

Utah State University

DigitalCommons@USU

---

All Graduate Theses and Dissertations, Spring  
1920 to Summer 2023

Graduate Studies

---

5-2013

## Chinese People's Perceptions of and Preparedness for Democracy

Xiangyun Lan  
*Utah State University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/etd>



Part of the [Sociology Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Lan, Xiangyun, "Chinese People's Perceptions of and Preparedness for Democracy" (2013). *All Graduate Theses and Dissertations, Spring 1920 to Summer 2023*. 2030.  
<https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/etd/2030>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate Studies at DigitalCommons@USU. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Graduate Theses and Dissertations, Spring 1920 to Summer 2023 by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@USU. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@usu.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@usu.edu).



CHINESE PEOPLE'S PERCEPTIONS OF AND PREPAREDNESS  
FOR DEMOCRACY

by

Xiangyun Lan

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER of SCIENCE

in

Sociology

Approved:

---

Peggy Petrzelka  
Major Professor

---

Douglas Jackson-Smith  
Committee Member

---

Amy K. Bailey  
Committee Member

---

Mark R. McLellan  
Vice President for Research and  
Dean of the School of Graduate  
Studies

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY  
Logan, Utah

2013

Copyright © Xiangyun Lan 2013  
All Rights Reserved

## ABSTRACT

Chinese People's Perceptions of and Preparedness  
for Democracy

by

Xiangyun Lan, Master of Science  
Utah State University, 2013Major Professor: Dr. Peggy Petrzela  
Department: Sociology, Social Work and Anthropology

Democratization in China history has always involved exploration and debates on the concept of democracy. This is an ongoing course, continuing currently in China. This thesis seeks to understand Chinese people's perceptions of democracy and their considerations of the strategies to democratize modern China. I do so through analyzing a recent widespread internet debate on democracy and democratization stimulated by *Han's Three Essays*, three blog essays posted by Han Han, an influential public intellectual in China. The results of the analysis suggest that Chinese people perceive democracy close to the western notion, which focuses on the importance of institutional structures and cultural values. More specifically, they view the nurturing of democratic cultural values among the Chinese public critical groundwork to achieve successful democracy.

(74 pages)

## PUBLIC ABSTRACT

Chinese People's Perceptions of and Preparedness  
for Democracy

Xiangyun Lan

Democratization in China has been receiving attention from all over the world. In the US, a large percentage of media reports about China contribute to report democratization related political issues. And as a mainland Chinese citizen living under an undemocratic regime, I have always felt compelled to do research on democratization in China society.

This thesis describes a research study conducted to understand how Chinese people understand the notion of democracy, and with this notion how they perceive to democratize their society. The result of this research's analysis shows that Chinese people view democracy similar to a western notion; and they believe to help Chinese public to develop democratic cultural values is the most important in the course of democratizing China society. In common words, to democratize people would eventually democratize the society.

This research works on data collected from the internet. The use of internet data is money saving and helps explore research on internet data.

This research hopefully can provide a reference view for Chinese people themselves and people who care about China in understanding the current situation and predicting the prospect of democratization in China. And with a better understanding Chinese people might be able to take more strategic steps and earn strategic support from the world in the course of democratization of China's society.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my advisor, Professor Peggy Petrzelka, for her deeply insightful advice throughout this thesis research. I would especially like to thank my committee members, Drs. Douglas Jackson-Smith and Amy Bailey, for their support and assistance throughout the entire process.

I give special thanks to my family, friends, and fellow students for their encouragement, support, and care as I wrote this thesis. I could not have done it without all of you.

Xiangyun Lan

## CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT .....	iii
PUBLIC ABSTRACT .....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	v
LIST OF TABLES.....	vii
INTRODUCTION.....	1
LITERATURE REVIEW .....	3
Theories of Democracy.....	3
Institutional Components to Democracy .....	6
Cultural Values to Democracy.....	7
A List of Components to Democracy .....	10
History of Democracy in China: Late 1800s to Early 1970s.....	11
BACKGROUND ON HAN'S THREE ESSAYS AND INTERNET USE IN CHINA..	23
Who is Han Han.....	23
Han's Three Essays.....	24
Internet Use in China .....	27
METHODS .....	32
Sampling.....	32
Qualitative Content Analysis.....	34
RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS.....	37
Coding <i>Han's Three Essays</i> .....	37
Han Han on Democratization in China.....	39
Coding Comments to <i>Han's Three Essays</i> .....	41
A China Pattern of Democracy.....	56
CONCLUSION.....	66
REFERENCES .....	69

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1 Institutional Components to Democracy .....	7
2 Cultural Values to Democracy.....	10
3 Components to Democracy.....	11
4 Indicators to Components of Democracy .....	36
5 <i>Coding On Revolution</i> .....	43
6 <i>Coding On Democracy</i> .....	48
7 <i>Coding Wanting Freedom</i> .....	51
8 Three Essays .....	54
9 Additional Components to Democracy .....	56
10 Dominant Components of Democracy Across All Essays .....	59



## Chinese People's Perceptions of and Preparedness for Democracy

*In a revolutionary movement there is always the danger that political exigencies might obscure, or even nullify, essential spiritual aims. A firm insistence on the inviolability and primacy of such aims is not mere idealism but a necessary safeguard against an Animal Farm syndrome where the new order after its first flush of enthusiastic reforms takes on the murky colours of the very system it has replaced.*

-- Aung San Suu Kyi (*In Quest of Democracy: Essays in Honour of Bogyoke Aung San*)

### INTRODUCTION

Aung San Suu Kyi, the famous Burmese opposition politician, expressed concern that a revolutionary movement aiming at bringing about democracy could turn into a course that deviates from its original direction and ends up with an “Animal Farm”. In China, similar worries were expressed by a highly influential democracy advocate, Han Han, in three blog essays he posted in December of 2011. Three essays have stirred up widespread debates across China’s society. The debates over these three essays, generally termed Han’s Three Essays (韩三篇), provide an opportunity to examine democratization in China. Through analyzing the debates, this thesis seeks to understand how Chinese people view democracy, how they comprehend the conditions necessary to achieve a successful democracy instead of an “Animal Farm,” and what steps they believe should be taken to democratize China.

As I detail shortly, China is on a journey of democratization that began in the late 1800s (Nathan 1985:45). As the country with the largest population and most rapidly growing economy in the world, China deserves scholarly attention to the process and the prospect of its democratization. The answer to how Chinese people view democracy will provide meaningful insights to the nature and debates of democratization occurring within China.

In this thesis, I first discuss critical research pieces which examine theories of democracy. I then provide history of democracy and democratization in China, followed by research on democracy that has been conducted in China. I then introduce Han Han and his essays that simulated debates on democracy. I follow this with a discussion of methods to be used in my thesis, then turn to my results discussion and conclusion.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In this literature review, I first examine critical theories of democracy to aid in establishing an “ideal type” of democracy that can be used as a yardstick to measure Chinese people’s notion of democracy. I then briefly review the history of democratization in China and introduce a notion of democracy that developed within Chinese traditional cultural framework. As I will show, the notion of democracy held by Chinese people originated from a western idea but has been modified to fit within a Chinese cultural framework. I then summarize recent research findings of how Chinese people view democracy. As I elaborate below, this research is insufficient; and “a lack of knowledge of attitudes in China” is still a problem in addressing questions concerning Chinese democratization (Rosen 2010:509-516).

### *Theories of Democracy*

The word “democracy” comes from the Greek language, which refers to direct, participatory, and representative forms of rule by the people (Sargent 2009:62). While there is no role model of a perfectly successful democracy in the world, political theorists try to distinguish between democracy under construction and democracy achieved, and “a remarkable consensus has emerged concerning the minimal conditions that polities must meet in order to merit the prestigious appellation of ‘democratic’” (Schmitter and Karl 1991). Below, I focus on critical theories that discuss these conditions which constitutes an “ideal type” of democracy.

Linz and Stepan (1996) identified five conditions necessary for a “consolidated” democracy, which satisfies three requirements: (1) Behaviorally, no political actor seeks to create a nondemocratic regime; (2) Attitudinally, the public believes in democratic procedures and institutions as the most appropriate way to govern; and (3) Constitutionally, conflicts are addressed within the bounds of law. These conditions include: (1) *Civil Society*, a normative aspiration and a style of organization formed on participatory citizens organizing and participating; (2) *Political Society* with sufficient autonomy and a working consensus about procedures of governance, including institutions such as political parties, elections, electoral rules, political leadership, interparty alliances, and legislatures; (3) *Rule of Law* referring to an indispensable constitutionalism interpreted by an independent judicial system and supported by a strong legal culture in civil society; (4) *Usable State Bureaucracy* that effectively protects the rights of its citizens and delivers basic services that citizens demand; (5) *Economic Society* comprising a set of socio-politically crafted and socio-politically accepted norms, institutions, and regulations that mediates between state and market (p.7-11).

Sargent (2009) provides a “text-book” notion of democracy which discusses key principles of a fully functioning democracy, and gave a list of seven principles and indicators of their existence (p. 62-90). These seven principles are: (1) *Citizen Involvement* where Citizens are involved in making political decisions by voting, participating in political organizations and activities; (2) *Representation*, which refers to a system of representation for people to choose representatives to act for them; (3) *Rule of Law*, that states the law is supreme, not those who made it; (4) *An Electoral System* that

supports majority rules; (5) *Political Equality* which includes equality in voting, running for office, political influence; equality before law; equality of opportunity; economic and social equality; (6) *Freedom, Liberty, and Rights* which include the right to vote; freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, of religion, or movement, from arbitrary treatment by the political and legal system conditioned on political toleration and “the silence of the law and unenforceability”; and (7) *Education*, emphasizing that an educated populace is necessary to achieve sufficient toleration and make a democracy fully function.

A leading political theorist, Robert Dahl (1989), made statements on what democracy is and why it is important in his important work *Democracy and Its Critics*. He discussed institutions that make democracy work and conditions that make democratic institutions possible, with focus on cultural values. This list of cultural values include: (1) *Belief* in the legitimacy of the institutions of democracy-public contestation and participation; (2) *Beliefs* about authority relationships between government and the governed; (3) *Confidence* in the capacity of the government to deal effectively with the country's problems; (4) *Political and interpersonal trust*; and (5) *Belief* in the possibility and desirability of political cooperation mixed with a belief in the legitimacy of conflict (p. 261-263).

From the above discussion, two major component categories to democracy emerge: one is that of *institutional components*, and the other is of *cultural values*. I now discuss each of these major components, beginning with institutional components.

*Institutional components to democracy*

Schmitter and Karl (1991) defined a successful democracy by placing emphasis upon operative guidelines of a democratic institution. Using Robert Dahl's cultural values, they proposed two more and gave a list of the procedural conditions that must be present for modern political democracy (1991:247). These operative guidelines for democracy include: (1) *Usable State Bureaucracy* composed by elected officials that have constitutional rights over government decisions; (2) *Free Elections* of officials that are fairly conducted; (3) A *Civil Right* to vote enjoyed practically by all adults; (4) A *Civil Right* to run for elective office granted universally to all adults; (5) *Freedom of Expression*, referring to the right by citizens to express themselves on political matters; (6) *Free Media* ensuring citizens' right to seek out alternative sources of information; (7) *Freedom of Assemble*, citizens' right to form independent associations or organizations; and (8) *State Autonomy* where the state is able to act independently of constraints imposed by some other overarching political system.

Many of the components to democracy identified above are interconnected and intertwining, due to taxonomies and different wording schemes. However, the definitions of the varying terms show consistency in the components. For example, all above theories identify the operative procedure of *Free Election*. All theories also identify *Citizens' Political Rights and Freedom* and *Free Media* as essential institutional components to democracy; both Sargent's (2009) democracy principle and Linz and Stepan's (1996) conditions to democracy contain *Rule of Law*, which is similar to Dahl (1991) and Schmitter and Karl's (1991) *Usable State Bureaucracy* whose legitimacy is

granted by constitution. Table 1 contains four components consistently found in the theoretical definitions of democracy provided.

**Table 1: Institutional Components to Democracy**

<b>Operative Procedures</b>	Free and competitive election and a democratic constitution
<b>Civil Liberties or Freedom</b>	Freedom of speech, of expression, of the media, of assembly, of religion, of movement, freedom from arbitrary treatment by the political and legal system
<b>Political Rights</b>	Rights that ensure citizen involvement include to vote, to run for Elective Office
<b>Rule of Law</b>	An indispensable constitutionalism interpreted by an independent judicial system and supported by a strong legal culture in civil society

I now turn to critical theories on democracy that establish a checklist of the cultural values necessary to democracy.

