

CHINESE YOUTH OPINION AND THE PROSPECTS FOR DEMOCRACY IN CHINA

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INTRODUCTION

In the “Universal Declaration on Democracy” issued by the Inter-Parliamentary Union in 1997, it is stated that “Democracy is a universally recognized ideal as well as a goal, which is based on common values shared by peoples throughout the world irrespective of cultural, political, social and economic differences” (IPU 1997, 1). The notion of democracy as an end-goal and a global ideal has become an important aspect of international politics. As the world continues to globalize and nations interact on an international level, being democratic, or being on the path to democracy has become a norm.

The fact that the People’s Republic of China remains an authoritarian state—despite the global emphasis on the importance of becoming democratic—has been a focal point for many scholars and politicians for decades. In 1998, The *Journal of Democracy* published a series of articles entitled “Will China Democratize?” Articles included perspectives from both sides. For example, several authors predicted the emergence of democracy (Chen 1998, Oksenberg 1998), or at least the liberalizing of the political system (Harding 1998). In contrast, other authors did not think that a Western-style democracy had a chance in China (Brzezinski 1998, Metzger 1998, Scalapino 1998). More than ten years later, after another decade of economic liberalization and development, the second group of predictions is closer to the truth. As China continues to transform its economy, the world is still waiting in anticipation for China to reform its political system. The question remains, why hasn’t China liberalized politically?

This paper looks to the students at Peking University, China’s top university, to gain further insight into the reasons for this lack of political democratization. Open-ended interviews conducted in the fall of 2008 reveal a sense of satisfaction with the current situation and a disinterest in pressuring the Chinese government to liberalize. Social stability and continued

economic growth are top priorities, and those interviewed did not show any desire to risk their own future, and the future of their nation, for increased democracy or freedoms.

THEORY AND LITERATURE

In the current literature on democratization, the theory that economic development will lead to political development prevails and poses a paradox for the situation in China. Despite China's economic development, it has failed to democratize. Scholars have identified three main reasons for this lack of democratization in China: the strong support for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), support for the current regime, and the lack of a stable civil society to facilitate reform. Additionally, scholars have identified three segments of society that may eventually lead to China's democratization in the future—the middle class, the elites, and the young generation. I outline these reasons for the lack of democratization in China and the prospects for the future of democratization in China in the following literature review.

The expectation that China's economic development would lead to political liberalization comes from modernization theory, which posits a relationship between economic and political liberalization. Specifically, modernization theory states that economic development and market reform will lead to political democratization (Lipset 1959, Helliwell 1994). Under this theory, capitalism lays the foundation necessary for democratization, which includes reduced or limited state control of the economy, popular acceptance of individualism, and reliance on contracts. These characteristics of capitalism push societies to rely on law and believe in equality under law, and to use money, which produces a scientific worldview and is said to lead to democratization (see Glassman 1991, Shi 2000, Whyte 1992). The dependence on contracts required by a market economy means that law becomes more commonplace and respect for the

rule of law grows (Glassman 1991). These aspects of capitalism in turn lay the foundation for democracy, but do not necessarily assure democratization. Though the necessary social structures are available, other factors, such as public interest and historical traditions, contribute to the likelihood of democracy. For example, in China, despite the existence of a form of capitalism, there has not been such a move towards formal, legal-rationality which would theoretically lead to democracy. Furthermore, historically, people in China have resorted to the law only as a last resort when problems could not be resolved according to Confucian social hierarchical structure (Schoppa 2006). The lack of this history of legal tradition and is one reason that the development of the capitalistic economy in China has not led to political liberalization.

Scholars have refuted the positive correlation between economic development and the emergence of democracy as stated by modernization theory (Prezeworski and Limongi 1997, Landman 1999, Vanhanen 1997, McFaul 2005). Prezeworski and Limongi examine the per-capita income against regime stability in 135 countries between 1950 and 1990 and argue that democratization is country-and time-specific and can occur at any stage of development (1997). Vanhanen's study emphasizes how other factors, not only economic development, can lead to democratization. Specifically, he argues that the more widely power resources are distributed, the more likely economic development will lead to democratization (1997).

Several authors have conducted studies in order to determine the factors to explain China's lack of democratization. Relative to other socialist countries in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, before 1989 China actually appeared to be heading more directly towards democracy, yet the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has maintained consistent support and power (Whyte 1992, Young 1995, Gallagher 2002). Gallagher's study suggested that the timing

and sequencing of foreign direct investment liberalization allowed the CCP to maintain control despite other economic reforms. Gallagher (2002) suggests that the foreign competition promoted nationalism which reduced societal resistance to reforms and allowed the Chinese government to implement reforms while maintaining support. In contrast, Lewis and Xue (2003) found that the economic reforms have intensified unrest. Although the unrest is minimal compared to the chaos that resulted from the immediate radical political reforms of Russia, as the economy develops, the government continues to have to make political adjustments allowing for different power shifts in order to deal with unrest within the Party and maintain stability (2003).

The CCP maintains widespread public support, which helps explain its continued power. Chan, Yang, and Hillard (1997) found moderately high levels of popular support for the Chinese Communist Party regime, mostly among those optimistic about the country's economic and political future. High popular support for the CCP does not necessarily indicate popular rejection of reform, but may explain the lack of any social movements for democracy. Zhao (2000) posits that people will not accept social movements if they support the ruling power. With a public that supports the current government, there is little possibility of a political movement.

Without strong public support for democracy, political movements necessary for democratization remain unlikely. McFaul expresses the importance of public opinion by saying, "Inert, invisible structures do not make democracies or dictatorships. People do" (2002: 214). His actor-centric theory of democratization and other post-communist reforms posits that regardless of other factors, forces for change are only significant if they are "translated into human action" (McFaul 2002: 214). In China, this lack of human action may be the reason that the government remains authoritarian. Other research on democracy in China focuses on public opinion to explain the lack of democratization. In 1990, Nathan and Shi conducted the first

scientifically valid national survey in China on political behavior and attitudes in order to measure public opinion after the 1989 Tiananmen Square Democracy Movement. Their study found limited short-term prospects for democratization, but that long-term prospects were promising due to liberalizing attitudes and stronger democratic attitudes among the urban and educated sectors (Nathan and Shi 1996).

Almost fifteen years later, Wang, Rees, and Andresso (2004) adapted Nathan and Shi's survey from 1990 to measure if public ideals were becoming more liberal. Their sample size was smaller than Nathan and Shi's and their questions were more focused toward the perceived impact of government, feelings of political efficacy, and political tolerance. As the survey was based on one previously conducted, however, they were able to compare the results and found, similar to Nathan and Shi (1996), liberalizing public opinions, potentially providing a basis for transition in the future. Both of these surveys found, however, that the public was sufficiently content with the government to make it unlikely to pressure the government to liberalize. Taken together, these two studies indicate that liberal public opinions do not necessarily translate into demand for liberalization. Furthermore, with the results of these surveys changing little over the fifteen years, it is likely that these trends in public opinion will continue.

Another reason for the lack of democratization in China set forth by scholars is the lack of a strong and stable civil society (Young 1995, Whyte 1992, Zheng 1994). Civil society refers to a foundation of social structures unaffiliated with or controlled by the government, and provides people a platform through which to express their views against the government. Having a more stable and structured civil society could potentially lead the Chinese public to pressure the government to liberalize. China currently has more than 350,000 legally registered NGOs (Pei 2008) but most are still controlled by the government. Other independent structures,

such as social or cultural organizations, are not fully developed (Young 1995). Most of Chinese civil society consists of small groups engaged in leisure activity; there are few or no independent labor unions or religious groups capable of large-scale collective action (Pei 2008). Without a civil society, the state dominates most of society and makes it difficult for democracy to develop (Zheng 1994). Young (1995) suggests that for democracy to develop, China will need politically active autonomous social, cultural, and civic organizations, and at this point, such a civil society simply does not exist.

