

Chapter Title: REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY AND REPRESENTATIONAL DEMOCRACY (2014)

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Book Title: Voices from the Chinese Century

Book Subtitle: Public Intellectual Debate from Contemporary China

Book Editor(s): Timothy Cheek, David Ownby and Joshua A. Fogel

Published by: Columbia University Press

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7312/chee19522.14>

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CHAPTER 11

REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY AND REPRESENTATIONAL DEMOCRACY¹

WANG SHAOGUANG

TRANSLATED BY MARK MCCONAGHY AND SHI ANSHU

Translators' Introduction

Wang Shaoguang (b. 1954) is emeritus professor of government and administration at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) and a Schwarzman Scholar at Tsinghua University in Beijing. He earned his doctorate at Cornell and taught for several years in the United States before moving to the CUHK, where he spent most of his highly productive career. Wang is a prominent member of China's New Left, and his research agenda has from the outset been directly engaged with China's reform and opening, arguing for the development of "state capacity" and against the ravages of untrammelled free markets in dozens of well-researched, empirically based articles and books targeting concrete issues confronted by China's reform process.

More recently, as China has embraced its own "model" in which market forces interact in complex ways with state institutions, Wang's research focus has become more theoretical, moving away from specific challenges of the reform-and-opening era and toward a global defense of China's model of "democracy." Displaying his habitual energy, Wang has attacked his theme from multiple angles. His book *Minzhu sijiang* (Four lectures on democracy, 2008) traces the history of democratic thought and practices from ancient Greece and Rome down to the present day. In other volumes, such as *Zhongguo zhengdao* (China: The way of governing, 2014), he explores notions of traditional morality undergirding the practice of Chinese democracy (which he contrasts with

the Western fixation on “political forms”). The text translated here, “Representative Democracy and Representational Democracy,” tackles the same issue from a political science perspective.

Wang’s criticism of “representative democracy” draws largely on Western scholars who highlight the shortcomings of Western (and particularly American) democratic practices: the role of money in elections and in the political process in general, the lack of accountability in representative democracy, and the fact that “representation” is in fact a modern betrayal of the original meaning of democracy as the people being masters of their own affairs. The argument that the system is more “electoral” than “democratic” and that the idea of “representation” is highly problematic would not necessarily sound out of place on American university campuses. What is perhaps new is Wang’s robust defense of representational (i.e., Chinese) democracy. In past writings, he has called Chinese democracy “responsive”; the choice of “representational” presumably raises the stakes, suggesting that China’s evolving one-party system should be thought of as genuinely representing and responding to the needs of the Chinese people, no matter how dissimilar such a system looks from Western models.

By “representational,” Wang means that Chinese democracy, despite its lack of “democratic forms,” manages to represent and respond to the wishes of the people in an effective manner. Representational democracy, in other words, is substantive democracy. He supports this claim with credible political science survey work that suggests that the Chinese people are more satisfied with this government than Americans are with theirs (the same data also seem to suggest that this phenomenon is true of many countries in Asia, allowing Wang to intimate that his findings concerning substantive democracy go beyond China).

Most of Wang’s text, however, is devoted to explaining how and why Chinese democracy works. The key, according to Wang, is the notion of the “mass line,” the idea that Chinese Communist Party and government cadres “go among the masses” to understand their needs and subsequently shape policies on the basis of their findings. Suspecting that some of his readers will be unconvinced by this claim, Wang goes to considerable effort to provide a compelling account of what may look like a conventional, even ossified, concept from the socialist past, tracing its textual history as well as the concrete forms that it is meant to take on: integration with the people, social surveys, involvement by leading cadres, and the like. To some extent, Wang appears to be reviving Maoism without Mao as he takes pains to describe the nuts and bolts of a political process that functions, in his telling, without the catalyst of Mao’s charisma. At the same time, he argues that the mass line was largely abandoned in the first decades of reform and opening, to be revived by Hu Jintao (b. 1942) and especially by Xi Jinping (b. 1953), whom Wang depicts as being particularly devoted to the concept.

It is not clear whether Wang genuinely believes that the mass line has played a central role in China's rise or whether he hopes to convince China's leaders to cherish the mass line going forward as part of China's continued experiment in capitalist authoritarianism. In any event, his call to put Cold War clichés behind us and examine China's political order with fresh eyes is worthy of reflection.

Representative Democracy and Representational Democracy

Preface

Over the past twenty years, two worldviews have been in constant opposition. The first worldview is expressed in a popular saying often employed by the late British prime minister Margaret Thatcher [1925–2013]: “There is no alternative.” According to statistics, Thatcher used this mantra in her speeches more than five hundred times, to the point that people gave her a nickname: “TINA.” “There is no alternative” refers to the notion that aside from economic and political liberalism, the world has no other choices.

In the early summer of 1989, the American scholar Francis Fukuyama [b. 1952] raised Thatcher's “there is no alternative” to the level of historical philosophy, publishing an essay with the title “The End of History.” In the essay, which had its moment of fame, Fukuyama proclaimed: “At the beginning of the twentieth century, the West was full of self-confidence in the ultimate triumph of liberal democracy, yet at its close seems to have returned to its point of departure: not to an ‘end of ideology’ or a convergence between capitalism and socialism, as earlier predicted, but to an unabashed victory of economic and political liberalism.” Fukuyama boldly predicted “the end of history” because, in his eyes, humanity no longer struggled with “big questions” (such as the choice between capitalism and socialism); human society had already reached the end of its ideological evolution, and Western-style liberal democracy had irrefutably become the sole option for every country. Going forward, the only questions remaining were the technical details of how to implement Western-style liberal democracy. At the conclusion of his article, Fukuyama could hardly hide his sense of satisfaction as he deliberately expressed a victor's sense of loss over the fact that there was no one left to fight. According to him, the world after the end of history would be terribly boring: there would be no more art and philosophy, traces of them remaining only in museums.²

Today, even though Thatcher's “There is no alternative” and Fukuyama's “end of history” have already become standing jokes in academic and intellectual circles, their variants proliferate and circulate constantly. Though most people no longer use those particular expressions, many still firmly believe that the

“today” of Western capitalist countries is the “tomorrow” of other countries (including China).

The second worldview is embodied in two different slogans used in the “rethinking globalization” movement: “one no, many yeses”³ and “another world is possible.”⁴ What is rejected here is precisely the economic and political liberalism trumpeted by Thatcher and Fukuyama.

The opposition between these two worldviews is reflected first in their different perspectives on capitalism. After the financial crisis of 2008, the first worldview is already on the defensive. However, when it comes to the question of democracy, the first worldview seems to be as unyielding as before. Even though it is common for Western citizenries to lack faith in officials chosen through competitive elections, even though some Western thinkers have called for overcoming “electoral democracy”—advocating participatory democracy, consultative democracy, and sortition⁵—the majority of people still think that Western-style representative democracy is currently the only desirable and feasible democratic system and that differences between countries amount to different forms of representative democracies. Regardless of whether one employs a presidential or parliamentary system, power holders can emerge only out of competitive elections between different parties. This worldview is not only mainstream in Western countries but quite influential in other countries as well (including China).

This article’s basic argument is that representative democracy is a gilded-cage democracy, which should not be nor can be the only form of democracy.⁶ Conversely, though the *representational democracy* that China is practicing has many flaws, it has tremendous untapped potential, signifying that another form of democracy is possible.

Few will disagree with calling Western democracy “representative.” However, if one calls China’s political practice “representational democracy,” many people in China and elsewhere will shake their heads. When those same people talk about China, they will without hesitation label China’s political system authoritarian. The problem is that this label has, like snake oil, been applied indiscriminately in the past few decades. Not a single era has escaped this label, from the late Qing through the early Republic and the warlord period, then on to the reigns of Chiang Kai-shek, Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao, and Xi Jinping. Chinese politics during this period has undergone earth-shattering transformations, and yet the label applied to Chinese politics has not changed at all. Is this not absurd? This is not academic analysis; it is an ideological smear. A simple label like *authoritarianism* explains nothing, and there is no way to distinguish [the current Chinese model] from other “authoritarian” regimes that have existed historically in China or abroad. As such, in the study of contemporary Chinese politics we see a wide range of variously qualified “authoritarianisms,” including “dynamic authoritarianism,”

“adaptable authoritarianism,” “participatory authoritarianism,” “responsive authoritarianism,” “highly legitimate authoritarianism,” and the like, with no end in sight. These adjectives always sound as if they contradict the concept of “authoritarianism.” If a political system is “dynamic,” “adaptive,” “participatory,” “responsive,” and “highly legitimate,” would it not be more suitable to call it “democratic”?

This article defines China’s political practice as “representational democracy” and will discuss the questions: What is representative democracy? What is representational democracy? How do they differ from one another? What are the characteristics as well as strengths and weaknesses of both? Yet before we discuss these questions, perhaps we should begin by addressing what appears to be a contradictory phenomenon.

A “Paradox”?