#### *Cultural values to democracy*

Almond and Verba's (1989) classic text on political culture of democracy, *Civic Culture*, conceptualized "political culture" as "the specifically political orientations -- attitudes towards the political system and its various parts, and attitudes toward the role of the self in the system" (p. 12). They studied mass attitudes and values in five nations and identified the participant political culture (compared to parochial and subject political cultures), as the most congruent with a democratic political structure (p. 21). The participant political culture is a civic culture constituting of a set of political beliefs, attitudes, norms, and perceptions favorable to individuals' participation within the

political system and a set of nonpolitical ones such as trust in other people and social participation that work to sustain democratic institutions (pp. 32; 178). Almond and Verba (1989) prescribed ten characteristics shown by civic citizens in democracy as: (1) Oriented toward their political systems in both the political and governmental senses; (2) Pride in aspects of one's nation; (3) Expect fair treatment from government authorities; (4) Talk freely and frequently about politics; (5) Emotionally involved in elections; (6) Tolerance toward opposition parties; (7) Valuing of active participation in local government activities, parties, and in civic associations; (8) Self-confidence in one's competence to participate in politics; (9) Civic cooperation and trust; (10) Membership in a voluntary association.

These characteristics of civic culture parallel components which political scientist, Robert Putnam (1993), described in his work, *Making Democracy Work*. Putnam explored some fundamental questions about civic life by studying the regions of Italy, with a primary concern to explore the origins of effective democratic governance (1993:15). He found that “the degree to which its surroundings approximate the ideal of a ‘civic community’” plays a key role in democratic institutional success (p. 87). Central themes to the “civic community” include: (1) *Civic Engagement* as a consequence to citizens’ interest in public issues and is more oriented to shared benefits; (2) *Political Equality* referring to citizenship that entails equal rights and obligations for all, and citizens interacting as equals; (3) *Solidarity, Trust, and Tolerance* among citizens who are helpful, respectful, and trustful toward one another, and are tolerant of their opponents; (4)



*Associations* that instill in their members habits of cooperation, solidarity, and public-spiritedness.

Gibson and Duch (1992) also considered some of the key cultural requisites to democracy. When examining the contemporary political culture of the Soviet Union, their consideration was inspired by Robert Dahl's list of cultural values they thought conducive to democratic development (1992:332). The cultural prerequisites to democracy they prescribed are: (1) *Political Tolerance*, without which, they argue, widespread contestation is impossible, regime legitimacy is imperiled, and a numbing conformity prevails; (2) *Valuation of Liberty*, the guaranteed opportunities for citizens to compete for political power; (3) *Support for Democratic Norms*, including political tolerance, respect for freedom of expression, and respect for rule of law over state authority; (4) *Rights Consciousness* where citizens are vigilant about their rights, and define and claim their rights; (5) *Support for Dissent*, displayed in citizens' ability to challenge the actions of government and to dissent from those they find objectionable; (6) *Support for Independent Media*, where a vigorous, pluralistic media that serve as a check on government; and (7) *Popular Support for the Institution of Competitive Election*, in which candidates freely compete for votes and virtually all the adult population is eligible to vote.

As with institutional components, there are several consistent factors included under Cultural Values Components. These include *Political Tolerance*, *Interpersonal Trust*, and *Civic Cooperation and Association* and are contained and defined within Table 2.

**Table 2: Cultural Values to Democracy**

<b>Political Tolerance</b>	Citizens prepared to be tolerant of those who hold different political beliefs, and of existence of dissents in the society
<b>Interpersonal Trust</b>	Citizens are helpful, respectful, and trustful toward one another
<b>Civic Cooperation and Association</b>	Citizens' interest in public issues and is more oriented to shared benefits, and habits of cooperation, solidarity, and public-spiritedness

*A List of Components to Democracy*

Table 3 contains the combined institutional and cultural values components identified in the literature as essential to democracy. It is these components which will be examined for in Han Han's essays and responses to his essays.

I now turn to discussing democracy and democratization in China.

**Table 3: Components to Democracy**

<b>Institutional Components</b>	
<b>Operative Procedures</b>	Free and competitive election and a democratic constitution
<b>Civil Liberties or Freedom</b>	Freedom of speech, of expression, of the media, of assembly, of religion, of movement, freedom from arbitrary treatment by the political and legal system
<b>Political Rights</b>	Rights that ensure citizen involvement include to vote, to run for Elective Office
<b>Rule of Law</b>	An indispensable constitutionalism interpreted by an independent judicial system and supported by a strong legal culture in civil society
<b>Cultural Values</b>	
<b>Political Tolerance</b>	Citizens prepared to be tolerant of those who hold different political beliefs, and of existence of dissents in the society
<b>Interpersonal Trust</b>	Citizens are helpful, respectful, and trustful toward one another
<b>Civic Cooperation and Association</b>	Citizens' interest in public issues and is more oriented to shared benefits, and habits of cooperation, solidarity, and public-spiritedness

*History of Democracy in China: Late 1800s to Early 1970s*

The beginning of Chinese democracy can be dated back in 1895. The process of democratization in China was launched under international pressure and imposed by Chinese thinkers who started to search abroad for guidance to modernize the country. When they examined the western notion of democracy, these thinkers were not able to make sense of some essential components to western democracy. There is a lack of these democratic values in Chinese traditional culture. Based on Confucianism, China has

formed a paternal, hierarchical relationship between the state and the society. The people were expected to be obedient and respectful to the authorities, who in turn were expected to protect and nourish the people (Pye 1992). While citizens of a western democratic society view their relationship with the state as reciprocal and even antagonistic, Chinese people view the relationship of rule and ruled as paternal, thus harmonious interests between state and citizen. While Western democratic value emphasizes sovereignty of the individual (i.e. individual rights are inherent in personhood), Chinese people viewed individual rights as granted by the state who has the power to make law, and places the supremacy of the public interest over citizens' rights (Nathan 1985:112; Vittoz 1993:329).

In early 1900s, Chinese scholars and enlightenment thinkers started to study the western idea of democracy in hopes of finding solutions to social, cultural, political, and economic problems of China. Liang Qichao, the most influential among these people, found the idea of natural rights inherent to individual personhood rather than created by the state a mystery. Therefore, when he introduced democracy to Chinese society, he selectively integrated school of democratic thoughts that retained the idea that citizens' rights derive from the state, purposively ruling out the idea of individuals born with natural rights that is incompatible to Chinese traditional view of political power structure. As a result, when the notion of democracy first entered into China, it was modified to fit Confucian political constructs that rule out the ideology of rule of law. All other democratic values in China have been developed from this ideological foundation.

As Andrew J. Nathan (1985) accounted in his book *Chinese Democracy*, which identifies the dominant tradition of Chinese democratic thought and the major

controversies within it (p.107), the evolving notion of democracy concerning the basic nature of rights is epitomized in a series of constitutions that have appeared in Chinese history: the Qing Dynasty constitution of 1908; the Provisional Constitution of 1912; the Chinese Kuomintang (the National People's Party) Constitutions of 1923, 1943 and 1947; and the Communism Constitution from 1949 on.

As an effort to rescue its ruling from perdition, the ruler of Qing Dynasty, the last feudal regime in Chinese feudalism history that had extended more than two-thousand years, compiled a constitution in 1908 to transform itself into a constitutional monarchy by extending political participation to people outside the imperial bureaucracy. Before this constitution, the feudal regime constrained political power within the imperial bureaucracy and denied public participation. But since the monarch wanted to be both sovereign and all-powerful, the extension of political power to the public was highly limited. The Hsin-hai revolution<sup>1</sup> finally ended Qing Dynasty and established the Republic of China in the year of 1911, which marks the beginning of modern history of China. The Republic of China was built on Dr. Sun Yat-sen's<sup>2</sup> *Three Principles of the People* (三民主义) consisting of nationalism (民族), democracy (民主), and welfare for people (民生), similar to the western notion of democracy (Nathan 1985). Since then, the ruling of Kuomintang continued on part of Sun Yat-sen's legacy, but never inherited the ideology that defines rights are inherent to personhood.

---

<sup>1</sup> Hsin-hai revolution: (辛亥革命) Also known as the *Revolution of 1911* or the *Chinese Revolution*, which was a revolution that overthrew China's last imperial dynasty, the Qing Dynasty, and established the Republic of China.

<sup>2</sup> Sun Yat-sen: (孙逸仙) A Chinese revolutionary and first president and founding father of the Republic of China.

The Chinese Communist Party began ruling in 1949 after winning the civil war against the Kuomintang, and continued the regime of Confucianist Leninism produced by “[t]he centrality of hierarchy, the elaborate concerns involved in managing superior-subordinate relations, and a pervasive use of moralistic rhetoric” (Pye 1992:ix). The communist regime advocated “socialist democracy”, and “democratic dictatorship of people.” This notion of democracy is class-based where rights are only granted to “the people,” an exclusive concept that is formed by existence of class enemies.

Despite some differences, all of China’s constitutions share some political values fundamental to the Chinese notion of democracy. First, none of the constitutions viewed rights as inherent to individual personhood. Second, citizens’ rights are created by the state and at the command of the state through legislation by the state. Third, citizens’ rights are goals to be realized rather than facts to be enjoyed at present. Fourth, as a logical result of previous values, none of the constitutions provided effective procedures to curtail the state power and people’s effective exercise of rights.

These ideas have been endorsed by democratic activists. For example, Chinese thinkers since Liang Qichao have identified two major obstacles to the realization of democracy: the Chinese people’s “backward culture” (a culture of disunity, selfishness, and privatism resulting in political incompetency and lack of civic consciousness), and interference by bureaucrats in the natural solidarity between ruler and people (Nathan 1985:67). Therefore, Lian Qichao decided that “only the tutelage of an enlightened dictatorship could prepare the people for democracy” (Nathan 1985:67). This idea denied a universal, inclusive membership to social groups such as the less-educated peasants.

However, a new, quasi-global wave of democratizations began in the 1970s (Markoff 2005), and China was on the bandwagon. The totalitarian regime of the chaotic Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution<sup>3</sup> ended in 1976 and the economic and political opening and reform began in the latter part of 1978. Since then, profound social and economic changes have been taking place throughout Chinese society, which provides conditions for the notion of democracy to evolve greatly. In this period, the notion of democracy has undergone significant transformations (Zhao 2001:21), and a more progressive democratization was witnessed in China society. At this stage, new components to the notion of democracy were displayed in varied social activities that pushed for democracy.

In the late 1970s, many activists advocated popular and participatory democracy (Zhao 2001:21). A movement symbolized by “the Democracy Wall” was launched in Beijing in 1978 and 1979. The participants in this discussion were “students and factory workers rather than young literati (intellectuals of early 1900s)” (Nathan 1985:109). The participants debated the notion of democracy by posting big and small character posters<sup>4</sup> on a 200-yard brick wall. The activists advocated diverse concepts of democracy that ranged from Marxist pluralist perspective to liberal human rights discourses. Despite their diversity, they shared common ground and emphasized some substantive dimensions of democracy. They attacked the class-based democracy in the Mao era, and advocated for a popular and inclusive notion of democracy. Specifically, they: (1) defined democracy as

---

<sup>3</sup> A social-political movement that took place in China from 1966 through 1976

<sup>4</sup> Handwritten, wall-mounted posters using large-sized Chinese characters, used as a means of protest, propaganda, and popular communication

participatory that involved intellectuals, workers, and peasants; (2) stressed economic democracy to counter the state's monopoly in the economic realm, and (3) supported "grass-roots democracy" to counter the state's control in the political realm (Zhao 2001:27). Among these voices, the more radical activists advocated competitive elections and independent media as two essential reforms to democratize China (Nathan 1985:192). The reform advocacies and demands exceeded what the CCP government could tolerate, and the Democracy Wall activity was cracked down in 1979.

But the debate and demand for democracy continued in Chinese society. "The 1980s were a period of intense political ferment, when democracy was debated inside the government, think tanks, universities, and intellectual salons" (Thornton 2008:19). The notion of democracy had taken an elitist and liberal character among its advocates. "The substantive view of democracy had given way to a procedural view and a US-inspired system of checks and balances among state institutions" (Zhao 2001:21). This political ferment eventually amounted to the democratic movement in 1989 that ended with the "Tiananmen Massacre"<sup>5</sup> by the CCP government's suppression. The activists, mainly college students and intellectual elites, made clear demands for freedom, or civil rights, of the press, assembly, association, and an independent judicial system (Unger 2000:90). But activists' concept of democracy "had assumed an elitist and exclusionary character" among movement advocates who "saw Chinese peasants and workers as neither ready nor suitable for democracy" (Zhao 2001:28).

---

<sup>5</sup> This is a term used widely by overseas media but rarely among Chinese people. In China, this democratic movement in 1989 is usually referred as June the fourth (六四).



In contrast to the public enthusiasm and passion about democracy shown in China, the scholarly inquiries into this issue are still very underdeveloped, both in China and the rest of the world. Wu (2011) maintained in his research of the study of Chinese politics in contemporary China, “the political penetration from the Party-state has been the major factor that hinders the intellectual development of the study of Chinese politics as a branch of political science” (p. 279). In addition, the lack of academic autonomy makes the study of democracy and other political-relating issues highly sensitive and censored topics in China. The scientific inquiry on democracy inevitably falls prey to this control, and the scholarly study of Chinese people’s view on democracy is still underdeveloped.