The relatively small middle class and its unwillingness to make waves is yet another explanation for limited demand for democracy in China. Many scholars argue that the middle class will be the catalyst for reform to a more liberal political system, but is currently not strong enough to resist the government (Chen 2002, Whyte 1992, Young 1995, Glassman 1991). Chen (2002) finds that the middle class in China wants change, more liberalization, protection from corruption, and rule of law, however they depend too greatly on continued economic reform and cannot afford to offend or breakup the Party. Glassman (1991) predicts that one day, if the middle class can be independent from the constraints of the government, they will form the foundation for democracy. The middle classes are currently too constrained by and dependent upon the communist party to demand change.

Rather than focusing on the middle class, other authors look to the elite class for bringing about future democratization (Shi 2000, Chhibber and Eldersveld 2000, Zheng 1994, Higley and Burton 1989). These authors posit that political liberalization must come from within the ruling class itself. O'Donnell & Schmitter state that “there is no transition whose beginning is not the consequence—direct or indirect—of important divisions within the authoritarian regime itself” (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986:19). This means that transition to democracy would start within

the elite class themselves, intentionally or otherwise. Authors who posit that elites facilitate successful transition to democracy argue that they do so by forming pacts amongst themselves to ensure that the new regime allows them more power, prestige, or other benefit (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986, Burton et al 1992, Karl 1990). Geddes (1999) points out, however, that one of the basic problems with the pacts made by elites is that the agreements made are usually unenforceable once the transition is complete. Chhibber and Eldersveld found that elite support for reform is critical in enticing popular support for reform (2000), and in studies of Latin America and Europe it seems that elite pacts do play a role in democratic transitions (Burton et al 1992, Karl 1990). In African cases the theory that elites facilitate success holds no evidence (Bratton and van de Walle 1997), and in China, elites may not yet be ready to facilitate a regime change. The elites in China are still benefitting from the current system and have no reason to push for a transition. Zheng (1994) predicts that democracy in China will be a gift from the elite to society; however, they will not give the gift without pressure from society. As discussed above, that pressure does not yet exist.

The youth represent another group in society from which democratic movements are predicted to begin. Lifton (1969) suggests that young people search to create a new history, and view rebellion and revolution as a form of rebirth. Kuzio (2006) mentions that the youth have less to lose, and therefore are more willing to participate in revolutions. Other scholars have noted growth in technology and youth's ability to use it effectively as a contributing factor to democratic revolutionary success (Kuzio 2005, Lavery 2008). Lavery points out that the colored revolutions in Georgia and the Ukraine were possible due to youth's ability to effectively utilize both foreign and domestic media as well as new internet technologies (158). Young

people exhibit the characteristics that make them more likely to begin successful democratic revolutions.

Globalization and time spent abroad are other factors that scholars have identified to explain the development of stronger support for democracy in younger generations. Beck and Jennins (1982) suggest that youth can develop political views that may be drastically different from prior generations due to contemporaneous factors and current political climate. Kuzio (2008), in a comparison of six democratic revolutions in post-communist societies, argues that the youth were minimally influenced by communist and Soviet political culture and tended to be pro-western and hold democratic values. As a result, these youth were more likely to demand democracy, which in turn sparked democratization in their countries. The relative powerlessness of Soviet influence on these youth may be due to increased access to Western culture for the young generation relative to older generations, itself due to the processes of globalization. Cardina (2008), in studying the student movements in Portugal, pointed out that youths who had been abroad were more likely to reject the regime's authoritarianism. Afshari and Underwood (2007) argue that in Iran, the student movement offers hope for democracy as the youth culture becomes more western. Younger generations are being influenced more by Western culture and democratic ideals, and less by Soviet culture and communist ideals.

The majority of scholars agree that youth and student movements have played a large role in various democratic revolutions in the past (Afshari and Underwood 2007, Cardina 2008, Kuzio 2006, Lavery 2008), however there are some scholars that disagree about the importance of the young generation's role in such movements (Mcfaul 2005, Way 2005). Kuzio (2006) suggests that the youth have been vital to all democratic revolutions since the 1980s. He looks at democratic revolutions in Serbia (2000), Georgia (2003) and the Ukraine (2004) and proposes

that the revolutions would not have taken place without young people (Kuzio 2006). In contrast, other authors argue that youth, and particularly students, have not played such an important role in democratization. In the colored revolutions in Eastern Europe, for example, the degree of importance of the student movements is under debate, with some authors arguing that civil society more broadly (Lavery 2008), fragmentations already within the government (Way 2005), and fraudulent elections and the ability to inform citizens (McFaul 2005) played more important roles.

Chinese youth have played an important role in several movements in the past, the two most memorable being the 1919 May fourth movement, and the 1989 Tiananmen Square democracy movement. Young intellectuals planned and carried out the 1919 May fourth movement, which grew to incorporate different sectors of society across the country. The movement began when over 3000 Peking University students gathered in Tiananmen Square to hold a demonstration to protest the unjust treatment of China in the Treaty of Versailles (Hao 1997). The movement did not achieve all of its goals, but the government did withdraw support of the treaty (Wasserstrom 2005). Beijing students and intellectuals also led the now infamous Tiananmen Square democracy movement in 1989. Thousands gathered in Tiananmen Square and in various locations across the country to call for democratic reform. Students from Peking University led the march to Tiananmen Square and were later followed by students from other universities (Hao 1997). The terrible failure of this event remains imprinted on the minds of those around the world. These two events represent the attempts of the youth in China to bring change to their government and politics.

This paper adds to the literature by looking at the young and educated in Beijing through interviews regarding their views on democratization in China. The young people now in top

universities in China will become leaders in the future, and understanding their thoughts, motivations and ambitions will be the key to successful US relations with China in the future.

DATA

The data for this project comes from interviews I conducted with Peking University students in the fall of 2008. I used a snowball sampling method to find participants for the interviews. Starting with close friends, I relied on referrals to generate additional interview participants. The only restriction for participation was current enrollment in Peking University. I hoped to have a sample that was representative of the students at Peking University and this method provided a wide variety of volunteer participants from various age groups, backgrounds, and majors.

While the sample of respondents is clearly not representative of the whole population of China, the thirty-two Peking University students I interviewed came from twenty of China's 30 provinces. The sample was roughly split between men and women (fifteen respondents were male and seventeen female). Sixteen respondents were in master's degree programs, one was pursuing an MBA, and the remaining fifteen were undergraduates (four freshmen, two sophomores, four juniors, four seniors, and one in her fifth year). One respondent was Christian, and one was from the Tuijia minority. Fifteen members of the communist party participated, four participants were planning to become members, and there were twelve non-members. While this sample is quite diverse, it is small enough to make it difficult to determine how respondents' characteristics influenced their responses to questions. While several factors, such as gender and hometown, seemed to contribute to certain perceptions and attitudes, this study cannot make accurate generalizations about youth opinions based on the limited number of

respondents. Throughout the analysis of the interviews, I refer to respondents by their interview number. Appendix A contains a list of each respondent's interview number and identifying features.

I conducted the interviews in English, if the respondents were comfortable, and I allowed the option of using Chinese if they had difficulty expressing their sentiments in English. Specifically, I translated the interview questions into Chinese, but asked them first in English and gave respondents the option of requesting that the question to be repeated in Chinese. I conducted three interviews entirely in Chinese. Conducting the interview in English served as an incentive to respondents to participate. English language is a requirement for Peking University and all of the participants were either currently or previously enrolled in an English language course. Having the opportunity to converse one-on-one with a native English speaker and practice their language skills was a key motivation for participation.