Mainstream Western ideology has a seemingly self-evident basic assumption: only leaders chosen through a system of competitive elections will enjoy legitimacy,⁷ and authoritarian systems cannot possibly win the widespread support of the people. But a significant amount of empirical survey data indicates that the “authoritarian” Chinese system has continually received the support of an overwhelming majority of common people.

In recent years, the world’s largest independent public-relations firm, Edelman International Public Relations Co., Ltd., has published the annual Edelman Trust Barometer, the latest of which was released in early 2013.⁸ The report found that the Chinese public’s trust in the government rose six percentage points in 2012, reaching 81 percent, ranking second only to Singapore and thus second among all surveyed countries. This is much higher than the 53 percent of public trust in the government in the United States. Taking an average from all the countries surveyed, public trust in government is a mere 48 percent.⁹ As a matter of fact, over the years of the Edelman Survey, Chinese public trust in government has been among the highest worldwide.

The Edelman survey is not the only one to report this finding. Over the past two decades, regardless of who was conducting surveys (including foreigners who were skeptical of their predecessors’ surveys), the manner of investigation (including the most rigorous random-sample surveys) or whether the survey was of rural or urban residents, the result was essentially the same: that the Chinese people have a high degree of trust in their government.¹⁰ At present, scholars familiar with the survey data accept them without question. For instance, John James Kennedy concludes in an article in 2009 that “since the early 1990s, all surveys that examined public opinion about the Chinese Communist Party have shown that more than 70 percent of respondents support the

central government and Party leadership. Regardless of changes in how various surveys asked the questions, the results were the same.”¹¹ An article by Heike Holbig and Bruce Gilley in 2010 further claims that “while there are different views on the reasons for the stability of the Chinese Communist regime, there is broad consensus that the present regime enjoys relatively strong popular support.”¹² All studies after 2010 have come to conclusions identical to that of these two scholars.¹³

We can draw two conclusions from this: either (1) an “authoritarian” system is much more popular with the people than are many “democratic” systems, or (2) a system that is highly supported by the people is nonetheless labeled “authoritarian.” Together, these conclusions appear to be contradictory.

Those reluctant to abandon the label *authoritarian* have thought up a whole variety of excuses to resolve such contradictions. In their view, the government during the Maoist period enjoyed a high level of support from the people because of pressure tactics and ideological indoctrination; people supported the government after reform and opening because of the sustained growth of the economy and the drumbeat of Chinese nationalism.¹⁴ In short, the Chinese people’s strong support for the government is not because the system is good, but rather because of the temporary presence of favorable conditions. Their subtext is that no matter how much the Chinese masses support the present government, an authoritarian system cannot long endure.

Rigorous studies have shown, however, that these seemingly reasonable excuses are unfounded. After analyzing the data of the Asian Barometer Survey, Chu Yun-han, professor of political science at National Taiwan University, concluded that “the persuasiveness of these explanations is not as strong as many China experts in the West believe. There is no solid evidence which indicates that the Chinese government’s public trust is highly dependent on its dazzling economic performance or relies on its manipulation of nationalist sentiment.”¹⁵ Similarly, the U.S.-based scholar Tang Wenfang and his American collaborators based their study on a systematic analysis of data, which refuted the same excuses as untenable.¹⁶

The resolution of such contradictions is, in fact, very simple. Scholars simply need to remove their “authoritarian”-tinted glasses. The reasons for such enthusiastic support of the Chinese system is obvious, as it is reflected in the three areas of demand, supply, and results: (1) demand—the Chinese people in general prefer representational (substantive) democracy to representative (formal) democracy; (2) supply—China has developed a set of representational democracy theories and modes of operation; and (3) results—the practice of representational democracy allows China’s Party-state system to respond relatively effectively to social needs. In essence, the reason why the Chinese people are highly receptive to the existing system of government is that China has

Table 11.1 How Various Peoples Across Asia Understand Democracy

	Chinese								
	China 2008	Taiwan 2006	Singapore 2006	Mongolia 2006	Indonesia 2006	Philippines 2005	Cambodia 2008	Vietnam 2005	Thailand 2006
	Average								
<i>Formalistic Dimensions</i>									
Opportunity to change the government through elections	31.9%	28.2%	29.5%	20.5%	30.2%	31.0%	39.0%	42.6%	49.0%
Freedom to criticize those in power	13.4%	4.5%	22.7%	32.1%	24.6%	19.6%	12.6%	6.6%	17.4%
<i>Substantive Dimensions</i>									
A small income gap between rich and poor	20.2%	28.9%	19.8%	20.8%	12.3%	7.4%	4.0%	28.5%	18.0%
Basic necessities such as food, clothes, and shelter, etc., for everyone	34.5%	38.4%	28.0%	26.5%	32.9%	42.1%	44.4%	22.4%	15.5%
Total	13,459 (100%)	4,070 (100%)	954 (100%)	1,165 (100%)	1,417 (100%)	1,146 (100%)	941 (100%)	1,050 (100%)	1,209 (100%)

Source: Asian Barometer Study, 2013, <http://www.eastasiabarometer.org/chinese/news.html>.

practiced a new type of democracy that conforms to the aspirations of its own people—representational democracy.

How Chinese People Regard Democracy

The original meaning of democracy is that the people are the masters of their own affairs. Yet if one asked people from different cultures what “the people as masters” means and how to implement it, their understandings would diverge. In today’s world, the overwhelming majority of people agree with the notion that “democracy is a good thing,” but understanding what is “good” and what is “democratic” are very different. We must not take for granted that since we all like democracy, we must all be supporting the same thing. Many people in the West arrogantly believe that only their understanding of democracy is authentic and that there is only one correct understanding of democracy: this is a form of cultural hegemony. Empirical studies show that the concept of democracy in East Asia has unique features,¹⁷ that the concept of democracy within the Confucian cultural sphere has its unique features,¹⁸ and that the same is true for the concept of democracy in China.¹⁹ If one does not look for the kind of democracy that the Chinese themselves understand but instead strenuously schemes to replicate in China the kind of democracy that Westerners understand, one cannot be called a “democrat” in any sense, because one is betraying the will of the people, which is contrary to the first law of democracy—that the people are the masters.

We can understand democracy in two ways, as formal democracy and as substantive democracy. The former concerns itself with so-called democratic features, whereas the latter concerns whether policy has produced results that meet the needs of the broad popular masses. Considering this, to which category does the Chinese people’s understanding of democracy belong? The Asian Barometer Survey contains questions that precisely touch upon these two different kinds of understanding. When asked about the meaning of democracy, the respondents had four options: (1) that it was possible to change the government through elections; (2) that the freedom existed to critique those in power; (3) that the income gap between the wealthy and the poor was not large; and (4) that everyone enjoyed basic necessities such as food and clothing.

Table 11.1 compares the situation of nine countries or regions. What we see is that there are indeed close to 30 percent of mainland Chinese who feel that democracy above all means giving people the right to choose their political officials; there are 4.2 percent of people who understand democracy to mean freedom (for example, the freedom to critique those in power). If you add these together, those who chose these two kinds of formal standards [for what democracy is] come to roughly one-third of the people. More people were inclined to

judge whether a political system was democratic or not by examining the results of governance. [According to table 11.1,] 28.9 percent of people took the ability to control disparities between the rich and the poor as the measure of democracy; close to one-fourth of the people believed that only a system that could guarantee that all people had the basic items required for survival—such as food, clothing, and housing—could be called democratic. More than two-thirds of people chose a substantive standard [for measuring democracy]. We can see that for the vast majority of Chinese people, “democracy” means substantive democracy rather than something that is a democracy in name only. What is interesting is that even though Chinese Taiwan has a different political system, the way Taiwanese people understand democracy is not terribly different from the way people on the mainland do.²⁰ In other nations in East Asia, more people prefer formal [i.e., Western-style representative] democracy, roughly 50 percent, with Thailand being the only country in which that number exceeds two-thirds of the population.

Perhaps some will suspect that those interviewed in table 11.1 were composed of a relatively large number of middle-aged people; for such doubters, it is young people who will perhaps be more inclined to accept “universal” democratic values—that is, formal democracy or procedural democracy. If this hypothesis is correct, then as time moves on, China will have more and more people who emulate “universal” democratic standards. What is the actual situation?

According to the data found in the most recent iteration (the third wave) of the Asian Barometer Survey, figure 11.1 displays democracy as it is understood by young people (born after 1980).²¹ In mainland China, 30 percent of young people understand democracy as “good governance,” while another 30 percent understand it as “social equality.” Added together, they represent 60 percent of those surveyed. On the other hand, those who understand democracy as “procedural democracy” or “freedom” only accounted for 40 percent. In Chinese Taiwan the situation is about the same as in the mainland. Further analysis reveals that understandings of democracy among young people in China are not dissimilar to those held by adults.²² Aside from the mainland and Taiwan, countries in which a majority of young people understand democracy in substantive terms include Japan, Korea, Singapore, Viet Nam, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia; only Mongolia, the Philippines, and Cambodia are exceptions. Yet even in those three countries half of all people still understand democracy in substantive terms, on par with those who take a formal understanding of democracy.