Generally, studies which do exist concerning Chinese politics and democratic attitudes are based on interpretive studies characteristically based on documentary sources, interviews, and field observation (Pye 1992:93), or survey research that started in the 1980s (Nathan and Shi 1993). For example, Nathan and Shi, in their 1993 study of cultural requisites for democracy in China (1993:95-123) focused on three dimensions of political culture they believed are fundamental to democracy: citizens’ perception of government impact on their lives; internal political efficacy (i.e. people’s confidence in their capability to understand and engage in politics); and political tolerance, indicating to what extent citizens are tolerant of different political beliefs. They found that very few Chinese people perceived that the CCP government had an impact on their daily life, and the results varied greatly across different social groups when examining political efficacy, which was higher among less-educated people and lower among the most-educated citizens. The researchers explained the findings by arguing a cultural attitude considered

conducive to democracy may also help buttress authoritarianism, as less-educated people with trust in the current regime might help the regime to survive (p. 111). Regarding political tolerance, the levels in China were lower than those in democratic countries in comparison. The researchers concluded that the cultural deficits may pose impediments to democratization in China; but since the more urban and educated sectors showed more democratic attitudes, they expected that “China’s culture will move closer to the patterns characteristic of democratic countries as the economy grows” (p. 116).

In 1999, Columbia University-based Chinese professor Tang Wenfang (2005) conducted a national survey on people’s political attitudes in six Chinese cities which contributed to his book *Public Opinion and Political Changes in China*. The book drew most of its empirical evidence from twelve Chinese public opinion surveys conducted between the late 1980s and the late 1990s. The findings showed that Chinese people dissatisfied by their economic conditions were not necessarily dissatisfied by the regime, and the government in China still enjoyed a considerable amount of legitimacy and political support. The findings also revealed that Marxism-Leninism and Maoism still influenced the minds of people although such influences are largely class oriented. Some of Tang’s analyses of the surveys, rather than the survey findings per se, contradict conventional wisdom and western political theories concerning democracy development. For example, on media control, Tang argued that while highly controlled media access makes people more supportive of the single-party regime and more nationalistic, it also makes people more supportive of civic values, feel more efficacious and more actively participate in politics to pursue private interests. His analysis also showed that

interpersonal trust among Chinese people is very high, which increases people's support in authority instead of political and social institutions as in Putnam's theory (Shi 2007:149-151).

Based on the World Values Survey 2001, Lu (2004) examined the origins of democratic values in China and provided evidence to show the types of people likely to support those values. He argued a number of studies suggest that "well-educated, urban and wealthy people have a relatively stronger orientation towards democratic values than the rest of Chinese." His findings pointed out that China's elites will play a crucial role in future political change in China.

Ching Kwan Lee's (2002) research conducted in 2000, however, casts doubt on the expectation that Chinese elites would play a crucial role in China's democratization. Based on in-depth observations of labor insurgency in China, she pointed out that instead of promoting the law, Chinese entrepreneurs or the rising middle classes reside their interests in evading the law, as they harvested benefits from connections with the government rather than market competition (p. 220). Therefore, Lee argued it is hard to expect Chinese middle classes to develop and disseminate a perception of democracy similar to that held by their western counterparts. The middle class in general do not get to live up to a "historical expectation," as their counterparts did in Western democratization history, to push forward democracy.

Thus, some research argues that as the economy grows, Chinese culture will move closer to cultural patterns considered conducive to democracy (Nathan and Shi 1993), while other researchers suggest Chinese people displayed cultural values considered

conducive to democracy but supported undemocratic political practices such as one-party ruling (Tang 2005); and some showed confidence in China's elites role in bringing about democracy (Lu 2004), while other declined this prospect (Lee 2002).

There are, however, limitations to the existing research on China's democratic values. First, The CCP government requires that all public-opinion surveys in China, both the survey and the surveyors, must be approved by the government. However, surveys with questions carefully designed to understand Chinese people's view on democracy are too politically sensitive and would not survive the government's censorship. As a result, most of the research in the past few decades on Chinese people's democratic values was based on limited public surveys conducted in China.

In addition, there are some operational flaws to the above survey research. While aiming to measure Chinese people's affective and evaluative support to democracy, the survey designs and the outcome analyses are too simplified, and the validity of the findings is questionable. For example, in the 2007 Markle Foundation funded survey of internet use in China, the study findings show that from 2005, the percentage of users who say that online content about "politics" should be controlled or managed jumped from 8% to 41% (Fallows 2008). The director of the survey research, Guo Liang, explained that the puzzling increase is probably due to the Chinese word used for "politics" which in the question, "is not confined simply to political rights or competition for political control but maybe understood to include larger questions of public morality and social values" (Fallows 2008).

Additionally, people of different social and demographic groups possibly have different understandings of democracy, yet this is not taken into account in the analyses. For example, the Chinese working class has lost social, economic and safety-net benefits through the economic reform that began in the late 1970s and has developed grievances toward the reform (Lee 2000). When they understand the democratization process of economic reform to privatization that deprived them of social benefits, they would certainly hold a less favorable attitude towards “democracy.”

In addition to the operational flaws of the research, the findings are also questionable as respondents may have modified answers in fear of governmental retaliation. One questionable finding is that, despite a high percentage of respondents who did not think the government was delivering what they wanted, few wanted to replace the government (Shi 2000). In the 2008 East Asia Barometer survey, nearly 90 percent of Chinese respondents rated the “present political situation in our country” as “very good” or “good.” And in the 2007 World Value Survey, nearly 93 percent had “quite a lot” or “a great deal” confidence in “government” (Wright 2011). Yet these findings contradict the observed phenomenon of social unrests in China.

My research will address some of these flaws in the research on Chinese people’s view of Democracy. Due to various difficulties and problems, the research looking at how Chinese people understand democracy and democratization is still limited, which opens up space for further study as new events take place, and new information becomes available. The widespread debates over Han’s Three Essays provide a good chance to look into the Chinese public’s view of democracy.

In the available public sphere in China society, the major contents of everyday give and take of ideas provide building blocks to the idea of democracy. The cyber world displays great potential for expanding the public sphere. Early in 2000, scholars already observed that the rapid development of the internet had been an important contributing factor to facilitate intellectual discourses on social, economic, and political issues, as new ideas and arguments spread very quickly (Li 2000:126). China's political reform continues to fall short of expectations of domestic and international society, and the CCP government still holds resistant attitude toward democracy. Under this control, Chinese people lack opportunities to assemble, demonstrate, and openly express dissent in physical world. But access to the internet provides a cyber-world that creates an opportunity between people's expression and government suppression and censorship.

In this study, I conduct qualitative content analysis of online comments to Han's Three Essays on Han Han's blog to understand Chinese people's views on democracy. The availability of a large number of online comments responding directly to Han Han's opinions on democracy and democratization makes content analysis an appropriate method to capture Chinese people's concept of democracy.

## BACKGROUND ON HAN THREE ESSAYS AND INTERNET USE IN CHINA

Below I first discuss Han Han's essays, then the use of the internet in China.

*Who is Han Han?*

Han Han is one of the most prominent figures of the "Post-1980"<sup>6</sup>, the *Generation Y* in mainland China (Lee 2010). He became famous when he was 16 and published his first best seller, a novel that criticizes the unified and rigid Chinese education system. Since coming into the public sight he has retained a high profile and now is a novelist, essayist, the most-read blogger in the world with almost 600 million hits,<sup>7</sup> and a successful car racer (Osno 2011b). He enjoys a reputation as the Opinion Leader of Chinese youth generation, and as a Public Intellectual in the Chinese community of liberal intellectuals and elites. This is mainly due to his copious blog essays full of sarcasm and humor devoted to criticizing the CCP government's pointless and predatory rules that have brought about negative consequences (Jepson 2011). His significant social and political influence among China's young generation and the intellectual community has attracted the attention of influential media of the western world. For example, in 2010, he appeared on the list of 2010 *Time Magazine's* World's 100 Most Influential People. In 2011 *New Yorker* magazine carried a long report, *Han Dynasty*, profiling his persona and analyzing his political and cultural influences in China (Osno 2011b).

---

<sup>6</sup> The Post-1980 refers to the generation born in 1980s, an era in mainland China characterized by the One-Child Policy, profound economic reform and development, access to modern technology, and clash between traditional and modern cultures (Lynton and Thøgersen 2010).

<sup>7</sup> The count of the hits appearing on the homepage of Han Han's blog ([blog.sina.com.cn/twocold](http://blog.sina.com.cn/twocold)) read on Oct. 29, 2012.

### *Han's Three Essays*

In late December 2011, Han Han posted three blogs within 4 days, *On Revolution*, *On Democracy*, and *Wanting Freedom*, stating his political thinking concerning the notion of democracy and the possible path to democratize China. These three blog essays, later termed *Han's Three Essays*<sup>8</sup>, immediately stirred up intense debates among his blog followers-supporters and pro-democracy intellectuals in China (Goodman 2011). An English version of *Han's Three Essays* was translated by Roland Soong (2011).

The major positions and arguments<sup>9</sup> made in *Han's Three Essays* include:

-- He believes that the Chinese people are not “ready” for radical action aimed at successfully ending the current regime, and notes, “the ultimate winner in a revolution must be a vicious, ruthless person.”

-- He advocates a gradual political change by working within and on the existing political system, and against a democratic revolution seeking an end to the Communist Party in China (Goodman 2011).

-- Along with a sullen view on the prospect of a revolution, he points out that nurturing civic values conducive to democracy among the Chinese people is the way to a successful democratization (Abrahamsen 2012). He says, “it can no longer simply be seen as a political party or a social class. Often, the ills of the Party are the ills of the people... the Party is the people itself. The problem isn't what to do about the Party. If

---

<sup>8</sup> This terming scheme follows the terming tradition of *Three Old Essays* (老三篇), short articles composed by Mao Zedong before 1949, which were must-read materials to the CCP party members and average Chinese people, as they provided essential ideological guidance throughout revolution.

<sup>9</sup> I synthesized these through combining my own understanding and summaries of Han's points made in Han's Three Essays from multiple media articles to make them consistent with my understanding of Han's positions.



you can Change the people, you'll change everything. Law, education and culture are the root”.

Han's argument echoes a concern of Aung San Suu Kyi and other students of democracy that the dissolution of an authoritarian regime is likely to give birth to another authoritarian regime rather than a democratic one (Linz 2000:269). And the social unrest in some countries after Arab Spring, the democratic movement in Arabic world that had received high acclamation from the world, seems to further validate this concern. But with this statement Han seemed to distance himself from a considerable portion of the Chinese dissident community that consists of liberal minded intellectuals and democracy advocates who once acclaimed his courageous confrontation with the CCP government. At the center of the controversy over Han's Three Essays in China is that Han's political positions disappointed many democracy advocates, while appearing to hearten the authorities who were conventional targets of his critics (Goodman 2011). As an online posting pointed out, interest and opinion groups usually hostile to each other joined together this time to side against Han's "new stand".

The critics of Han's political opinions concerning democracy came in multiple aspects. The academic oriented critics point out the theoretical fallacy of Han's arguments lies in that he confuses revolution and rebellion (Xue 2012); and the logic fallacy is that he mistook lack of civic values as the cause to the CCP's authoritarian regime rather than the result (Luo and Hong 2012).

However, the critics that prevailed online focused on great disappointment in his "softened" position against the current political system, his lack of confidence in the

people's cultural and political "quality", and his favoring a reform over a revolution. These critics hold a faith in revolution and believe that it is the only path to wipe out the CCP's authoritarian regime to make room for democracy. They suspected that Han had been co-opted by the CCP, and accused *Han's Three Essays* as "loyalty announcement" to the government (Goodman 2011). For example, Ai Weiwei, an outspoken Chinese dissident artist who used to acclaim Han's democratic position, commented that *Han's Three Essays* "lacks honest discourse and is too acquiescent. It's almost predicated on flattery. It's biased and degraded, like he has surrendered voluntarily... it would be a great piece for *Global Times* (China's English-language nationalist state-run paper) to publish" (Osnos 2011a). For these critics, Han Han has fallen from the high rising niche of "public opinion leader" to a "public enemy" (Luo and Hong 2012).

Amid the widespread critics, there are also supportive opinions to *Han's Three Essays* expressed by some prominent liberal intellectuals and some netizens (internet users) active on well-known liberal internet forums such as the *Seeing People in Cat Eyes* (猫眼看人) affiliated to *Kai Di Community* (凯迪社区).<sup>10</sup> The major supportive opinions argued for Han's advocacy of a civil society of citizens who embrace values conducive to democracy as the fundamental foundation to a stable, viable democracy, which is an important point that seems to be missed or misunderstood by most of Han's critics. One of the supporters, Yi Zhongtian (2011), a well-known Chinese writer and historian, upheld Han's opinion by saying that revolutionary and progressive ideological ideas such

---

<sup>10</sup> The web address is at <http://club.kdnet.net/list.asp?boardid=1>.

as democracy and freedom can be utilized as a means by people whose real pursuit is personal power and interests.

