes the model, essentially one in which the public takes collective, violent action against corrupt government officials, especially in retaliation for illicit sales of land, in a blog post in the *Wall St. Journal*: http://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/2012/11/19/wukan-still-unsolved-and-still-significant/

42 Gilley & Diamond, pg. 129.

43 Reilly correctly notes, later on pg. 220, that his primary concern, foreign policy, is a "difficult case" to show the influence of public opinion. Popular demands for a harder line against Japan may well be made by a majority, but the CCP must toe a line between allowing these to be expressed in street protests without damaging relations with a major trading partner.

toward it can be perceived. To illustrate the different, democratic trajectories of the PRC, Singapore, and Taiwan, the next section offers four models adapted from Baogang He.

Four Models of Chinese Democracy. If the purpose of introducing great institutional flexibility in how "by and for the people" is interpreted, a few models may be borrowed from Baogang He to show how each addresses the democratic goals of consultation, responsiveness, and accountability. Drawing exclusively from the experience of the cases discussed in this study, I offer an admittedly convoluted chart below of how each is theorized to work.

Models 1)-4) → COMPONENTS (BELOW)	1) Liberal/ Representative (Taiwan)	2) Illiberal/ Communitarian/ Electoral (Singapore)	3) Paternalistic/ Consultative/ Deliberative/ Single-Party (PRC trajectory?)	4) Populist/ Direct (Cultural Revolution in PRC?)
CONSULTATION	Elections, public opinion surveys, petitions, "Town Hall" meetings	People assumed to want economic growth, clean gov't, basic needs met, etc.	Elections at subnational levels possible, but otherwise combine 1) & 2)	Voting may decide policies directly, or popular support built for "mass movements"
RESPONSIVENESS	Elected officials advocate their constituencies' favored policies (in theory)	"Trustee" model & basic goals ensure effective response by dominant party, opposition parties press for greater polt. liberalization in response to liberal-minded portion of population	Policies & appointments can be traced to demands made in consultative institutions. Petitions, letters to media from public receive considered replies (incl. reasons when apparent preference not met)	As "the people" decide policy, government (if deemed necessary at all) is required to be very close to the Weberian bureaucratic ideal. Responses are thus direct (not restricted or mediated) and immediate
ACCOUNTABILITY	Bad officials don't get re-elected, impeachment also an option	Managing popular expectations, meting out harsh penalties for transgressions, elections as a bare minimum for ousting hopelessly corrupt failures	Internal anti-corruption efforts, media are watchdogs informing public about their interests. Protests & riots realign policies w/ popular demands (costly & often ineffective).	Gov't replacements are swift, likely frequent, but unclear what happens when sth. majority supported goes badly
MAIN ADVANTAGES, ARGUMENTS FOR	Clear institutions for C,R,A, "Unleash the power of the individual", Rights & freedoms are nice to have	Working well so far (third-to-first world record), citizens seem basically satisfied	People can't take long-term/nat'l interests into account, Competition may divide/destabilize the state, Elections are flawed, Deliberative form may be more deeply democratic, Majority of citizens seem basically satisfied	Purest form of democracy, other forms lose connection to the people too easily
MAIN PATHOLOGIES, ARGUMENTS AGAINST	Weak connection to "the people", cultural compatibility in E.Asia ?-able	Hybrid form (may be unclear), Unhappy liberals, rests mostly on performance legitimacy, meets only material needs/desires?	Vulnerable to corruption at highest level, Unhappy liberals, entire regime subject to performance legitimacy, has yet to exist clearly in any state.	Subject to demagoguery, may slide into totalitarianism, (unrestrained) tyranny of majority, politicizes many who'd rather be apolitical

FIGURE 1: How do the four models of Chinese democracy address this study's definitional elements of consultation, responsiveness, and accountability?

An even more complex, general description of these models as applied to the three cases and through Chinese history, in the form of a "tripartite Venn diagram" can be found in APPENDIX A. The chart above primarily addresses how the models would show themselves

to be democratic, with special attention to the relationship between the government and the population. In terms of C,R,A, the liberal model can be summed up as soliciting individuals' preferences, but accountability to whom is questionable. Paternalism claims to be responsive to the people's needs without need for consulting them or being held accountable. Populist democracy focuses precisely on the accountability that the previous two forms lack, but as “the people” are presumed to govern without mediation, consultation and responsiveness become almost redundant.

It needs to be emphasized that none of the cases fits any model perfectly and that I am not claiming that the PRC is currently a democracy. Instead, and despite the beliefs of the hundreds of millions of citizens noted in the introduction, there are precious few institutions in the PRC to suggest the country is governed “*by* the people.” The PRC does, however, seem to be on a trajectory to realize a different kind of democracy, one which can be clarified by situating the regime and the unstable concept of democracy within China's modern, intellectual history. China's elites since the late Qing have been enamored of a wide variety of ideologies, each of which relates to democracy differently. Before delving deeply into history, the following section divides ideologies by whether they find democracy appealing as an end in itself or as a means to goals deemed more important. These points will keep the historical section tethered to my argument that China has its own, unique concept of democracy, and the direction of its political reforms is towards realizing its own

ideals, rather than the pure liberalization Westerners prefer and expect.

Q: *Why* democracy? As an end or a means to other ends? Andrew Nathan and other scholars who write about the last decades of the Qing and the early Republic find that Chinese intellectuals did not fully accept the liberal justification of democracy as a desirable good in itself, finding instrumental motivations more compelling. The table below summarizes the various reasons why democratization is undertaken, categorized secondarily by whether it is an end or a means and why.

IDEOLOGY	END OR MEANS?	WHY INHERENTLY DESIRABLE? TOWARDS WHAT END?
Liberalism	End	Empowering individuals is a fundamental, universal good.
Legitimacy	Means	Dem. Broadens the base of gov't (i.e. away from autocracy & oligarchy), leads to better governance
Populism	End	Distrust in ability of elites & bureaucrats to be selfless, act in "the people's" interest, especially those who constitute the majority. Empowers "the people" over those w/ high socioeconomic status.
Paternalism	Means	For the benefit of a strong, stable state, people's interests must be the primary concern. Elites governing "for the people" is both democratic and better than liberalism b/c the people aren't "ready" to govern.
Chinese e.20th C.	Means	Democracy cultivates/frees the individual to contribute to the highest priorities: a strong state, national (race) survival. If strong state can be

Statism		achieved w/out democracy, however, neither liberal nor populist dem. is worth social "disharmony." (Combines all of above)

FIGURE 2: Why democracy? Different ideologies justify it differently, and these affect the form a polity will pursue, the strength of commitment to realizing it.

With these ideologies and justifications in mind, a historiography of the Chinese democratic experience follows. Until more research is done, it ends in the 1920's, and I'm not sure whether it needs to extend all the way to the 1990's, before the PRC case study picks up in Hu Jintao's administration. For now, it is separated into two sections, going up to 1890 and 1920, respectively.

A History of Democracy in China to 1890. The concept of democracy prevalent in the late Qing dynasty, when the concept was first introduced to Chinese intellectuals, and the Republican Era is similar to the tripartite definition used by this study. These two sections will delve briefly into dynastic history, then highlight problems with Chinese elections in the early 20th century. The goals in doing so are to argue that democracy in China was justified for different reasons than liberals posit, with an eye toward popular consultation, responsiveness, and accountability rather than concerns about individual freedom. More explicitly, even as liberalism became better understood among Chinese

elites, proposals and experiments with liberal institutions were not well received by cultural conservatives or much of the general public, and most importantly, failed to yield the good governance and strong state for which they were attempted. As Benjamin Schwartz, Andrew Nathan, and other scholars have pointed out, the intellectuals of the late-Qing who led calls for political liberalization did so in large part for instrumental reasons of strengthening a weak, even fluctuating Chinese state. Many scholars, especially strident liberals and orientalists of Asian or Western descent, wrongly criticized both China's interpretations of liberalism and motivations for liberalization as incorrect, rather than as ideological and cultural hybrids created to address national exigencies.[44]

Going centuries back in history, to when democracy was not really a social fact anywhere in the world, it is important to keep in mind what would constitute change in a democratic direction. As in other cultures with a strong monarchic tradition, then, the first steps toward democracy must precede the use of such a unified concept, focusing instead on expanding the popular base of government and restricting the head of state. At first, in

44 Dunstan's article mentions some of these, Fung's 2005 article and really most of his work on Chinese intellectual thought of the early 20th century can be read as a defense of prevalent but apparently contradictory ideas like "liberal socialism" or "anti-capitalist liberalism".

any traditional society, anything envisioning a political role for the people could be interpreted as such. Also, anything suggesting population-linked limits on the the national leader, or use of voting to determine political outcomes should also be noted. At some point in the narrative, however, Chinese notions of liberalism and democracy diverge, and this process is well worth tracing.

The original Chinese translation of the term “democracy” dates from the middle of the 19th century,[45] though various literati living long before the translation have carried the title of China's first liberal. Earliest among them appears to be Huang Zongxi (1610-95), the Ming Loyalist and despotic critic, who “rhetorically envisage[d] an autonomous political role for commoners.”[46] Calling Huang anything more than a proto-democrat for this vision, however, is highly contentious. In the critical vein, Edmund Fung, in *The Intellectual Foundations of Chinese Modernity*, doesn't find much to recommend William Theodore de

45 See Lackner et al. for the linguistic evolution of the word itself, as well as the origins of relevant Western terms like “liberty”, “president”, and “rights”. Interestingly, democracy was originally translated with negative connotations, went through several combinations of Chinese characters before settling on *minzhu* 民主, which used to refer to a single person who was a “lord of the people”.

46 Gaus & Kukathas, pg. 327. Dunstan says that Huang's writings should not be viewed as liberal or constitutional but rather as “a provocative attempt to rethink the design of China's polity, including the military and the economy.”

Bary's claims that the Song and Ming dynasties contained democratic elements,[47] but Joan Judge finds real substance in Huang's proposal for "the establishment of public or civil law (*tianxia gongfa*) as a means of limiting imperial authority."[48]

Many scholars have also moderated the image of the emperor as completely autocratic, at very least for his frequent reliance on advisors, officials, and regents for matters too big or small, emperors too old or young.[49] Simply because the emperor had help doesn't mean the people ruled China, of course, but one must step away from the precipice of absolutism very carefully. Etienne Balazs' seminal *Chinese Civilization and Bureaucracy* offers the term "officialism" to describe Chinese governance consistently through 1912. The process of becoming an official, supported by the Confucian notion of cultivating or perfecting one's humanity, was open to the people, at least in theory. In

47 Fung, pg. 131, also notes Paul Cohen's derision of de Bary for using an excessively broad, Western notion of liberalism. In discussion of a classically liberal state which "governs as little as possible," however, Fung finds the traditional Chinese state to be "autocratic minimal" rather than intrusive. Duara (1988) notes that this was to the ultimate detriment of the late Qing, when the rise of nationalism and modernization projects necessitated a shift away from the "light government" noted by Schwartz and the "centralized minimalism" of Philip Huang. Fung makes these last comparisons on pg. 161-2.

48 Judge, pg. 81. She also notes a specific proposal that special schools be set up as "the primary forum for the institutionalized expression of public opinion," later picked up by Liang Qichao, who took much inspiration from Huang (pg. 82).

49 The danger of factions, seen generally as corruption by perfidious, insufficiently Confucian eunuchs in the Ming and fellow-Manchu favorites like Heshen in the Qing, is often given as a danger of delegating power outside of the body of the emperor, a rather odd but often used argument against democratization by officials in the late Qing. See Kuhn, pg. 11, for discussion of how anti-faction concerns shaped advisory discourse, pg. 12 for the observation that officials did indeed advise the emperor.

terms of subjects' upward mobility and who could become an official, however, Balazs calls the democratic glimmer of the examination system "a mere legend fostered by the officials to conceal their monopoly."[50] While exams may have been more meritocratic than democratic, a distinction now favored by Daniel A. Bell, the mid-Qing had other institutions to incorporate mass influence.

A far more likely route to political influence by the masses was following elite mobilization in the form of a protest or statement to the censorate, "the institutional embodiment of remonstrance."[51] Asking for a response from a virtuous government bears resemblance to this study's definition, but any actual power vested in the people themselves over centuries of dynastic rule would sound contrary to the nature of an empire. While Natascha Vittinghoff asserts that imperial China's political culture required the "upright official to speak up in public and criticize the ruler," a combination of fear, genuine respect and decorum mostly meant that only "token gestures" flowed upward through the censorate

50 Pg. 7. Hartwell comes to similar conclusions, noting that the best and virtually only way to pass the imperial exams was to have family connections or the considerable financial means needed to study for them. Balazs curiously calls the "internal relations" among the scholar officials a "real enough" democracy without much explanation; perhaps the point is that an oligarchy which discusses imperial affairs is relatively democratic compared to an absolutely despotic monarchy.

51 Gaus & Kukathas, pg. 326. Dunstan says that the people served as "junior members of remonstrance hierarchies," while "the rulers' helpers (loyal critics) comprise the entire social order."

toward the emperor.[52] Ho-fung Hung's 2011 book, *Protest with Chinese Characteristics*, finds a welcome, modern middle ground between the image of passively submissive subjects too afraid and disempowered to air their grievances and the old Qing narrative of a weak dynasty tottering from one full-scale rebellion to the next. In short, the Qing government did not exactly welcome mass participation, but it did often tolerate and respond constructively to "filial" displays of pro-active state engagement.

Petitions and protests, according to Hung, were the primary means of "popular collective action" and "claim-making" in the mid-Qing. These were a means to government responsiveness before any concept, let alone modern example, of democracy existed, well before the U.S. "rediscovered" it. Petitions, especially, embody responsiveness and accountability as an institution with primarily popular participation.[53] From 1740-54, while the Qing state was relatively powerful and not overly corrupt, elites organized the people to express their preferences in a submissive, loyal manner on matters such as official

52 Vittinghoff, pg. 447-8 for the "integral" part of imperial political culture; Dunstan deconstructs the censorate as a genuine instrument of consultation and accountability at length in Gaus & Kaukathas, pg. 326.

53 This is to say that officials had more direct channels to make claims on higher levels of government, whereas the few literate people not affiliated with the government likely felt a need for an institution to make their voices heard.

appointments, the equal disbursement of famine relief, and land disputes.[54] Coded as "only 30% violent," Hung notes that women were especially useful in proactive, "filial" displays to make demands of officials because they were seen as non-threatening, and the expectation that popular concerns be considered was usually met.[55] Or, at least, elites had to be consulted, and if an elite could demonstrate popular support, the legitimacy of his position could only be augmented.

The social hierarchy of the Qianlong reign is also portrayed by Hung as familial, as between grandparents (the emperor) who entertained demands and complaints from grandchildren (the people) about their parents (lower officials). A harmonious "household" such as this required communication, and in the absence of other, more formally consultative institutions, peaceful protest occurred regularly and may even have been seen as a means to keep the emperor informed as to whether heaven approved of his rule.[56] By

54 Hung, pg. 69, 99. He claims that a state with higher capacities in rich areas was more likely to respond positively to its subjects' demands, in turn creating higher expectations among them.

55 The only other time I've come across women in the era of this study regarding democratic practices is with David Strand's 2011 book on the early Republic, in which he follows the Chinese suffragette Tang Qunying's fruitless attempts to get Song Jiaoren and Sun Yatsen to follow through on promises that women would have the right to vote in the Republic (pg. 19-29).