In comparison with just their Asian neighbors, the Chinese people’s substantive understanding of democracy is not exceptional. However, when that understanding is compared with Americans’, its distinctiveness stands out. The data from table 11.2 come from polls conducted in America in 2010 as well as in China in 2011. They encompass two different groups given four choices, testing whether people understand democracy in a formal (Group A) or a

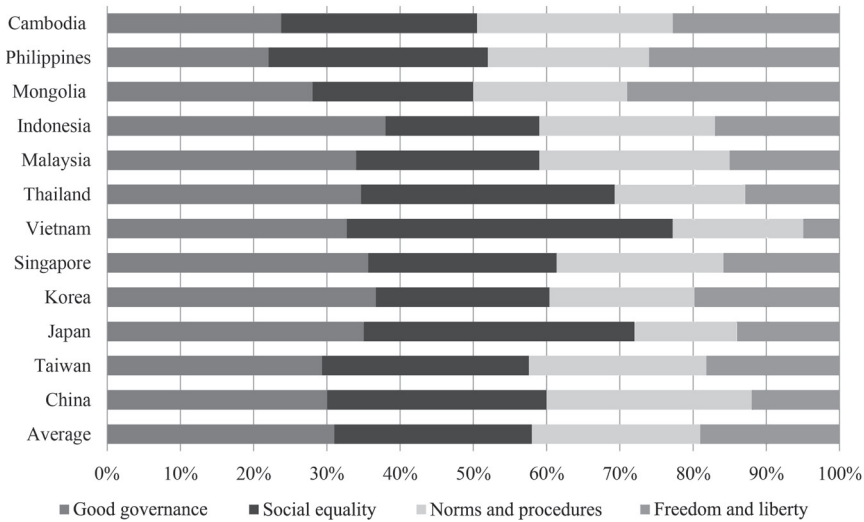


Figure 11.1 How Do Chinese Youth View Democracy?

Source: Asian Barometer Wave 3. From Yun-han Chu and Min-hua Huang, “East Asian Youth’s Understanding of Democracy,” paper presented at the conference “Democratic Citizenship and Voices of Asia’s Youth,” organized by the Institute of Political Science, Academia Sinica, and cosponsored by Asian Barometer Survey, National Taiwan University, September 20–21, 2012, Taipei, 5.

Table 11.2 Comparing Chinese and Americans’ Understanding of Democracy

	Chinese	Americans
A. Regular and fair competitive elections are held to select government officials	53.57%	73.58%
B. How one gains the right to govern is not important; what matters is that the government takes the interests of the people as its priority and is competent	34.00%	26.17%
A. Ensure that two or more parties compete for the right to govern	15.36%	39.75%
B. The ruling party seriously considers ordinary people’s opinions and suggestions	68.03%	58.89%

Source: Asian Barometer Study III, Mainland China Survey, 2013, (N = 3,419); USA National Survey, 2010, N = 810, cited in Jie Lu, *Democratic Conceptions and Regime Support Among Chinese Citizens*, Asian Barometer Working Paper no. 66 (n.p.: n.p., 2012), 72, <http://www.asianbarometer.org/publications/abs-working-paper-series>.

substantive manner (Group B). It is clear that Americans put greater emphasis on formal democracy, whereas Chinese people give more weight to whether democracy can bring tangible benefits to the people.

The conclusions reached by sample surveys done by research institutions within China correspond exactly with those reached by research institutions outside of China. For example, surveys conducted in 2011 by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences found that the Chinese understanding of democracy placed much more emphasis on content and substance than on form and procedure.²³

Representational Democracy and Representative Democracy

A democracy that emphasizes content and substance can be called “representational democracy,” while one that emphasizes form and process can be called “representative democracy.” Generally speaking, Asian peoples, including Chinese, prefer the former to the latter. Although their names differ only slightly, these two different kinds of democracy are in fact separated by a great gulf. Table 11.3 outlines the difference that exists between the two in three important dimensions.

For representative democracy, the most important concept is *daiyishi*. This term was one way of translating the English term *representative* into Chinese, popular during the late Qing and early Republican periods. Today this English term is often translated as *daibiao*.²⁴ Regardless of how it is translated, “representative” signifies a person selected by voters, who can be a legislator or the leader of the executive branch (for example, the American president). Yet calling these people “representatives” is often inaccurate, for in both the democratic theory and practice of many countries in Europe and America, people selected [for office] do not speak for the voters and are indeed not the representatives of the people.²⁵ It is precisely the opposite, in that once these people are elected, they can operate according to their own subjective judgment, for it has been claimed that “the voters are not angels; they do not necessarily have a healthy and rational judgment regarding public affairs. They often make mistakes, to the point of being led astray,” and as such they require elites with “the capacity for political judgment” to keep them in line.²⁶ In other words, elections are merely a means by which common people grant power to political elites. The elected elites do not need to genuinely represent the people, for they only have to administer the affairs of the state in their place, thus replacing the people as “masters.” Those who promote such a system state very clearly: these elected people “are absolutely not the representatives of the people; what democratic countries need is not representatives of the people but rather legislators elected by citizens!”²⁷

Table 11.3 Representational Democracy and Representative Democracy:
Differing Points of Emphasis

Representational Democracy	Representative Democracy
Is the government representative?	How are political representatives produced?
Do policies reflect the basic needs of the people?	Are elections competitive?
Does the political system produce such substantive effects as social justice, good governance, welfare, and a high quality of life for the people?	Is the political system defined by such characteristics as civil rights, freedom, and formal systems and procedures?

If it does not allow the masses of the people to truly act as masters of the state but allows only a small group of elected elites (politely calling them “representatives”) to serve as masters in their stead, then what exactly is “democratic” about the system? The way to defend representative democracy is to redefine the term: to call the kind of democracy that demands the people serve as masters “classical democracy” or “utopian democracy,” but to define modern democracy as “representative democracy,” a political system in which representatives are chosen through free elections.²⁸ Following this redefinition, the standard for measuring whether a political system is democratic or not changes as well: a political system in which there are free, competitive, multiparty elections is democratic; a political system in which there are not free, competitive multiparty elections is not.²⁹

Why are governments created by free elections democratic? Two different theories are offered in support of this contention. One emphasizes the role of elections in granting authority (authorization theory); it deals with how politicians begin their political careers. The other emphasizes the role of elections in punishing elected officials (accountability theory); it deals with how politicians end their political careers.

According to authorization theory, during elections each political party puts forth its policy positions and promotes its candidates, while the people have the right to choose to support whichever party or candidate they want, and they will vote for the party and candidates of their choice. This system is of course democratic insofar as those who are elected start governing only after they have been invested with the authority of the people.

Yet authority theory is in fact grounded in three unstated but indispensable assumptions: first, that voters are rational and that they have a clear and comprehensive understanding of the various policy positions of the competing parties and candidates as well of the preconditions necessary to implement those policies and their possible consequences; second, that politicians will

scrupulously abide by their promises and that when they take power, they will implement to the letter the policies that they promoted during the campaign; third, that implementation of the policies promoted during the campaign is in the voters' best interests. To actually realize any one of these three preconditions is incredibly difficult, and to realize all three at the same time is almost impossible. A large number of empirical studies have shown that voters are not necessarily rational and that in fact they are often politically ignorant.³⁰ In many circumstances, politicians are not willing, able, or inclined to act according to the platform presented during the campaign. Indeed, if policy were implemented according to the capricious nature of electoral language, in which candidates speak out of both sides of their mouths, it would not likely benefit voters.³¹ What is even worse, modern elections are geared toward the rich, and parties and candidates must raise an inordinate amount of money to cover election expenses, without which they simply cannot run for office. What this means is that, for electoral parties and candidates, the most important people are not average voters but rather wealthy donors. Given that without wealthy donors there is no way to gain power, it is in fact these donors who truly "grant power."

Accountability theory is also premised on a series of hypotheses: first, that politicians will not necessarily honor their promises, and, second, that even if they do honor their promises, those promises will not necessarily benefit voters. Accountability theory further hypothesizes that in the case of the previously mentioned circumstances emerging, voters will certainly be displeased, and these unhappy voters will force these politicians out of power at the next election, choosing another group to replace them. This is what is called "demanding accountability," and its basis lies in voters' ability to force politicians out of power. If representatives want to stay in power over the course of multiple terms, if they do not want to give up power, then they must govern carefully while in power so as to win the voters' favor.

The problem is that all modern political systems are incredibly complex, and any given policy—from its inception, drafting, approval, and promulgation through to its implementation—will involve many different political parties, factions, departments, and officials. In addition, the positive and negative effects of the policy will be determined by internal and external factors. If voters are unhappy with the effects of a policy, they do not necessarily know whom they should punish. Politicians will of course find a variety of excuses and rationales in order to shirk responsibility, directing the voters' unhappiness toward other people and places.