Micheal Anti, a liberal Chinese blogger, commented on the debates: “the ensuing debate online has drawn a bright line between Chinese liberals, with reformers on one side and democrats on the other” (Goodman 2011). That is, the debates over *Han's Three Essays* by well-known activists and intellectuals on democracy revealed a cleavage among them in the notion of democracy and about the path to democratize China. But does this cleavage also exist among the Chinese public? And if so, which notion of democracy dominates among the Chinese public? As the Chinese people are the ones who will put their idea of democracy in practice, answers to these research questions are important in order to explore the process and the prospect of democratization in China.

### *Internet Use in China*

Internet usage had been growing rapidly in China in last decade, according to the China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC), the administrative agency in charge of Internet affairs under the Ministry of Information Industry of China. In CNNIC's annual report of 2011, by December of 2011, 513 million of the population had access to internet, 38% of the total population of China. Among this group of internet users (referred as “netizens” in this thesis in order to be in accordance with a habitual usage in China), 56% were male, and 44% were female. Chinese netizens concentrated in younger generations, with the youth population (10 - 29) summing up 56%, followed by 30 – 39 year olds at 26%. There was a large gap between urban and rural residents, with

74 % of internet users living in urban areas, and only 26% from rural areas. (This access gap, in rural areas, the US is around 12% in 2011, according to U.S. Department of Commerce). “Internet users continue to penetrate the poorly educated population”, and with junior to senior high education comprising 69% of the population, and only 22% of the users with a college education and above (CNNIC 2012:21).

Chinese internet users go online mainly for communication, acquisition of information, entertainment, and business transactions. Microblog (a Chinese version of Twitter), and blog/personal space were the major applications used. CNNIC’s (2012) report shows that China had a huge group of bloggers who created 319 million blogs and personal space (p. 33). But when compared to their counterparts in North America and Arab world, in general Chinese blogs displayed little power and effort when it comes to the “blogging revolution” (Leibold 2011). The Chinese Internet is used as a “steam valve” of public dissatisfaction instead of a true organizing ground for activity (Wertime 2012), and this is mainly due to the Chinese government’s most brutal internet restrictions applied to any post that calls for offline protests or demonstrations (E.H. 2013).

Although blog’s utilization fell in 2011 as the use of microblog grew rapidly, “Some celebrity blogs are still concerned (attracting attentions), which are important channels for opinion leaders to transmit information” (CNNIC 2012:41). The celebrity blogs are kept by famous movie stars, well-known social figures, and whoever enjoys considerable popularity with people.

There have been vigorous debates over the positive and normative implications of the blogs for politics in the United States (Drezner and Farrell 2008). The book, *Blog!:*

*How the Newest Media Revolution is Changing Politics, Business, and Culture*, examines the notion that blogs are redefining journalism and media consumption (Kline and Burstein 2005). Applying this notion to the circumstance of China, where independent media does not really exist, blogs are redefining journalism and media consumption by allowing for real public participation, as detailed below.

As an iconic opinion leader of youth generation and a significant figure in the political sphere, Han Han had never gotten into any serious trouble with authorities. His popularity might have helped shield him from the direct government's persecution (Chau 2013), but his strategy to tiptoe around the bottom line drawn by the authorities might be more important for the survival of most of his blog articles.

Han Han once said that he criticized one thing which made the authorities feel terrible, and if the authorities asked him to stop talking about it he then picked something else to criticize (Osnos 2011b). Some of his blogs were censored almost immediately after being posted, but readers are still able to find them through multiple avenues. *Han's Three Articles* is one of those that survived. Since the "bottom line" for political speech is drawn arbitrarily, usually it is difficult to explain why some articles were blocked and why others were not. But for these three articles, some critics pointed out that the softened tone on issues such as revolution and reform had actually pleased the Chinese government (Osnos 2011a).

As the rapid growth of use of Microblog has expanded the cyber public sphere where information disseminates faster and exchange of ideas is more intensive, the Chinese government has been applying tougher censorship on the use of internet. The

“Freedom on the Net 2012” report, issued by Freedom House, an American organization that tracks global trends in political freedom, ranked China as the third most restrictive country in the world when it comes to internet access (E. H. 2013). But China's criteria for censoring the internet are slightly more subtle than foreigners often assume. As the main goal is to prevent the internet from being used to organize political activities in real world, the censorship system would tolerate critics and political discussions to a certain level that keeps with the government's anti-corruption drive and helps create an image that the government does have some freedom of speech (E. H. 2013).

At the same time, Chinese internet users have been circumventing the censorship and broadening the political space in cyber world. For example, some internet users apply technology such as a Proxy server to access censored websites and information (Roberts, Zuckerman, and Palfrey 2009), and in discussions on sensitive social and political issues, users refer to issues, politically sensitive persons, and senior authority figures using nicknames or coded language, in an effort to stay ahead of the censors (E.H. 2013).

With the government's limited tolerance and internet users' censorship-circumventing efforts combined, a public sphere has come into form on cyber world where Chinese citizens enjoy some freedom to express and exchange opinions on political and social issues (Webster 2009). This makes collecting and analyzing online comments and feedbacks on a certain social and political topic a valid research method.

Since in China the internet has a significant role in providing a “public sphere” for exchanging ideas, testing opinions, mobilizing actions that work for pushing forward democratization, it is important to examine online comments for understanding people's

views (Wang and Bates 2008). Most of the debates on Han's Three Essays took place at online discussion forums (Bulletin Board), thematic micro-blogs, a Chinese version of twitter (微博), and personal blogs. Mainstream media did not take part in the debate due to the topic's political nature that is sensitive to authorities' censorship. Even though the internet is also under effective control and censorship by the government and the website service providers had to delete some strong dissident comments, the online debates still survived and provide considerable materials for an investigation into patterns of Chinese people's views on the concept of democracy.

## METHODS

In this section I discuss the method applied on sampling and collecting internet data, and the coding schemes applied to generating the findings of this research.

### *Sampling*

I collected data for this thesis from online comments that were made to respond to *Han's Three Essays* posted on Han Han's (2011) blog titled *Twocold*, registered under Sina.com, the largest Chinese-language infotainment web portal. This research conducts a systematic random sampling on netizens' comments and collects 300 entries for analysis, with 100 entries for each essay.

*Han's Three Essays* were posted on his blog in late December 2011, as *On Revolution* on Dec. 23, *On Democracy* on Dec. 24, and *Wanting Freedom* on Dec. 26. These three essays, just like most of Han's other blogs, immediately attracted huge numbers of reading-hits and comments. By the day of sampling on March 7, 2013, the three essays had received about 4.5 million hits, and 25,938, 14,741, and 21,360 comments respectively. More than 80% of the comments were made within the first four days after each essay was posted. The huge numbers of comments provide a sufficient database for conducting content analysis for this thesis.

There are various types of comments. For example, some comments give opinions with some discussions to Han's essays; some comments are very brief and just expressed opinions in short words such as "Agree," "Support"; and some comments' contents, such as advertisements, are not relevant to the essays. After several sampling trials that



generated databases with a large number of short comments which provided insufficient information for coding and analyzing, I then sampled entries with a length of at least two lines of Chinese characters. This strategy effectively increased the amount of information for conducting analysis.

Sampling internet comments is a new technique to academic research, thus, and there are few models to follow (Bialik 2012). For my sample, I selected 100 entries of comments of two or more lines for each essay out of all comments responding to the essay. I applied random sampling on all the comments to every of three essays to construct a database for this research. The layout format of the online comments is convenient for conducting systematic random sampling to obtain data. On each webpage there are fifty entries of comment, and the comments are listed time-wise, with the earliest comments appearing as the first line on the first page of comments under Han Han's essays.

I first calculated the intervals by dividing the total number of comment entries to every essay by 100, the sample size for each essay, which generated 100 clusters of interval number of entries; I then randomly picked entries with two or more lines from every of 100 clusters.

For example, the day I did the sampling for the *On Revolution* essay, the total comments were 25,938 entries. I divided 25,938 by 100, the sample size I had decided for each essay, and calculated an interval at 260. I started from the first comment with two or more lines and made it the first sampled entry, then move to the 261st comment. If the comment on the sequence order does not contain at least two lines I move to collect the

closest following comment with required length. Then I had 100 sampled comments by calculating the same interval.

The netizens usually logged in to the website and left comments, so most of the comments were made under an account name. This made it possible to detect for repeating individuals and ensure I only counted them once. However, there are netizens who do not log in and used the common name *Xinlangnetizen* (新浪网友), it was impossible to detect repeating individuals with this common name.

I checked for duplications of names with the sampled comments to make sure every individual was only sampled once. Those individuals who made comments anonymously are identified by the internet with the same ID, *Xinlangnetizen*. Without proper techniques, I was not able to avoid the duplicated sampling of this group of individuals. However, the large sampling intervals help reduce the risk of repeating sampling of the same individual.

### *Qualitative Content Analysis*

By using qualitative content analysis I analyzed the collected data in text form. The method of content analysis helps to test theoretical issues to enhance understanding of the data (Elo and Kyngäs 2008); Hsieh and Shannon (2005) define qualitative content analysis as a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes and patterns, and define three distinct approaches including conventional, directed, and summative (Hsieh and Shannon 2005). For the research of this thesis, a directed content

analysis is applicable, which starts with a theory or relevant research question as guidance for initial codes.

The initial coding categories for this research are the components of ideal type democracy located in Table 3. The coding process included two steps, first, I coded all the text that appeared to represent the initial categories, and second, I gave new codes to text that could not be categorized with the initial coding scheme. That is, I first examined dominant themes related to the identified components of democracy. I began by reading each sampled thread of comment carefully, focusing on keywords or phrases as well as the underlying meanings of the words or the content, highlighting text that appears to describe and imply the identified components of democracy, and uncovering potential themes and patterns creating a coding scheme for subsequent readings. The second and third readings ensured consistency in my coding, paying attention to the depth and breadth in the comments (Malin and Petrzela 2010:1192).

I remained open to new ideas emerging in the data (Aronson 1994), and constructed additional tables for each essay which records the occurrences of dominant ideas regarding democracy which emerge outside of the coding category of key components identified.

I report the incidence of codes that represent the category of components to democracy and new categories. I also present coded comments which are representative of the online quotes.

I now turn to the findings.

For the purpose of this thesis, I focus on previously discussed theories suggesting essential components that make a democracy work to establish an operational notion as a “checklist.” These components were included in Table 3. As shown in Table 4, for each of the components I identify indicators gained from the literature to provide operationalization of the components.

**Table 4: Indicators to Components of Democracy**

<b>Institutional Components</b>	
<b>Democratic Procedures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free, competitive, fair election;</li> </ul>
<b>Civil Liberties or Freedom</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Freedom of speech, of expression, of association and assembly, of religion, of movement</li> <li>• Freedom of the media</li> <li>• Freedom from arbitrary treatment by the political and legal system</li> </ul>
<b>Political Rights</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rights to vote</li> <li>• Rights to run for Elective Office</li> </ul>
<b>Rule of Law</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A democratic constitution</li> <li>• Independent judicial system</li> <li>• A legal culture in civil society</li> </ul>
<b>Cultural Values</b>	
<b>Political Tolerance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tolerant of different political beliefs</li> <li>• Tolerant of dissents</li> <li>• Tolerant of conflicts</li> <li>• Tolerant of different interest groups</li> </ul>
<b>Interpersonal Trust</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizens are helpful, respectful, and trustful toward one another</li> </ul>
<b>Civic Cooperation and Association</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizens’ interest in public issues</li> <li>• More oriented to shared benefits,</li> <li>• Desires and habits of cooperation, solidarity, and public-spiritedness</li> </ul>

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this section of the thesis I present the findings of coding and analyzing the sampled comments to Han's Three Essays, and discuss these findings.

### *Coding Han's Three Essays*

I begin by discussing the results of coding of Han Han's essays, then turn to the results of coding the comments.

I first coded Han Han's Three Essays to understand his notion of democracy in terms of essential components, and to see if there are thematic components that the essays focus on that may gain more attention and emphasis in the netizens' comments.

#### *1. On Revolution*

In *On Revolution*, the first posted essay of the three, Han Han touches on all seven components to an ideal type democracy. The democratic components with most appearing counts are Civil Cooperation and Association (seven counts), Rule of Law (five counts), and Interpersonal Trust (five counts).

Han Han denies the possibility for a revolution to take place in China and denies the possibility that even if there is one, the revolution would bring about democracy, because most of the social actors lack the cultural values such as Civil Cooperation and Association, Interpersonal Trust, and the support Institutional components such as *Rule of Law*. As he writes:

Of course, all of the above is a waste of time. The key point is that most Chinese people don't care about the lives of others. They only holler when they get abused themselves.

If you have never cared about the judiciary of publishing, then what is the point of caring about universal suffrage?