The sensitivity of the project and the respect and concern for the participant's privacy and protection required additional precautions in the setting up of the interviews. I conducted all interviews in a private location, many in my home, and a few at the Beijing Institute of Asian Studies (BIAS). BIAS is the program through which American University has a partnership and runs its Beijing Enclave Study Abroad semester. BIAS often donated classroom space for me to use for the interviews, which was private and secured during the interviews. Additionally, I did not record the interviews, but instead took notes during the interview, which I later typed up into a password-protected document. This method limited the amount of detail and the number of direct quotes from participants, but the notes were thorough enough to provide a strong overview of each interview. I limited the collection of identifying information to factors which I determined might be useful for analysis, and never connected this information with the notes.

Participation in this project was voluntary and participants were informed of the security measures taken. They were given the option to end the interview at any point and were able to refuse to answer any questions if they felt uncomfortable. Despite these measures, a few of the students expressed hesitancy during the interview when revealing certain information that was critical of the government, though they continued the interview and often revealed the information anyway. One potential drawback to the data is that students may not have honestly expressed themselves because of my status as a foreigner. One student jokingly said, “As a member of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), I cannot arbitrarily say something about politics...especially when I meet a foreigner” (30). This student laughed after saying this, but his comment indicates that not all students may have been entirely truthful, and instead may have given me the image of China that they want the outside world to see. For example, if the respondents had discussed these same issues with their peers in a casual environment, they might have been more critical of their government. Despite these hesitancies, I believe that students remained honest and many expressed criticisms openly.

The purpose of the interview was to gain an understanding of the student’s perceptions of democracy and their support of democracy in China. The interview questions were open ended to allow for answers that could not be predicted. The questions are listed in Appendix B. Through these interviews, I hoped to gain a clearer understanding of why democracy has not come to China and whether or not these students would support democracy enough to demand great liberalization of the Chinese government.

ANALYSIS

The interviews revealed several ways in which the respondents spoke about the current situation and the future of democracy in China. The following analysis is organized according to six reasons why democracy has not come to China: 1) Satisfaction with the present situation; 2) Priority of social stability over democratic values; 3) Priority of economic development over democratic development for social stability; 4) Willingness to sacrifice freedoms and democratic governance for social stability; 5) Stake in the Communist Party; and 6) Belief that democracy is not suitable for China. The respondents are generally satisfied with the present situation, and therefore lack the passion and spirit that would be required to stir a social movement. The respondents prioritized social stability over democratic values, and explained that social stability is important for continued economic growth. Next, the respondents expressed their willingness to sacrifice freedoms and rights for the common good, and for the maintenance of social stability. Many of the respondents are members of the Chinese Communist Party and therefore have a stake in the continuance of the Party. Finally, the respondents believe that democracy is simply not suitable for China based on its history and culture. Taken together, we can find a deeper understanding of what motivates these respondents and why they are unlikely to demand democracy from the Chinese government. The following analysis explores each of these themes deeper and describes how the interviews revealed these themes.

In analyzing the interviews and the responses based on these six themes, I attempted to identify certain characteristics of respondents that influenced their responses. I looked at hometown, gender, CCP membership, parent's occupation, and experience abroad to explain why certain participants gave particular responses. I hypothesize that students from smaller hometowns may express more acute perceptions of certain problems and inequalities in China.

These students may be more supportive of democratic values such as equal rights and opportunities. I hypothesize that CCP members will be more invested in the continuance of the Chinese Communist Party and will favor communism to democracy. I also predict that parental occupation will influence beliefs and ideas regarding occupation, education, and communism. For example, students whose parents are teachers may be more supportive of education reform in China, and students whose parents are government workers may be more supportive of the continuance of the Chinese Communist Party.

SATISFACTION WITH PRESENT SITUATION

The images from the failed 1989 Tiananmen Square democracy movement portray brave students battling a violent and heartless authoritarian government, and westerners have perceived the event as symbolic of terrible conditions in China under the Communist Party. However, since 1989, the situation has changed, and students in China are actually satisfied with their present situation. One respondent described the situation in 1989, including the economic crisis, rampant corruption in the government, and students' feelings that the government did not respect intellectuals. He said, "[such a movement] would not happen today, because more and more people are rich, so less and less people are unsatisfied" (22). This response reflects the general feeling of satisfaction felt today, and the unwillingness to pressure the government so long as this satisfaction level is maintained. This satisfaction can help to explain why the respondents are not passionate about pressuring the government to change.

Students are satisfied with China's present situation relative to other countries and relative to China's past. For example, some students compared China with poorer developing nations, such as states in Africa, and found satisfaction in China's relative wealth and high living

standards. According to one respondent, “there are many unsatisfying things, but when compared to many other countries, for example, Iraq, China is very fortunate. In Africa, they lack food and suffer from hunger; China has more than enough” (15). Another student described the situation saying, “Satisfaction depends on the comparison. If you compare China with the West, we are not satisfied. If you compare China with Africa, the poor countries of the world, we are satisfied. The government always tells us not to compare with Western living; we must compare the present status with history. Many people are persuaded by this” (4). In fact, many respondents were persuaded by this notion and focused on this type of comparison to feel satisfied with China’s present situation.

Similarly, many used the past as a reference point, and found satisfaction in the improvements of the present situation. The students I interviewed have learned of the miseries of the Mao era from both their textbooks and their parents and grandparents. These young people have heard stories of the desperate situation in the past, and some perceived it as wrong to complain about the present situation, knowing that they have not suffered in comparison. It is undeniable that in the past thirty years a lot has changed, and in the words of one respondent, changed in “a good and positive direction” (22). According to another respondent, “Everyone thinks ‘I will be better tomorrow than I am today,’ they don’t compare themselves with others around them” (19). The belief that China will continue to move in a positive direction also provides for the feeling of satisfaction with the present situation.

Faith in the future stems from a trust in the government. One respondent expressed her faith in the present Chinese government: “I’ve never been as faithful about the Chinese government as I am now. I believe them. I trust them” (24). Many students acknowledged the Chinese government’s ability to create policy that will continue to improve the living situation in

China. A student from a small town in Jiangxi Province credits the government for the improvements in her hometown and in China and said, “The Chinese government has done a really good job in the last thirty years. The government has put a lot of money into my hometown to improve construction and development” (28). A student from Xinjiang, whose mother and father both work as farmers, explained a policy the government made in 2001 regarding the price of grain that protected and benefited farmers. Prior to the implementation of this policy, he and his family could work for a whole year and not have enough money, but now things have gotten better (25). Satisfaction with the present situation reflects satisfaction with the government, and since students are satisfied, it is unlikely that they would attempt to change the government.

However, the satisfaction that respondents expressed seemed to be more of a tolerance of the situation, rather than contentment. In fact, five respondents mentioned the word “tolerance” specifically when speaking of satisfaction (15, 19, 27, 28, 30). While it is difficult to draw conclusions about why these five students responded in a similar fashion, they were all from small towns. A girl from a farming family in a small village in Hebei Province, did not mention the word “tolerance” specifically, but said that most people in villages are more satisfied than in the city because they were able to endure hardships (12).

Students from small towns or villages tended to have views of satisfaction that were quite different from those born and raised in wealthier, larger cities. Those from small towns or villages viewed satisfaction more simply, in terms of being able to live a peaceful life, whereas those from the cities referred more to economic development as a vehicle for satisfaction. For example, the two respondents who were raised in Beijing both referred to the economy as the basis for future satisfaction (16, 22). On the other hand, a student from the notoriously poor

province of Guizhou stated, “Economy has nothing to do with satisfaction. If the people’s needs are met, even if they are poor, they will still be satisfied and will continue to work hard” (11).