56 One can only hope that the contemporary PRC's conflation of peaceful protests and violent riots as "mass incidents" grows to be so nuanced.

the 1820's this pattern changed to be more reactive, as violent protests and blackmail of local officials came to outnumber "humble petitions."[57] As Jonathan Ocko notes, the idea of increasing communication and accountability with the people with petitions was noble and innovative, but the institution itself was buckling under a huge backlog of cases by this time.[58] This was a result of the emperor Jiaqing's undoing of Qianlong's filtration system, intended to keep out "the spurious and frivolous", while tasking lower officials (albeit unsuccessfully) with categorizing only the most important claims as worthy of the emperor's attention. Ocko also faults the magistrate for not being "attuned to popular feeling," thereby generating more complaints from a growing population and making a trip to Beijing more appealing than a three to ten-year wait to "adjudicate a simple case," most of which were land disputes and personal litigation.[59] Greater use of and frustration with the over-burdened petition system led to a pair of interesting conclusions, of great concern for

57 Hung, pg. 158, notes that the Qianlong family model was in jeopardy by this time, that local incapacity made capital appeals a first and last resort (pg. 167) after the Jiaqing emperor "revived the center" to be more responsive to popular demands but could not fix administrative malfeasance.

58 Ocko, pg. 311, says that the Qing compared favorably with the exclusivity of the English and American legal systems of the time, but the system may have been left intentionally "slightly dysfunctional" so that only those with legitimate grievances would persist with appeals while the many opportunistic pettifoggers would be deterred by long waits and low success-rates. This sounds more than a bit like the contemporary PRC system.

59 Ocko, pg. 296.

democracy. Hung says that contentious politics became both more violent at the same time it was becoming more institutionalized, while Ocko ascribes the failure of these attempts to connect the government and the people to the population explosion of the 18th century.[60]

While full popular accountability may not have been achievable in the Qing legal system, a more inclusive political process by the mid-Qing should be seen as structural and systematic, rather than anomalous. An underlying theme for Beatrice Bartlett's *Monarchs and Ministers* is the shift in power away from the Qing emperor himself toward institutions which were at least oligarchic. Since the formation of the Grand Council in 1733, the Qing Dynasty was able to govern its vast empire even as its 19th century emperors never approached the long and powerful reigns of Kangxi and Qianlong, nor the micro-managerial style of Yongzheng. Dunstan even claims that after Yongzheng and including Qianlong, emperors "generally refrained" from exercising their autocratic powers in favor of something resembling "checks and balances...between ruler and ministers in the mature Qing

60 Hung (2004), pg. 493, Ocko, pg. 310.

system."[61]

Going further still, evidence can be found of actual deliberation, debate, and negotiation among interested parties in grain surplus management in the Qianlong era, a prominent topic in Dunstan's 2006 book.[62] This could be read as evidence that a strong state clearly governing in the interests of the people, plus an expanded demographic base of legitimate political participation could add up to a minimalist and uniquely Chinese conception of democracy which still resonates today. Dunstan herself characterizes these events in the mid-Qing as "in no sense democratic, but far from being mere autocracy." Judging by contemporary surveys, this could very much have been an example of a Chinese democratic process; all that may have been lacking was an explicit democratic motivation—no great flaw because there was no sense of such a unified concept. This may not have been democracy by today's standards, but again consultation and responsiveness are

61 Dunstan, pg. 83-4. She also suggests that administration was largely efficient and apolitical for a time.

62 Noting the young Qianlong's tendency to side with whoever last advised him, Dunstan concludes, pg. 98, that "Yongzheng led; Qianlong was led." Interests in this debate spanned all sectors of society, from bureaucrats to merchants to the poor who would benefit from redistribution of the surplus (and not unlike the present, the "real" interests of the poor were subject to much interpretation and debate due to their less than solicited or effective participation in the process). Later in the article, pg. 102, she casts doubt on whether a "Western-style democracy" could have handled the matter better.

present.[63] Skeptical voices seem to prevail in matters of finding early examples of people power or autonomous civil societies in China, a hot topic after 1989.[64] As usual, for novel ideas, democratic reforms had to be conceptualized and discussed before being implemented.[65] Modernity provided ample opportunities for both.

For Philip Kuhn, the end of Qianlong's reign in the 1790's was a domestic turning point at which issues of modernization were being discussed, well before the conventional catalyst of the Opium Wars.[66] The *Origins of the Modern Chinese State* to which he refers are almost entirely domestic, though with foreign influence looming, increasing the urgency of reforms. To address and, more importantly, prevent corrupt officials like Heshen from rising in government patronage networks, many officials felt a need for closer connections with the people, and there existed "a sizable stratum of educated men with at least a latent

63 A claim for accountability can hardly be made, however, and this last requirement seems frequently to be the most difficult to secure.

64 Wakeman finds claims of civil society in books by Rowe and Rankin positing, in the first case, autonomous guilds in Hankou around the 1870's to be "dubious" because they were still dependent on state monopolies and no "informed and critical public opinion" existed (pg. 128). Nonetheless, he is quite amenable to the idea that by the end of the Qing a "public sphere" well short of the kind Habermas conceptualized did exist and "expand" (pg. 132).

65 Even if the influence of as-yet-unnamed concepts like civil society and democracy could be felt, applying these terms too explicitly still feels strange before the 19th century.

66 Kuhn points to "three dilemmas" faced by the Qing state at the turn of the 19th century, as "accidental" problems became "systemic" and "local" ones became "national" (pg. 8-12).

awareness of national affairs, but with no hope of participating in them."[67] Kuhn points to Wei Yuan (d 1857) as one such figure he considered to be progressive by dynastic political standards. By asking who should participate in politics and later proposing that the government's base should be broadened, Wei's ideas for reform don't seem far from democratic, but as a literate elite his concern was primarily to expand the influence of the small minority to which he belonged, extending no further than educated men who lacked only degrees and official positions.[68] Furthermore, the purpose of such reforms was not to empower individuals with rights or bring popular justice but to increase governmental effectiveness and enhance state power. As China entered an era of continual crisis in the mid-to-late 19th century, Kuhn describes the political climate as "not a time for weakening authoritarian rule but for strengthening it."[69] As the second historical section will explain, arguments about China's territorial integrity, stability, and strength have sustained a paternalistic conception of democracy from the late Qing to the present.

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67 Kuhn, pg. 17.

68 Hung (2011, pg. 182) found Wei's justification of the proposal to be simply that lower-ranked and unofficial literati could "present diverse views and aid in decisions."

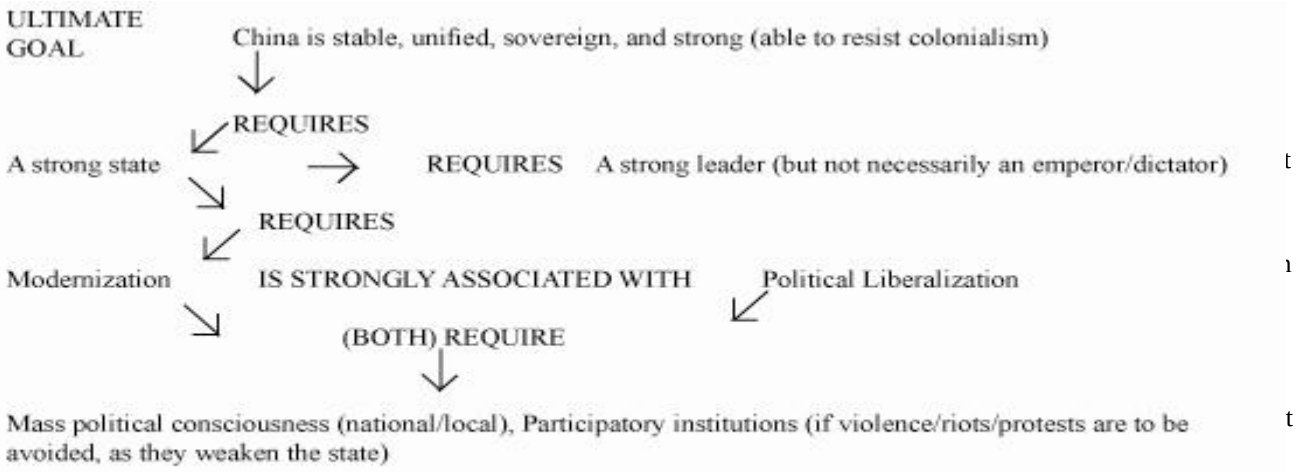
69 Kuhn, pg. 47-48. The earlier note of Wei's progressiveness is on pg. 31. Edmund Fung (2010) also cites the peripatetic official Lin Zexu's reformist writings in the mid-19th century as evidence of early Chinese liberal thought.

The question of why China found democratization to be attractive must be answered carefully, in terms which consider what China's priorities were in the very fragile decades between 1890 to 1920. Failure to consider where democracy, however conceived, fit into the state's goals can lead many in the West, especially political scientists interested in a universal narrative of “political development,” to an over-reliance on the analytical lens of democratization. Arguably, this obscures more than it illuminates in China's case: both the Republican Revolution and the 1989 student protests were about much more than democratization. Furthermore, the only form of democratization which counts in much Western analysis is political liberalization—the introduction of elections and liberal rights and freedoms (of speech, association, etc.). Such a focus neglects China's past as a despotic, black box. It also blinds us to changes which may be both more effective and important for the governance of the state and the lives of citizens, namely general processes of modernization, differing concepts of “illiberal” democracy, and the wide variety of political participation inherent in both.

In the era beginning in the late Qing through the establishment of the Nationalist

government in Nanjing, the Chinese state was extremely weak, a crucial fact which can be lost amidst the obligatory notation of multiple regime changes. In examining Chinese democracy, this essay proposes that the (re-)establishment of a strong state was China's ultimate goal during this time. At the same time, a general desire for a more democratic state existed among Chinese intellectuals, but this desire had to be moderated (or abandoned) due the realities of state instability and weakness.[70] Expanded political participation with electoral "self-government"[71] was a more concrete, achievable goal than any new abstraction like *minzhu*, and even the most liberal of Chinese thinkers largely saw democracy as a means to an end rather than a political end in itself.[72] Schematically, I would rank China's priorities, given by its most influential intellectuals, as follows:

FIGURE 3: Chinese Priorities in the Late Qing to 1920, with Foundational Requirements. Note that "political



liberalization" is synonymous with what liberal thinkers, both Chinese and Western, would consider democratization, based mainly on implementing "free and fair elections," civil and political liberties for individual citizens. Obviously, the requirements listed (especially for something so contentious as modernization) are not exhaustive but simply those relevant to this essay.

The extent to which Chinese democracy is associated with a weak state (or that democracy leads to chaos) depends partially on the extent to which the Republican Era is seen as democratic, or representative of democracy for Chinese people. That Chinese people's appraisal of democracy is in accordance with its universal, international popularity suggests that most find little democratic about the early Republic. Furthermore, if the chain of events leading to Yuan Shikai's imperial declaration and the "Warlord Period" are seen by influential Chinese today as the results of (failed) democratization in China, both the state and population might justifiably fear another attempt at liberal democracy on a national scale. Fundamentally, late Qing literati held that the appeal of liberating the power of the individual lay in harnessing people's power to strengthen the state. Nonliberal advocates of democracy (conceptualized differently) largely bypassed the empowerment of the individual and aggregated "people power" for the state, as seen in the democratic rhetoric of both Nationalists and the CCP alike. Given their centrality in popular, Western conceptions of

democracy, the next section considers the role of popular elections in the closing years of China's final dynasty and it's Republican experiment.

Modernity and Liberal Democracy in China from 1890 to 1920. Modernity, broadly conceived, can include both the elections associated with liberal democracy and the mass campaigns of totalitarianism. For David Strand and Samuel Huntington, a fundamental assumption embedded in political modernity is that the people want to participate in politics as active citizens. The most important question, then, is how to provide institutions which channel popular participation into good government practices, preferably peaceful and viewed by the population as democratic. In the absence of a communist, revolutionary counter-example until 1917, China chose to adopt liberal democratic institutions such as elections and competitive political parties, yielding mixed results and effectively curtailing the experiment. Who and what processes led to the large scale implementation of mass elections, a concept quite foreign to traditional Chinese political culture, and did non-Chinese roots or other factors eventually end their use as a decision-making institution?

Elections, as the procedural essence of liberal democracy, were a component of the larger concept of constitutionalism, which became the over-arching preference of reformers in the late Qing.[73] Echoing the somewhat contradictory condition today of local elections under an authoritarian regime, something close to the "electoralism" which theorists now criticize as insufficient for democratic status[74] preceded the 1911 revolution by several years. With the imperial examination system abolished in 1905, Qing autocracy was found to be quite compatible with local, elective democracy to fill government posts, and it was implemented widely in the hope that it would yield officials who could save the dynasty by modernizing it.[75] More often, and exclusively by the middle of the 20th century, elections were a means of *top-down*, rather than bottom-up communication, intended to give instruction to "the ruled" about exactly how they should participate in politics: in an orderly

73 This is not to suggest that all constitutions outline popular elections in their democratic rights and procedures. Rather, as Hill notes, elections signified a government's legitimacy to modernizers both foreign and domestic. While Fung (2010, pg. 2-3) describes Republican thinkers caught in a triad of competition between Chinese cultural conservatism, liberalism, and socialism, Hill (pg. 10) asserts that all agreed on the need for elections, if not the details of suffrage, electoral procedures themselves, or what elected bodies should do.

74 See Schmitter & Karl. Their point regarding electoralism, made during the "Third Wave" of democratization in the early 1990's, is that equating democracy with the presence of elections reduces the concept to a proceduralist shell with an empty core where democratic values should be.

75 Fincher, pg. 251. Hill, pg. 4, explicitly calls elections a "successor" to the exam system for official appointment. Thompson, pg. 17-18, notes that deposed officials still had a good chance of being elected, though Western or Japanese-educated elites were now in favor.

fashion and for the strengthening of the current regime.[76] While this understandably suggests an anti-democratic perversion of the electoral institution to Western liberals, the earliest Chinese elections were at least more ambivalent in their potential to empower the general populace.

In the 1969 volume, *Modern China's Search for a Political Form*, Mark Elvin declares that the Shanghai City Council of 1905 was "the first formally democratic political institution in China."[77] He also finds the Council Assembly to be the first Chinese political institution in which open political struggle is regarded as a "legitimate, normal activity." It did not, however, allow for the formation of parties or "contrasting programs of action," though the unanimity the body projected on matters of policy was a projected, "false image."[78] The intense electoral competition found in the last decade of the Qing, instead, was personal,

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76 Hill, pg. 5.

77 Gray, pg. 41. Not surprisingly, given a start at the city level, it seems that subnational and even quasi-governmental bodies offered the best arena for electoral procedures to endure. Strand (1989, pg. 105, 118) notes that the Beijing Chamber of Commerce "abided by its [democratic] charter" well after national and higher levels of politics, even in their constitutional form, gave way to the rise of militarism. Still, Strand does not portray the Chamber's elections, held more than every year from 1920-29, very favorably. Instead, the frequency of elections reflects frequent scandals and resignations. Contemporaneously, Mao Zedong was advocating "self-rule" in Hunan, based on elections at village, county and provincial levels as the second stage following "semi-self-rule" by the military, bureaucratic, and provincial leaders (Duara, 1995, pg. 190). Given Mao's procedural preferences, later revealed in the PRC, one can doubt how democratic an independent Hunan might have been.