Another problem is that accountability theory assumes that voters have the choice of many parties and politicians. If you are unhappy with A, then you can choose B; if you are unhappy with B, you can choose C. In reality, within a two-party system there are only two choices available. Even in a multiparty

system, there is still a limited number of choices. In a situation in which alternatives are limited, voters are often faced with picking their poison.

Moreover, while politicians surely hope to win multiple terms, losing is hardly a disaster. In fact, after they leave the political arena, their profits will often be even greater. For example, in recent years in America fully half of the congressional representatives who lost their seats have joined lobbying groups, with much larger salaries than [they had] when they were in office.³² Take, for example, Bill and Hillary Clinton, one a former president, the other a former secretary of state. Since they have left office, their annual speaking fees have been enormous.³³ In other words, those who leave the political world after serving for several years will have the possibility of gaining a highly lucrative future return on their investment. In this light, it seems to me that the latent threat of “demanding accountability” is nothing but a “paper tiger” to a clever politician.

All of this means that neither “authority theory” nor “accountability theory” can explain how so-called representative democracy is in fact democratic. Three authoritative scholars of representative democracy argue regarding this question that “the expectation of the founders of representative government was that the system they championed would through a variety of measures lead government to serve the interests of the people, but they did not precisely understand how it would work. More than two hundred years later, we still don’t know.”³⁴

In contrast to representative democracy, the key concept of representational democracy is not “representative” (*daiyishi*) but “representation” (*daibiao*). According to the classic work *The Idea of Representation* by Hanna Pitkin [b. 1931], “representation” can be defined as that mode of operation that will realize the greatest benefit for the public; whether the subject representing the people is chosen through free and competitive elections is another question.³⁵ The basic assumption of representational democracy is that democracy can be realized through a variety of different representational mechanisms, and it is not the case that it must absolutely be the result of elections. As such, the standard for measuring whether a political system is democratic is no longer the existence of free and competitive multiparty elections. As Robert A. Dahl [1915–2014], the great theorist of democracy has said, “A crucial characteristic of democracy is that the government continues to be responsive to the preferences of its citizens, and that all citizens are completely equal politically.”³⁶ Here, what is important is not the extent to which the representatives speak for the voters (representativeness) but rather the government’s responsiveness to the people’s preferences. Dahl’s statement in fact established a standard by which to judge whether a political system is democratic: a standard of representational democracy. What must be further clarified are the “preferences” that Dahl speaks of. To my mind, the “preferences” referred to here are not the subjective wants of

the people. No government, no matter when or where, can or should meet the boundless desires of the people. “Preferences” instead primarily refers to the people’s objective needs and their opinions and suggestions having to do with those needs.

To distinguish between “authorization” and “accountability,” we can call the theory we have just developed “representation.”

China’s Theory of Representational Democracy

In the past few decades, China has in fact already developed a theory of representational democracy. It is made up of four major parts, which can be divided by the answers to four key questions: Who is represented? By whom? What is represented? How is it represented?

Who Is Represented?

The answer given by Chinese representational democracy is: the people. All Chinese people are familiar with Mao Zedong’s famous saying “serve the people”; this is the mission of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP); it is engraved on the East Gate as well as the Xinhua Gate of Zhongnanhai [CCP headquarters]. To “serve the people” does not mean that the people passively accept service. In fact, its true meaning is to build a better world through collective effort, together with the people.

So who are the “people”? In all nations, the internal connotations and broader implications surrounding the concept of “the people” (or “the citizenry”) is always changing. On the eve of the founding of the People’s Republic of China (PRC), Mao Zedong explained what he meant by “the people”: “The masses of the people include the working class, the peasant class, the urban petit-bourgeoisie, and the national bourgeoisie who have been oppressed and harmed by imperialism and the reactionary regime of the Guomindang (which represents the bureaucratic-capitalist class as well as the landlord class), with workers, peasants (soldiers are mainly peasants wearing army uniforms), and other laboring people forming its primary subject.”³⁷ Mao Zedong consistently understood “the people” as a political category that was historical and dynamic rather than as a general reference to the entire population of a given country. The one thing that did not change was that the subject of the people as he understood it from beginning to end was the great laboring masses who engaged in material production. Even if the internal connotations and broader implications of the concept of “the people” once again went through tremendous changes after reform and opening, its primary subject remained the great

laboring masses, while at the same time bringing in all those patriots who upheld socialism and the unity of the motherland. The greatest historical contribution of the Chinese Revolution and the new China was to enable hundreds of millions to stride onto the political stage for the first time in history.

Emphasizing that the people are the object of representation is in sharp contrast to liberalism. The vocabulary of liberalism simply does not possess collective concepts such as “class” and “social groups,” to say nothing of the concept of “the people.” For liberals, only the individual in pursuit of his own private interests deserves to be represented.

Represented by Whom?

In mainstream Western theory regarding representation, it is only elected representatives (known as “political officials”) who have the authority to represent others and make decisions on their behalf. But in the modern period, regardless of which political system we examine, there exist many unelected officials (known as “public servants”) who truly do exercise political power. To say that they do not have the authority to represent others is in fact to negate the pressure on them to serve the people with all their hearts, as if everything will be fine if they follow standard procedure and go through the motions.

As for the question of who represents, the answer provided by representational democracy is: all those who exercise political power, including those representatives chosen through formal elections as well as other public servants who also possess genuine power. China calls all those who exercise some kind of power “cadres.” Each and every cadre has a responsibility to represent the people’s interests.

There is no doubt that cadres belong to the “vanguard” of which Lenin spoke, but this does not mean that they can act in an “elitist” manner, conducting their work in “elitist” ways. It is in fact just the opposite: those who have a responsibility to represent the people’s interests must through various means become one with the great masses of the people and through this process unwaveringly remold themselves, for “it is the people, and only the people, that compose the force that can change world history”;³⁸ for the “the masses are true heroes,” while cadres at all levels “are often laughable in their naivety”;³⁹ for “the masses have boundless creative power.”⁴⁰

This is to say that cadres at every level must “study amid practice and practice amid study.” They cannot “see themselves as masters of the masses, as if they were aristocrats residing high above the commoners.”⁴¹ They “absolutely cannot pretend to know something when they don’t, they must ‘not be ashamed to ask those beneath them,’ and they must excel at listening to cadres beneath

them. They must first act as a student, then act as a teacher; they must first seek counsel from lower cadres and only then give orders.⁴² This is in contrast with the role of the representative as imagined by “authority theory” and “accountability theory,” which is that of a political elite above other people.

What Is Represented?

In Western-style representative systems, there are mechanisms for expression that enable people to express their desires (or preferences) and thereby produce a form of pressure on representatives in the hopes that they can thereby influence government policy. “Desire” is a relatively vague concept, which includes both the subjective wants and objective needs of the people. With a little bit of class analysis, we will see that the middle and upper classes of a society, those who have already solved basic questions of food and clothing, often express subjective demands (for example, reduced taxes, same-sex marriage, freedom of expression), whereas the lower classes of a society, those still struggling with poverty, often express objective needs (social safeguards, such as employment, medical care, education, and housing). In fact, the objective needs expressed by the lower classes are also the objective needs of the upper classes because the latter cannot do without clothing, food, housing, employment, medical care, and old-age care. It is only because they have money left over after seeing to the basics that the truth regarding these objective needs is hidden. We can thus see that the needs of society’s lower classes are the needs of the entire society, while the demands from society’s upper classes are not necessarily the demands of the entire society. There is one more difference between needs and desires: the former remain relatively stable over time, but the latter can change rapidly, even in a short period.

To enable the people to act as their own masters and to serve the interests of the greatest number of people, what representational democracy seeks to represent are the people’s objective needs and not capriciously expressed demands or fashionable viewpoints.

Of course, objective needs are not set in stone. When the level of economic development is relatively low, the crucial needs are food and clothing. Once a society has reached a relatively high level of development, however, the importance of these survival needs diminishes, and other needs rise in importance: one wants to eat a little better, to wear clothes that are a little more attractive, to have more convenient transportation, to live in a more spacious and comfortable dwelling. When we’re sick, we want medical care; when we get old, we want elder care; and the like. Representing the basic needs of the people must keep up with the times. This entails demanding that cadres at every level listen to the demands expressed by every level of society, even as they immerse themselves unceasingly in the lowest reaches of society, so as to understand the

changing needs found there. In this sense, representation must be a dynamic process of construction.

How to Represent?

People often understand the mass line as the form of democratic decision making inherent in the Communist tradition, yet the mass line is also a method of representation imbued with the most Chinese of characteristics. In Chinese history, it was precisely the CCP that took the mass line as its own “basic political and organizational line” (see Liu Shaoqi’s report on amending the Party’s constitution presented at the Seventh Party Congress). It was the CCP that brought hundreds of millions of common people onto the political stage for the first time, and it was the [political] awakening of these hundreds of millions of people that was the precondition for the realization of democracy.⁴³ From this perspective, the American scholar Brantly Womack’s assertion that the Chinese political system, with the mass line as a defining characteristic, is a “quasi-democratic system” makes sense.⁴⁴ The mass line is the core of Chinese representational democracy.