Another respondent from a small town in Shandong Province quite poetically expressed, “if we have food to eat, clothing to wear, and can sleep until tomorrow to see the beautiful new sun rising and the stars twinkling in the darkness, we have nothing to complain about” (15).

Another respondent, from a farming family in a rural area of Shanxi Province said, “Chinese farmers are very tolerant, as long as they have something to eat and a house to live in” (27).

Another student from Guizhou said, “The people in China only want stable society to lead life, to feel satisfied” (7). A large part of Chinese tolerance appears to be the ability to live peacefully in a stable society, and therefore social stability was the top priority for many of the respondents.

PRIORITY OF SOCIAL STABILITY OVER DEMOCRATIC VALUES

The priority of social stability over democracy was evident in two specific ways throughout the interviews. Firstly, the respondents expressed fear of instability that would ensue if democracy was brought to China too quickly. The respondents mentioned several aspects of democracy that they believed would cause instability in China. Secondly, respondents ranked values such as social stability and national peace over democratic values. This section will analyze the aspects of democracy expected to cause social stability followed by a discussion of the lower priority placed on values associated with democracy.

While not specifically defined, the respondents generally spoke of democracy in terms of the political system in America. One student said, “Most people accept democracy to mean the system in America” (16). Many respondents mentioned aspects of American democracy such as national election and the two-party system and expressed fear of the instability that would ensue

if this form of democracy was directly implemented in China. One student warned that if you “want a total change and have a government like America’s, it would cause so much unrest and civil war that would be terrible” (30). This response demonstrates the emphasis on social stability and the fear of war or unrest in the event of attempted change.

Respondents identified voting in a national election as a specific aspect of democracy likely to cause chaos. Three respondents expressed a fear of “chaos” (26, 29, 30). Most students believed that a national election system would not work in China. One reason is that China has a lot of minorities (1, 29). China has fifty-six different races; one student said that, if there was an election, there could potentially be a crisis of racial conflict (29). Along these same lines, another student said that a national election would not work because everyone would vote for people from their own hometown (7). The problem implied by many, and expressed by one student, was that after an election, “everyone must agree to live by the result...this would not work” (10). And one even noted the danger of forces using an election for their own political purposes, for example, in regards to Taiwan and Tibet. He said, “These forces will definitely take some illegal action to break the peace of the society during election time” (29). These responses reflect a desire to maintain social stability by avoiding democracy.

Respondents also expressed concern about a two-party system. Respondents said that “chaos” would result from having more than one party in China (26, 30). One student assumed that if there were two parties, “they would conflict so much and there would be chaos” (30). Another student said, “If there were two parties, each party would try to sabotage the other instead of trying to raise their own ability for the benefit of the nation. The parties would just try to humiliate each other” (26). One party is seen to be more stable and more effective. According to one student, since China is still a developing country, having one party in power “gives

certainty and stability. People need confidence, some insurance or guarantee that their life will be OK. This one party is the insurance” (18).

In order to gauge the desirability of democracy and the tolerance for the instability necessary to achieve it, I asked respondents which of the following values was the most important: individual freedom, public order/social stability, fair administration of justice, social equality, political democracy, or national peace and prosperity. Of the thirty-two respondents, twelve chose national peace and prosperity, nine chose public order/social stability, five chose individual freedom, four chose social equality, and two chose fair administration of justice. No one chose political democracy. The responses indicate that the students overwhelmingly value social stability over democracy.

I listed individual freedom as a choice for this question as it represents an aspect of democracy that China currently lacks. However, I did not explicitly express individual freedom as related to democracy, and left the meaning of the words open for the respondents to interpret. The respondents expressed varying sentiments regarding individual freedom, including individual attention and freedom of thought.

The five respondents who chose individual freedom as the most important value gave different reasons for their answers. One of these respondents predicted that any person from the post-1980 generation would agree that individual freedom is the most important value. She believed that “only-children” would all value individual freedom because they grew up with individual attention (8). Another respondent saw society as made up of individuals, and believed that individual freedom is important for each one. In his opinion, sacrifices must be made for individual freedom, including national peace and prosperity (10). One freshman female attempted to define individual freedom, “individual freedom does not mean you can do whatever

you want to do; it means that you can think whatever you want to think.” She expressed her frustration that in school in China, conformity of thought is emphasized, “Thinking and imagination are forbidden” (15). The final respondent who answered, without hesitation, that individual freedom was most important simply said, “Because I love freedom.” He went on to explain that freedom could help people to develop their own future; freedom can stimulate their potential (26). These responses reflect varying ideas about the definition of individual freedom from individual attention to freedom of thought, but the responses do not indicate any relation to democracy or pressuring the government to change its political structure.

Although only five respondents chose “individual freedom” as the most important, thirteen others mentioned it in their responses. Among the thirteen respondents who mentioned individual freedom, there were three groups of thought that offer insight into the conceptualization of individual freedom. One group believed that individual freedom was impossible because of different societal pressures or laws. A second group expressed the negative consequences of individual freedom. Finally, a third group believed that once all the other values were realized in a society, individual freedom would appear as a result.

The first group expressed the sentiment that individual freedom is impossible in any society. The common thread in this group was that there will always be something to restrict your freedom, for example, other people and society, laws, or culture. One said, “We are born in chains” (6), another that “individual freedom doesn’t exist perfectly in any society” (16). To these five respondents, true individual freedom will never be possible, and they all chose either national peace and prosperity or public order and social stability as the most important value.

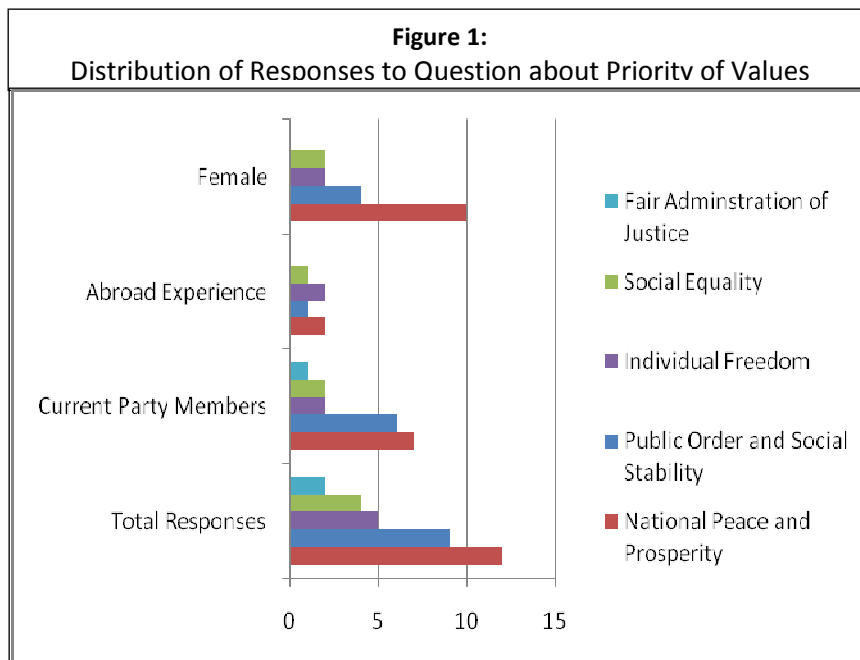
There were four that saw individual freedom as detrimental to society because it would bring disorganization, anarchy and chaos. One student called individual freedom “selfish” (25)

and another student warned that “if there is too much individual freedom, no one will be organized and cooperation will be hard” (4). Two students said that individual freedom could lead to “chaos” (12, 13). This fear of individual freedom reflects the desire for social stability and willingness to sacrifice certain freedoms in order to maintain stability.