He ends this article by indicating that democracy will be naturally, peacefully achieved when the public learns and applies democratic cultural values:

If you insist on asking me about the best timing for revolution in China, I can only say that when Chinese car drivers know to turn off their high beam lights when they pass each other, we can safely proceed with the revolution.

Such a country does not need any revolution. When the civic quality and educational level of the citizens reach a certain standard, everything will happen naturally.

## *2. On Democracy*

In this essay, Han Han reinforces his argument that democracy will be achieved when people are reformed through establishment of Rule of Law, improvement of education, and cultural development. Rather than specifying components of viable democracy, he groups them into two categories, Institutional Components and Cultural Values (as I do the ideal type of democracy), and suggests that the latter forms the foundation for institutional components.

The term used as the alternative to Cultural Values is Quality of People (国民素质) and appears four times in this essay. Below are quotes representing this:

I do not believe that a Velvet Revolution can take place in China... To believe in the Velvet Revolution requires that you believe in the quality of the people, the tolerance of the authorities and the leadership of the intellectuals... I believe none of these three factors exists in China.

If you change the people, everything changes. Therefore, it is more important to seek improvement. Rule of Law, education, culture... these are the basics.

### 3. *Wanting Freedom*

In this final piece of Han's Three Essays, Han Han advocates the public to appeal for their liberties and freedom written in the constitution and to urge a reform to be carried out by the government. He claims as a member of the Chinese public that he is going to act on his advocacy to appeal for freedom of expression in literature creations, which is most critical to his career as a writer. Therefore, Civil Liberties and Freedom, which include Freedom of Expression and Media, Civic Cooperation and Association which demands citizens' interest in public issues, and Rule of Law appear throughout this essay by 11, 7, and 5 times, respectively, and is evidenced in the quotes below:

I know that you must have studied the case of Soviet Russia. You (Chinese government) believe that the breakdown of Soviet Russia was largely due to Gorbachev opening up the press as well as following the constitution to return the highest powers from the Party to the people's delegates. Therefore, you become especially cautious about the free press and constitutional politics.

In the new year, I earnestly request the authorities to let culture, publishing, press, and cinema be freer.

It is said that a man can only make one wish at one time. My wish has been used up. As for the other issues (fairness, justice, rule of law, political reform and everything else), they will have to be wished by those friends who need them.

#### *Han Han on Democratization in China*

As the essay of *On Revolution* indicates, Han Han holds a concept of democracy similar to the ideal type of democracy which includes both institutional and cultural elements. Essentially, Han Han's opinion on democratization in China is like: To democratize China by a revolution is not possible, because (1) a revolution is impossible

to organize due to lack of a collective interest demand among Chinese people, and (2) the outcome of a revolution is most likely to be another undemocratic regime, as a collective understanding and demand on democracy is absent in China society. Based on this observation, Han Han argues that a realistic way to democratize China is to reform the Chinese public as well as the Chinese government, for when the public learns and becomes the carriers and actors of democratic values, a democracy of institutional constructs will be demanded and built into the place. As he argues:

In a nation with a complex social structure, especially in the eastern world, the ultimate winner in a revolution must be a vicious, ruthless person.

In China, it is hard to find a collective demand.

Especially for the Chinese, the result of democracy is frequently lack of freedom. Most Chinese people do not link freedom with publication, news, literature, speech, election or politics. Instead, they think of freedom from public morality so that those who have no social connections can freely break the rules and regulations, freely take advantage of legal loopholes, freely commit misdeeds.

The key point is that most Chinese people don't care about the lives of others. They only holler when they get abused themselves. They will never manage to unify.

I now turn to examining what Han Han's followers argue regarding democratization. In this next section, I first present merged results of my findings for Han's Three Essays. I then compare and contrast these results across the three essays. After discussing the results which focus on the ideal type of democracy, I present results of additional components which emerged in the comments, and compare and contrast these components across the three essays.



I present and interpret exemplar comments as textual evidences to codes and analysis. To protect the identities of the individual netizens who made the comments, I paraphrase their internet accounts, either initially in Chinese characters or English words and letters, into English rather than using Pinyin, which is a phonetic system for Chinese characters and is easy to be used to track the original text.

### *Coding Comments to Han's Three Essays*

#### *1. On Revolution*

I begin with Han's essay On Revolution. In this essay, Han argued that revolution is impossible to happen in China as lacking on understanding of democracy, democratic values, and "cultural qualities" prevents the Chinese public from forming a collective appeal that then motivates an organized revolution to democracy. He argues, "most Chinese people don't care about the lives of others, and they only holler when they themselves get abused"; and stated that different diverse social groups, including students, masses, elites, intellectuals, peasants and the workers, would not be able to unify or reach consensus on the course and goal of a revolution, as most Chinese people have not had a full understanding of democracy. As he states:

Intellectuals frequently link democracy and freedom together. Especially for the Chinese, the result of democracy is frequently lack of freedom. Most Chinese people do not link freedom with publication, news, literature, speech, election or politics. Instead, they think of freedom from public morality so that those who have no social connections can freely make noise anywhere, freely jaywalk across the streets, freely spit in public; those who have some social connections can freely break the rules and regulations, freely take advantage of legal loopholes, freely commit misdeeds.

About 45% of the 100 netizens commenting are supportive of Han's opinion; most of these comments are short, stating agreement with or support to Han, and 36 individual netizens (35%) wrote a brief discussion that touches on one or more components to democracy. As Table 5 shows, all the cultural values and some institutional components to democracy are acknowledged in the comments, and no comment makes a direct attack on any of these specific components. The cultural values received much higher recognition than institutional components, and *Civic Cooperation and Association*, *Interpersonal Trust*, and *Political Tolerance* are respectively indicated by 25, 21, and 12 individual comments. Two institutional components, *Civil Liberties or Freedom* and *Rule of Law*, are both mentioned by 6 individual comments. The other two institutional components, *Democratic Procedures* and *Political Rights*, obtain minimal counts from the comments. This does not mean these two institutional components are not acknowledged by Chinese people as important components to a democracy; rather, these are two components that Chinese people may apply to "stereotype" a democracy, thus are not the focus in the essay and comments. As Han Han wrote:

Many people think that the urgent task right now in China is to elect a chairman on a one-person-one-vote basis. Actually, this is not the utmost urgency to China.

**Table 5: Coding *On Revolution***

Themes	Individual Comments (N=100)	
	supportive	opposing
<b>Institutional Components</b>		
• Democratic Procedures	0	0
• Civil Liberties or Freedom	6	0
• Political Rights	1	0
• Rule of Law	6	0
<b>Cultural Values</b>		
• Political Tolerance	12	0
• Interpersonal Trust	21	0
• Civic Cooperation and Association	25	0

Rather than identifying specific components to democracy, the netizens comment on observed social phenomenon to present an opinion that cultural values to democracy, while important, are not happening in China due to perceived self-interest among the Chinese people. This is supported by two quoted arguments from Han's essay appearing in the comments. One argument points out that Chinese people only speak up for individual interest and reveals the absence of values such as *Civic Cooperation and Association* that orients people to shared benefits, *Political Tolerance* that tolerates conflicts, and *Interpersonal Trust* that encourages citizens to be helpful to each other. As noted below:

Thundertigeronjourney: This is worth a read. And this statement is unpleasant to hear but mostly accurate: Chinese people will never utter a word while seeing others suffer, and only holler when they themselves get abused, therefore they can never manage to unify!

Some individuals, through drawing on observations of social life and phenomena, point out that *Civic Cooperation and Association* is missing in China's society. This is illustrated in these comments:

Arashibrake: "The crucial fact is that most Chinese people don't care about the lives of others, and they only holler when they themselves get abused. They will never manage to unify." – I'm deeply aware of this problem now that I live abroad. After being victimized by a fraud conspired by a telecom company and an agent who claimed to be "our people", (at the beginning) everyone agreed to participate in a collective complaint, but in the end only several people who were faced an immediate fine actually showed up. "To unify" can only happen when there is no choice left with an individual.

MundaneWorldmei: The "Old Hundred Surnames" (老百姓 referring to ordinary people) in fact don't want democracy and stuff, or so-called "one person one vote" to elect someone. This year my city held a seemingly formal registration of voters, which even required a signature for abstention. But no one was willing to register in our company, because everyone asked first question as "Do I get money for registering in the company" and the answer is "No". Then these people told that they would register in their residential communities, where they would get 30 or 50 RMB (US\$5~8) for participating the registration.

*Interpersonal Trust* was the next highest component supported in the comments to the *On Revolution* essay. In the essay, Han Han wrote, "If you insist on asking me about the best timing for revolution in China, I can only say that when Chinese car drivers learn to turn off their high beam lights when they pass each other, we can safely proceed with the revolution." Turning off high beam light in that situation is helpful to other drivers on the road. By this example, Han Han maintains that when Chinese people learn to embrace cultural values such as *Interpersonal Trust*, the democracy will be achieved. This example becomes the other catch phrase that is quoted most in the comments:

Asillyearaches: Receiving multiple forwards (of this essay) in early morning, I, a silly and shallow person who has no insight in social issues, strongly support the suggestion that “Chinese car drivers learn to turn off their high beam lights when they pass each other”. Let’s reform bit by bit from practicing trivial kindness.

Besides the comments quoting Han’s example, netizens give other evidence of the lack of interpersonal help and support that prevails in Chinese public life. As one netizen commented:

Lazyplanetman: In fact (Han Han) told quite a truth. Except for devoted “angry youth” (nationalist youth), whoever being asked about attitude toward these two words (democracy and freedom) would give approval, but only on the condition that “as long as I’m not requested to contribute money or effort”. This is Chinese people’s deep-rooted evil nature, which has never changed for hundreds years.

*Political Tolerance* also gained considerable attention by the comments. While it mainly appeared along with the other two cultural values in the discussion, it was also given special emphasis by some netizens through their own insights. As the following two comments said:

Consult: Don’t define him (Han Han) as necessarily revolutionary. He is just himself. Don’t polarize opinions to tag him as either “fifty-center<sup>11</sup>” or “angry youth”, and critics should be a bit gentler. I finally understand why everything in Chinese history has gone extreme, because it’s either too radical or too conservative.

Yishiabyss: It’s not about how much I agree with his opinions; it’s about that I like his manner (of communication). When it comes to conflicting issues, there are only responses of either scurrility or indifference. When do we ever perceive and treat other people and the world with soberness, tolerance, gentleness, and insightfulness?

---

<sup>11</sup> Fifty Center: Fifty cents is a reported price paid for hired internet censors censoring each internet comment; and a fifty-center, pronounced as Wu Mao (五毛) in Chinese, is used as a derogatory term to people who work for and support the CCP government.

As previously noted, the institutional components to democracy are not the major focus of this essay and the discussion, but *Rule of Law* and *Civil Liberties or Freedom* still gained a total of 12 mentions in the comments. Han's essay emphasized that besides election, democracy includes more components such as *Rule of Law* and *Civil Liberties or Freedom* such as freedom to publish. He writes:

Democracy is a complex, difficult but inevitable social process. It is not attained through simple words such as 'revolution,' 'universal suffrage,' 'multi-party system,' 'down with XX,' etc. If you have never cared about the judiciary or publishing, then what is the point of caring about universal suffrage? The only reason is that it is easier to talk about. This is no different from the people who only speak of F1 when it comes to car racing; or only the World Cup when it comes to soccer.

Given this focus in the essay, in the comments these two institutional democratic components are mentioned side by side. Four comments supportive of Han's opinion quoted his words which pointed out a problem found in Chinese people—that the *Rule of Law* is not respected and the concept of freedom is formed on immediate self-interest rather than on a public agreement. One comment elaborated on this opinion in writing:

Bhcdl: when reading the part mentioning Ma Huateng<sup>12</sup>, I laughed in a helpless feeling. Yes, it (the society) is a pile of loose sand form by strayed social walks, each of which displaying super resilience to survive. The biggest misunderstanding lies in disconnecting democracy and freedom, and in separate understandings of "freedom" of different social walks: freedom to publish and associate is what you demand, but what I demand is freedom to spit everywhere and to jaywalk.

Some comments state that *Rule of Law* is the ground work for achieving other components, such as freedom of speech, to democracy. As the following comment

---

<sup>12</sup> Ma Huateng: (马化腾) is the CEO of Tencent Holdings Limited, one of the top three Chinese internet companies which owns *Tencent's QQ* instant messaging which had achieved a total of 784 million active users by the end of 2012.

illustrates, *Rule of Law* is being called for through establishment of institutional components which provide both freedom and rights for the public to pursue democracy:

Qinfattybro : If there exists a room for peaceful reform, people wouldn't have to risk lives. The so-called revolution, in my opinion, is to test the possibility of protecting rights and dignity through risk of life. For example, if Yang Jia had been treated with the full rigor of the law by the Shanghai police, he would have been willing to continue traveling for relax (instead of breaking in the police station stabbing 6 policemen to death).

Now I turn to the coding and analysis of the comments responding to the *On Democracy* essay to examine the democratic components that emerged in netizens' discussions.