Several generations of CCP leaders have had much to say about the mass line. Mao’s summary of the concept is most representative:

In every aspect of my Party’s practical work, if leadership is to be correct, it must come from the masses and go to the masses. This is to say, we must gather up the views of the masses (disparate and unsystematic views) and, through study, turn them into collective and systematic views, and then we must go back to the masses to disseminate and explain them, turning them into the masses’ own views, enabling the masses to persevere and to see [these views] implemented in practice. From the practice of the masses, we must conduct examinations to determine whether these views are correct. We then must once again gather up the views of the masses and once again go back to the masses and persevere. This endless cycle will each time be more correct than the last, richer and more vivid than the last. This is the epistemology of Marxism.⁴⁵

In representative democracies, the relationship between representatives and the people becomes closer during elections. Yet once representatives are elected and have the legitimacy to wield political power, they in fact come to possess free discretionary power; they can represent the people who elected them according to their own wishes. If during their terms in office representatives interact with the people, it is mainly with electioneering in mind, and their goal is to win favor in the eyes of the people so that they will win the next election. As such, they will do things that help secure and enlarge their electoral base and have no interest in doing things that do not, regardless of whether these latter things are beneficial for the people. For representatives, the object of their courtship

are those people who participate in elections, the people with whom it is necessary to interact; and as for those people who do not participate in elections, they can ignore them altogether. And, indeed, those who do not participate in elections are often those at the bottom of society.

The mass line is different, for it demands that cadres at every level “love the great masses of the people and carefully listen to the voices of the masses; when one arrives at any region, one must become one with that region’s masses, not placing oneself above the masses, but going deeply into [the life] of the masses.”⁴⁶ “Go among the masses, learn from the masses, synthesize their experience and produce better and more orderly methods and principles, then go and tell the masses (to carry out propaganda), urging the masses to carry out such methods in order to solve their own problems, enabling them to gain liberation and happiness.”⁴⁷ The “masses” spoken of here are “the great masses of the people,” the same as “the people”; and “the people” refers primarily to peasants, workers, soldiers, and other laboring people.⁴⁸

In order to address the shortcomings of representative democracy, some progressive scholars in the West have championed the concept of participatory democracy with the hope of producing more opportunities and channels by which common people can influence government policy.⁴⁹ Even when compared with the relatively more democratic notion of participatory democracy, the mass line still maintains its distinct characteristics.⁵⁰

Figure 11.2 compares the concepts of the mass line and civic participation. It presents civic participation and the mass line in their ideal conditions. The first difference between the two is seen in the direction of the arrows on the figure. The arrow of civic participation moves from interest groups toward policy makers, meaning that interest groups have the right to wade forcefully into and deeply affect the process by which government makes decisions; yet this also means that policy makers do not have to step outside of their official chambers (see figure 11.2a). The arrow of the mass line moves from policy makers toward interest groups, meaning that within the process of government decision making, policy makers must let their guard down and work to engage deeply with various interest groups. This is a responsibility that policy makers are not allowed to shirk (see figure 11.2b).

The second difference between the mass line and civic participation regards the question of whether they include class analysis. The concept of civic participation often tacitly includes a pluralist assumption, imagining all interest groups as being evenly matched in strength, believing that they all can participate equally in the policy-making process and that in the end they will reach a kind of political balance (figure 11.2a). The mass line makes a distinction between the powerful who possess various kinds of resources and the weak who lack resources. The mass line in its ideal state of implementation entails policy makers engaging more with those weaker interest groups, listening more

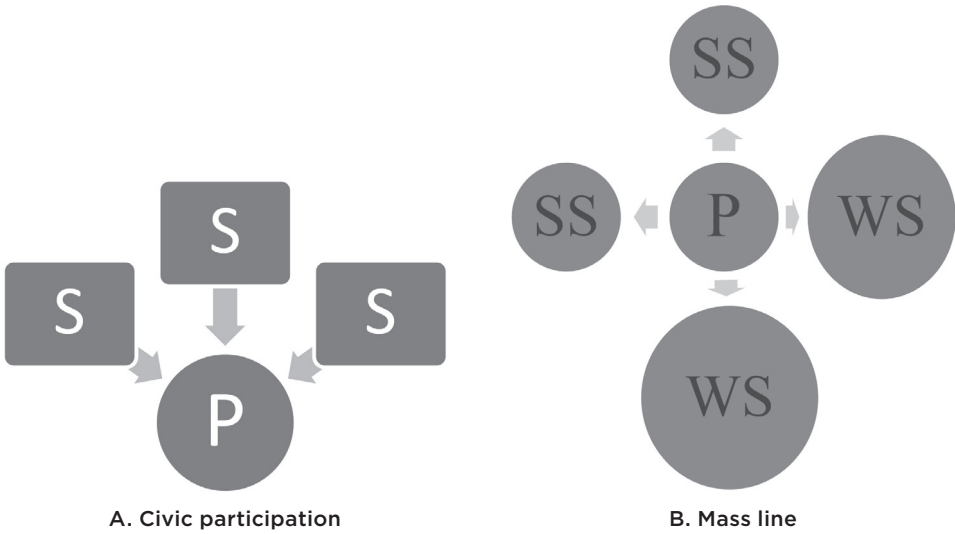


Figure 11.2 Mass Line and Civic Participation: Ideal Operations

Note: P: policy maker; S: interest groups; SS: strong interest groups; WS: weak interest groups

thoroughly to their voices, for their interests require more thorough attention and their ability to actively influence policy makers is weaker. What this means is that the mass line is not neutral, but rather a process that favors common laboring people (figure 11.2b).

Civic participation and the mass line as they are actually implemented are perhaps quite different from their idealized forms. In civic participation, different social strata differ greatly in terms of their ability to participate in the policy-making process. Some classes have advantages in terms of money, knowledge, and social connections, and their desire to participate in politics can be strong, as is their ability to influence policy making; other classes spend their days simply getting by because they have no time or ability to exert influence on government policy (figure 11.3a). The inequality that exists among various classes' abilities to participate means that the lustrous halo surrounding the concept of "civic participation" can silently flicker out, with the necessary result being that [such a system] is more apt at expressing "wants" rather than "needs."⁵¹

In implementing the mass line there are relatively exacting demands placed on cadres at every level; they cannot simply sit and wait for the common people to come through their office doors but must actively engage with the broad masses of the people. If cadres have a weak sense of mass consciousness, if their mass consciousness has become dissipated, then I'm afraid that even if they get out of their offices to go among the people, they will "be suspicious of the poor and love the rich." They will suck up to powerful social groups, frequent

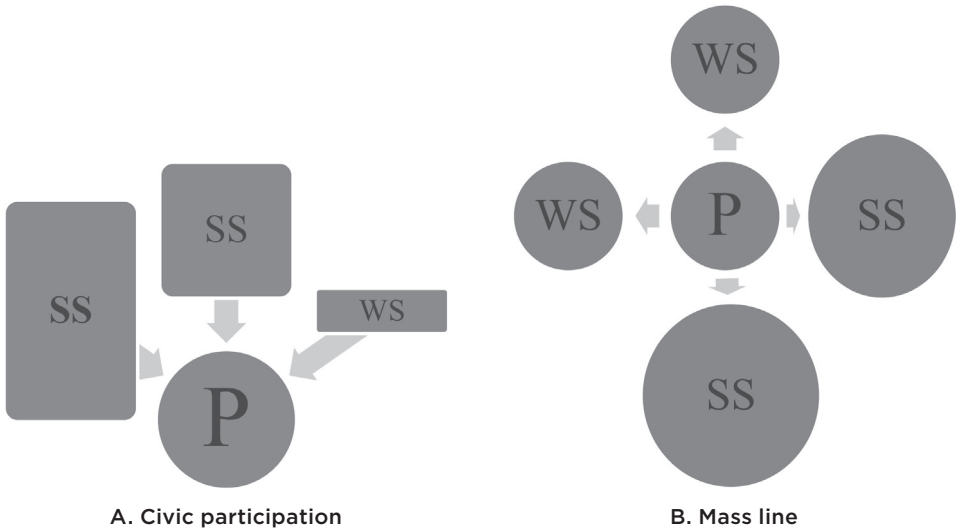


Figure 11.3 Mass Line and Civic Participation: Actual Operations

ribbon-cutting events run by merchants, eat and drink lavishly with captains of industry. In short, they will be pulled this way and that and will wind up accepting bribes as they turn influence peddling into a bargaining chip. At this point, engaging with powerless social groups becomes a perfunctory task, a sham (figure 11.3b). This is the Achilles heel of the mass line, for it has an overreliance on the level of the cadres' enlightenment. Along with the mass line, there must be a comprehensive mechanism that forces cadres at every level to engage with the common masses at the base of society. One way to do this may after all be to forcefully promote the mass line, systematizing the means for carrying it out, speaking of the mass line every year, month, and day, ensuring that it is discussed and understood in every household, that it enters deeply into people's hearts, becoming an intense expectation of—as well as a firm demand on—cadres at every level.