The final group believed that individual freedom will come naturally once all the other values are realized in a society. One said, “Only with social stability can people obtain freedom. Many social conditions need to be had before freedom” (11). Another said, “If all the other values are satisfied, then my individual freedom will no longer be a dream” (24). One student drew on the linkages between the other values, saying that public order and social stability is the most important aspect of the current situation in China, but in the future people may pursue individual freedom. According to this student, “If we can obtain public order, there is no use for fair administration of justice; we can only pursue individual freedom after society is stable” (2). These responses help to explain why the majority of respondents chose either national peace and prosperity or public order and social stability.

Twelve respondents chose national peace and prosperity and nine chose public order and social stability as the most important value. Many respondents spoke of these two sets of values interchangeably, noting similarities. According to one respondent, “Stability and peace are similar. Without these two values, none of the others can exist” (21). Many respondents said that prosperity leads to stability, and public order was said to be necessary for national peace; and both are necessary as a foundation for the other values.

Many used words such as “core” and “basis” when describing why they believe national peace and prosperity to be the most important. One student said, “If we achieve national peace



and prosperity, then we can

achieve anything else” (23).

Another said, “If there is no public order, there is no way of developing any of the other values” (19). Another student

brought up a Chinese phrase, *youguo cai youjia*, which means that only if there is a nation, can there be family.

With the Chinese emphasis on peace in the family, some respondents believed the nation must be at peace first (06). Peace is not only necessary for family harmony, but peace is also necessary for China to continue to develop. One student said, “The Chinese are peace-loving people, we really want peace, just want to develop, we are in need of development” (18). The overall consensus is that social stability and national peace are necessary in order to continue developing, and development is most important for China’s present situation.

It is hard to draw conclusions about what factors led to these responses considering the limited sample size and varied background of the respondents. However, certain factors appeared to have influenced several of the responses: gender, experience abroad, and Communist Party membership (see Figure 1).

Gender roles in Chinese society may influence responses. All five respondents who suggested a belief that individual freedom is impossible in any society were female. These responses may be reflective of the restrictions of Chinese society on females. Additionally, ten of the twelve who choose National Peace and Prosperity were female. For all the other choices there was an even split of male and female, suggesting no effect of gender.

As very few of the respondents had experience abroad, it is interesting that those with experience abroad answered similarly. The two students who had experience in Japan both choose national peace and prosperity as the most important priority whereas two of the three with experience in Hong Kong listed individual freedom as the top priority. The two respondents had been to Hong Kong both focused mostly on the word “individual,” which may reflect their experience in the former British colony where individualism is more emphasized than on the mainland.

Finally, Communist Party membership seemed to have influenced many of the responses. Many party members choose national peace and prosperity or social stability and public order. While communism theoretically values equality, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) emphasizes economic development above all. Economic development is said to eventually lead to communism, but has to be prioritized first. This can help to explain the choice of national prosperity. Additionally, Party members have a stronger stake in the continuance of the CCP and therefore may be more inclined to prioritize stability and peace.

Overall, the responses to this question indicate that the students are unlikely to tolerate instability in order to bring democratic values and freedoms to China. Broadly speaking, the students are unlikely to demand further individual freedoms from the government and believe

that these freedoms will come naturally as long as national peace and social stability are maintained in order to continue development.

PRIORITY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OVER DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT FOR SOCIAL STABILITY

Based on these interviews, young people in China want stability and prosperity over democracy, and the key to stability is the development of the economy. According to one student, “now is not the time to build a democratic society, now is the time to build the economy. If you put too much pressure on the government, they cannot focus on building the economy” (16). Many of my respondents perceived economic development and social stability as mutually reliant. A stable society is necessary for economic development, and economic development helps to solve the issues that may cause social instability. In particular, many respondents believed that economic development can help to make the society more stable, in terms of closing the income and educational gaps.

When asked about the biggest problem facing China, fourteen responses mentioned the income gap. The Gini coefficient is a measure of the inequality of income distribution, with values between 0 and 1. A low coefficient corresponds to a society where wealth is distributed equally, while a high coefficient indicates a larger gap in wealth. The coefficient is usually represented as a percentage. In 2004, China’s Gini coefficient was 46.9% (UNU-WIDER 2009).¹ The students interviewed for this study recognized that this relatively high level of income inequality in China can not only cause the economy to fail further, but could turn into social unrest. One student said, “If the gap is too big, the society is not stable, and the economy loses its dynamic” (16). The poor and uneducated people, such as migrant workers, who “come

¹ In comparison, the 2004 gini coefficient of the USA’s was 46.6%, whereas Sweden’s was 23%.

to the city and see the differences, and cannot benefit from the developing economy feel frustrated” (19). Respondents noted that the income gap is creating a population of uneducated, unemployed, and very angry people, with no idea of how to channel their frustration. They felt that the larger this population becomes, the more danger it poses to society. One student focused on unemployment, saying, “A higher unemployment rate could increase unrest” (6). If the government fails to maintain a low unemployment rate, “some people without jobs can cause problems.” One student retold a story she had heard about a man who was angry about losing his job who had retaliated by hijacking a car and killing many people on Wangfujing, a famous pedestrian-only street in Beijing (19).

In addition to the income gap, another danger respondents noted is the educational gap. Many of the respondents grouped being poor and being uneducated together. A student from a small coal mining town in Shanxi Province complained that poor people do not have access to university education because of the cost (17). A first year MBA student said, “Education is not equal in China. It’s very hard to pay for education. Poor people do not have access to University” (17). A second-year master’s candidate from a small village in Hunan spoke of the nine years of free compulsory education, but pointed out that many families from the countryside cannot afford to continue with school beyond that (26). Education is important as it provides hope for the future as well as knowledge as to how to redress grievances. One student said, “The well-educated people who know the laws can be free” (32). While the well-educated value social stability and know the laws, the uneducated, who do not know a proper way to express their dissatisfaction, pose a potential risk to social stability.

The respondents perceived themselves well-educated, and many referred to the gap between themselves and the non-educated in China. The word “*suzhi*” in Chinese refers to the

cultivation of a person, but does not have an exact equivalent in English. It is often translated as the “character” or “quality” of a person. One student born and raised in Beijing complained of people from outside of Beijing with little *suzhi*, and gave the example of classmates who would leave rubbish in the classroom, or those who could not wait to cross the road with the light. She said, “We need to find a way to educate them, to teach them how to live in society with civility” (16). While this student focused on *suzhi* and societal taboos, others saw the *suzhi* gap as a risk to social stability.

One student referred to the *suzhi* gap and how farmers with low *suzhi* could cause potential problems. He said, “Farmers are poor people, they cannot know their own rights, and anyone can take advantage of them and destroy their rights” (27). Those with an education know the laws and are aware of channels through which to channel their frustration if necessary. Another student fleshed out this idea, saying that “Uneducated people are not satisfied, but they don’t know how to express their thoughts or what they can do” (5). The respondents seemed to fear that this frustration and dissatisfaction could lead to the farmers expressing themselves in away that disrupts social stability.

Students felt that danger did not necessarily come just from this poor and uneducated population alone. Several students noted that these poor people would most likely be used by others, perhaps educated people with a political aim, to incite rebellion and cause social instability. One student said, “Because [the migrant workers] have no money and no job, if someone gives them money, they will do whatever they want them to do. They may be used by people with political goals, maybe someone inside the [Chinese Communist] Party who wants more personal power” (21). Another student saw this danger as well but added that if educated people were to lead a rebellion, the situation would have to be very bad, the worst (8).