## 2. *On Democracy*

In the *On Democracy* essay, Han used the 1989 *Velvet Revolution* in Czechoslovakia that ended the one-party ruling in a non-violent, smooth fashion as an example to further argue that such an "ideal type revolution" would not take place in China, as (1) there is no sign that separate social groups in China can associate and cooperate; and (2) the one-party ruling culture has been internalized by the public.

Similar to the comments to *On Revolution*, the comments to *On Democracy* show a debate occurring online, with 40 individual netizens explicitly supporting Han's arguments and opinions, 15 netizens criticizing the essay's opinions or Han's political stance, and 23 netizens giving their understandings on democracy or democratization in China. The remaining 22 comments did not provide enough information for coding. Table 6 contains the frequencies of each component mentioned in the essay.

There are 34 netizens who identified in their comments one or more key components to the ideal type democracy. All components of the ideal type of democracy received attention, with *Civic Cooperation and Association* and *Rule of Law* receiving the highest support (15 and 14 comments, respectively), followed by *Political Tolerance* and *Civil Liberties or Freedom*, with seven and six comments respectively. No component of ideal type of democracy was opposed in the comments.

**Table 6: Coding *On Democracy***

Themes	Individual Comments (N=100)	
	supportive	opposing
<b>Institutional Components</b>		
• Democratic Procedures	2	0
• Civil Liberties or Freedom	6	0
• Political Rights	2	0
• Rule of Law	14	0
<b>Cultural Values</b>		
• Political Tolerance	7	0
• Interpersonal Trust	3	0
• Civic Cooperation and Association	15	0

In the *On Democracy* essay, one of Han's catch phrases is, "The Party is no longer just a political party or a class. Therefore, many of the flaws of the Communist Party are also the flaws of the people." Individual netizens who support the component of *Civic Cooperation and Association* express similar concerns and disappointment in Chinese people's lack of this value, as seen below:



Yilingsmily: ... To be honest, I hold a perspective of Chinese people as pessimistic as Han Han's. In such a society where the people possess low basic moral quality, and everybody desires to be a relative, an alumnus, or a trusted subordinate to high-ranking government officials, it's impossible to even imagine realization of democracy. The best opportunity in history came in 1980s, but regretfully the path of history was then forced to deviate.

Those netizens express agreement with Han's emphasis on *Civic Cooperation and Association* as the key component to democracy, as illustrated below:

Lingtian: ... To the peasant group, I believe that talking about democracy doesn't make as much sense as chatting about weathers. You can gain some clues from the Wukan Protest Event<sup>13</sup>, in which a large organized group disbanded easily by government officials showing up, giving some provocative speeches, and making some lip promises. It doesn't even cost them any money sometimes. Anyway, I also believe that China will gradually be getting better, but I don't necessarily get to witness it for my life.

Netizens who support *Rule of Law* specifically propose that rule of law has to be implemented in order to achieve democracy, and one comment even describes a life experience to illustrate that law has to be implemented to curb the corrupt CCP's ruling which deprives Chinese people of rights and opportunities, as seen in these two comments which have an angry and sad tone:

Xinlangnetizen: The Chinese high-ranking officials are so corrupt, but have they been sent to jail? It's impossible. The ex-president of Taiwan, Chen Shuibian, has been sent to jail, but is it possible in China? Can mainland Chinese people confront and scold high ranking officials? Can they? A Taiwanese independent scholar, Li Ao, confronted and scolded that high ranking military official. Can this possibly happen in China? This is the basic human right! Whatever high ranking officials do, "old hundred surnames" has the right to criticize...

---

<sup>13</sup> The Wukan Protests Event: (乌坎村事件) also known as the Siege of Wukan, was an anti-corruption protest that began in September 2011, and escalated in December 2011 with the expulsion of officials by villagers, the siege of the town by police, and subsequent detente in the southern Chinese village of Wukan.

Zhenzhao98: My home is in TH County's HY Town of HN Province. While I worked far away from home for a long time, a neighbor piled rocks and blocked the path to my house. I filed a complaint to the government cadres, but they refused to step in; later I called the police when that neighbor torn down my yard walls by force, but the police didn't take the case; and then the local government made excuses to brush off me. Now that the regional level society has corrupted long and rotten, am I supposed to fight a bloody struggle? Am I going to be sentenced? The policies from the upper authority might be benign, but who from the regional level authority is willing to solve my problem? Can I seek justice through a letters-and-calls petition to the upper authority? Am I going to be detained or greeted? I'm here requesting an answer.

*Political Tolerance* and *Civil Liberties or Freedom* still obtained noticeable attention in comments to this essay. Han Han promoted tolerance in political power competitions by stating that when there is opportunity he would adjust his stance to support disadvantaged groups rather than holding to a fixed stance, and this gained agreement from seven netizens. The component of *Civil Liberties or Freedom* is usually considered an important condition for people to pursue democracy.

In a comment communicating with another netizen, Lawyerzhang specified Political Tolerance as an important quality for Chinese people to develop:

Lawyerzhang: Even Chinese intellectuals still need to be "enlightened", through learning tolerance, making compromises, balancing interests, and learning to apply a reasonable coordinate on orientating fairness and justice.

One netizen commented that in China, *Civil Liberties or Freedom* is usually deprived by the government; therefore people's fear as a result of power deprivation impedes the democratization:

Chenfreezer: Democracy is not what we common "old hundred surname" can have when we want; it's something that can only be permitted by village officials, town officials, county officials, mayors, provincial

officials... If they let us to enjoy democracy we would have democracy; if they don't let we wouldn't dare even to think about it....

In the next section I will examine and present the coding results of the comments to the *Wanting Freedom* essay, the final essay of *Han's Three Essays*, in which Han Han proposed strategies of democratization based on his understanding of democracy and democratization of China that was discussed in previous two essays.

### 3. *Wanting Freedom*

In his *Wanting Freedom* essay, Han Han advocated every individual taking action to demand and claim freedom such as independent media and freedom of expression.

Table 7 contains the frequencies of individuals' comments to each component mentioned.

**Table 7: Coding Wanting Freedom**

Themes	Individual Comments' Counts (N=100)	
	supportive	opposing
<b>Institutional Components</b>		
• Democratic Procedures	3	0
• Civil Liberties or Freedom	28	0
• Political Rights	5	0
• Rule of Law	12	0
<b>Cultural Values</b>		
• Political Tolerance	8	0
• Interpersonal Trust	4	0
• Civic Cooperation and Association	22	0

Similar to the results for the essays *On Revolution* and *On Democracy*, *Civil Liberties or Freedom*, *Civic Cooperation and Association*, and *Rule of Law* received the

most support, with 28%, 22%, and 12%, respectively, of the netizens noting them. While the other components of the ideal type of democracy are mentioned, the counts are minimal.

Comments representing *Civil Liberties or Freedom*, *Civic Cooperation and Association*, and *Rule of Law* echo Han Han's advocacy and call for individuals' participation and action to democratize China, through negotiating a return of constitutional rights with the authority. One netizen responding to Han Han's advocacy quoted his word and wrote:

Wintershadowwindevil: I hope that those without money can become wealthy in a judicial society, and those who have money will not still feel that they are inferior to foreigners in spite of their money.- Support Han Han! If the situation doesn't change even after freedom of speech is opened up, when you go personally to sit in and protest at every annual conference of Writers Association and China Federation of Literary and Art Circles, I will be there with you!

This netizen values *Rule of Law* in hoping for a "judicial society"; supports *Civil Liberties or Freedom* through supporting Han Han's action to demand freedom of literary creation; and embraces *Civic Cooperation and Association* through joining Han Han in petitioning activities. This comment exemplifies a quite common opinion held by a number of netizens; these three components need to be present to pursue democracy, as *Rule of Law* guarantees civil liberties and freedom, which can possibly be realized through citizens' collective actions.

Another netizen who discusses both *Civil Liberties or Freedom* and *Civic Cooperation and Association* maintains that these two components help realize each other:

Thoughtsjianxia: Yes, Han Han is fighting for freedom for himself as an individual, so every of us should also fight for the freedom that we deserve. Don't do empty talk about nation and people, and as Mr. Shizhi<sup>14</sup> has said that to fight for individual's freedom is to fight for the nation's freedom.

Regarding *Rule of Law*, a third netizen proposes to define and pursue freedom in a framework of rules:

Traityeah: There is only limited freedom, because unlimited freedom will lead to chaos, which would undermine freedom. It requires necessary control and constraints, but which should be people-oriented and guide toward right values.

Eight percent of the netizens mentioned *Political Tolerance* in their responses to Han Han's essay. While most agree with Han's statement to support different interest groups, one netizen challenges part of his understanding of this value by pointing out that delivering *Political Tolerance* should not conflict with *Rule of Law*. In the essay Han Han suggests granting amnesty to the government officials who have committed wrong conducts<sup>15</sup> in their cooperation for democratization. A netizen, *Qubiao*, opposed Han's idea by writing:

Qubiao: Han Han, you can decide for yourself not to settle old scores with them, but you can't decide it for me! A butcher becomes a Buddha the moment he drops his cleaver. They can only avoid being settled old scores by settling old scores with themselves first! Not to judge the vested interest groups is Han Han's freedom, but not our freedom!

The coding of all the three essays shows that some components of ideal type of democracy receive significant support consistently throughout Han's Three Essays, while some others receive a minimal total mention. To merge the counts of support that every

---

<sup>14</sup> Mr. Shizhi: is Hu Shih (胡适) (1891-1962), a Chinese philosopher, essayist, and diplomat.

<sup>15</sup> According to Han Han, the wrong conducts refer to "illegal, sensitive events in administration history", and "high ranking officials and their families' illegally obtained vested interest", and so on.

component receives from comments to all three essays displays a pattern of how Chinese people perceive and understand democracy and democratization of China. Now I turn to the discussion of the merging results of the coding of comments to all three Han's essays.

Table 8 contains the overall percentages of each component mentioned in each essay.

**Table 8: Three Essays**

<b>Themes</b>	<b>On Revolution (N=100)</b>	<b>On Democracy (N=100)</b>	<b>Wanting Freedom (N=100)</b>	<b>Total N=300 (Percent)</b>
<b>Institutional Components</b>				
• Democratic Procedures	0	2	3	5 (2%)
• Civil Liberties or Freedom	6	6	28	40 (13%)
• Political Rights	1	2	5	8 (3%)
• Rule of Law	6	13	12	31 (10%)
<b>Cultural Values</b>				
• Political Tolerance	12	7	8	27 (9%)
• Interpersonal Trust	21	3	4	28 (9%)
• Civic Cooperation and Association	25	15	22	62 (21%)

As shown, certain components to democracy concentrate in certain essay's comments, while other components' counts vary not much across the three essays. The counts are consistent with the thematic topics that Han's Three Essays respectively take on. For example, the essay of *On Revolution* discusses cultural values that are necessary to construct a functional democracy, and the components of the cultural values category in this essay obtained a total 58 counts, much more than 13 counts of institutional

components. In the essay of *Wanting Freedom*, the counts concentrate on the institutional component of *Civil Liberties or Freedom*, and the cultural value of *Civic Cooperation and Association*, which are the major concepts discussed in this essay.

The components which obtain close significant counts across the three essays could be components that are considered as more important or urgent to build a democracy in China. As evidenced, two cultural components, *Civic Cooperation and Association* and *Political Tolerance*, gained the most attention and support across all three essays.

Unlike cultural values that all the components received a high total support, only two components of institutional components to ideal type of democracy were as consistently supported across all three essays. *Civil Liberties or Freedom* and *Rule of Law* each dominated in two of three essays analyzed. It is interesting to see which components received very little support. Under institutional components, *Democratic Procedures* and *Political Rights* received the least total mention.

But the least mentioned are not the least important. According to Han Han's essays and the following comments, the netizens participating in the discussion are concerned that a democratic election system, composed by *Democratic Procedures* such as free and fair election and *Political Rights* including rights to vote and to run for elective office, is a factor and the only factor for the most Chinese public to identify a democracy. Therefore the comments focused the discussion on the democratic components believed to be unaware of by the Chinese public.

I now turn to discussing dominant additional components that emerged in the analysis, following the same method of analysis and presentation used for the ideal type. These additional components provide insight to how the netizens view essential components of democracy.

### *A China Pattern of Democracy*

Several general themes of a Chinese pattern of democracy emerge in the comments to Han's Three Essays.

**Table 9: Additional Components to Democracy**

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Individual Comments (N=300) (Percent)</b>
• Populace's Qualities	21 (7%)
• Education	10 (3.3%)
• Advanced Social Productivity	7 (2.3%)

Table 9 contains the themes that emerge from the comments to all three essays. Except for *Populace's Qualities*, the other two components are not dominant but are consistently mentioned by comments to all three essays. *Populace's Qualities* obtained the highest support, with 7% of the netizens noting this component by various terms and expressions such as the populace's qualities (国民素质), the populace's wisdom (民智), the national cultural quality (国民文化素质), and so forth. *Populace's Qualities* generally refers to social actors' educational attainment, social norms, moral standards, civic consciousness etc. that are materialized in behaviors. In China, a poor *Populace's*



*Quality* is usually identified as one of the factors contributing to various social and economic problems, and a major obstacle to democratization.