Another method for forcing cadres to carry out the mass line exactly would be to combine it together with civic participation. Though each of these has its own distinct characteristics, they are not mutually contradictory or exclusive. The relative strength of civic participation is that it is helpful for expressing the will of the people and for exerting pressure on policy makers; the relative strength of the mass line is that it is helpful for developing a sense of mass consciousness in cadres, to understand the feelings of the people, and to absorb the wisdom of the people. Not only are the two not in opposition, but they also in fact can be completely integrated, making an excellent combination that complements each other's strengths (figure 11.4). For example, the

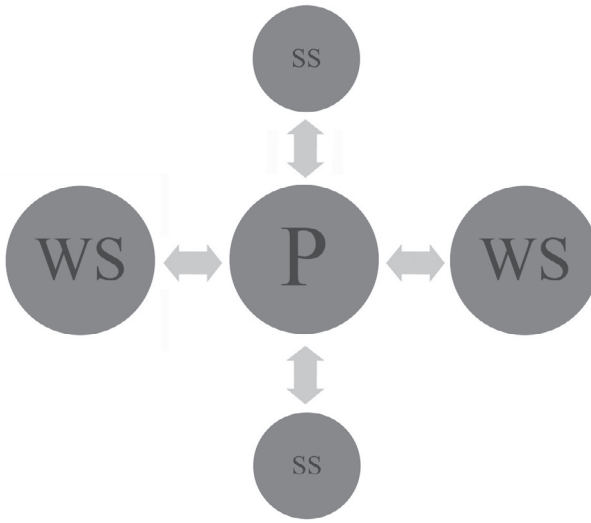


Figure 11.4 The Combination of the Mass Line and Civic Participation (The Practice of Chinese Representational Democracy)

government can on the one hand push cadres to carry out the mass line while on the other hand empower the masses politically, helping them to organize and to grasp the will and the ability to participate. If the government does this, the laboring masses can have a relatively large influence on policy makers as they express their needs, while at the same time the expression of reasonable demands by other social groups will not be ignored.

The mass line is not only the theoretical cornerstone of Chinese representational democracy but also the primary means of implementing it.

In his political report to the Seventh Party Congress, Mao Zedong pointed out that the mass line was one of the clear marks by which the Communist Party distinguished itself from other political parties. Whether during the revolutionary wartime period or during the period of socialist construction, the first generation of Party political leadership placed tremendous emphasis on the thorough implementation of the mass line. Mao Zedong was exemplary in this respect. Using Deng Xiaoping's words, we can say: "Comrade Mao was indeed great, was indeed different from us, for he excelled at discovering problems from within mass discussions and at presenting guidelines and policies to solve them."⁵² At the beginning of reform and opening, the second generation of Party central political leadership continued to place important emphasis on the mass line. Deng Xiaoping once said: "The most basic work methods promoted by Comrade Mao are the mass line and seeking truth from facts. . . . As regards the current state of our Party, the mass line and seeking truth from facts are extremely important."⁵³

One should openly admit that from the 1980s on, over a relatively long period of time, the rich heritage of the mass line has been forgotten by a considerable number of people. Though in official discourse sayings such as “trust the masses,” “rely on the masses,” and “serve the people” will sometimes appear (although less and less), in many places there are no longer specific measures designed to implement the mass line. This condition endured until around 2011, when changes finally took place. Major motivating forces in the rejuvenation of the mass line are perhaps the emergence of the Internet as well as continually increasing civic participation and pressure.

The year 2011 marked the ninetieth anniversary of the founding of the CCP. In his speech on July 1, General Secretary Hu Jintao said: “The unshakeable foundation of our Party is that we are from the people, rooted in the people, and that we serve the people.” “Every single Communist Party member must keep the people in the highest of positions in their hearts; they must take the people as their teachers, grounding the enhancement of their political wisdom and the strengthening of their skills of governance deeply in the creative practice of the people themselves.” Around this time, some provinces, cities, and districts began to raise the concept of the mass line again (for example, Chongqing, Guangdong, Shanxi, Jiangsu, Hubei, Tibet, and Yunnan) and to institutionalize and ensure its implementation. By the end of 2011, “go to the lowest reaches [of society], go to the masses” had become a national trend. Aside from the regions mentioned earlier, the leaders of the provincial Party committees of Hebei, Zhejiang, Anhui, Shaanxi, Guilin, Jilin, Gansu, and Xinjiang were going down to the lowest reaches of society, engaging with the masses “with zero distance between them,” speaking to them face-to-face, and large numbers of front-line cadres were living in villages in order to conduct firsthand investigations, striving diligently to feel the pulse of the masses, getting as close as possible to their hearts and minds.⁵⁴ In 2012, even more provinces launched similar activities (for example, Qinghai, Guangxi, and Ningxia).

At the same time, many regions started to establish organizations for mass work (whose shortened names were abbreviated as mass work units). The first mass work unit emerged in 2005 in Yima City in Henan Province. It brought together representatives from various government departments, who were tasked with functions that bear directly on the interests of the masses, including departments such as the State Bureau for Letters and Calls, Civil Affairs, Labor, Social Assistance, the Judiciary, Science and Technology, Public Security, Land and Resources, and Urban Development. Such representatives were brought together to answer the complaints and demands of the masses face-to-face in one space. Not soon after, Yima’s experiment gained recognition from central government leadership, and it was steadily expanded to eighteen prefectural-level cities and 158 counties (including municipalities and districts).⁵⁵ After this, Shandong, Hunan, Heilongjiang, Guizhou, and Liaoning

Provinces also established similar mechanisms at both prefectural and county levels. In June 2011, Hainan Province established the first provincial-level mass work unit in the entire country.⁵⁶

In 2012, the Eighteenth Party Congress chose a new cohort of Party leaders. General Secretary Xi Jinping has always seen mass work as the lifeline of the CCP. Even early on, when he was serving as secretary of Ningde in Fujian Province [1988–1990], he established four routinized mechanisms for cadres to “go to the grassroots,” including receiving the letters of complaints from the grass roots, meeting with people at the grass roots directly and dealing with their problems, conducting surveys and reports regarding the grassroots level, and promulgating policy at the grassroots level.⁵⁷ At the concluding ceremony of the special-topic seminar for leading provincial-level cadres in 2011, Xi Jinping demanded that cadres at every level use their own conduct as an example, cultivating within themselves a mass outlook, fortifying their mass stance, adhering to the mass line, deepening the emotions they feel for and with the masses, and innovating in the development of methods for mass work.⁵⁸ On the eve of the opening of the Eighteenth Party Congress, at the concluding ceremony of the special-topic seminar for leading cadres at the provincial level in 2012, Xi once again emphasized: “Our Party upholds our basic mission to serve the people with all of our hearts and minds; we uphold the work line of coming from the masses and returning to the masses; we uphold that the entirety of the Party’s work is to realize the will, interests, and demands of the people; this is the greatest source of our Party’s strength, a strength generated from close relations with the people.”⁵⁹

Xi Jinping was the leader of the working group tasked with writing up the report of the Eighteenth Party Congress. The term that appears with the greatest frequency in the report is *the people*, appearing altogether 145 times; this is without a doubt a revelation of his tremendous consciousness of the people.⁶⁰ A couple of weeks after the Eighteenth Party Congress, in order to strengthen the sense of popular consciousness that cadres at every level should have, the Politburo published “Eight Guidelines Regarding Connecting Closely with the Masses and Reforming Work Methods.”⁶¹ The Central Party School, the Academy of National Administration, and the Chinese Yan’an Cadre Academy have placed mass work within the ranks of the important courses for training cadres. On April 19, 2013, the Politburo made another decision: mass-line educational activities would commence in the latter half of that year, lasting for roughly a year in time, and would be executed across the entire Party from its highest levels down to its lowest.⁶²

Figure 11.5 can perhaps help us gain a sense of the momentum surrounding the return of the mass line. The Baidu Index is a big-data analysis service based on searches on the Baidu engine as well as in *Baidu News*.⁶³ It can be used to display the “rate of user attention” and “rate of media attention” that certain



Figure 11.5 Baidu Index of the Term “Mass Line”

key words have received over a particular time period, directly and objectively reflecting hot social topics and netizens’ interests. Figure 11.5 shows that before 2011 the Baidu Index number for the “mass line” remained below the average line (the dash line). Yet in the two subsequent years, the “mass-line” number passed the average line and, indeed, increased rapidly after the Eighteenth Party Congress, achieving unprecedented heights.