According to the majority of respondents, as the economy improves, these educational and income gaps will improve as well. One respondent said, “Currently, students pay attention to pragmatic things, like GPA, a career, and earning money. This is a good thing for China, it is very stable, and no one will stir up instability” (6). The focus of the intellectuals is on developing the economy, for their own benefit and for the continuation of social stability. Most respondents implied that any grievances they have with the government would be solved through further economic development.

WILLINGNESS TO SACRIFICE FREEDOMS AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE FOR SOCIAL STABILITY

Many students expressed a willingness to sacrifice certain freedoms or tolerate certain shortfalls with the government for the good of the country and to maintain social stability. Many students mentioned the necessity of sacrificing freedom of speech and freedom of information for the stability of the country. Governmental shortfalls, such as corruption or the weak legal system, are tolerated and expected to improve gradually with economic development.

One student stated that people in China are generally willing to sacrifice, “Decisions are made for the good of the whole country, which means that some sacrifices have to be made” (4). The government makes decisions that require certain sacrifices for people, such as having to work exceptionally hard, or being denied certain freedoms. As long as the decisions continue to benefit the economy as a whole, most are willing to accept the decisions. However, this student continued, “After we give up our freedom, do we really get our welfare? We are willing to give up our freedom if we can get welfare, but we really don’t get welfare” (4). Despite his criticism, he remained committed to the progress of the economy over freedoms, saying, “first we should develop economic rights, after that, we can talk about basic human rights” (4).

To many respondents, censorship, sacrificing freedom of speech and freedom to information, is necessary at this point of China's development to control and maintain the stability of society. In the future, when the income and educational gaps are closed, they expect to have more freedoms. To justify censorship, one respondent referred to people with low levels of education and understanding of society, and how they should not be allowed to say something against the country because "it could cause some serious problems" (20). One student said, "Most of the Chinese people are not very educated, and they have bad opinions about the government, so it is not rational. Some of their opinions are unreasonable, if they are allowed to speak freely, it is not a good thing" (16). This response reflects the underlying goal of social stability and the need to make sacrifices to maintain that stability. This student appreciated the restrictions on freedom of speech in order to control those who may cause unrest. Another student said that censorship is "half good and half bad, good for controlling things and maintaining order, bad for restricting the freedom of the people" (3). Another student said "censorship in China is regarded as a good thing, supposed to be done for protection" (4). While this student did not specifically say protection from what, many others implied that censorship is to protect people from an uprising or another form of social instability. Overall, these educated people in Beijing were willing to sacrifice their own freedoms because they do not trust others to maintain stability.

One student started by saying that people should be allowed to publish books to express extreme ideas. He then thought about his answer and added, "But not those *extremely* extreme ideas, like wanting to break China in two, those ideas are not allowed, even in my opinion they should not be expressed" (30). This response gives insight into what is considered an extreme opinion: challenging China. Others used phrases such as "sensitive" (15), "against the

government” (18, 21, 31), or “could bring harm to others” (23) to define what should not be allowed. These responses reflect an acceptance of censorship, and the willingness to sacrifice freedom of expression for social stability.

Students also expressed a certain amount of acceptance of government flaws in order to maintain social stability. These shortfalls include corruption, lack of oversight, and inefficiency. Corruption runs rampant and is almost ingrained in the culture and society. Money can help surpass laws and regulations; it can buy passages out of jail or into important clubs or events. Almost all of the respondents mentioned corruption at some point in the interview and five listed it as China’s biggest problem (2, 3, 17, 25, 26). However, despite the complaints about corruption, no one expressed a willingness to pressure the government to reform.

Most of the students interviewed recognized that corruption is a problem with the system itself. For example, one student stated, “in the countryside, there is only one person in charge of everything, so it is easy for him to get away with corruption” (26). Another gave the example of one local leader who burned a house and killed its owners for his own benefit. The respondent warned that it is very dangerous to go against such a rampantly corrupt government (21). Corruption is deep, and trying to change the system threatens the stability that it has been able to maintain.

Corruption is related to the lack of oversight and weak legal system. One student discussed the corruption in the court system. He said, “the laws and justice system is not very good, so when people get into trouble and need to utilize the court system, they won’t. People do not trust the system, even the court is corrupt” (32). Another said, “Since the law and the enforcement system are weak, there is little incentive not to take bribes.” This student continued, “If an official is not corrupt, or does not take advantage of the government’s money, the official

is seen as stupid. If one person does it, they can be punished, but so many people do it, if you want to punish all of them, there will be no more officials” (15).

Corruption can be tolerated because most have faith that the government will fix it as the economy continues to develop. As one explained it, “I trust [the government] to change themselves. It will be a long road, but I know the end, so I’m satisfied” (25). Another student pointed out that the government has already acknowledged the problem of corruption and is setting up new rules and regulations for the government officials (17). Overall, most of the students dream of a future China without corruption, but acknowledge that it may take a long time to become a reality. One student expressed that it is his dream that he will rule China and change the corruption problem so that China can become truly powerful in the world (2). While the students acknowledge the shortfalls of the government and offer criticism, no one suggested challenging the government to change.

STAKE IN THE COMMUNIST PARTY

While respondents criticized certain features of the Chinese government, overall the students do not have an interest in changing the political system. One reason for the desire to maintain the current political system is the stake that the respondents have in the communist party. Many respondents are communist party members and believe that communism may one day be realized in China.

Fifteen respondents were members of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and four more were planning to become members. The CCP represents a select group of individuals; the application process is demanding and requires a combination of observation, classes, and writing essays. One student said being a member “means that person is advanced and continues to

become better and better in thought” (15). Some of these students had become members in high school—a privilege only for the brightest students with the highest potential for leadership.

According to one student, “Joining the party is like a reward for the good students” (22).

Another added, “Only the best students can become members of the party in high school” (23).

While five respondents said they joined the party because they believe in communism (11, 12, 18, 29, 31), recently more and more students have joined in order to further their careers and better their social networks. To become a government worker, membership is not formally required, but it is understood to be a prerequisite. One student said, “When we have to decide whether to join or not, we consider mostly our personal interests. If you want to work for the government, then it would be best to join” (30). One student predicted “the political system will not change in the next fifty years, so it is good to be a member” (16). For these respondents who are members, the benefit of being a member is dependent on the successful continuation of the party’s political power.

Regardless of reasons for joining the Communist Party, many respondents genuinely believe in communism. They believe that China will one day reach the communist utopia, in which all basic needs are taken care of and everyone enjoys a high standard of living. Many respondents stated that China’s economic development is a step on the way toward this communist ideal; if China can continue to develop economically, communism is possible. Students who desire a fully communist China are clearly not interested in creating a democratic society. In fact, two respondents explicitly said that Communism is better than democracy (03, 22). Communism was described as a “dream” (05, 08, 25) and “too ideal” (28) but many respondents had faith that it was possible in the future. This faith in communism, and belief that

communism is good and possible, further explains the disinterest in bringing democracy to China now.

BELIEF THAT DEMOCRACY IS NOT SUITABLE FOR CHINA

Many respondents believe that democracy is simply incompatible with Chinese culture and history. China has a long history and deep traditions, and if political change was forced upon Chinese society, instability could result. When compared to America, the sentiment was that American history suits American democracy. One student said, “Americans had a good start that was suitable for the creation of democracy, but China’s history is too long to change to democracy suddenly” (15). One sentiment expressed was “if you directly put the US political system into China, there will be total mess” (16). Overall, respondents felt that American democracy cannot be directly transplanted into China because China is too different from America.