In the essay *On Revolution*, Han took a driving norm as an indicator to measure the *Populace's Qualities* in China. He wrote:

China is the nation which needs reform the most in the world. If you insist on asking me about the best timing for revolution in China, I can only say that when Chinese car drivers know to turn off their high beam lights when they pass each other, we can safely proceed with the revolution.

The example of “high beam lights” has become a catch phrase to Han’s opinion expressed in the essay, and quoted often by comments that emphasize the importance of *Populace's Qualities* to democracy, as illustrated below:

Lostthousandpounds: Carefully reading Han Han’s new blog essay, I’m deeply moved. Han Han’s thinking is sober, mature, and insightful. When the populace’s wisdom hasn’t been enlightened, a reform is more important than a revolution, and to clarify the concept of democracy is more important than to promote the idea of revolution.

Other comments identify *Populace's Qualities* as a critical factor to democracy, and express concerns about the low *Populace's Qualities* of China’s society. This is evidenced below:

1111 to On Revolution : Yes. The smallest element to construct a society is people, therefore there is the kind of people there is the kind of society. Chinese people haven’t evolved the genes necessary to build a democracy which haunts somebody’s daydream.

Fogandclearwater to On Democracy: If China walks on the path of revolution again, the outcome can only be another round of robbing the rich for enriching the poor. A state ruled by constitutionalism requires all social walks and classes to negotiate and make compromises, and this task is for the elites from different social walks and classes to take on. But the general populace’s quality is the foundation, and reform is the only road. And the reform has to start from ourselves.

*Education*, the second most frequently mentioned theme in Table 9, is considered a resolution to the problem of low *Populace's Qualities*. In the essay *On Democracy*, Han Han argued that since to change the people would change everything, the development of education and culture, along with construction of *Rule of Law*, is the groundwork for constructing democracy. The comments mentioning *Education* help strengthen Han Han's argument, as illustrated below:

Windrim to On Democracy: Who has ever been awoken and moved by the repeated, loud cry for democracy? ...It's no use to discuss those too decent questions. Education is the most effective tool to renovate the current regime. And the decline of education will absolutely produce a series of grieves.

While not included as part of the "ideal type" democracy, the founders of the United States believed education essential to an effective democracy (Sargent 2000:89). Following this vein, Sargent (2009) identified *Education* as one of the seven key principles to a fully functioning democracy. He took democracy in India as an example to argue that a democracy of illiterates is limited because lack of skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic prevent the citizens from being fully informed to participate in political activities.

The development of education in China is slow. While in 2007, the overall illiteracy rate is 7.8% (CIA 2012), lower than the world average at 16.3%, the quality of education is drastically unequal across different areas, generally much better in urban and worse in rural areas. Public spending on education is low and has decreased over last ten years. According to the United Nation's record, from 2006 to 2012, the Chinese

government's expenditure education was 1.9% of GDP, well below the global average (UNSD 2013).

Seven netizens point out that an advanced social productivity would naturally bring about a democracy. The general argument is that advanced social productivity would increase economic and social welfare to people, and until then people would shift their attentions from making a life to democracy, a seemingly luxury to people struggling in everyday hardship. As the following netizen explained:

Heartleirivermoon to On Revolution: During the process of transforming from the realm of necessity into the realm of freedom, people are inevitably slaved by the social relations created by themselves. It has nothing to do with revolution; it's eventually a matter determined by the level of productivity. The poor don't have freedom, only because they are unable to differentiate between democracy and freedom. It's just like the poor hardly pursue "pure love", because they can't afford to ignore added pragmatic values to a relationship of live.

Table 10 contains the dominant components of ideal democracy and dominant additional component of democracy that emerged in all comments to all three essays.

**Table 10: Dominant Components of Democracy Across All Essays**

	<b>Themes</b>	<b>Individual Comments (N=300) (Percent)</b>
1	Civic Cooperation and Association	62 (21%)
2	Civil Liberties or Freedom	40 (13%)
3	Rule of Law	31 (10%)
4	Interpersonal Trust	28 (9.3%)
5	Political Tolerance	27 (9%)
6	Populace's Quality	21 (7%)

Five of themes are part of the ideal type of democracy, while *Populace's Quality* is not. Two of which are part of institutional components and three of which are cultural values.

As indicated, cultural values of an ideal type democracy have much more support in the netizens' communication about democracy and democratization in China.

*Civic Cooperation and Association* is a cultural value to the ideal type of democracy that emphasizes citizens' orientation to public interest and issues and advocates participation. Promotion of this component by the netizens' commenting shows that the part of the Chinese public represented by these netizens has declined the traditional political ideology that the relationship between the society and the state is paternal and thus harmonious. Rather, this group has accepted the idea that freedom and liberties and political rights are not granted by the ruling government, and are to be claimed and pursued by individuals. Meanwhile, these netizens suggest that *Civic Cooperation and Association* has not been found in general Chinese public, thus also the most critical value to nurture in the course of democratization.

*Civil Liberties or Freedom* received the second highest support by the netizens, followed by *Rule of Law*. As the discussion on democracy and democratization in Han's Three Essays proceeds from the notion of democracy to the path of democratization, these two institutional components receive more support as critical prerequisites to encourage *Civil Cooperation and Association*. Only when guaranteed liberties and freedom of speech, of expression, of association and assembly, etc. within a system of

rule of law, would the Chinese people be more likely to participate in political activities, either individually or collectively.

*Interpersonal Trust* and *Political Tolerance*, received similar amount of support. As the other two cultural values of ideal type of democracy mentioned mostly in the *On Revolution* Essay along with *Civil Cooperation and Association*, the netizens commenting maintain that the lack of these two cultural values among the Chinese public results in the lack of the value of *Civil Cooperation and Association*. According to a survey research in 1990 (Nathan and Shi 1993:112), Chinese people had quite a poor record on *Political Tolerance*, which posed an obstacle to democracy. My findings do not show any change on this record, but do show that this obstacle has been identified by part of the Chinese public.

*Populace' Qualities* is a dominant theme mentioned by the comments as an explanation of the obstacle to democratize China's society. This concern echoes one persisting view maintained by Chinese philosophers and democracy activists, from Liang Qichao a century ago to activists in 1980s democracy movement, on democratization in China. While most netizens commenting did not explain what the populace's qualities are, some specified that the qualities include the cultural values of ideal type of democracy. In addition to the support of *Populace's Qualities*, twenty comments expressed the support to reform the Chinese people as the key to democratize China, without giving discussion. As one comment responding to the *On Democracy* essay said:

Vanneilson: I didn't plan to say, but there is one point (in Han's essay) coinciding exactly with my perception so I can't help giving my support: China is just exactly what Chinese people are! Stop accusing this and

scolding that every day. You're just like this mess! This nation could only see hope when you yourselves change into better people!

The above results may also be explained by a debate which occurred in all three essays on the prerequisites to democracy, to which I now turn.

The most salient theme emerging from the sampled netizens' comments to Han's Three Essays is that the cultural values are considered prerequisites to achieving democracy in China. But some netizens criticize this opinion and argue that the *Populace's Qualities* should not be considered a prerequisite to democracy and the democratic values will evolve spontaneously from institutional democracy. Some comments argued that the low *Populace's Qualities* is more like a survival mechanism developed under an authoritarian regime, as illustrated by one netizen identified as *Winter* commenting to *On Democracy*:

Winter: Those villagers were born and raised in the existing regime, and their rational beings are constructed by the irrational characteristics of the regime. In front of the supreme ruling authority, villagers from generation to generation preserve their fears and cautiousness in numbness.

And some comments criticize that advocacy of *Populace's Qualities* over democratic institutions are also involved in the debate through raising a challenging question as follows:

Xinlangnetizen: An evil regime can only deteriorate the populace's qualities. If a low populace quality is the reason not to have democracy, is it saying that where there is no democracy where there will never have democracy?

Responding to Han Han's call for taking action to obtain freedom, as evidenced in previously presented comments, some netizens point out a paradox that under the CCP's one-party regime, people do not have the freedom to pursue freedom. And a number of

netizens insisted that the path of democratization of China proposed by Han Han and some of his supporters, which is to democratize the society through reforming the people, seems to be an impasse. They argued that the reform and development of education and culture to reform the people is impossible to realize under the current regime, as this comment argued:

Xinlangnetizen: 1...2. The populace's quality is the soil for growing democracy. But our brains have been washed for many decades. The majority of people older than 40 years age are resistance force to democracy, as they prefer to be dictated. Education is the key to enhance the populace's quality, but the education we have now can only produce more "shit youth", more nationalists, and more so-called "state lovers". So I don't see any hope in next 20 years. The situation can only get worse.

Likewise, netizens who mentioned cultural values to democracy, such as *Civic Cooperation and Association*, are aware of the interconnection among different institutional components and cultural values to democracy:

Uncletito: The problem is that without democracy, how to improve law, education, and culture? The populace needs no democracy. They have survived so many years since Beijing Asian Game, and during when China even became a rising power. Why democracy is demanded for? The reason is the daily environment for law, education, and culture is deteriorating.

The debate on prerequisites to democracy, democratic institutions or democratic values, is also the central of the debate between which path to take to achieve democracy in China, reform or revolution. Some critics insist that revolution is the only path to democracy as there is no way to negotiate reform out from an authoritarian government, and democratic values are just products of a democratic institution.

The debate which has emerged from the comments raises fundamental concern about democratization in China. Many people agree that there are some critical conditions needed to be prepared in order to achieve a successful democracy. But when these conditions are prerequisite conditions for each other to develop in China society, the question becomes which one to nurture first, and how? If the hope lies in democratizing the people first as Han Han argued, how does one achieve this goal in an undemocratic regime in which institutional components are not in place to support the public's democratization? These are two comments to the essay of *On Revolution* that raises this question as follows:

Xinlangnetizen: "A revolution cannot be pre-planned, because a revolution is the last choice. When our desperate cry for a "reform" is only answered by an "anti-reform", the last choice will be inevitable." –  
Correct! A bad political regime can only worsen the population quality. If the low population quality is the reason not to implement democracy, then where there is no democracy where there will never be qualified for a democracy.

Fourkawafxgreat: If interpreted by Xiao Han's discourse system, Han Han's opinion is that social reform is the premise to political revolution, as he suggests to first solving the problem not to turn off the high beam light, which is opposite to Xiao Han's opinion. Considering historical experiences, I agree more with Han Han, nonetheless I wouldn't deny that political revolution can possibly enhance social reform. But the problem with Han Han's opinion lies in that he doesn't (or is unable to) point out what would motivate the social reform.

This question brings the debate back to the historical scholarly debate on democracy: under what conditions can a functional democracy be achieved. While some scholars (Markoff 2005) have claimed that the academic focus has shifted from conceptualization of social conditions for democracy to an ongoing process of



democratization, they still cannot avoid this question. After giving a standing ovation to the Arab Spring, the world is now witnessing a post revolution chaos rampaging the area where a democracy was expected to be in the place.

Arab Spring revolution didn't bring a successful transition to democracy; instead, economic and political struggles have been plaguing the countries involved in Arab Spring. In Syria and Libya, uprisings have morphed into a civil war; in Tunisia and Egypt, the elected governments fell in swift succession (YaleGlobal 2013). Scholars from these societies believe that the Arab societies largely lack a democratic culture, and democracy is not a matter of principle or faith for most people in the region.

The comments to Han's Three Essays reflected that Chinese people share this concern with scholars and democracy advocates across the world. Francis Fukuyama, the renowned political scientist on democracy, said in an interview that as he still believed that democracy is the direction of things, all of the places hit by Arab Spring face a long evolutionary path for democratic institutions to evolve (Perry 2013). The scholarly inquiry into how to take on a path for democracy to evolve in those societies is highly relevant in addressing this concern.

## CONCLUSION

The results of analyzing the sampled comments responding to Han's Three Essays that discuss democratization and prospect of democracy in China show that at least a part of the Chinese public accept the ideal type democracy that comprises both institutional components and cultural values and that cultural values to democracy, especially *Political Tolerance* and *Civic Cooperation and Association*, are central to Chinese people's notion of democracy. *Populace's Qualities* and *Education*, two additional themes that emerged, further confirm that Chinese people believe that cultural values are the key issue to democratization in China. Oppositions to these opinions argue that democratic institutions are the prerequisites to democracy and will produce cultural values critical to maintain a functional democracy. This, then, will promote revolution to end the CCP's authoritarian regime in China and be the starting point to democratize China. The comments presenting the opposing idea are not many, but pose a powerful challenge to opinions that emphasize cultural values, and to scholarly argument that considers cultural values are the prerequisites to democracy.