78 Gray, pg. 54-5. Strand (2011, pg. 172) believes that "public opinion" in the first decade of the 20th century "favored unity to the point of unanimity," even as reformers and revolutionaries debated the best path to modernization, and competitive elections were first introduced.

reflecting traditional fears of factionalism.[79] Rather than a good thing which elections were implemented to promote, Joshua Hill portrays political competition as "an unintended consequence" of opening government appointments up to popular selection and approval.[80]

As it turned out, most people liked to be consulted quite a lot, though convincing people that elections weren't just another scheme to extract more taxes from them occasionally had fatal consequences.[81] Preparing citizens for elections, not to mention administering them, proved to be very difficult, even at a minimal level of suffrage. For David Cheng Chang, Provincial Assembly elections in 1909 nonetheless constituted a "democratic enlightenment" accompanied by "large-scale experimentation" with a free media to explain electoral procedures such as registration and campaigns to the masses. Acknowledging both the successes and failures of an event most have overlooked, given the momentous end of the dynastic period only two years later, he calls the 1909 Provincial

79 Hill, pg. 7, emphasizes that elections were not actually a Western import, but derived from the Chinese tradition of "public selection." Nonetheless, he grounds the process as "a primary symbol," though not a guarantor, of political democracy in his introduction.

80 Hill, pg. 5.

81 Cochran & Pickowicz, pg. 195, 204-5, notes that at least one election worker was murdered, others were driven out by "agitated" villagers, but "the most common attitudes" were "skepticism and enthusiasm." Newspaper accounts of the learning process generally showed the arduousness, but not total incompatibility, of implementing nationwide elections in the last years of the Qing.

Assembly elections a "textbook case, underscoring two fundamental components of democracy: elections and freedom."[82] He does admit, as Yang Liqiang echoes later, that there was very little understanding of what elections (and later the Republic itself) were and what they meant, even less time and resources to educate the rural masses.[83] Rather than dividing China into chaotic factions, the 1909 elections ceded this effect to revolution itself, though Strand points out that 1911 was "a turning point in history that quickly seemed to many no real departure at all."[84]

Post-revolution elections were, at least, more of a toss-up in terms of whether they led to democratic outcomes or were too divisive and weakened the state. It was clear, in any case, that they were primarily "intended to be meaningful for the government, not the citizens," and the intended effect of selecting only those "universally acknowledged to be talented and virtuous" was shown to be a uniquely Chinese ideal based on a preference for

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82 Unless modified to be "liberal", this study does not share Chang's foundation.

83 (Cochran & Picowicz, pg. 200-5, Wakeman, pg. 205).

84 Strand (2011, pg. 21-2) . Fung (2010, pg. 180) says that "Republican liberals were as paternalistic as the literati of old," though not much different than Western thinkers like John Stuart Mill, who was also skeptical of democratic institutions. Elections were seen as a necessity, but they could easily become anti-democratic. Figures like Yan Fu and especially Zhang Binglin were seen as fundamentally against elections, though only because the newly empowered masses would "inevitably elect their current oppressors" (Wong, pg. 61). Zhang nonetheless opposed literacy and property requirements for suffrage and should be seen as an advocate for a uniquely Chinese republican political system, though this was never well-defined (pg. 62).

social harmony.[85] In short, expecting elections to lead to consensus and universally improved governance was a naïve illusion of the kind often afflicting neophytes and literati out of their cultural comfort zones.[86]

Elections might not have succeeded at such an impossible task, but what did they mean for the Chinese concept of democracy? Late Qing and Republican era elections can be used to buttress either side of the cultural compatibility debate, with those in favor noting the enthusiasm with which Chinese voters participated and those opposed noting their flawed implementation, general ineffectiveness, and even blaming them for the chaos and weakness of China at the time. Parallels can be drawn with China's present in that elections coexisted with an unelected state leader, and that they were a means that was supposed to lead to good (or improved) governance rather than to an abstract democratic end.[87] The initial appeals for and promotions of the procedural aspects of liberal democracy were generally not made in the name of democracy, however, but rather for “self-government”, or

85 Hill, pg. 4, for the first quotation, pg. 7 for the second.

86 Or political scientists attempting detached, pre-modern historiography.

87 This is to say that democracy as a universally recognized goal, an worthy end in itself, is a contemporary product, and normative views of its superiority were not prevalent in this time or location.

zi zhi 自治.[88] In the official language of the PRC today, rural elections are still referred to by this term, insuring that these are just an alternative method of selecting officials rather than the essence of democracy.[89] What else did democracy entail in China? For answers, the next several paragraphs invoke shining intellectual stars of the 1890's to 1920's.

If the centuries of dynastic rule are seen as absolutely despotic, having no connection to the people, almost any political form following the overthrow of the Qing could be seen as more democratic. Whether the warlords had as strong a grasp of the Confucian concept of *minben*, the people as foundation, should be doubted, however. Keeping in mind the hierarchy of state priorities in FIGURE 3, consultative relationships more deeply rooted in Chinese culture were seen to be just as useful to democracy as mass elections.

With nationalism taking hold of many elites by the last decades of the Qing, enhancing state power became the primary concern of educated Chinese, and constitutionalism was consistently mentioned as an alternative to the absolute monarchies

88 For Mao in the 1920's, Duara (1995, pg. 191) describes self-government as more than just local elections. Additionally, it "referred to th enlarging the power of localities in relation to the center." This essay hasn't considered the problem of federalism, but suffice it to say that by the 1920's provincial autonomy came to be seen as of "greater importance than democracy." Even so Duara says on pg. 193 that "no other political body in China went further on the road to democracy than Hunan."

89 *Zi zhi* is also synonymous with autonomy, the quasi-provincial/special title given to territories outside of "China proper," populated by "minority nationalities" and whose officially autonomous leaders are not elected by popular vote.

of dynastic rule.[90] Yet proposals from the likes of Feng Guifen for "reallocating power" or having lower officials elect higher ones were still considered radical and not well received. Conservative elites in the 1890's criticized such proposals for allowing "private interests" into public, objective appointment procedures, effectively *reducing* transparency and placing factional ties (according to which votes would inevitably, invariably be cast) above merit.[91] Military defeat at the hands of Japan in 1895, however, effectively ended the perspective that all China needed was Western weaponry to strengthen itself; consensus slowly formed that some political institutions of the West would have to be adopted as well. Rey-Ching Lu claims that while the self-strengthening of 1860-93 "only saw the material aspect of the West" as important, after 1895 political reform was deemed necessary and urgent.[92] Even with the 1898 "Hundred Days" of reform, however, most Qing officials still believed that

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90 Nathan, pg. 46, portrays Kang Youwei's interpretation of constitutionalism differently, as the first step in a process which would not limit the powers of the leader but rather enhance them by mobilizing the people on the state's behalf.

91 Kuhn, pg. 58, 62, puts Feng Guifen (d 1874) at the forefront of reformists, as a leader of the "Self-Strengthening Movement". Young-tsu Wong notes (pg. 19-21) that the reformist Kang Youwei (d 1927) first raised the idea of parliament with the Guangxu Emperor in 1895, then in 1897 argued for a national assembly and the formation of a modern nation-state, all bitter pills for an absolute monarch to swallow. Clearly the "objective" method of appointment was an ideal rather than a reality, but elites of the time clung to it reflexively and defensively, with no lack of self-interest.

92 Lu, pg. 34. Notably, Andrew Nathan's book also gives 1895 as the beginning of the era of democratic politics in China. Among the most prominent conservatives, Kang Youwei generally maintained that all China needed was material progress to modernize and catch up to the West (Wong, pg. 114-5). While Kang himself "imagined subtle ideas of democracy, freedom, constitutionalism, and republicanism" as a means to create wealth and power for China, freedom without the rule of law was "madness" (pg. 116) and had to be preceded by "material learning."

political reform would mean stronger factionalism, more corruption, possibly even chaos and fragmentation of Chinese territory,[93] and for much of the early 20th century these conservative doubts were vindicated.

As China itself was an unstable concept and political unit, the meaning and desirability of democracy shifted wildly, evidenced in that many notable Chinese thinkers began as radicals but were seen as reactionaries by the time of their death. Most supported the idea of a Chinese republic and democracy in some form, only to come slowly and painfully to the conclusion that China needed a strong leader to carry out state-strengthening agendas of modernization. Young-tsu Wong even finds the explicitly anti-democratic views of Zhang Binglin (d 1936) to be instrumental and temporary.[94] Figures like Yan Fu (d 1921) and Liang Qichao (d 1929) prescribed modernization with popular political participation as the means to strengthen China against foreign imperialist incursions, but the idea of democracy was only being discussed and understood at an elite

93 Kuhn, pg. 68, notes that such criticism was given by a Qing official who was actually pro-West.

94 Zhang always favored revolution, unlike his "rival" Kang Youwei who intended to revive constitutional monarchy as late as 1917 (pg. 43), but he declared that if the uneducated Chinese people were given the power to elect their leaders, they would only choose (for reasons of ignorance and connivance) those who had been their oppressors.

level, in an era when the world's leading examples were far from liberal, as understood in today's terms.[95]

In the face of official skepticism and indifference, concerned Chinese elites formed "study societies" in the 1890's and published journals, often covertly, to discuss proposals for reform, including democratization. The fact that some leading figures were themselves government officials and the elite nature of these groups makes it questionable whether these were examples of civil society, but they certainly challenged the state directly by advocating political reform. Offering some support for the idea that these societies were themselves examples of Chinese democracy rather than forces for democratic change, Joshua Hill notes that they were conceived largely to "give feedback" to the Qing government.[96]

While it is tempting to view study societies through a lens of inchoate, liberal democracy, they should not be mistaken for a Chinese analog of the American constitutional

95 Women's suffrage, for example, was still a radical idea in the West, and few elites thought that the massive illiterate population of China was ready for democratic responsibility. Modernization, in an essay arguing that different forms of democracy exist, can hardly be defined except in terms of "multiple modernities," but some break with tradition must be a part of it.

96 Hill, pg. 4.

conventions. Instead, their liberalism extended only far enough "to strengthen China by finding public opinion and striving to attain 'popular rights'."[97] Edmund Fung similarly claims that Yan Fu's liminal status as either a precursor or representative of Chinese liberalism stemmed from the fact that Chinese liberals were "revisionist and utilitarian from the onset." Yan Fu and his contemporaries skipped the laissez-faire individualism of 18th century Europe and jumped straight to the modern, state liberalism of 19th and 20th England, where Yan Fu was first introduced to his liberal heroes.[98]

In the terms of my definition, Liang Qichao hoped that study societies would serve as consultative bodies which communicated with the government and "cultivated learning," fitting for the evolving role of people in Chinese politics. By Andrew Nathan's reading of Liang's essays from 1896-8, Liang's notion of democracy was "chiefly...a means of communication between government and people."[99] Such a conception presumes that existing institutions for communication either did not exist, had atrophied, or were too weak

97 See Duara in Wakeman's edited volume, pg. 318. He says that these groups were not overtly political and so "quintessentially a part of the public sphere."

98 Fung, pg. 132, 134.

99 Nathan, pg. 49, draws this definitive conclusion from the series "A Comprehensive Discussion of Reform", pbulished in the journal *Chinese Progress*, which Liang also edited.

to meet the needs of the people in a modernizing society. Like my own definition, notably, it is institutionally flexible, requiring neither elections nor even an end to traditionally authoritarian, dynastic rule. While both Yan and Liang openly expressed admiration for Western-style democracy, their preference for a constitutional monarchy under continued Qing rule placed them in the reformist camp, which eventually lost to the republican revolutionaries.[100] The revolutionaries were led by Sun Yatsen (d 1925), the "father" of the Chinese nation whose democratic ideas would shape the modern state fundamentally while ensuring that the imperial lands and peoples remained a part of China.

Shelley Rigger and other scholars emphasize that democracy was not the Republic of China's only goal—or even its primary one. As a nationalist state, the first goal had to be the formation of the nation, a task still ongoing today, and President Sun Yatsen outlined several stages which had to precede full political liberalization.[101] Over the course of the

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100 Schwartz, pg. 67-8, describes Yan Fu's commitment to democracy as "not immediate but ultimate" as the people were "incapable of ruling themselves", a position also held by Zhang Binglin. Instead of immediate democratization, the preconditions of self-government had to be prepared by an "enlightened elite" (pg.69) who presumably became so by reading his translations of liberal Western texts. Unfortunately, Fung notes that many consider Yan Fu's work to suffer from mistranslation, as when translating Mill's "On Liberty" Yan places the group above the individual. Liang Qichao is said to have abandoned his liberal democratic ideas after visiting Chinese communities in America in 1903, greatly disappointed that living in a democracy had failed to make active, liberal democratic citizens of his fellow expats (Duara, in Wakeman, ed. pg. 322)

101 Rigger, pg. 61. Strand's new book characterizes Sun as a tremendously charismatic figure who took his own

1910's, however, plans for China's future multiplied and diverged greatly. Following the establishment of the Republic, Edmund Fung finds elite thinkers divided between Chinese cultural conservatism, liberalism, and socialism, though with many overlapping, apparently contradictory, tenets. For example, Fung casts Republican liberals who might have been expected to advocate Western-style democracy and the empowerment of the individual citizen as mostly "statists with socialist leanings."[102] Du Yaquan (d 1933), a "scientifically trained" intellectual of the New Culture Movement of 1915-21, offered a noteworthy conceptualization which foreshadowed an Asian Values cultural dichotomy, arguing that the East was "*jing* (quiet)" while the West was "*dong* (active)" and thereby better suited to the political participation entailed in modern citizenship but also more prone to war-making.[103] After Yuan Shikai's ill-advised attempt at forming his own dynasty,[104] a second republic was declared and dissolved only five years later. John Fincher says the Second Republic of 1918-

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popularity to mean that his own views best represented those of the whole Chinese populace. Sun's vision for a democratic future, however, bordered on "empty sloganeering to the point of fantasy" (Strand, 2011, pg. 31).

102 Fung, pg. 2-3 for the ideological framework, pg. 23 for the illustration. Rejection of capitalism was also prevalent.

103 Fung, pg. 35. Du's views were published in a Shanghai journal in 1916 and represented a cultural conservatism.

104 Yuan's fiasco likely played some role in finally dissuading Kang Youwei from his intention, held as late as 1917, to revive constitutional monarchy (Wong, pg. 43). Zhang Binglin, by contrast, always favored revolution, though his vision for the product of change away from a dynastic form was unclear and often contradictory (pg. 62). He was, at least, adamant that elections were *not* a means to democracy, while at the same time opposing literacy and property requirements for suffrage.

23 was doomed by “a shrinking electorate” caused by the loss of momentum behind representative democracy at the national level.[105] What had gone wrong?

Yang Liqiang, a historian from the PRC, has strongly implied that Chinese liberal democracy's failure lay not in Chinese culture[106] but in a failure to engage the masses genuinely in the limited democratic institutions which existed, primarily political parties and the elections in which they briefly competed. As “the idea of [liberal] democracy swept over the country like a storm,” Yang counts 386 new parties and associations by April 1913, of which 271 were political. Finding fault, he claims that not one of the parties represented the working class, and by implication, government connection to the people could skim only the very top of Chinese society.[107] While greater than factions, for their “modern” competition, their number betrayed their impotence and evanescence, and conflict among them did nothing to achieve a strengthening of the state, still the over-arching nationalist

105 Fincher, pg. 252.

106 Except to the extent that the scurrilous Yuan Shikai was a product of Chinese political culture. An “autocrat with thugs” (pg. 200), Yuan is said to have “used the bourgeois parties for his own rise to power, then outlawed them (pg. 207).” Lu (pg. 40-1) agrees that Yuan himself, for his imperial ambitions, was largely responsible for the failure of the first republic. Drawing on a Taiwanese history of the Republic, Lu notes that the GMD, Progressive Party, and Yuan Shikai each put itself ahead of China's wellbeing immediately after the fall of the Qing, with Yuan prevailing only to struggle against parliament to delay the constitution, then declare himself president for life in 1914 (pg. 42).