Many respondents mentioned China’s history of thousands of years (15, 26,27,31), which is incompatible with democracy. Respondents felt that the current political system in China works because of China’s tradition of respecting the government and the leader. One student said that China has always been under a system of dynasties and hierarchy, therefore “hierarchy in china runs very deep” (15). Others referred to the emperors, and compared the situation now to the way that it has always been, with the current government acting as an emperor, making all the decisions for the country (26, 27, 28). According to one student, “even if China had more democracy, it would still be controlled by the leader of the party; it would still be controlled by tradition” (22). Another student said “Chinese people are not suitable for democracy, for

thousands of years, Chinese people are not use to that” (16). The respondents felt that the history of China makes the nation and the people incompatible with democracy.

This focus on history and deep traditions also reflects a fear of chaos or disorder that would ensue if these long-standing traditions were changed too quickly. Many of the respondents implied that since the history and traditions are “too deep and too big” (28), it would be “disastrous to directly carry out democracy” (22). While some indicated that in the future, maybe in several decades, these traditions could change (28), for now, democracy is “not suitable for China. It is totally different from Chinese traditions” (6). These students suggested that since the history is so long, the cultural tendencies are so deep, and therefore it would be very difficult to change.

THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY IN CHINA

While this analysis looked at six themes present in the interviews, the main concern of the respondents was social stability. Maintaining a stable society takes priority over democratic values and freedoms and the students are more willing to accept flaws with the current situation than risk stirring up society for increased freedoms. Additionally, many students see democracy as incompatible with Chinese society and fear that democracy itself could cause social instability. This focus on social stability relates back to the 1989 Tiananmen Square democracy movement. While many in the West view the incident as revealing a fearsome government, my respondents most afraid of another such political movement. When referring to the event, the overall tone was dark, full of shame and fear, which helps explain why students today do not want to pressure the government in such a way again. While the Tiananmen Square 1989 democracy movement is not taught in schools, my respondents are aware of the chaos that may

ensure if students put pressure on the government. The respondents are not willing to bring democracy to China if it will disrupt social stability. This means that while another Tiananmen Square movement is highly unlikely, the possibility for a slower, gradual transition to democracy in the future remains.

However, the timeline for any such liberalizing is long. One student said, “Democracy will one day work in China. China can become a democracy, but it needs a long period of time because of the culture and the history” (28). This respondent saw gradual change as important so that society can remain stable. “Things will get better and better gradually” (17). A few optimistically predicted this period of time to be fifty years. One said, “American democracy will not come to china for at least 50 years” (15). Another echoed this, but included a reason for the fifty-year prediction: “In 50 years maybe [the political system] will change, as the generation changes, it will change. It will become more democratic. When this generation is in charge, their logic and way of doing things is different from the people in power now” (18). As new generations come to power, the political system may gradually liberalize.

In addition to the generational changes, many students correlated economic growth with future democracy. One student said, “The progress of China’s democracy depends on the progress of China’s economy. The economy first has to make rapid progress” (15). Another student said, “When people are rich and out of hunger they will care more about politics” (21). Another student predicted, “If China can deal with economic problems in the future, then the political system will continue to progress as well” (28). The belief that democracy may follow economic development provides hope for the future of democracy in China. When the majority of the population is less concerned with protecting social stability for continued economic growth, they may make more demands of the government.

Finally, respondents felt that the democracy that China may one-day experience will most likely not be the same as the democracy in America. One student said, “China is so large and has so many people; it cannot have the same democracy as America. It can have its own democracy” (15). Another spoke of the future of the political system in China, saying that even if the CCP does not add American democracy, they can do something similar, better, in their own form (10).

The six themes outlined in this paper reveal several reasons that the youth in China have not demanded democratization, as well as slim prospects for the youth to do so in the near future. Social stability is far more important than democracy for my respondents and as long as the government can continue to maintain economic growth and a peaceful society, my respondents will remain satisfied.

CONCLUSION

Interviews conducted for this study revealed the motivations and priorities of these Chinese students. While these young intellectuals can see problems with the government, they have no interest in changing the political system, especially not in changing it to a democratic system. While my sample was not representative of the whole population of China, given that these students are the future leaders of China, their viewpoints will strongly drive future trends. Rather than expressing desire for democracy, students emphasized social stability, economy, and development first. They saw the future of China gradually changing and becoming more democratic, but that any drastic change could lead to social instability. The responses from these interviews reveal an overall disinterest to pressure the government for political reform.

Satisfaction with the present situation and belief that the government will continue to improve living conditions drives this disinterest. If conditions were to deteriorate to a point at which these students became extremely dissatisfied, they might become more interested in bringing democracy to China, but tolerance for government weaknesses is high. The belief that the government will grant more freedoms as the economy improves and more people become educated seems sufficient enough to keep these young intellectuals satisfied and willing to sacrifice their freedoms in the name of development.

The results that young Chinese elites prioritize social stability and economic growth can be beneficial for U.S. policymakers dealing with the Chinese government. In promoting better environmental or human rights policies, the US should acknowledge the importance of the maintenance of social stability within China. Also, recognizing that Chinese youth view China's history and traditions as unsuitable for democracy should guide America away from promoting democracy in China. Instead, America should work within China's current political system to promote gradual liberalization while allowing the Chinese Communist Party to maintain control and stability.

The results from these interviews correspond with the literature in predicting low short-term prospects for democracy, but higher potential for a gradual shift toward democracy in the future. My conclusions are similar to those of Nathan and Shi (1996) and Wang, Rees, and Andresso (2004). No drastic change in over eighteen years suggests that the situation may not change for a very long time.

While China has not followed the path of modernization theory, it is possible that with increased economic development, democracy will become more likely. My respondents predicted that as the economy continues to develop, democracy may begin to develop as well.

My respondents, however, did not look to factors such as reliance on contracts or equality under law as linking economic growth to political liberalization, instead, the responses reflected the idea that economic growth could decrease the income and educational gaps. As people become richer and more educated, they will begin to care more about politics and freedoms.

Finally, while youth played a vital role in various democratic revolutions in the past, it is unlikely that the youth in China will begin a democratic revolution. Although the youth have been influenced by Western culture and have access and command of modern technology, it is unlikely that they will use it to disrupt social stability and democratize the government.

In conclusion, the young intellectuals in China are more interested in maintaining social stability and continued economic growth, and are not interested in demanding democracy. As the country continues to focus on economic development, the CCP will maintain its restrictions in order to protect social stability, and the respondents in my study accept this. Prospects for democracy in China in the near future are dim, but as the nation continues to develop, it may gradually adopt more democratic practices and eventually may become its own democracy, with Chinese characteristics.