Through the practice of the past few decades, the mass line has already developed three different kinds of mechanisms. The first is a mechanism for understanding the sentiments of the people and absorbing their wisdom, which includes social survey work, front-line unit work, pilot projects, and strategies that start with one work unit but can be scaled up to an entire region.⁶⁴ The second is a mechanism for nurturing a mass outlook in cadres, which includes engaging with the poorest members of society and understanding their plight, the “three togethers” (eating together, living together, laboring together), being sent down, and the like.⁶⁵ Aside from this, there is also a series of accompanying mechanisms whose goals are to force cadres at every level to keep firmly in mind the mass line and to implement it, which include engaging in criticism and self-criticism at set times and at non-set times participating in rectification activities.⁶⁶ When these three mechanisms are active at the same time, the mass line can be thoroughly implemented.⁶⁷

Among all of the mechanisms for implementing the mass line, one that deserves particular mention is the social survey, for this is a mechanism that is often used; though the tradition of social surveys continued during the years

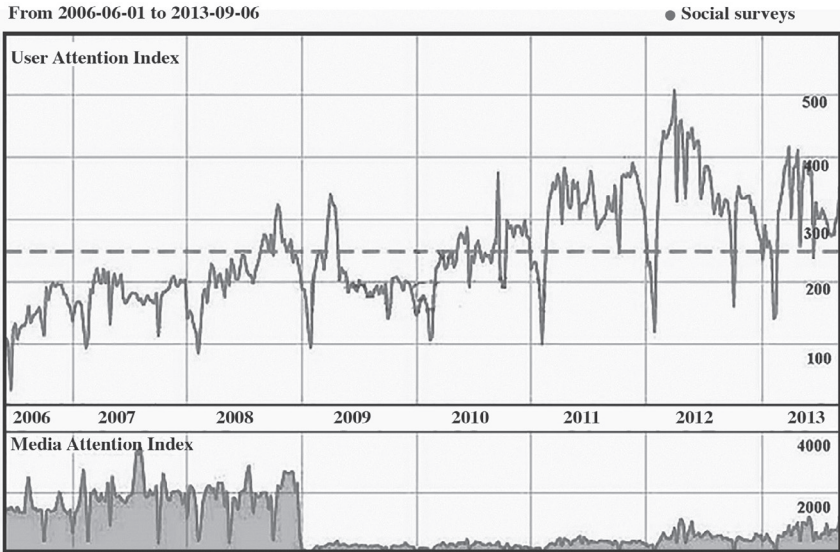


Figure 11.6 Baidu Index of the Term “Social Surveys”

in which the emphasis placed on the mass line wavered, they were not carried out frequently, and their investigations lacked depth.⁶⁸ Along with the return of the mass line, the emphasis placed on social surveys has increased tremendously, evidenced by the increase in the Baidu Index number for social surveys (figure 11.6).

Prior to his engagement with the mass line, Mao Zedong had already placed tremendous emphasis on social surveys and in fact conducted them himself. In the spring of 1927 in Hunan, he conducted investigations in five counties: Changsha, Xiangtan, Xiangxiang, Hengshan, and Liling. During the Jinggangshan period, he conducted a wide range of investigation and survey work, including the two-county investigation of Ningqu and Yongxin, the Xunwu investigation, the Xingguo investigation, the Dongtang investigation, the Mukou village investigation, the survey regarding land allotment in southwestern Jiangxi, the investigation into the distribution of immature crops and land rent, investigations into the errors made in struggles over land in Jiangxi Province, investigations into the issue of rich peasants after land had been divided, investigations pertaining to the two initial land laws, the Changgang village investigation, and the Caixi village investigation.⁶⁹ After Mao became the leader of the CCP, he repeatedly impressed upon the entire Party the importance of conducting survey work. During the rectification period in Yan’an, the CCP Central Committee created the Central Committee Guidelines Regarding Social Survey Research.⁷⁰ After the establishment of New China, Mao Zedong twice demanded a “work-style defined by seeking guidance from the

masses and wide-ranging survey work":⁷¹ the first time in 1956,⁷² and the second time at the beginning of the 1960s.⁷³

When it comes to individually carrying out social survey work, Xi Jinping, the head of the new leadership cohort selected at the Eighteenth Party Congress, is himself an exemplary model. He has diligently carried out survey work over the course of his career, from serving as Party branch secretary of the Liangjia River brigade in the Wenanyi commune in Yanchuan country in Shaanxi Province and on the Party committee of Zhengding County in Hebei Province to his time on the Party committees of Xiamen, the Party prefectural committee of Ningde, the Party committee of Fujian Province, Zhejiang Province, and the city of Shanghai and serving on the Standing Committee of the CCP Politburo. In October 2002, when he took up his post in Zhejiang, he conducted intensive social investigation. In his first two months, his social investigation work outside of his office made up approximately half of his overall work; in his first nine months, he had visited sixty-nine of the region's ninety counties, cities, and districts.⁷⁴ In 2005, Xi spent 177 days outside of his office conducting investigations, which came to more than thirty in all.⁷⁵ Within five years, he had visited Zhejiang's mountains and waterways.⁷⁶ On March 27, 2007, he was transferred to the Party committee of Shanghai; three days later, on March 31, he began a special investigation of Pudong; within half a year, he had conducted investigations of all of Shanghai's nineteen districts and counties.⁷⁷ In Xi Jinping's own words, "When you serve as county Party secretary, you must certainly scour every single village; when you serve as prefectural (or municipal) Party secretary, you must scour every single village and township; when you serve as provincial Party secretary, you must scour every county, city, and district."⁷⁸ After becoming general secretary of the CCP Central Committee, he continued to hold firm to conducting grassroots social survey work.⁷⁹ It was not just Xi Jinping who did this, but all previous members of the Standing Committee of the Politburo of the CCP Central Committee have built their careers in this fashion.⁸⁰

In comparison with the surveys conducted by scholars or think tanks, the "survey and research" work referred to here, which is meant to shape policy, has eight characteristics. First, evaluations through survey and research are a necessary procedure for policy making. For Mao Zedong, when deciding policy, "only a fool would, alone or in a group of people, not conduct social survey work, but simply wrack one's brain to 'think of a method' or 'come up with ideas.'" "This will certainly not produce any good methods or come up with any ideas. Put another way, he will certainly produce the wrong methods and bad ideas."⁸¹ Even for those so-called elected representatives, if they do not conduct survey and research work, then their policies will have no value. As such, Mao Zedong advised that all policy making "has to uphold the mass line and all questions have to be discussed with the masses and only afterward

collectively decided upon and thoroughly implemented. Cadres at every level are not permitted to forego survey and research work. It is thoroughly forbidden for the small number of people on the Party committees to forego survey and research work, to not discuss matters with the masses, to lock themselves up in their rooms and produce so-called policy that is tainted with pernicious subjectivism.”⁸² Mao Zedong admonished that “if there was no survey work, one had no right to speak.”⁸³ Chen Yun [1905–1995] spoke of the demand to conduct social survey work as an antecedent to policy in a more vivid manner: “Leading organs decide policy, and one must use over 90 percent of one’s time conducting survey and research work, while the time spent on discussion and policy decision making should account for not even 10 percent of one’s time.”⁸⁴ Xi Jinping completely identifies with this understanding of social survey work, believing that “survey work must thoroughly permeate the entire process of policy making, truly becoming *the* essential procedure.”⁸⁵

Second, those who carry out social survey work should not be support staff, like secretaries and consultants, but rather those who directly make policy. For example, though Mao Zedong entrusted the personnel around him with carrying out survey work (for example, his secretary, Tian Jiaying [1922–1966]),⁸⁶ he nonetheless emphasized that leading cadres “must themselves mount the horse,” “that all those tasked with the responsibility for leading [Party] work, from the chairman of village governments to the chairman of the central government at the national level, from brigade leaders to major generals, from section secretaries to general secretaries, all of them must personally carry out concrete social and economic investigations; they cannot simply rely on written reports, for these two things are not at all the same”⁸⁷ because “those who do not directly carry out investigation work will not be able to understand.”⁸⁸ Mao himself, along with Liu Shaoqi [1898–1969], Zhou Enlai [1898–1976], Zhu De [1886–1976], Deng Xiaoping, Chen Yun, and Peng Zhen [1902–1997], went to various regions to conduct survey work.⁸⁹ Today, grassroots investigation and research are a mandatory course and basic skill for first secretaries at every level across China. Xi Jinping’s own personal experience is that, “in terms of knowledge and feeling, the effect on leading cadres who engage directly with masses at the grassroots level, who discuss conditions and think over problems with them, is different than indirectly listening to summary reports or simply reading [printed] materials.” He therefore admonishes: “Though today’s means of transportation and communication are increasingly developed, and the channels we have for receiving information more numerous, for leading cadres, none of these can replace social survey work done directly and diligently by themselves.”⁹⁰