107 See his chapter “Political Parties, Party Conflicts, and Society in Early Republican China” generally in Wakeman and pg. 192-4 for discussion of parties and the quotation opening the paragraph.

goal. Instead, internecine quarrels opened spaces for competition of an even less democratic kind, among warlords despised for their brutality and opportunism at China's expense. Here was an example of multiparty competition gone haywire, not only largely missing the democratic target, but also contributing to actual fragmentation of the country. Even if collective Chinese memory doesn't lead all the way back to the early 1910's, to deny the need for political competition in democracy, every student in China now learns that the later half of the decade was one of the country's weakest, most difficult periods. But although the warlords "carried no concerns for democracy, the spirit of republicanism did not die," according to Rey-Ching Lu.[108]

With China tearing itself apart and few remaining institutional channels for popular participation, the May 4th Movement of 1919, consisting largely of nationalist street protests, should be seen as a major democratic data point. Until this event, mass movements in China had mostly taken the form of wholesale rebellions against the ruling dynasty.[109] By

108 Lu, pg. 37. Unfortunately, Lu's brief volume could not spare the pages to make the connection between republicanism and democracy more explicit, nor define either in isolation with any depth.

109 Though see the article and book by Ho-fung Hung on "contentious politics" and other popular demands on the Qing for a systematic challenge to this reading of mass politics before May 4th.

this time, anti-Confucianism was rampant, and thinkers from the previous era like Kang Youwei and Zhang Binglin came to be seen as conservatives.[110] At the same time, new figures like CCP founder Li Dazhao emerged with proposals for substantive, as opposed to institutional and thus far ineffective, democratic change. His manifesto of 1919 called on the government to allocate funds for public welfare, health and education in particular, even in the midst of a fiscal crisis, and at a time when the state had very limited capacity. In short, while procedural democratic failures mounted, demands were being made by other means, anticipating what Samuel Huntington called praetorianism, the militaristic rule of the GMD under Chiang Kai-shek. As the 1920's progressed, even staunch republican supporters deemed greater central control necessary to re-unite China following the rule of warlords and make popular political participation more orderly and more directed toward state-strengthening. By David Strand's summation, "Political failure at the center paradoxically succeeded in widening and deepening a public life that stretched from the political elite to

110 Wong, pg. 150, says that they didn't oppose the "New Culture" per se but were greatly offended by the "reckless ways and means demonstrated by the May 4th iconoclasts." If this was what democracy looked like, rivals Kang and Zhang could agree that they had no affinity for it.

millions of citizens."[111] Recognizable democracy in any form, however, may have been unachievable.

This examination of democracy's early history has shown that the Chinese definition, requiring and striving explicitly for such otherwise optional or contradictory factors as socioeconomic justice, state strength, and government performance, deviates from the liberal obsession with procedures and individual liberties because China answered the question "why democracy?" from a fundamentally different normative position. Different Chinese notions are inextricably tied to China's historical experience, and the conclusion that the grand, Republican experiment was an unsuccessful attempt at political liberalization is unlikely to be lost on either the CCP or much of the population today. If the PRC is to democratize, as more in the general population than Western scholarship see occurring, we should expect a different trajectory and a different destination. For a look at a far more successful example of Chinese political liberalization, Taiwan is treated as the first of this study's three contemporary cases.

111 Strand, 2011, pg. 23.

Taiwan (RoC). This section will consider Taiwan as an example of the liberal model of democracy most familiar to the West, using further institutional evidence to assess its democratic claims critically, from a definition based on the government's consultation, responsiveness, and accountability to the people. The other two cases, in following sections, will be assessed similarly. As Taiwan's democratic form is most familiar, this section will be the briefest but most critical of the three.

As one of Asia's most vibrant, liberal democracies, many hope that Taiwan will provide a strong demonstration effect across the strait. Shelley Rigger claimed in 2011 that "Taiwan is a daily challenge to the PRC's claim that competitive democracy cannot work in a Confucian society."[112] This makes intuitive sense and becomes a stronger challenge with each passing election. A shining example of a liberal democracy with a Confucian society should be extremely damaging to the Asian Values thesis of cultural incompatibility. Shin's 2012 book strongly suggests that the Asian Values cultural argument is fundamentally unsound because survey evidence shows that non-Confucian countries in the region (Malaysia, Indonesia, Mongolia, etc.) harbor values, especially hierarchy and support for "paternalistic meritocracy," at rates higher than those thought to be most influenced by Confucianism (Taiwan, China, Korea, etc.). This conclusion is shaded by very low support in Japan, whose Confucianism is not particularly strong, and a majority still supports it in Singapore, where the Asian Values argument originated.[113]

While Taiwan fits most liberal, institutional definitions to a tee, the findings of Yu-

112 Rigger, pg. 175.

113 Shin, pg. 127.

Tzung Chang and Yun-Han Chu in *How East Asians View Democracy* are sobering.[114] A sizable minority of Taiwanese, with cognates in other liberalized East Asian states, believed the martial law era preceding political liberalization in the late 1980's to '90's to have been at least "somewhat democratic" already.[115] Chang and Chu partially explain this away by suggesting either conceptual confusion or demographic factors like an authoritarian nostalgia among those who benefited under the early GMD regime, but the most telling factor in terms of this essay's definition and overall democratic performance is their finding that over half of those surveyed saw either "no bottom-line change in popular influence over government despite the improvement in civil liberties [...or] felt even more disempowered than before."[116] Citizen orientation toward democratic institutions may have improved under President Ma Ying-jeou, but as of 2001 the East Asian Barometer found Taiwanese to have "the lowest level of commitment to democracy," by Chang and Chu's evaluation of the national survey.[117]

If the modern history of Taiwan began with the relocation of the GMD's Republic of China regime to the island, most scholars agree that the 1947 national constitution is a "democratic document."[118] Byron Weng's chapter in *Public Governance in Asia and the*

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114 Chang and Chu (in Ch. 4 "How Citizens View Taiwan's New Democracy" of Chu et al.) use survey data from 2001, unfortunately the oldest in the book, to conclude that Taiwan's political system is fragile but not in danger of reverting to the martial law of the previous regime.

115 Given four choices ranging from "very dictatorial" to "very democratic", 20.3% chose the democratic half of the spectrum (Chu et al., pg. 93). A more confounding result with some likely crossover from this group, 17.1% saw no democratic change or even a negative change toward dictatorship. The authors suggest that old people in the survey who strongly identified as Chinese (rather than Taiwanese, as the new regime promoted) may be responsible for this counter-intuitive finding. As with other chapters, the evidence can add up to a litany of democratic faults: sixty percent of those surveyed said they could neither understand nor participate in politics (pg. 99); unlike Japan and the PRC, whose citizens perceived corruption in opposite levels (national and local, respectively), Taiwan had the highest percentage in East Asia who said that both are corrupt (pg. 100); the most basic institutions of liberal democracy (parliament and political parties) were also the two least trusted by Taiwanese society out of twelve listed (pg. 101).

116 Chu et al., pg. 95.

117 Chu et al., pg. 111. Shin now finds that the majority of Japan and Korea are "uncommitted" to their regimes, while Taiwan has slipped to third, at 42% (2012 article, Table 3). Interestingly, he posits that while this is consistent with the "critical citizens" thesis by which exposure to democracy makes the people more critical of the regime, a demonstration effect in reverse (i.e. supporting authoritarianism instead of democracy) may be prevalent, as evidenced by high numbers of "deferential authoritarians" in the region. These are defined as citizens of states like Vietnam, Singapore, and the PRC who "go along with the government's view that these are well-functioning democracies" (Shin, 2012 article, pg. 24). Contrarily, this essay argues that a different concept of democracy is in play in these countries, and this necessitates an institutionally flexible definition to compare the different models.

118 Rigger, pg. 60. She says that the democracy of the 1947 constitution went unrealized for many decades, much like

Limits of Electoral Democracy claims that the early regime needed elections because it lacked roots with the Taiwanese population beyond a few major cities, and a language barrier also separated the majority of the population from its newly arrived Nationalist leaders. In Weng's words, the perception of Taiwanese elections went from "institutions of self rule to instruments of the regime" after the violent events of February 28th, 1947, rendering them a "mockery" of democracy until 1988.[119] Implied in this is not only that the actual GMD regime, in spite of its constitution, was non-democratic because the elections it held "did not threaten the power at the center." The 2-28 incident showed clearly that the arrival of the GMD regime was an imposition on the people of Taiwan,[120] but if we take this study's suggestion that elections should not be the sole marker of democratic status, a threshold must have been crossed at which popular approval and participation in the regime rendered it democratic. If not at the time of the first "free and fair" presidential election in 1996, when did the Republic of China achieve rule by and for the people?

Conventionally, Taiwan is seen to have reached its status as a "full" democracy when constitutional reforms ended the "Temporary Provisions" which had allowed for Chiang Kai-shek and his son to rule indefinitely. But merely lifting restrictions could only bring democracy as a kind of reversion to a default, in this case a full realization of the 1947 constitution, but elections were not held for several more years.[121] Other turning points are notable within a liberal model and make it difficult to pinpoint the exact moment when Taiwan's democratic experience began in earnest. Besides the end of martial law in 1987, lifting bans on newspapers and opposition parties in 1988 and 1991, respectively, showed a clear path toward liberal democracy but are individually insufficient to ascribe full democratic status. Combined with elections which slowly liberalized over the course of decades, many democratization narratives in Taiwan focus on the civil society activities of

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the beliefs of Sun Yatsen, who "leaned toward democracy."

119 See Bridges & Ho, pg. 119-20.

120 Between 10-30,000 Taiwanese civilians were massacred by the GMD on Feb. 28th, 1947, protesting and rioting for a long list of causes, including greater autonomy, free elections, anti-corruption, etc.

121 The matter of whether the 1992 Legislative Yuan elections were enough to declare Taiwan democratic or if 1996's presidential election was the final marker is subject to interpretation. It is likely that many Taiwanese citizens saw these elections as simply a procedural change in how national leaders are selected, whereas a change from authoritarianism to democracy came in more subtle or deeper ways which had greater influence on citizens' everyday lives.

dangwai (outside the party) organizations. But could government responsiveness to civil society indicate a democratic transition simply because civic groups became "assertive, robust, and confrontational," in Yan Fan's words?[122]

As mentioned at the opening of this section, it may be better to consider what still detracts from Taiwanese democracy, even after a relatively clear victory for the incumbent president in early 2012. Why did so many Taiwanese not see an improvement in the government's rule by the people? Again, Weng's chapter in a rather critical volume highlights what remains peculiar about democracy in "Chinese Taipei," and much relates to Chinese characteristics themselves.[123] But Chinese problems with democracy are not reducible to a Confucian culture.[124] First, the national identity of citizens and possible intervention by the PRC in domestic affairs are of great concern. Coppedge et al., it should be recalled, find sovereignty a necessary condition for democracy, and in Taiwan's case this is clearly compromised by three factors: China's previously mentioned "core interest" that Taiwan is an inseparable province of China; the internationally unrecognized status of the RoC as a sovereign state (strongly related to the previous factor); and the island's small size and population.[125]

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122 Fan stops short of causal claims but does note that civil society played a crucial role in socializing the people to public participation in politics, "providing education for democracy, developing political skills, identities, and civic virtues." (Alagappa, pg. 165, 185) Fan also suggests that electoral competition is a necessary but not sufficient condition for democratic transition, pg. 164. Again, the modifier "liberal" should be added.

123 Yun-Han Chu's chapter in Diamond & Plattner's edited volume is generally more optimistic, though perhaps because it was written after the 1996 elections, a high point seen as "a distinct advance" over the previous regime after the first election and less clearly after the first (Chu et al., pg. 92. Even so, he does note that the role of money is at least as strong as ever, and "mafia-style" politics is disturbingly prevalent to both Chu (Diamond & Plattner, pg. 140-2) and Weng, who calls these a matter of "gold and black" politics (pg. 140).

124 With divergent quantitative and qualitative methodologies, Shin's survey data and the elite interviews of Fetzer and Soper come to different conclusions about the role of traditional Chinese political culture in the region generally and Taiwan specifically. Shin finds that other factors like one's cultural outlook as supporter of hierarchy, individual rights, egalitarianism, or fatalistic belief shapes one's democratic views fundamentally. While Fetzer and Soper agree that "Confucianism and democratic culture have learned to accommodate themselves to each other", the old sage is at once "perceived as a Trojan horse for the PRC and its desire to annex the island (pg. 511)," "has little to offer for providing justification for the turn toward democracy (pg. 503)," and is quite illiberal on matters like gender equality, offering no aid to the efforts of "the people most active on issues of women's rights in Taiwan (pg. 506)."

125 I assume that states with a small land area and population are far more likely to have their political and economic affairs influenced, perhaps even guided, tied to, or fundamentally compromised and controlled by larger states nearby. Taiwan is clearly less affected by this than Singapore, though as a recognized state Singapore's sovereignty is fragile rather than unofficial/unrecognized. Both, of course, attempt to compensate for their small size and population with vital economies and have arguably been very successful at raising their international profiles with economic prowess.

Indigenous Taiwanese and the Democratic Progressive Party view the CCP's role in Hong Kong very unfavorably,[126] but at the same time most view closer ties with the Mainland as beneficial to the island's economy overall.[127] Surveys from Chu et al. and Shin alike show that a large majority of Taiwanese view democracy as closely tied to economic performance, but presumably few are willing to give up Taiwan's tenuous sovereignty for a an extra point or two of GDP growth percentage. President Ma has posed clear economic policy goals for his second term, and it's clear that the nearly half of the population which favors independence fears both that these will once again not be met and that Ma may sell out those who identify as Taiwanese, not Chinese, in order to reach them.[128]

Weng too decries what he terms the "adolescent nature" of Taiwan's democracy, evident in *guanxi* (connections) that prevent a full rule of law and exacerbate what he calls the "*neihao* problem." While this study considers rule of law a facilitator rather than a necessary component of democracy, *neihao* illustrates many of the PRC's concerns with the liberal form. Weng claims that the pan-blue and pan-green coalitions are embroiled in a "negative-sum game" in which parties find that "denying credit to other parties is more important than the merit of a policy issue under consideration." Worse than a lack of bipartisanship, Weng suggests that neither side among the Taiwanese populace sees its opposition as loyal. The result of these problems is that "standing up to high-level officials in an offensive manner shows bravery and strength, while breaking the law and getting away with it shows one's importance."[129] Finally, the warts of new democracy have been on

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Mongolia might be a good indicator of whether a state with a small population and economy can handle independent statehood, a fundamental reason many Chinese give for keeping more independence-minded minorities within the PRC.

126 Schubert, pg. 160.

127 Kahler & Kastner suggest that the goal of the PRC toward its "target," Taiwan, may be one of three to bring the Taiwanese economy closer to interdependence with the Mainland, to bring the island's domestic and foreign policies closer to the PRC's preferences. Taiwanese-owned firms are taken as one means to this, and increasing access to Mainland labor and consumer markets is presumed to have a positive effect on GDP.

128 Schubert, pg. 145, notes that Ma's failure to reach his "6-3-3" goals to keep the economy growing at 6% per year, raise the average per capita income to 30,00 TWD, and reduce unemployment to 3% was a major rallying point for the DPP opposition campaign. That he was re-elected anyway may appear to be a mark against the government's accountability, but most of the blame for this was said to be placed on the global economic downturn. Fears of getting too close to the PRC are shown to be island-wide concerns on pg. 148, concerns that it is "colonizing" Taiwan on pg. 159-60.