APPENDIX A: INFORMATION ABOUT THE RESPONDENTS

#	Gender	Grade	Hometown	Hometown Details	Member of CCP?	Abroad?	Parents' Occupation
01	Male	Sixth year	Hebei		In Training	Never	F: Power engineer M: Housewife
02	Male	Third year graduate	Hunan	9 million people	No	Never	F: Local government M: Local government
03	Female	Sixth year	Inner Mongolia	Rural	Yes	Never	F: Farmer M: Primary school teacher
04	Male	Second year graduate	Fujian		No	HK, Taiwan	F: Beer factory M: Rice company sales
05	Female	Sophomore	Shandong		Not yet	US	F: Factory worker M: Nurse
06	Female	Senior	Ningxia		Yes	Japan, Vietnam, Singapore, Thailand.	F: State-owned oil company M: Retired accountant
07	Male	Junior	Guizhou		Yes		F: Rice farmer M: Rice farmer
08	Female	Graduate	Sichuan		Yes	HK	F: Government worker M: Engineer
09	Female	Second year graduate	Fujian	Little bigger than a village		Never	F: Driver M: Housewife
10	Male	Senior	Sichuan	Province Capital	No	HK, Indonesia	F: High school staff M: Retired clothes factory worker/shop-owner
11	Female	Second year graduate	Guizhou		Yes	Never	F: High school history teacher M: High school math teacher
12	Female	Second year	Hebei	Village	Yes	Never	F: Corn and wheat farmer M: Corn and wheat farmer

		graduate					
13.	Female	Junior	Henan	Town	Applying	Never	F: Lawyer for 20 years, now works for government M: Doctor
14.	Male	First year graduate	Ningxia	Province Capital	No	Never	F: Works in construction company M: Teacher
15.	Female	Freshman	Shandong	Small town	Member of club	Never	F: Physics teacher M: Doctor at school
16.	Female	Junior	Beijing		Yes		F: Sells paper M: Worked for state-owned company, retired at 45
17.	Male	First year MBA	Shanxi	Coal mining city	No	Vietnam	F: Local government M: Local government
18.	Male	Freshman	Henan		Yes	Tokyo (study) Korea (travel)	F: Work related to construction M: Work related to construction
19.	Female	Senior	Liaoning	Small town	Yes	Never	F: Worker M: Stays at home
20.	Female	Freshman	Hubei	Very small town	No	Never	F: High school math teacher M: Nurse
21.	Male	Freshman	Jiangsu	Small city	Not yet	Never	F: Primary school math teacher M: Nurse
22.	Female	Junior	Beijing		Yes	Never	F: Newspaper IT M: PKU affiliated hospital
23.	Female	Senior	Anhui	Mountain town	No	Never	F: Owns teashop in Shanghai M: Owns teashop in Shanghai
24.	Female	First year graduate	Hainan	Small island	No	Never	F: Official in a bank M: Farmer
25.	Male	First year graduate	Xinjiang		Yes	Never	F: Farmer M: Farmer
26.	Male	Second year graduate	Hunan	Small village	Yes	Never	F: Rice farmer M: Rice farmer

27.	Male	Third year graduate	Shaanxi	Rural	No	Never	F: Wheat and corn farmer M: Wheat and corn farmer F: Common worker M: Housewife F: Farmer) M: Worker F: Factory worker M: Factory worker F: High school math teacher M: High school English teacher
28.	Female	First year graduate	Jiangxi		Yes	Never	
29.	Male	Senior	Sichuan	Province Capital	Yes	Never	
30.	Female		Zhejiang	Small town	No	Never	
31.	Female	First year graduate	Guizhou	Medium sized city	Yes	Never	
32.	Male	Third year graduate	Jiangxi	Small city	No	Thailand	

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (调查问卷)

1. How would you describe your hometown? (请用你自己的话描述一下你的家乡)
2. What do your parents do? (你父母的职业是什么 ?)
3. How long have you been in Beijing? (你在北京多长时间了 ?)
4. How would you rate your English level? (你觉得你自己的英语水平如何 ?)
 - a. Do you think that in order to be successful in the world today, one must be able to speak English? (你认为掌握英语是在如今社会中取得成功的必要条件吗 ?)
5. Have you ever been abroad? (你去过国外吗 ?)
6. Approximately how many friends do you have from other countries? (你大约有多少个外国朋友 ?)
 - a. Suppose a young person who wanted to leave this country asked you to recommend where to go to lead a good life, what country would you recommend? (如果有一个年轻人想要到另一个国家去寻求更好的生活水平, 哪个国家会在你的建议范围内 ?)
 - b. From what you know, do people from China who move to the US have a better life there, a worse life there, or is life neither better nor worse there? (从你所知来看, 去美国的中国人在当地的生活与他们在中国相比, 是更好, 更坏, 还是一样 ?)
7. Who do you admire most in your country's history? (中国历史上谁是你最崇拜的人 ?)
8. Who do you admire most in the world, living or historical? (在世界范围内, 活着及已故的人中, 你最崇拜谁 ?)
9. Which country leader do you most admire? (你最崇敬哪个国家的领导人 ?)
10. How would you describe the current economic situation in your country? (你如何描述中国经济的现状 ?)
11. What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of China's economic system? (在你看来, 中国的经济体制中有哪些利弊 ?)
12. In your opinion, how much, if at all, does what happens in the Chinese economy affect economic conditions in the rest of the world? (在你看来, 中国经济的变化会在多大程度上影响世界其余部分的经济 ?)

13. Is China's growing economy a good thing or a bad thing for China, the world? (中国的经济增长对于中国 / 世界来说是好还是坏事 ?)
- a. One advantage for China, one disadvantage. ? (中国的经济增长对世界 / 中国有什么利弊 ? 请各举一例 ?)
14. What do you think is the biggest problem facing China today? (你认为中国现今面临的最大问题是什么 ?)
15. Do you believe China will ever surpass the US as the world's leading superpower? (你认为中国最终会超过美国成为超级大国吗 ?)
16. Do you like American Movies and Television? (你喜欢美国电影和电视吗 ?)
17. What do you think of the American way of life? (你眼中的美国的生活方式是什么样的 ?)
18. What have you studied about the American governmental system? (对于美国的政府系统你有什么了解 ?)
19. How do you define democracy? What values do you associate with democracy? (你如何定义民主 ? 你认为哪些社会价值是和民主联系在一起的 ?)
20. How do you define communism/socialism? What values do you associate with socialism? (你如何定义共产 / 社会主义 ? 你认为哪些社会价值是和社会主义联系在一起的 ?)
21. How would you rate your knowledge and understanding of national affairs on a scale of 1(low) to 10(high)? (你如何评价你在国际事务方面的知识和理解 ? 1 (低) - 10 (高))
22. Are you a member of the Communist Party? (你是共产党员吗 ?)
23. How much effect does the national government have in your daily life ? (国家政府对你的日常生活有多大的影响 ?)
24. How would you describe China's current political system? (你对中国现今的政治体制有什么看法 ?)
25. Do you feel that the basic rights of citizens are well protected in China? (你认为中国公民的基本权利得到了良好保障吗 ?)
26. How do you think the rest of the world views China? (你认为世界其他国家是怎样看待中国的 ?)

27. If a person wanted to express some views that may be considered extreme by the majority, should he/she be allowed? (如果有人的观点在大多数人看来是很极端的 , 他 / 她是否应该被允许去表达这些观点呢 ?)
- a. -should a teacher be allowed to express such views in school? (老师可以在学校里发表这些观点吗 ?)
 - b. -should someone be allowed to publish books to express these ideas? (出版界是否应该让这些言论成书发表 ?)
28. Do you think it is necessary to reform the Chinese political system? (你认为中国有必要对政治体制进行改良吗 ?)
29. Do you think that having too many political parties in a country could lead to chaos? (你认为一个国家有太多的政党会导致混乱吗 ?)
30. Which of the following values is most important? (下列的那些价值是最重要的 ?)
- a. Individual freedom (个人自由)
 - b. Public order/Social Stability (公共秩序 / 社会稳定)
 - c. Fair administration of justice (司法公正)
 - d. Social equality (社会平等)
 - e. Political democracy (政治民主)
 - f. National peace and prosperity (国家安定繁荣)
31. Overall, are you satisfied with the way things are going in your country today? (总体来说 , 你对中国的现状满意吗 ?)
32. How do you see the future of China? (你觉得中国的未来会怎么样 ?)

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