There are various limitations to this thesis. First, the majority of the comments are brief, and most express support for Han's essays without providing any explanation; while some give explanations they were not detailed enough to clarify the individual's opinion, which caused coding difficulties. For example, some comments consider "law" a key component to democracy. I have coded them as *Rule of Law*. However, Chinese people usually confuse *Rule of Law* (法治) and *Rule by Law* (法制), which are

fundamentally different ideologies that define different notions of democracy. It would be more accurate in capturing Chinese view of democracy if it is possible to know which ideology dominates among Chinese public.

In addition, the sample size is small. The overall sampling ratio is about 0.51%. A larger sample may be able to provide more information for capturing how Chinese people view democracy, thus increasing the representativeness of the results.

Furthermore, debates stimulated by Han's Three Essays were on widespread online forums and twitter-like micro blogs such as Cat's Eyes (猫眼看人), Tianya Community (天涯社区), and Sina Microblogging (新浪微博), where netizens can post long critic postings and make conversational discussions. Critics of Han's opinions were active on those websites. Incorporating these comments into the analysis would enrich the results.

Despite these limitations, this thesis begins to shed light on how Chinese people view democracy in the light of an "ideal type" of democracy, and provides insight on what may be unique and what may be universal in China's experiences with democratization. All critical questions to examine as the move to democracy is occurring in many countries worldwide. Regarding how Chinese critiques view democracy and the steps they believe essential for democracy to occur, until now, information of this type has been either non-existent, or extremely faulty in terms of data strength. Because of the constraints on collecting data of this type for Chinese critiques, internet data such as that used here is a valuable resource and waiting to be tapped for even more research on this

topic, particularly in authoritarian societies like China where opinion polling and surveys are hard to conduct due to social and political reasons.

## REFERENCES

- Abrahamsen, Eric. 2012. "Han Han's U-Turn?" *The New York Times*, January. Retrieved September 12, 2012 (<http://latitude.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/01/26/blogger-han-han-controversy-on-democracy-in-china/>)
- Almond, Gabriel A. and Sidney Verba. 1989. *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*. CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Aronson, Jodi. 1994. "A Pragmatic View of Thematic Analysis." *The Qualitative Report* 2(1). Retrieved October 12, 2013 (<http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/BackIssues/QR2-1/aronson.html>)
- Bialik, Carl. 2012. "Mining Tweets for Public Opinion." *The Wall Street Journal*, February. Retrieved October 2 (<http://blogs.wsj.com/numbersguy/mining-tweets-for-public-opinion-1118/>)
- Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). 2012. "The World Factbook." Retrieved November 20, 2012 (<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ch.html#top>)
- Chau, Angie. 2013. "Celebrities in the Internet Age: Han Han's Everyman Appeal." Presented at China's Domestic Challenges Conference, March 25, Shanghai, China.
- China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC). 2012. "Statistical Report on Internet Development in China." Retrieved October 8, 2013 (<http://www1.cnnic.cn/IDR/ReportDownloads/201209/P020120904421720687608.pdf>).
- Dahl, Robert A. 1991. *Democracy and Its Critics*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Drezner, Daniel W. and Henry Farrell. 2008. "Introduction: Blogs, politics and power: a special issue of Public Choice." *Public Choice* 134:1-13. DOI 10.1007/s11127-007-9206-5.
- E. H. 2013. "How does China censor the internet?" *The Economist*, April. Retrieved October 3, 2013 (<http://www.economist.com/blogs/economist-explains/2013/04/economist-explains-how-china-censors-internet>)
- Elo, Satu and Helvi Kyngäs. 2008. "The Qualitative Content Analysis Process." *Journal Of Advanced Nursing* 62(1): 107-115.

- Fallows, Deborah. 2008. "Most Chinese Say They Approve of Government Internet Control." Pew Internet & American Life Project. Retrieved October 8, 2012 ([http://www.pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2008/PIP\\_China\\_Internet\\_2008.pdf.pdf](http://www.pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2008/PIP_China_Internet_2008.pdf.pdf))
- Gibson, James L. and Raymond M. Duch. 1992. "Democratic Values and the Transformation of the Soviet Union." *Journal of Politics* 54(2): 329.
- Goodman, David J. 2011. "With Essays on Democracy, Chinese Blogger Stirs Debate Among Reformers." The New York Times. Retrieved September 12, 2012. (<http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/12/27/with-essays-on-democracy-chinese-blogger-stirs-debate-among-reformers/>)
- Han, Han. 2011. "Twocold" (in Chinese) . *Sina Blog*. Retrieved August 28, 2011 ([http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/articlelist\\_1191258123\\_0\\_1.html](http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/articlelist_1191258123_0_1.html))
- Hsieh, Hsiu-Fang and Sarah E. Shannon. 2005. "Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis." *Qualitative Health Research* 15(9): 1277-1288.
- Jepson, Duncan. 2011. "One in 1.3 Billion: The Phenomenon of China's Han Han." *Publishing Perspectives*, July. Retrieved September 13, 2012 (<http://publishingperspectives.com/2011/07/phenomenon-china-han-han/>)
- Kline, David and Daniel Burstein. 2005. *Blog!: How the Newest Media Revolution is Changing Politics, Business, and Culture*. NC: CDS Books.
- Lee, Ching Kwan. 2000. "The 'Revenge of History': Collective Memories and Labor Protests in North-Eastern China." *Ethnography* 1(2): 217-237.
- Lee, Ching Kwan. 2002. "From the Specter of Mao to the Spirit of the Law: Labor Insurgency in China." *Theory and Society* 31(2): 189-228.
- Lee, Mei. 2010. "Han Han: Writer and Racing Driver of the Post-80 Generation." *WantChina Times*, November. Retrieved October 12, 2012 (<http://www.wantchinatimes.com/news-subclass-cnt.aspx?cid=1604&MainCatID=16&id=20101125000182>)
- Leibold, James. 2011. "Blogging Alone: China, the Internet, and the Democratic Illusion?" *Journal of Asian Studies* 70(4):1023-1041. doi:10.1017/S0021911811001550.

- Li, Cheng. 2000. "Promises and Pitfalls of Reform: New Thinking in Post-Deng China" Pp. 123-158 in *China Briefing 2000: The Continuing Transformation*, edited by T. White. Armonk, NY: ME Sharpe Inc.
- Linz, Juan J. 2000. *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*. CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Linz, Juan J. and Alfred Stepan eds. 1996. *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation. Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Lu, Chunlong. 2004. "Domestic Values among Chinese People: Analysis of A Public Opinion Survey." *China Perspectives* 55. Retrieved November 6, 2012 (<http://chinaperspectives.revues.org/413>).
- Luo, Xiaofu and Hu Hong. 2012. "'Public Enemy' Han Han" (in Chinese). *Southern Metropolis Weekly*, January. Retrieved September 12, 2012 (<http://www.nbweekly.com/news/people/201201/28792.aspx>)
- Lynton, Nandani and Kirsten H. Thøgersen. 2010. "Reckoning with Chinese Gen Y." *Bloomberg Businessweek*, January. Retrieved November 2, 2012 ([http://www.businessweek.com/globalbiz/content/jan2010/gb20100125\\_065225.htm](http://www.businessweek.com/globalbiz/content/jan2010/gb20100125_065225.htm))
- Malin, Stefanie A. and Peggy Petrzela. 2010. "Left in the Dust: Uranium's Legacy and Victims of Mill Tailings Exposure in Monticello, Utah." *Society and Natural Resources* 23(12):1187-1200. DOI: 10.1080/08941920903005795.
- Markoff, John. 2005. "Transitions to Democracy." Pp. 384-403 in *The Handbook of Political Sociology: States, Civil Societies, and Globalization*, edited by T. Janoski, R. R. Alford, A. M. Hicks, and M. A. Schwartz. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Nathan Andrew J. 1985. *Chinese Democracy*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Nathan, Andrew J. and Tianjian Shi. 1993. "Cultural Requisites for Democracy in China: Findings from A Survey." *Daedalus* 122, no. 2: 95.

- Osnos, Evan. 2011a. "Han Han Finds a New Crowd to Irritate." *The New Yorker*, December. Retrieved September 12, 2012 (<http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/evanosnos/2011/12/han-han-finds-a-new-crowd-to-irritate.html>)
- Osnos, Evan. 2011b. "The Han Dynasty: How Far Can A Youth-Culture Idol Tweak China's Establishment?" *The New Yorker*, July. Retrieved May 23, 2012 ([http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2011/07/04/110704fa\\_fact\\_osnos#ixzz2Ais7RvUw](http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2011/07/04/110704fa_fact_osnos#ixzz2Ais7RvUw))
- Papacharissi, Zizi. 2002. "The Virtual Sphere: the Internet as A Public Sphere." *New Media & Society* 4(1): 9.
- Perry, Dan. 2013. "3 Years After Arab Spring, Democracy's Future In Middle East Still Uncertain." *HUFFPOST MEDIA*, Retrieved December 6, 2013 ([http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/10/05/arab-spring-democracy\\_n\\_4049414.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/10/05/arab-spring-democracy_n_4049414.html))
- Putnam, Robert D. 1993. *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Pye, Lucian W. 1992. *The Spirit of Chinese Politics, New Edition*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Roberts, Hal, Ethan Zuckerman, and John Palfrey. 2009. *2007 Circumvention Landscape Report: Methods, Uses, and Tools*. The Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University. Retrieved October 10, 2013 ([http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/sites/cyber.law.harvard.edu/files/2007\\_Circumvention\\_Landscape.pdf](http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/sites/cyber.law.harvard.edu/files/2007_Circumvention_Landscape.pdf))
- Rosen, Stanley. 2010. "Is the Internet a Positive Force in the Development of Civil Society, a Public Sphere, and Democratization in China?" *International Journal of Communication* 4:509-516.
- Sargent, Lyman T. 2009. *Contemporary Political Ideologies: A Comparative Analysis*. 14th ed. Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Schmitter, Philippe C. and Terry L. Karl. 1991. "What Democracy Is...and Is Not?" *Journal of Democracy* 2:75-88.
- Soong, Roland. 2011. "EastSouth WestNorth Blog." Retrieved August 28, 2012 (<http://www.zonaeuropa.com/201112a.brief.htm#008>).



- Tang, Wenfang. 2005. *Public Opinion and Political Changes in China*. CA: Stanford University Press.
- Shi, Tianjian. 2000. "Cultural Values and Democracy in the People's Republic of China." *China Quarterly* no. 162: 540.
- Shi, Tianjian. 2007. Review of *Public Opinion and Political Changes in China* by Tang Wenfang." *The China Journal* 57: 149-151.
- Thornton, John L. 2008. "Long Time Coming: the Prospects for Democracy in China." *Foreign Affairs*, 87(1):1, 2-22.
- Unger, Jonathan. 2000, "Power, Patronage and Protest in Rural China." Pp. 71-94 in *China Briefing 2000: The Continuing Transformation*, edited by T. White. Armonk, NY: ME Sharpe Inc.
- United Nations. The United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD). 2013. "UNdata, Country Profile: China." Retrieved December 12, 2013 (<http://data.un.org/CountryProfile.aspx?crName=CHINA>)
- Vittoz, Stanley. 1993. Confucianism and the Spirit of Democracy in China: the Beijing Uprising of 1989. *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*, 7(2), 329-365.
- Wang, Chunzhi and Benjamin Bates. 2008. "Online Public Sphere and Democracy in China." Presented at IAMCR, July, Stockholm, Sweden.
- Webster, Graham. 2009. "Definitions and Boundaries of an Online Chinese Public Sphere." Presented at the Harvard East Asia Society Graduate Student Conference, February 27-March 1, Cambridge, MA.
- Wertime, David. 2012. "Harvard Researchers: Yes, You Really Can Criticize the Government on China's Social Media." *TeaLeafNation*, June. Retrieved October 2, 2013 (<http://www.tealeafnation.com/2012/06/harvard-researchers-you-really-can-criticize-the-government-on-chinas-social-media/#sthash.RcmZ1VTL.dpufWartime>)
- Wright, Teresa. 2011. "Perpetuating Communist Party Rule in China." *Journal of International Affairs* 65(1): 31-45.
- Wu, Guoguang. 2011. "Politics Against Science: Reflections on the Study of Chinese Politics in Contemporary China." *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 16(3):279-297.

Xue, Yong. 2012. "The Fear of Revolution in China (in Chinese)." *Sina Blog*. Retrived September 14, 2012 ([http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog\\_45f00ef40102dzfv.html](http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_45f00ef40102dzfv.html))

YaleGlobal. 2013. "Winners and Losers after Arab Spring." *YaleGlobal Online*, August. Retrieved December 6, 2013 (<http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/winners-and-losers-after-arab-spring>)

Yi, Zhongtian. 2011. "Han Han's New Clothes (in Chinese)." *Sina Blog*. Retrived September 12, 2012 ([http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog\\_476e068a0102dxbu.html](http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_476e068a0102dxbu.html))

Zhao, Yuezhi. 2001. "Media and Elusive Democracy in China." *Media and Democracy in Asia* 8(2):21-44