129 Bridges & Ho, pg. 139. His laundry list of complaints finally concludes that major elections "practically every year since 1991" have sustained endless campaigns and arousal of emotions by politicians with the media. The media,

display in the very public prosecution of the previous president, Chen Shui-bian, landing him and members of his family in jail, for what many of the DPP still see as trumped up charges, retribution for being outspoken on independence.

If they were not supported by extensive survey evidence pointing to genuine popular ambivalence about Taiwan's democratic system, Byron S.J. Weng's criticisms that Taiwan's "government system is based on the principles of democracy but is still incoherent and problematic" might be dismissed as the ramblings of a disgruntled academic. Instead, each source complements the other, with large-N surveys showing the prevalence of complaints within the population. Informed critiques that the system lacks presidential checks, shifts unpredictably to a "cabinet system," that it is at times "immature" or "wobbly," combined with considerable nostalgia for the old regime, suggest that liberal democracy is better at bringing societal conflicts to the fore than at mediating them.[130]

In conclusion, a demonstration effect on the PRC would likely require official Chinese media to portray Taiwan's elections positively, rather than as a chaotic spectacle which reveals, instead of popular will, the supposed superiority of the PRC's paternalistic democracy. At very least, the Chinese view of Taiwan's liberal model seems tied to whether it produces a president who is pro-independence or more amenable to closer ties and future unification with China. This is to say that, over time, if Taiwan's democratic system consistently produces reasonably "good" presidents (i.e. pro-Mainland), liberal democracy

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too, may not be aiding democracy because it is too skewed and powerful.

130 Gang (Kevin) Han's highly, perhaps excessively theoretical article on how the PRC media framed the particularly acrimonious 2004 elections and their aftermath concludes that the sensational conflicts between the GMD and DPP are what drove the coverage. After an official declaration that China would not follow the campaign or care about the result, Chen's narrow victory did indeed turn out to be "a concern." (pg. 54)

would become more appealing and thereby more likely to undermine the PRC's paternalistic model. A demonstration effect requires a positive evaluation of the demonstration in question, and it's not clear that Taiwanese politics currently provide an unequivocally admirable example.

Singapore. This small, island nation straddles the line between being a liberal or paternalistic democracy, especially as the regime of "electoral authoritarianism" was seen by some pro-liberalization critics to have "faltered, but not fallen" after the 2011 election. Where most democratic parties would be thrilled to win with 60% of the vote, evidence of a strong mandate, the 2011 election delivered the ruling People's Action Party (PAP) "its worst result since 1963."[131] Unfortunately, for a one-party dominant regime such as Singapore's, a resounding, sea-change electoral triumph by a non-PAP candidate may be necessary for critics to acknowledge the city-state's democracy.[132] Despite the increased competitiveness of 2011, no one predicts any such result within the next several election cycles, though opposition parties are likely more excited than outside observers.

Singapore does hold highly efficient elections, whose turnout regularly exceeds 90%, among the highest in the world. Thus, the criteria on which critics deem Singapore a non-democracy are unrelated to voting, but instead impugn restrictions on opposition parties, government control of mass media, and limitations on democratic freedoms. Even the scholarly defenders who trumpet Singapore's high rankings in developmental indices, however, acknowledge that something is missing from its democracy, and label the regime "nonliberal communitarian," "limited," "illiberal," or "soft authoritarianism."[133] In light of the

131 Barr, pg. 1-2, for all quotations in this paragraph.

132 A "two-turnover" rule may well apply also, but two peaceful transfers of power from one party to another is probably a better indicator of a *consolidated* democracy than of democracy's existence itself.

133 Mauzy & Milne (pg. 129), Vasil consistently calls Singaporean democracy "limited" throughout his book, Mutalib (pg. 7, 12) lists a number of other terms used to describe the regime on pg. 21, including "administrative state", "controlled democracy", "technocratic state", "capitalist state", "semidemocracy", and "adhocracy".

most recent election, Stephan Ortmann finds it appropriate to add the modifier "competitive" to this list, yet real competition for power is not enough to deflect the accusations of non-democracy.

Other liberal-minded observers lament the recent turn away from a culturally neutral administration toward a "substantial re-emphasizing" of its Chineseness since the 1990's.[134] Michael D. Barr and Zlatko Skrbis are most critical in this regard, suggesting that the founding principles of "multiraciality, meritocracy, and technocracy," which have fostered a harmonious culture of elite governance, are little more than powerful, rhetorical myths. Shifting in recent decades from a civic to an ethnic conception of this nation that contains a Chinese majority has meant "incomplete assimilation" of minorities which excludes them from the elite and makes the "effective, if not impressive" system more personalistic than formalized.[135] While these authors' contentions that these changes make Singapore less democratic are subject to debate, a Singapore which is more Chinese does at least fit more neatly in this study's case selection.[136] Were the island to become simply another Chinese state, it might be disqualified from liberal democratic status on ethnic minority rights alone, but such a status has never been the PAP's primary goal. Nor have civil and political rights been the party's primary democratic claim.

In terms that resonate throughout the global South, Raj Vasil describes the official stance of the ruling PAP as reconciling democracy with national development, both ethnic and economic.[137] As modern Asian regimes' legitimacy is generally tied more closely to economic performance than to any other factor, single-party rule in Singapore fundamentally resembles the many economic development "miracles" seen in other regional

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134 Vasil, pg. 241. He asserts that many Singaporean Chinese have traded ethnic sensitivity for chauvinism, "making demands about the status of their language, heritage and culture" which would not have been acceptable in the 1970's and '80's. On pg. 242, "For some two decades after independence, the first generation rulers insisted that it was critically important for Singapore to de-emphasize its obvious Chineseness..."

135 Barr & Skrbis, pg. 254. Minority rights in liberal democracy generally respect rights to maintain connections to one's culture, though whether this requires affirmative action or full equality with an overwhelming majority is less certain. The authors portray the problem more as a retraction of previous promises rather than a democratic violation.

136 I make this point to address similar skepticism about choosing the PRC and Singapore to compare existing democracies. There are reasons to question whether Singapore is a Chinese state, not least the stated preferences of founders to build a multi-ethnic Singaporean national identity with English as the official language.

137 Vasil, pg. 234. "Democracy" in this statement refers to the conventional, liberal variety.

NIC's.[138] As a smaller nation, however, there is great fear that such rapid progress could be reversed, the island's premier financial position in SE Asia could be lost if the aforementioned balance is not maintained. “Too much” democracy would lead to unpredictability, possibly the instability of populism (including much greater economic redistribution and more active labor movements); too little, as liberal critics maintain, might stifle the economic transparency and entrepreneurial creativity needed for economic growth.

The East Asian financial crisis of 1997-8 was a major challenge for the entire region, with many investors complaining that financial transactions and information within countries like Singapore were too closely guarded by illiberal governments. When liberals predictably posited that the only cure for opacity was deeper democratization, the ruling party deftly instituted financial reforms while leaving its favorable power structure intact. More explicitly, Garry Rodan's analysis of the PAP's response to the crisis suggests that the goal of most reforms in Singapore has been to create transparency enough to reassure foreign investors without heeding their calls for more media freedom or political liberalization. The island's good reputation, aided by swift and effective responses to the needs of business, pre-emptively evades or minimizes challenges to its many less democratic institutions. As Singapore is not suspected of “systemic corruption” or “political favoritism,” Rodan says that “investor interest” in the financial markets of the city-state can be sustained without as great a need for transparency as might be demanded of others in the region.[139] Expecting global businesses headquartered in liberal democracies to demand full political liberalization of the city-state is thus unrealistic and of dubious effectiveness, especially if the best hope for democracy is supposed to originate domestically.

Singapore's affluent population apparently confounds expectations laid out by Seymour Martin Lipset, proponents of Human Development Theory, and others who believe

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138 Due to the much smaller size of Singapore than Japan, Korea, Taiwan, or most obviously China, economic development on the island is said to be far more dependent on Multinational Corporations finding favorable reception than on local entrepreneurs or state-owned enterprises. Verweij and Pelizzo, however, seem to neglect the factor of scale in criticizing the authoritarian government for stunting entrepreneurship; whether domestic entrepreneurs alone could have grown the economy to its current size is dubious, a rare case of MNCs' role in the economy being criticized in a supposed non-democracy rather than the state.

139 Rodan, pg. 282.

that materially comfortable people inevitably demand liberalization.[140] While businesses and the middle class are thought by some to be the most natural supporters of market reform and democratization, Rodan finds that the state has retained full control of market development with only "modest" involvement from businesses, which are often co-opted by rather than successfully challenging the state.[141] Such a state-led model is subject to much criticism by free-market economists and in a 2009 article by former Singapore Management University professors Marco Verweij and Riccardo Pelizzo. They find fault in Singapore's economic inequality, blame the interventionist state for unsuccessful and unpopular ventures like building casinos and favoring MNC's over local entrepreneurs, and claim that most of Singapore's economic gains are unsustainably based on citizens working longer hours instead of increasing productivity. For these two authors, liberalization is offered not only as the only hope to address the tiny state's political and economic vulnerabilities, but as a panacea for all of Singapore's social ills—not least for the desire of most people to leave the country. Such a conclusion bears more resemblance to ideological wishful thinking than the pragmatism which has largely marked Asia's modern, developmental states, whose democratic legitimacy is built on economic growth as the population's paramount concern.

Lam Peng Er concurs with Rodan on the state's role in the economy but is less critical than Verweij and Pelizzo, noting that most of the Singaporean middle class were originally immigrants who arrived in search of material gains, gains which the marginally democratic state continues to meet. As economic development has been largely state-driven, the middle class is dependent on the state for its prosperity, and a civil society demanding liberalization would first have to make room for itself apart from the "banyan tree" of the state, which smothers everything under its all-encompassing branches.[142] Suzaina Kadir says that Singaporean civil society has yet to take advantage of opportunities to carve out such an independent space and instead tends to be, like business interests, co-opted into a

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140 As Lam Peng Er's introduction states, liberalization is only one form of democratization and can't be conflated with democratic change itself. More empirically defensible is the finding by Przeworski that, rather than causing democratization, reaching a certain level of national per-capita income virtually guarantees that a transition to liberal democracy will not revert to authoritarianism.

141 Rodan, pg. 297.

142 Lam, pg. 274

less challenging “civic society” coordinated and therefore approved by the PAP. Kadir finds that there is nonetheless a lot of feedback and consultation between the state and social improvement groups in terms of agenda-setting and resource allocation. Such a model would be key to a paternalistic model of democracy but also might work well to supplement elections which are not very competitive and, as in Japan during the LDP's developmental heyday, to pre-emptively address issues which opposition parties might otherwise or initially champion.[143] Indeed, even in the event of a clear trend toward liberalization, Lam and other observers agree that the PAP itself would lead such a process, and the result would not necessarily result in a liberal form of democracy, in which any of multiple parties would have the ability to take power.[144]

While opposition parties are claimed to be both “necessary and desirable”, Mauzy, Milne, and Mutalib each find extensive evidence that the PAP's strategies to keep such parties weak have been both effective and yet less than democratic.[145] Using election results from several decades, Hussin Mutalib's book shows convincingly that Singaporean opposition parties get very significant electoral support, usually about a third of the popular vote, but are granted little or no say in governing. A more recent and worrisome assertion was made by the Singapore Democratic Party (SDP) that the elections held on May 7th, 2011, were called “undemocratic” by party leader Chee Soon Juan, as the media did not cover the party's campaign, and members of the party have been repeatedly barred from participating in political action or jailed for assembling without a police permit. While scholars have noted the potential for social media to circumvent censorship and non-coverage of opposition campaigns, it is no substitute for media that reaches the entire electorate.[146] Unfortunately, increasing the mass media's anemic attention to opposition campaigns may first require overcoming this handicap electorally, certainly a difficult task in the absence of widespread discontent with the PAP. While clearly inimical to democracy, it

143 Kadir, pg. 333.

144 Lam, pg. 255. Themes in this paragraph could well be repeated for the PRC section.

145 Mauzy & Milne, pg. 146.

146 I need to find and incorporate an article which looks at social media in Singapore, found a recent one but have yet to read it beyond the abstract.

would be disingenuous to call this situation a simple failure of democratic institutions (elections and the press) rather than a calculated strategy of the ruling party and its two most prominent heads of state, the father and son duo of Lee Kwan Yew and Lee Hsien Loong.

Interestingly, Vasil suggests that the reigning face of Asian Values, the elder Lee, began his career as a "highly Westernized" lawyer who did not even speak Chinese.[147] The methods by which he and his son have led Singapore have nonetheless been the prime example of paternalistic democracy based on Chinese values and hierarchies of trickle-down virtue. (Quote from Lee's autobiography on democracy, work in more on Asian Values, especially as related to Shin's work with the EAB) Singapore's UN representative, Bilahari Kausikan, rejects any notion of Singapore as a model, but his democratic framework bifurcating the term's meaning as a means of legitimacy versus a method of governance deserves consideration. Any regime which enjoys genuine support from the majority of its population is deserving of a democratic label, and a paternalistic model such as Singapore's may in fact be more democratic than a liberal, representative one if it can be more accountable by means other than popular elections.[148] Channeling Lee's justification of the PAP operating as democratic "trustees" of the people, Singapore's leaders are better able to consider the state's long-term interests from a stable position, with more freedom to enact policies in line with these interests. In short, the West only "imagines" that Singapore is undemocratic, when in fact it is pursuing its own conception of democracy, to which all states are entitled.[149]

Despite shortcomings that appear glaring to outsiders, survey evidence from actual Singaporeans partially validates official assertions from the PAP, according to Kuan et. al.[150]

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147 Vasil, pg. 238.

148 This is not to say that Singapore doesn't have or need elections; rather, since the PAP has always held power, officials might be better held accountable within the party itself or by other means which advocates for traditional Chinese political culture are proud to offer.

149 Kausikan may intend to implicate political science itself with his assertion that Singapore is not a model, not universalist (pg. 19), but rather that every state is an idiographic entity with unique needs and aspirations.

150 Their 2010 book compares Singapore to other East Asian countries with results from the 2006 EAB, but oddly and unfortunately, questions asked in the EAB survey and compared in *How East Asians View Democracy* were not included. This section draws from their chapter on "Democracy and Political Rights", so the absence of questions of

The data show that Singapore ranks in the middle of a list containing its larger regional peers, with its combination of ranking first in "satisfaction with the right to vote, to participate in any kind of organization, and the right to be informed about the works and functions of the government" and dead last in satisfaction with "freedom of speech and the right to criticize the government." (If the consolidated indices at the end of this file are kept, refer to them here.)

Under the single-party rule of the PAP since the founding of the city-state, Singapore offers fruitful comparisons to the near hegemonic parties of Japan and the PRC, under regimes that are seen as more and less democratic, respectively. In T.J. Pempel's *Uncommon Democracies*, Michio Muramatsu and Ellis Krauss could just as well have been describing the PAP's Singapore as the LDP's Japan with strategies to maintain dominance in a democratic system. Among the most resonant and comparable: a dominant party should not completely deligitimize the opposition but rather strive to be a "catch-almost-all" party which appeals to nearly all interests in a pluralist society, while appearing most able to govern, among alternatives.[151] Barr's 2012 article makes a case for opposition parties being far more capable, with better candidates and more resources than in the past, but Pempel's principles of democratic domination have been in effect so long that even Barr does not foresee a change in the ruling party for many election cycles to come.[152]

China (PRC). Scholars of Chinese politics give democratization in the People's Republic of China an extraordinary amount of attention, and rightly so. Even as other regions and cultures thought to be accepting of authoritarianism have experimented with, if not fully embraced, liberal democracy, the PRC remains resistant, difficult to study, though hardly inscrutable. This section will highlight some of the institutions and processes which

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what democracy means is most unfortunate.

151 Pempel, pg. 300-1.

152 After comparing the parties dominant for decades in the advanced democracies of Sweden, Italy, Israel, and Japan (to which this study would add Singapore), Pempel's conclusion (pg. 336) delineates three "commonalities" between these regimes: an electoral structure which fosters a multiparty (as opposed to two-party) system, a cycle of the party's evolution "marking the origins, the maintenance, and the possible ending of dominance", and most importantly the "consequences of long-term dominance"--a polity which has been shaped fundamentally by the government to reflect its own values and political preferences. How the extensive use of government office for the benefit of the party in power is reconciled with democracy is one of the main themes in the book, and while Singapore might well seem out of place among such advanced democracies, the fact that Singapore is still not seen as a democracy may reflect more of a liberal shift in democracy's definition than great differences between these regimes.

scholars have focused on the most in the past decade, asking two provocative questions: If adhering strictly to a standard liberal conception, emphasizing national elections as a necessary first step, might we in the West 1) fail to perceive that the PRC is *already* a democracy or 2) fail to perceive the crossing of a threshold, after which the PRC would *become* a democracy?[153]

To answer these questions, this part will proceed in sections which will have to be very clearly demarcated. First, to justify the PRC's inclusion in this study, survey evidence will be presented to suggest that citizens of China conceive of democracy differently than the standard liberal definition. Furthermore, by their own conceptions, a majority of Chinese view their state as a democracy already. My own definition of democracy, focusing on the three criteria of consultation, responsiveness, and accountability, will be used to analyze how such a perception can be coherent, while also suggesting that even the PRC's most democratic institutions (which will be enumerated) still fall short of what would be needed to be labeled a democracy on a dichotomous scale. Alternative democratic institutions utilized in China will be discussed, with the conclusion that the path on which the PRC has apparently stalled for the past two decades, by liberal standards, does in fact lead to a recognizably democratic destination.

As treated in the historical sections, tracing the evolution of democracy's meaning and goals (including especially its perceived appeal of strengthening the Chinese state), *minzhu,* "people as masters," is subject to myriad interpretations.[154] The World Values Survey, East Asian Barometer, and other mass surveys are indispensable resources for gauging the prevalence of widely held conceptions, but as the following section shows, these do not dig very deeply into the concept or escape methodological problems.

In many ways the most interesting and contentious chapter of *How East Asians View*

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153 These questions arise naturally from the outgoing Hu Jintao's assertion that China will "never" copy or adopt a Western political system. Even more optimistic observers, judging from the cautious statements of incoming Xi Jinping, doubt that liberal democracy will come to the PRC within the decade. Twenty years seems to be a popular estimate, shared by Bruce Gilley, Rey-Ching Lu, and others, while Chang's *The Coming Collapse of China* seems less apt with each passing year.

154 Lackner et. al treat the 19th century introduction of the term at some length on pg. 73-6. They find, after countless other translations before settling on *minzhu*, the term had to phase out its ancient, literal meaning of "lord of the people" (as in a single lord, one person) to "simultaneously impl[y] the principle of 'rulership by the people.'"

Democracy, Tianjian Shi's analysis leads one to question whether it is appropriate to ask anything of PRC citizens beyond what they think democracy is.[155] Interpreting survey results from 2002, Shi finds the idea to be both "elastic" and successfully defined by the government, in that the "official view remains dominant." Shi also concludes that the high percentage of "don't know" responses to the definitional question are due to genuine "cognitive deficiency."[156] The legacy of the revolutionary era and the well-publicized, state-fashioned idea of "socialist democracy"[157] are not easily erased from the collective Chinese consciousness, and Shi spends much of his chapter trying to explain apparent contradictions and anomalies in the survey results. Chief among them is the finding of overwhelming support for democracy (whatever it may be); yet the data also demonstrate that a majority does not support competition between parties.[158]

While measures like those of Freedom House and other liberal foundations show a monolithically non-democratic, static PRC stuck in the doldrums of authoritarianism, Shi instead brings to light Chinese people's very different impressions of substantial democratization. One of the most surprising findings in entire book is that Chinese survey respondents believed the PRC to have democratized even more than did citizens of Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines, all of last three having instituted national elections fairly recently. What should further confound the liberal "China-watcher" is the finding that the population of the PRC finds more progress in democratization from the mid-1990's to the current regime than in "policy performance," despite that the latter is supposedly the source

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155 For example, one question asks respondents to rate the current regime on a scale in which democracy and dictatorship are polar opposites, a fair assumption in the liberal form, but possibly invalidating the beliefs of the many Chinese he notes who do not find (benevolent) dictatorship to be incompatible with—and certainly not antithetical to—democracy. For a considerable number of respondents, the survey apparently at once solicited (as it should), assumed (as it must), and (as it should not) framed information in a way which could have an effect akin to indoctrination.

156 See Shi in Chu et. al., pg. 209, 216, 214 for each point.

157 While some authors (I lost the citation) find this to be little more than "empty rhetoric", He Li's chapter (pg. 55-6) notes that PRC reformers have genuinely considered the pursuit of a North European model of socialism. The topic of whether this could be pursued without national elections is rather meticulously avoided, and this does leave the concept institutionally nebulous or wishy-washy.

158 This non-competitive conception likely has as much to do with respect for the CCP, constitutionally-inscribed as not being subject to legitimate opposition, as fear of societal divisiveness and instability. The Party, of course, does much to stoke such fear, and these worries nicely complement the denigration of "Western-style" democracy on grounds of nationalism and more analytical observations of liberal, electoral pathologies. More on this later.

of the regime's legitimacy and popularity.[159]

The data for Shi's observations come from the inaugural East Asian Barometer surveys, conducted in 2002 in China, but more recent editions provide further evidence of a uniquely Chinese understanding of democracy. Dingping Guo's use of the 2008 survey highlights the fact that 77% of the Chinese sample believes that China is either a full democracy or one with only "minor problems."[160] Such findings mesh well with Bruce Gilley's 2009 book on regime legitimacy, in which he must exert considerable energy explaining the high ratings received by the PRC, despite his own previous book outlining the imminent establishment of a liberal democratic regime on the Mainland. One may read the incongruity between the support for democracy as a concept, and belief in its presence despite an authoritarian regime as evidence that most Chinese people are incapable of differentiating between democracy and "good governance." But Doh Chul-Shin's 2012 book, *Confucianism and Democratization in East Asia*, reframes this issue brilliantly, showing the PRC and Taiwan as startlingly distinct from other countries even in the same region. Whereas every other country in the book has an evenly divided population between those who imagine democracy in procedural versus substantive terms (elections and political freedoms comprising the first category, economic equality and security the second), both Chinese and Taiwanese conceive of democracy substantively at a rate of two to one over "procedural conceivers." Shin's regional scope and scholarly caution lead him to eschew stark statements throughout the book, but evidence in this case suggests that for most Chinese people, good government performance in the economy is almost conceptually equivalent to democracy.[161]

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159 Shi (pg. 219) attributes these odd findings both to differences in conceptualizing democracy and also to memories of the PRC's turbulent, impoverished past (differing "baselines" of comparison). "Democratization" in this comparison includes freedoms, equality, "popular influence", and an independent judiciary, which are perceived to have gone in a more democratic, preferred direction than corruption, law and order, and economic equality. Younger generations, not surprisingly, tend to be more in line with a liberal definition, so an argument can be made that a convergence of Chinese and liberal definitions of democracy is on the way.

160 See Guo's chapter, "Institutional Accumulation and Gradual Substitution: The Dynamics of Developmental Democracy in China", pg. 173, in Huang (ed.). China compares quite favorably with Japan, with almost twice as many people (10.1%) claiming that the PRC is a full democracy.

161 More broadly and still more crudely, for some people (and Shin does suggest which demographics hold this view more than others, but the groups are not entirely clear or consistent), a regime that gives the people what they want is a democracy. Benevolent dictators, if effective, are then almost democratic by definition.

Having established how the PRC is starkly different, it is also worth noting where China is not an outlier, fitting instead the region-wide concerns about democratic compatibility, lest one doubt the reliability of surveys in China generally. Shin finds that the Chinese sample is much like the other countries' on most measures, most notably that the general approval of a democratic regime type far outpaces positive evaluations of democratic processes and practices.[162] Another cause for pause: the Chinese sample for nearly all questions continues to contain a sizable portion, much larger than in the other countries, who answer that they "don't know" or have "no opinion." Smaller surveys made of deeper interviews, like those undertaken by Rey-Ching Lu in 2004 for his 2011 book, may ultimately be more valid representations of Chinese democratic views.[163]

Among the most unfortunate terms Professor Shin uses in his book are those which label the many in East Asia who associate some values and processes more akin to authoritarianism with democracy as simply "incorrect."[164] Whether this reflects an editorial decision, a concession to mostly-Western audiences, or his own beliefs in an objectively correct concept, more consideration could be made of democratic institutions and values

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162 Shin, pg. 287, states that "a large majority of 73 percent of East Asians prefer to live in a democratic regime, but just 33 percent favor democratic processes over nondemocratic ones". For China, this includes a mere 6% of the sample who are "unconditionally attached to democracy as a process." On the following page, a strikingly consistent observation can be made about the Chinese sample: fully 63 percent are categorized as "indifferent", rather than as "nondemocrats, nonliberal democrats, or liberal democrats". On pg. 275 and elsewhere it is clear that a third to a half of the Chinese sample routinely does not answer questions such as whether they prefer democracy over other forms of government. Someone with more methodological leverage could probably assess how big a problem this is with the survey, but it is cause for concern and curiosity. I know that I personally wouldn't feel right about walking up to a farmer in the PRC and asking him or her a series of questions about political institutions.

163 For a book with "Chinese Democracy" in the title, very few of Lu's subjects actually mention democracy in response to his open-ended questions on how Shanghai elites foresaw the city developing. Notable, however, were the general praise for being "efficient" and "transparent" (pg. 81), an official who continued to use Mao's concept of the "mass line" whereby "policy ideas should come from the people" (pg. 76), and a general agreement that Chinese people want stability and fear that rushing into democratization would threaten national order. The "not ready yet" position was most explicitly given by university professors in Lu's section on "intellectuals," while subjects in the section on "the media" most lamented having no role in the system except to comply, without any channel to influence government policy (pg. 84). It bears repeating that, if the 2008 Barometer is accurate, most subjects would not mention transitioning to democracy because they already view the PRC as democratic, though it is quite unlikely that this view would prevail among the Shanghai elites Lu interviewed.

164 See especially the divisions into groups of people who are "well, ill, partially, or uninformed" about democracy (pg. 236) and the similarly haughty chart which divides conceptions of democracy into "authoritarian, authentic, hyprid, or other" on the following page. One might expect that asking a Chinese person about the "correct" concept of democracy will result in many "don't knows" and glib platitudes; asking the average American about Confucius (or differences between democracy and good governance) would similarly yield a lot of badly-worded fortune cookie slogans (or summing up as "freedom and elections").

which are consistent with non-electoral democracies such as the PRC pretends to be (and which a majority of its population perceives the CCP regime to be). From a liberal perspective, Chinese political institutions must be seen as ineffective or insufficient to achieve democracy, temporary and transitional at best. While less pessimistic, the following paragraphs will concur that current PRC institutions designed to decrease the distance between elite cadres and the masses are not yet well developed enough to make China a democracy, but it is conceivable that expansions and reforms could accomplish such a feat without the aid of electoral light and magic. Echoing Liang Qichao a century ago, and in line with this study's definition of democracy, one of Lu's more outspoken interviewees demands a channel of communication between the people and the government as the most urgently needed change to raise the level of China's democracy.[165]

Early scholarly defenders of the Chinese belief in PRC democracy are few and far between, with Daniel A. Bell's illiberal advocacy and Suzanne Ogden's *Inklings* straining both to exhibit and convince skeptical audiences of democratic reforms since 1989. These and several Chinese authors have more recently gained traction by studying consultative institutions and coining new modifiers like "developmental" democracy.[166] Baogang He, whose model of "paternalistic" democracy this study borrows to describe the current PRC's political goals, has in recent years shed much light into the black box of Chinese political institutions, finding genuine interest in both the Party and society to strive toward a deliberative democratic system which would leave the CCP in place leading the state, with a more informed though still unchallenged authority. How does the party conceive of consultation, responsiveness, and accountability, and what are the institutions it uses to achieve these democratic goals?

Suisheng Zhao's 2006 consideration of the Hu-Wen administration's reforms suggests

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165 Lu, pg. 121, notes that this subject was quite adamant that Western political institutions were not appropriate for China and that their adoption—adding up to a total loss of control—would be a destabilizing mistake.

166 Dingping Guo's chapter uses this last term, resting on three highly debatable points: first, the developmental authoritarian label is inappropriate because the PRC economy has developed as it became *more* democratic, unlike the Yushin system of Park Chung Hee, which dismantled what few democratic institutions remained in Korea. Second, Guo notes that the People's Congress is starting to separate itself from the CCP, including by means of more competitive elections. Finally, decentralization (which may be loosely tied to democratization) has been "the dominant theme of the 30 years of reform." (pg. 165)

that both leaders have been more responsive to popular demands than any previous regime in the PRC's history.[167] After the SARS crisis was largely mishandled in 2003, a new cadre accountability and responsibility system was created to ensure that officials who withheld public health information would be punished. The government has similarly stepped in and dealt harshly with both businessmen and regulatory officers deemed responsible for recent scandals, sensationally covered in Western media, involving melamine in infant milk formulas, diethelene-glycol being substituted for glycerol in toothpaste, and other breaches of vital interest to consumers.[168] But does the pattern of disasters leading to the removal of officials add up to real democratic accountability? Zhao is likely not alone in finding such a perilous, simple model unsatisfying: the real accountability on display is not to the people, but to "hierarchal superiors."

The past half decade has, fortunately, shown a CCP willing to experiment with institutions which connect the government more directly with the people. On an ad-hoc basis, evidence can be found for real consultation with the people, veering into the "deliberation among those affected" favored by democratic theorists. For example, the 2009 Health Care reforms offer an instance of a major initiative with obvious grassroots interest[169], and the process of implementation was said by authors Kornreich et al. to have

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167 Zhao, pg. 236

168 Sheng Ding's chapter, opening Guo & Hickey's uneven volume, shows that swift, punitive responses by the government to official negligence and malfeasance help to shore up the central government's credibility and the perception that the problems are mostly at the local level. In the Western media, "unsafe Chinese products" has become something of a trope, so it is interesting to see Chinese authors attempt to defend these as examples of responsiveness and accountability. The Chinese case is not likely helped by the liberal application of the death penalty to chief offenders.

169 This is to say that the great extent to which the population would be affected by changes made it very unlikely that changes could be made in an authoritarian manner, i.e. "shoving policies down the people's throats."

created new participatory arenas as well as an expectation for inclusiveness and responsiveness among the population.[170] It could well be that other examples of one-off policy consultation and deliberation abound, consisting of both deeper and shallower levels of popular participation. Western political science, however, may be too caught up in more familiar, generalized narratives of political development to produce multiple, individual studies in China like Kornreich et al's. In any case, such an example gives hope to the possibility that other, more permanent institutions may soon live up to their consultative claims. While these have a long way to go before they work in a recognizably democratic, bottom-up direction, it is important to describe them not only to predict or prescribe areas and means of measurable democratization. The harshest critics of the regime also need to see that these institutions exist, that they are more promising instruments to improve the lives of ordinary Chinese people than the imposition of national competitive elections.

In consultative terms, elections have been criticized throughout this essay as a thin measure, with liberal scholars also doubting their ability to reveal “popular will.” One

170 For whatever reason, JSTOR won't let me access this article, and the library doesn't offer access to *The China Journal*, so all of this is from Kornreich et al.'s articl abstract, unfortunately.

obvious supplement to learning what people think about any issue, which might become an alternative in the absence of either direct or representative democracy, is public polling. James Reilly notes that the Party Affairs Department at every university conducts monthly surveys. Likewise, *Lingdian* (Horizon) has done public polling since 2000 as part of a changing media landscape which strives increasingly to meet the interests of consumers, and online polls on a wide variety of topic, mostly apolitical or at least non-threatening, can be found on Chinese media websites.[171] Even surveillance by the Public Security Bureau, which sounds quite antithetical to democratic consultation to liberals, yields valuable information which the government can use to govern better, as it is collected not entirely without the public's knowledge or permission.[172]

Related to consultation by law enforcement officers, Reilly suggests that the Chinese government may use the information it gains from consulting the populace for different

171 Whereas newspapers and other media outlets used to be heavily subsidized by the government, they also had to carry a lot more propaganda in previous decades. Currently under greater market pressure to sustain readership, as *dan wei* automatically subscribing are themselves also unstable, more actual news and even some investigative reporting is being done, as citizens are more inclined to pay money for this content. This is largely the argument of Yuezhi Zhao, who still remains skeptical that the Chinese press can transition from "lapdogs" to "watchdogs" in the current political environment. Anne-Marie Brady also finds a major role for media to promote the Chinese system. One of the more interesting documentaries I've seen in recent years is *Please Vote for Me*, in which the sordid nature of campaigns and less than democratic results of elections are introduced into an elementary school classroom.

172 I foresee this point being twisted into my saying that a police state is good for democracy, but I only mean to say that law enforcement is likely a very reliable source of information about public sentiment to the government. Beat cops know what the people on the street are thinking and doing, not only in the PRC.

purposes. Whereas liberal democracies need to know the median voter, he says, China and authoritarian countries need to skew reports of public opinion “toward a particularly negative and engaged segment of the public” to gauge potential for protest, or worse. If the small segment of the Chinese population Shin finds to be “unconditionally committed to [liberal] democracy” is both the most engaged and challenging to the government, it should not be surprising that the government will take their views and preferences very seriously. Where preferences extend to rapid political liberalization or overthrowing the current political system, the CCP cannot be expected to react differently than any other regime which feels threatened. With regards to the current debate in the PRC on universal versus particular Chinese values, these liberals might never be satisfied by the different, democratic trajectory the PRC is currently on, siding instead with Westerners who can't imagine electoral reforms coming too soon. Again, Shin's survey evidence shows these citizens to be a small minority of a very large population, perhaps also linked to the growth of Christianity and other Western beliefs in recent decades. The Party, in any case, appears steadfast in following its own path, which it strategically alternates between calling socialist,

Chinese, or both.

As Baogang Guo puts it, “In Chinese interpretation, electoral democracy focuses on building a good government; deliberative democracy focuses on good governance.”[173] Many of Guo's hopes for the CCP realizing a deliberative democracy are pinned to the revival of the unwieldy CPPCC's, Chinese People's Political Consultation Conferences. He lists four types of consultation related to these conferences, based on the type of decision to be made, among policy, legislation, personnel, and (large) projects, noting that the number of proposals submitted to these has gradually increased in the past decade. While many improvements in the consultation system have been noted, he finds fault in that these conferences are still only advisory, lacking “teeth” and adequate resources in addition to the usual problems of bureaucratization and unelected appointment of CPPCC members.[174]

If the CPPCC's still sound too official and exclusive of the general public, Ning Zhang's work investigates a theoretically more inclusive institution, “Public Hearing Meetings” or PHM's, with great potential for popular deliberation on policy, should the government choose to reform their structure. Experiments with these occasional, topical meetings are similarly constrained by a “hegemonic discourse” which can apparently only be analyzed to date in terms of whether popular response to the plans announced by the party are “supportive, neutral,” or very rarely “challenging.”[175] Each of these would clearly function better in an environment of equality, the kind that a “consultative rule of law regime” could provide as an alternative to liberal democratization, according to Pan Wei.[176]

Establishing the full rule of law itself could be as challenging as liberal democratization, but authors such as Yuchao Zhu and Lacey Bradley-Storey offer evidence

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173 Guo, pg. 68. These are described as legislative bodies originally, replaced by the National People's Congress, after which point they became strictly consultative. Suspended during the Cultural Revolution, Guo notes that they were quickly revived and numbered 3117 at “all levels” of government by the year 2000.

174 Guo, pg. 70-74.

175 Ning Zhang currently studies PHM's, though I don't know if she has published anything yet. The terms are from a handout given at UCI in 2012.

176 Peerenboom and other Western scholars express skepticism about whether the CCP would ever allow its power to be limited by law. Additionally, he notes that “the sustainability and normative appeal of a consultative rule of law” turns on the extent to which the new elite [in the consulting positions] can be held accountable.” (in Zhao, pg. 74)

that even the imperfect Chinese legal system offers citizens a real chance to try to redress grievances. The democratic effectiveness of institutions like the Administrative Litigation Law (ALL) and petition system, *xinfang* or "letters and visits", is severely compromised by conflicting conceptions of whose purposes they serve.[177] According to Bradley-Storey, the CCP sees these channels largely as a means to substantiate the party's democratic claims as being responsive to the people. Zhu finds that people are reluctant to use the court system because it is at once non-traditional and unfamiliar, complex, and results in success in only about 20% of cases.[178] Portrayed as a dismally hopeless mess in Zhao Liang's documentary, *Shangfang (Petition)*, the centuries-old tradition of traveling to Beijing in search of justice has received contradictory support and suppression in recent years.[179] While entertaining formal complaints from citizens may seem to be retroactive consultation at best, more ambitious intentions suggest that if central leaders committed to more open communication, it would be of mutual benefit to both state and society. As Bradley-Storey notes, the practice of petitioning was revived by the CCP initially to connect the party to the people, to make suggestions for improving governance.[180] Such hopes were likely overwhelmed by the number of complaints which came pouring in from the provinces, some four million cases in 2004.[181] In the end, Zhu suggests that strengthening the National People's Congress would be the best route for government accountability and justice, as the legal system is too fraught with conflicting missions and inefficient practices.[182]

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177 A parallel can be drawn with these and elections in 20th century China, which Hill claims were not really means for the people to communicate their preferences to the government, but rather tools for the government to show the population what the recommended limits of political participation would be, to condition citizens' behavior to be more orderly (than protests and riots), and what topics were subject to public discussion and debate.

178 Guo & Hickey, pg. 109.

179 In 2005, a new law ended the ban on continuous or repeated petitioning while also supposedly making it illegal to intercept and harass petitioners. A survey found that 71% of petitioners found their treatment actually worsened after the law passed (Guo & Li, pg. 175). A 2009 law preventing petitioners from going to Beijing or any level higher than the provincial government could either be read as the Party giving up on the system (not benefitting enough from it) or the fact that most petitions are a result of "lower-level mistakes and errors" (pg. 176). Similarly, local unresponsiveness to such complaints is believed to be behind most local protests, so it would seem to be in the central government's interest to strengthen or at least streamline this process.

180 Guo & Li, pg. 161.

181 Guo & Hickey, pg. 111.

182 Guo & Hickey, pg. 116.

In terms of prescriptions in specific terms of expanding C,R,A, this section has highlighted several institutions which could be strengthened, implemented in more geographic locations, and made to accommodate more bottom-up input. For the time being, the CCP still appears to be more interested in legitimizing its democratic claims among a population inoculated with propaganda than in governing democratically. Presumably, Chinese people's standards for good governance will continue to rise with their income, so simply sustaining citizens' beliefs in a deliberative, PRC democracy will require the Party to display practices of consultation, responsiveness, and accountability not only more visibly (domestically and globally), but also with a great deal more substantive depth. Should the economy falter or corruption fail to be reduced, we can expect that the surprising Chinese connection between performance legitimacy and democracy itself will be tested.

In sum, what the people think matters, and what the government is doing could be mistaken for democratization if carried out more effectively or wholeheartedly. Despite widespread disappointment with political liberalization in the PRC, two explanations for

citizen perceptions of the PRC as a democracy remain: either citizens accept the government's assertion that "*for* the people is enough" or they feel empowered by the extent to which the CCP seeks their participation in governing. If PRC citizens see their participation as meaningful, even if outside observers such as myself are not satisfied, they live in a democracy of their own creation.

Comparative Discussion. The three cases presented here, with historical background, show that the meaning of democracy remains contested in Chinese territories. If the principle of congruence, which holds that political institutions are aligned with a polity's political culture, is taken seriously, the category of "non-democracy" should be severely constricted, reserved for truly terrible regimes obviously governing against the will of the majority. Satisfying the majority, by this essay's democratic definition, especially in new democracies which actively pursue and defend the "tyranny of the majority", opens wide the possibility that a democracy might behave badly. Minority protection becomes especially important in such cases, lest the empowered majority use its new status as masters of the country to settle old, likely ethnic scores of the kind outlined in *From Voting to Violence* or Amy Chua's *World on Fire*.[183]

More common, however, are the avowedly liberal democracies in which the majority still feels disempowered or even oppressed. Under such conditions, groups staking claims to be "the people" must go outside the electoral institutions to make their voices heard, participating in politics more visibly, and unfortunately, often violently. Chu et al. and Shin show that such sentiment is very strong in the liberal states of East Asia, no less strong than

183 This is relevant to the democratic question in that the CCP may actually be restricting a nationalist majority who want the government to be (even) more assertive about its territorial claims to the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands and the South China Sea. A newly liberal, democratic PRC might fall pray to candidates who escalate to more extremely nationalistic positions on such territorial issues to gain votes. A growing number of the Han majority are also resentful about the affirmative action benefits received by ethnic minorities. Recent, perhaps increasing Sinification of Singapore is another example of moving governance closer to majority rule in a manner inimical to liberal democracy.

in the more traditionally authoritarian and post-totalitarian states. In all, Shin's survey evidence suggests only a vocally liberal minority in these populations actually demands the "by the people" half of democracy. The majority would be satisfied--and consider the regime democratic—with the "for the people" half associated with good governance. By focusing on C,R,A the cases, both historical and contemporary, have attempted to strike an analytical balance between institutions and outputs.

Present in each case but not explicitly addressed so far is the role of Confucianism and its concomitant "Asian Values" influencing the meaning of democracy and its desirability. While Shin's use of the Asian Barometer survey offers a strong refutation of claims that traditional East Asian culture is incompatible with democracy or makes it any less desirable, large-N studies are inherently clumsy and indirect when dealing with what such a large and contested term means to the people answering the survey questions. More in-depth interviews conducted by Joel Fetzer and Christopher Soper with liberal democratic advocates, elites, and Confucians suggest that political liberalization in Taiwan was modeled directly on the West, that "Confucianism was associated with the authoritarian practices of the GMD" and that it had "little or nothing to do" with the democratization movement's political goals.[184]

Readers who still doubt that the Chinese conception of democracy is significantly different, unconvinced by "storytelling" in the history sections, or skeptical of surveys showing citizen satisfaction with ongoing "communist dictatorship" in the PRC might appreciate two further pieces of evidence. Regarding the second point, in the summer of 2012 I interviewed 31 citizens in the PRC on how they conceive of free choice and its

184 Fetzer & Soper, pg. 502.

relationship with subjective wellbeing (SWB).[185] Presumably, if these citizens felt their life choices were in any way constrained by living in the PRC, they would describe their level of choice as low on a 10-point scale. I found, not unexpectedly, that these citizens largely mirrored the optimism and satisfaction of 2008 Pew survey, seeing many improvements in the kinds of choices available to them, compared to past years and generations. That only a few mentioned politics at all, and only one in negative terms which were clearly based on liberalism, suggests that the larger surveys are valid on an individual level as well as a societal one.

Returning to more comparative evidence, in the fall of 2010, I gathered global media data comparing words associated with democracy for a class on political culture.[186] With data from 583 news websites, I concluded that democracy is less associated with "freedom" in the PRC than in any other country's media. Overall, 29% of all news articles worldwide

185 Not sure how much to go into methodology of this study, which was conducted with a grant from the Center for Asian Studies, under my classmate, Hannah Enenbach, as the primary researcher. I interviewed the subjects mostly on trains for 20 minutes to one hour each, attempting to keep the sample as diverse as possible in terms of age, gender, and geographic location, I only managed to interview one or two poor people, as we did not take any overnight trains in the hard seat section.

186 Methodology for this word association search was fairly complicated, originally conceived to compare the proportion of positive and negative words in articles mentioning democracy in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, and Arabic. The goal was to get an idea of how different countries' media portray democracy to their citizens: i.e. would it reduce violence in the political process?, was its promotion a cloak for Western imperialism?, would it give freedom to individuals and nations?

which contained the word “democracy” also contained the word “freedom”. For liberals, these concepts seem a natural pair, going hand in hand in both news reporting and rhetoric. Not surprisingly, the type of media whose articles contained both words at the highest rate, about half of all articles, were right-wing U.S. Sites, with the Middle East coming in second. The 101 East Asian sites came in last place as a region, with 20.3% of articles mentioning both words, with the PRC and Singapore's media having the lowest percentages within that group. Figures 4 and 5, below, summarize findings relevant to this study.

Polity	# of sites Sampled	# in Chinese	%Dem&Free
Hong Kong	15	8	29.90%
Macau	3	3	22.70%
PRC	51	47	14.10%
Singapore	3	0	18.40%
Taiwan	21	18	21.40%
USA	64	0	35.10%
All Sites	583	81	29%

FIGURE 4: The percentage of media articles containing the word “democracy,” searched on Google in fall 2010, which also contain the word “freedom” for selected countries.

Region (N=#)	%Dem.&Free
C. Asia (16)	20.60%
East Asia (101)	20.30%
Europe (52)	32.50%
Latin Am. (118)	29.90%
MidEast (117)	36.90%
NAFTA (83)	34.50%

S Asia (40)	22.20%
SE Asia (48)	21.10%
Left-Wing USA (47)	32.50%
Right-Wing USA (42)	44.20%
Mean Newsmedia (583)	29%

FIGURE 5: The percentage of media articles containing the word “democracy,” searched on Google in fall 2010, which also contain the word “freedom” for all sources, by region of origin.

I am hesitant to conclude too much from this very simple test, but it aligns with Shin's work suggesting a different concept is being presented to media markets in the three cases of this study. As both Hong Kong and Taiwan are more liberal than either the PRC or Singapore, their media should, and do, associate democracy with freedom at a rate up to twice that of the Mainland. Given that democracy is a universally valued concept, it seems likely that it is being conceptualized and discussed illiberally in the PRC, as the language and cultures of these media markets is fairly constant across the sample.

Conclusions. Broadly reductive comparisons between an individualist West and collectivist East grow less valid with every passing year, but historical differences in the value of democracy as means or end persist. As China rises, nationalist pride in its own, unique political culture and institutions may be expected to grow, and there may be some connection between global cultural status and the growth of Chinese identity in Singapore, along with its decline in Taiwan. Given current popular perceptions, full political liberalization in the Western sense of both Singapore and China, among the majorities in each country who see both as democratic, would be seen by Chinese nationalists less as

democratization than as unacceptable Westernization.[187] While few seriously claim that political liberalization today would be as disastrous as in the Republican Era, the uncertainty inherent in elections might well be undesirable to more than just the ruling CCP, and the Party's concerns about China's stability and territorial integrity are not wholly unfounded.

This study has suggested that both Taiwan and Singapore offer the less developed PRC options for its political trajectory, and while it agrees with Ortmann that so far China prefers the Singapore model,[188] it disagrees both normatively and empirically that China should and will inevitably give way to political liberalization. Other democratizing options exist, and they may be better able to incorporate popular political participation to make the regime consult the people more often and deeply, respond more effectively to their expressed policy preferences, and perhaps even have better mechanisms of accountability than a very occasional electoral test.

Methodologically, survey data in East Asia suggest that while political scientists would prefer that concepts like democracy be measured in terms of citizens' orientations toward their states' political institutions, these same citizens are more likely to compare their own life experiences to those in the past. Concepts which political scientists define as institutionally distinct from each other, especially democracy, "good governance," "performance legitimacy," and popular legitimacy in general may be indistinguishable in the popular imagination and are unlikely to travel well across international borders.

Finally, it is worth separating what this very long, convoluted essay has argued from what it has not. Firstly, there are other forms of democracy than the most familiar, liberal

187 Though see Li (2012) for a PRC survey stating that a majority of citizens "would not be opposed" to adoption of Western-style democracy. Stanley Rosen similarly cites recent surveys of university students, available "internally" and not publicly available, showing a strong preference for liberal democracy, but I'm not sure how to cite his posts from the C-POL discussion board. Rosen attributes Hu Jintao's declarations at the 18th Party Congress that China must "resolutely not follow Western political systems" to being afraid of liberal college students losing faith in the Chinese system. Contrasting these surveys with the larger ones from the East Asian Barometer, it is difficult not to suggest that liberalism finds its strongest support in China, among the well-educated, while the majority believing PRC propaganda about current democratic status come from the countryside and lower social strata. This is hardly surprising and begs the reinsertion of the hackneyed term "bourgeois democracy" into official CCP critiques of the West.

188 Ortmann, pg. 162.

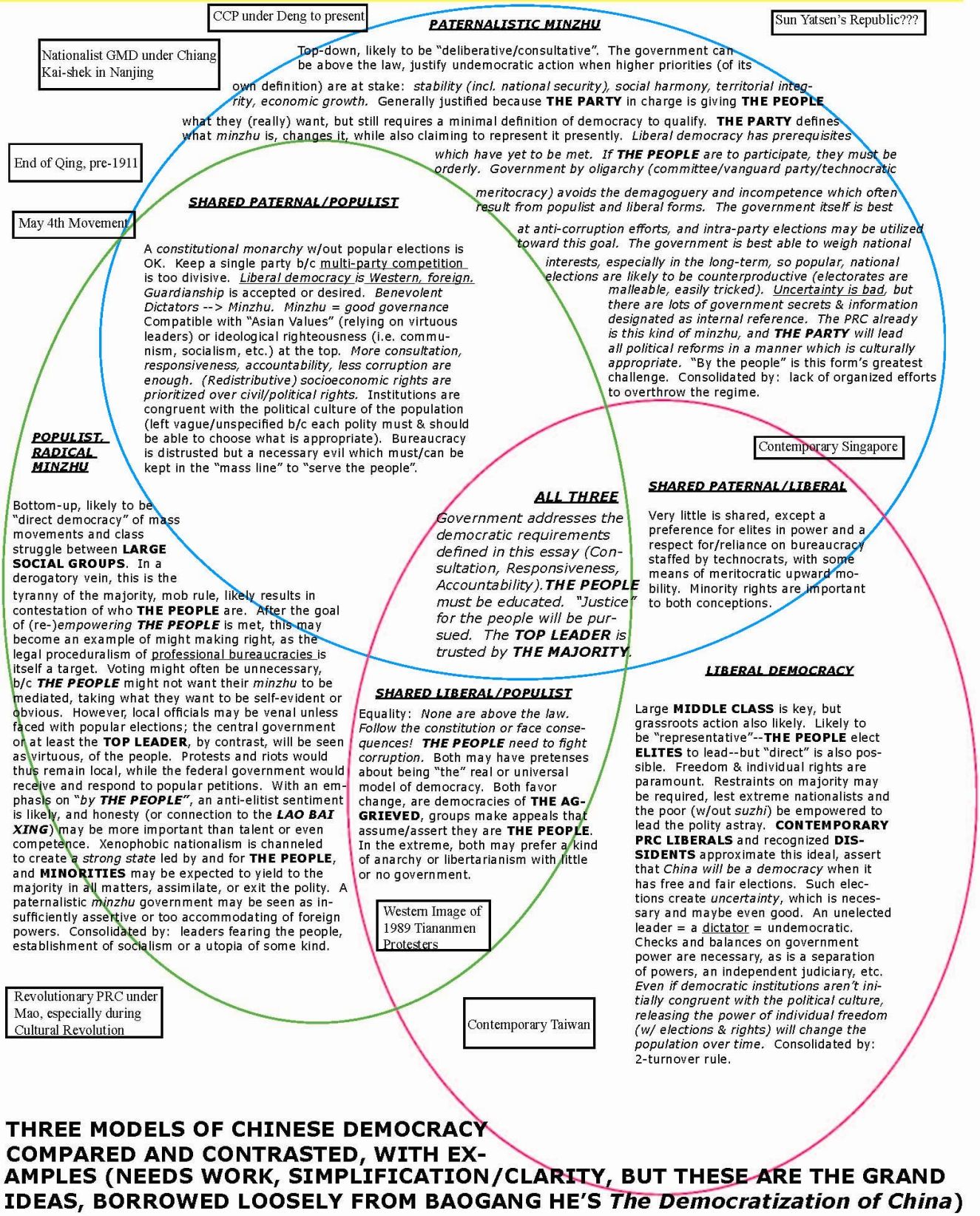
one, and others should be considered fully democratic to the extent that a polity's citizens believe their regime's claims. Elections have been much maligned in this essay as unnecessary for democracy and even sometimes undemocratic; if direct and deliberative forms have an advantage over representative examples for “the people” ruling more clearly, it remains to be proved conclusively that any of these result in systematically better governance, with or without the use of voting institutions. And lastly, this essay has *not* argued that the PRC is currently a democracy—I'm not the least convinced that Chinese people rule their republic. Rather, there is a solid foundation of institutions in place which provide some degree of consultation, responsiveness, and accountability which is apparently able to satisfy the current desire of a majority of citizens for popular rule. The democratic trajectory the PRC is on leads toward an illiberal but deliberative form of democracy, so in respect of the beliefs of hundreds of millions of Chinese citizens, their views should not be called “wrong” or “misperceived.” Instead, a more precise distinction needs to be drawn in the field of political science between democratization, which includes the political reforms and improved governance which all people can perceive and appreciate, and political

liberalization. The so-called “performance legitimacy” on which Singapore and the PRC are said to rely so heavily should be incorporated into the definition of democracy itself, if a majority of citizens agree on this.

APPENDIX A

STYLE KEY: **ALL CAPS & BOLD** = **ACTORS**; *Italicized = Goals, Assumptions, Assertions*; Underlined = Obstacles, Antitheses, Enemies

Examples of Chinese polities past & present are in boxes approximating their position to a model of *minzhu*. Participation expectations and relationships between officials and the population ("direct, representative, deliberative/consultative") are in quotation marks.



PATERNALISTIC MINZHU

Top-down, likely to be "deliberative/consultative". The government can be above the law, justify undemocratic action when higher priorities (of its own definition) are at stake: *stability (incl. national security), social harmony, territorial integrity, economic growth.* Generally justified because **THE PARTY** in charge is giving **THE PEOPLE** what they (really) want, but still requires a minimal definition of democracy to qualify. **THE PARTY** defines what *minzhu* is, changes it, while also claiming to represent it presently. *Liberal democracy has prerequisites which have yet to be met. If **THE PEOPLE** are to participate, they must be orderly. Government by oligarchy (committee/vanguard party/technocratic meritocracy) avoids the demagoguery and incompetence which often result from populist and liberal forms. The government itself is best at anti-corruption efforts, and intra-party elections may be utilized toward this goal. The government is best able to weigh national interests, especially in the long-term, so popular, national elections are likely to be counterproductive (electorates are malleable, easily tricked). Uncertainty is bad, but there are lots of government secrets & information designated as internal reference. The PRC already is this kind of minzhu, and **THE PARTY** will lead all political reforms in a manner which is culturally appropriate.* "By the people" is this form's greatest challenge. Consolidated by: lack of organized efforts to overthrow the regime.

SHARED PATERNAL/POPULIST

A *constitutional monarchy* w/out popular elections is OK. Keep a single party b/c multi-party competition is too divisive. *Liberal democracy is Western, foreign. Guardianship* is accepted or desired. *Benevolent Dictators --> Minzhu. Minzhu = good governance* Compatible with "Asian Values" (relying on virtuous leaders) or ideological righteousness (i.e. communism, socialism, etc.) at the top. *More consultation, responsiveness, accountability, less corruption are enough. (Redistributive) socioeconomic rights are prioritized over civil/political rights.* Institutions are congruent with the political culture of the population (left vague/unspecified b/c each polity must & should be able to choose what is appropriate). Bureaucracy is distrusted but a necessary evil which must/can be kept in the "mass line" to "serve the people".

POPULIST, RADICAL MINZHU

Bottom-up, likely to be "direct democracy" of mass movements and class struggle between **LARGE SOCIAL GROUPS**. In a derogatory vein, this is the tyranny of the majority, mob rule, likely results in contestation of who **THE PEOPLE** are. After the goal of (re-)*empowering **THE PEOPLE*** is met, this may become an example of might making right, as the legal proceduralism of professional bureaucracies is itself a target. Voting might often be unnecessary, b/c ***THE PEOPLE*** might not want their *minzhu* to be mediated, taking what they want to be self-evident or obvious. However, local officials may be venal unless faced with popular elections; the central government or at least the **TOP LEADER**, by contrast, will be seen as virtuous, of the people. Protests and riots would thus remain local, while the federal government would receive and respond to popular petitions. With an emphasis on "*by **THE PEOPLE***", an anti-elitist sentiment is likely, and honesty (or connection to the ***LAO BAI XING***) may be more important than talent or even competence. Xenophobic nationalism is channeled to create a *strong state* led by and for **THE PEOPLE**, and **MINORITIES** may be expected to yield to the majority in all matters, assimilate, or exit the polity. A paternalistic *minzhu* government may be seen as insufficiently assertive or too accommodating of foreign powers. Consolidated by: leaders fearing the people, establishment of socialism or a utopia of some kind.

ALL THREE

*Government addresses the democratic requirements defined in this essay (Consultation, Responsiveness, Accountability). **THE PEOPLE** must be educated. "Justice" for the people will be pursued. The **TOP LEADER** is trusted by **THE MAJORITY**.*

SHARED PATERNAL/LIBERAL

Very little is shared, except a preference for elites in power and a respect for/reliance on bureaucracy staffed by technocrats, with some means of meritocratic upward mobility. Minority rights are important to both conceptions.

SHARED LIBERAL/POPULIST

Equality: *None are above the law. Follow the constitution or face consequences! **THE PEOPLE** need to fight corruption.* Both may have pretenses about being "the" real or universal model of democracy. Both favor change, are democracies of **THE AGGRIEVED**, groups make appeals that assume/assert they are **THE PEOPLE**. In the extreme, both may prefer a kind of anarchy or libertarianism with little or no government.

LIBERAL DEMOCRACY

Large **MIDDLE CLASS** is key, but grassroots action also likely. Likely to be "representative"--**THE PEOPLE** elect **ELITES** to lead--but "direct" is also possible. Freedom & individual rights are paramount. Restraints on majority may be required, lest extreme nationalists and the poor (w/out *suzhi*) be empowered to lead the polity astray. **CONTEMPORARY PRC LIBERALS** and recognized **DISSIDENTS** approximate this ideal, assert that *China will be a democracy* when it has free and fair elections. Such elections create *uncertainty*, which is necessary and maybe even good. An unelected leader = a dictator = undemocratic. Checks and balances on government power are necessary, as is a separation of powers, an independent judiciary, etc. *Even if democratic institutions aren't initially congruent with the political culture, releasing the power of individual freedom (w/ elections & rights) will change the population over time.* Consolidated by: 2-turnover rule.

THREE MODELS OF CHINESE DEMOCRACY COMPARED AND CONTRASTED, WITH EXAMPLES (NEEDS WORK, SIMPLIFICATION/CLARITY, BUT THESE ARE THE GRAND IDEAS, BORROWED LOOSELY FROM BAOGANG HE'S *The Democratization of China*)

Criterion	PRC	Singapore	Taiwan (RoC)	Hong Kong, SAR
Population	1.34 billion	5353494	23234936	7153519
Land area (sq.km)	9.6 million	697	35980	1104
GDP Growth Rate 2011 in %	9.2	4.9	4	5
GDP Growth Rate 2010 in %	10.4	14.8	10.7	7
GDP Growth Rate 2009 in %	9.2	-1	-1.8	-2.6
Average GDP Growth Rate 2009-11 in %	9.6	6.2333333333	4.3	3.1333333333
Unemployment Rate 2011	6.5	2	4.4	3.4
Inflation Rate 2011	5.5	5.2	1.4	5.3
TIPR 2011 Tier	2wl	2	1	2
Freedom House Political Rights 2012 (1 to 7)	7	4	1	
Freedom House Civil Liberties 2012 (1 to 7)	6	4	2	
Freedom House 2012 (Free, Partly Free, Not Free)	Not Free	Partly Free	Free	
Freedom House 2012 Freedom of Press Ranking (Out of 40)	38	32	7	17
RWB Press Freedom 2012 Rank (out of 179)	174	135	45	54
Happy Planet Index 2012 Rank (out of 178)*	60	89	84	102
UN Human Development 2011 (out of 187)	101	26		13
Satisfaction with Life Index 2006 Rank (out of 178)	82	53	68	63
Global Peace Index 2012 Rank (out of 158)	89	23	27	23
Corruption Perception 2011 Rank (out of 182)	75	5	32	12
Bribe Payers Index 2008 Rank (out of 22)	21	9	14	13
Enabling Trade Index 2010 Rank (out of 125)	48	1	28	2
Doing Business Report 2012 Rank (out of 183)	91	1	25	2
Index of Economic Freedom 2012 Rank (out of 179)	138	2	18	1
Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy Index 2011 Rank (out of	141	81	37	80
International Property Rights Index 2012 Rank (out of 130)	57		21	12
GDP Growth Rate 2011 rank (out of 216)	10	73	98	67
Unemployment Rate Rank 2011 (out of 201)	70	12	44	30
Investment as % of GDP Rank 2011 (out of 150)	1	54	81	68
Inflation Rate Rank 2011 (out of 223)	143	137	15	139
Current Account Balance Rank 2011 (out of 192)	1	10	13	28
Net Migration Rate Rank 2012 (out of 221)	132	6	71	25

5.8365271415	3.157674151	2.9009806093	2.456874365
PRC	Singapore	Taiwan (RoC)	Hong Kong

APPENDIX B: Vital Statistics & Aggregation of Global Rankings

Average Decile (1= top 10%, 9= bottom 10%)

(The PRC is in the lower-middle range, while Singapore, Taiwan, and Hong Kong are all near the top ranking polities.)

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