Xi Jinping strongly emphasizes that those in charge of leading organs at every level must themselves conduct survey work, directly taking charge of surveys regarding important questions. “Policy making regarding various questions,

in particular questions of major significance, must in the end be decided by leading collectives after those in charge have assembled opinions from various quarters, and if those in charge conduct survey work themselves, if they have a collective sense of empathy and experience that is shared with everyone, then it is easier to produce a unified understanding and unified opinion within leading collectives and easier to make decisions.”⁹¹ Therefore, the General Office of the CCP Central Committee in 2010 published the document “Suggestions on Promoting the Construction of Learning-Oriented Party Organizations,” which clearly demanded: “In order to construct a comprehensive system of social investigation and study, leading cadres at the provincial level must every year spend no less than thirty days conducting grassroots survey work; leading cadres at the city and county level must conduct no less than sixty days of grassroots survey work; and leading cadres must every year write one or two social survey reports.”⁹²

Third, though the topics of social survey work can change, they should be focused primarily on comprehensive questions of strategic importance for policy makers as well as on new situations, contradictions, problems, and challenges. In relation to the present, what this entails concretely is that one must

research deeply prominent questions that influence and constrain scientific development, research deeply the pressing and difficult questions that generate strong reactions among the masses of people, research deeply the theoretical and practical questions that are facing Party construction, research deeply the important questions concerning stable development and reform, research deeply important questions facing the world in the economic and social fields, comprehensively understand various new circumstances, diligently summarize the new experiences created by the masses, and put great efforts into exploring those things within various fields and professions that carry with them certain inherent laws, actively offering up appropriate policies. . . . Especially as concerns questions that generate the greatest amount of hope, concern, anxiety, and complaint among the masses, these must be researched with even greater enthusiasm, so that they can be understood thoroughly.⁹³

Fourth, the objects of social investigation work are those people who are connected to policy formulation and “who can enter into and deeply understand social and economic circumstances.”⁹⁴ Such people include “midlevel and lower-level cadres who have genuine experience as well as common people.”⁹⁵ More specifically,

we must investigate [administrative] organs, we must also investigate the grassroots; we must investigate cadres, we must also investigate the masses; we must analyze model examples [of a given problem], we must also investigate

the entire context [in which a problem appears]; we must go to those advanced places where work is proceeding well to review and summarize experiences there, we must also go to those places where there are a relatively large number of challenges, where the situation is complex, where the contradictions are sharp, in order to research the problems there. The grassroots, the masses, important model examples, and challenge areas all must become focal points for investigations, and more time must be spent researching and understanding them.⁹⁶

What needs to be pointed out is that the objects of these investigations are not totally passive but instead active participants in these investigations. Policy makers should conduct investigations among and with the masses, carrying out research together.

Fifth, the attitude that one takes when conducting investigations is “humble yourself and be willing to be like an elementary school student,” for “the masses are the true heroes, and we are often immature and laughable,” and “if you only look up at heaven and utter high-sounding words,” “if you do not have the courage to look at what is in front of you, you will your entire life have no ability to truly understand the affairs of China.” Even more pertinently, “if you are not humble and diligent with an attitude of comradeship,” the masses will “not tell you what they know, or they will speak without going into detail.”⁹⁷ Only “by becoming friends with the masses, rather than acting as a spy sleuthing behind their backs . . . can one’s investigation reveal the true nature of the situation.”⁹⁸ According to Xi Jinping’s own practical experience, his advice is:

When leading cadres engage in investigative work, they must abandon their pride and devote themselves wholeheartedly to the work, immersing themselves completely in the finest details, discussing matters together with the masses, listening to their voices, experiencing their emotions firsthand, feeling their pain, summarizing their experience, and absorbing their wisdom. You must listen to the words of the masses when it is easy, you must listen to the words of the masses when it is hard; you must allow the masses to report on the situation, you must also allow the masses to present their own views. . . . Only in this way can you truly hear genuine speech, to investigate real situations, to gain real knowledge, to achieve real results.⁹⁹

Sixth, the goal of social investigation is to understand the circumstances of the people and to absorb the wisdom of the people. As Mao Zedong said, “We must ask to be educated by the masses,” and “we must seek truth from the masses.”¹⁰⁰ For policy makers, the point of understanding the circumstances of the people is to understand what to do, and the point of absorbing the wisdom of the people is to understand how to do it. To actively absorb the wisdom

of the people is to manifest a belief in, a reliance upon, and a respect for the pioneering spirit of the masses.

Seventh, there are various methods of social investigation, yet there are two major types: “going out” (that is, going to interview people, conducting grassroots investigations) and “welcoming in” (that is, holding discussion fora and symposia). “Going out” means “striding on two feet to go to every corner of the region encompassed within the scope of your work”; “welcoming in” means “holding a seminar as a means of assembling those people who understand a given situation, with the purpose of finding the sources of all the difficult problems you are currently grappling with to render the ‘current situation’ clear.”¹⁰¹ Regardless of whether [the method used] is “going out” or “welcoming in,” what is crucial is that one must engage with grassroots cadres and masses. Only in this way “can one grasp those new situations that are difficult to hear, see, and imagine if one simply stays at one’s desk, and one can find a new perspective from which to solve problems, a new mode of thought and new policies.”¹⁰² An important means of “going out” is to selectively conduct front-line [lit., “squat on a spot”] investigations, what we call “dissecting sparrows” [i.e., making detailed investigations of small test cases].¹⁰³ In conducting front-line investigations, one “must pay attention to grassroots units such as villages, communities, enterprises that not only are intimately related to one’s own set of duties but also in which there are many problems, great challenges, and a host of contradictions. [One must] conduct front-line investigations, listen to the voices of the masses, and find the crux of problems.”¹⁰⁴ Of course, methods of social investigations must advance with the times. While we maintain traditional methods, we must also “open up further channels of investigation, enrichen our means of investigation, and create new methods of investigation, learning, understanding, and utilizing investigatory methods that are rooted in modern technology and science—for example, questionnaires, statistical investigations, sample surveys, specialized surveys, online surveys, and the like. We must also steadily integrate modern information technology into the investigatory field, improving the effectiveness and scientific level of our investigations.”¹⁰⁵

Eighth, investigation and research must be done in tandem. The purpose of investigation is to better understand a particular phenomenon or question and to grasp firsthand experience and materials related to it; the purpose of research is “to sift through large numbers of disparate materials in order to expel what is false and grasp what is true and to think, analyze, and synthesize in a comparative manner that moves between surface and depth, to systematize and organize these materials so as to penetrate complex and multifaceted phenomena in order to grasp the genuine essence of matters, finding their internal laws, transcending emotional understanding in order to reach rational understanding, and upon this foundation making correct policy.”¹⁰⁶ To conduct research and investigative work in tandem is to “seek truth from facts.” In Chen

Yun's words, "seeking truth from facts is first to clarify what exactly is 'truth.' If you do not clarify this question, then you will not be able to do anything well."¹⁰⁷ "Truth' means clarifying the concrete situation; 'to seek' demands that one uses the results of one's research as a basis for making correct policy."¹⁰⁸ If you do not conduct detailed investigations, research "becomes water without a source, a tree without roots, becoming subjective and unreliable."¹⁰⁹ If one does not conduct diligent research, then investigation becomes a reckless waste, equivalent to striving through great obstacles to collect materials that will be simply discarded in the end. "The basic goal of investigation and research is to solve problems, and after investigations have been completed, you must conduct meticulous and thorough reflection as well as do the work of exchanging views, comparing [ideas], and [working through points] repeatedly; you must take one's disparate understanding and systematize it, take one's coarse understanding and deepen it until one has found the basic laws that define matters, the correct method for solving problems."¹¹⁰

From the eight characteristics just described, one can see that carrying out investigation and research is in fact the very essence of the mass line: "Everything for the masses, everything relying on the masses, coming from the masses, returning to the masses." From within the process that moves from investigation and research to the formulation of policy, we can answer the four questions regarding representation: Who is represented? By whom? What is represented? How is it represented?

In recent years, my colleagues and I have conducted two different research projects into China's model of government. One concerns the process by which China formulated policy regarding health-care reform, and the other examines the process by which China's Fifteenth Five-Year Plan was formulated. Both clearly show that examination and research are the most important characteristics of China's policy-making model.¹¹¹ Put differently, though many questions remain, China's political process absolutely practices representational democracy.

Conclusion

This article has examined the theory of representational democracy and its implementation in China, doing so by placing it in comparative perspective with representative democracy. There will be perhaps many inside and outside of China who will object to calling China's political system "democratic." For them, history has already ended, and democracy can take only one form, which is the representative democracy recognized by mainstream Western ideology. As such, because the operational forms of the Chinese political system are different from those of representative democracy, it cannot be democratic. This

Table 11.4 Different Peoples Across Asia on the Nature of Their Local Political System

	Mainland Chinese									
	China (2008)	Taiwan (2006)	Singapore (2006)	Mongolia (2006)	Philippines (2005)	Thailand (2006)	Indonesia (2006)	Vietnam (2005)	Cambodia (2008)	
Total	18.2%	5.8%	15.5%	7.9%	6.9%	17.6%	12.2%	40.7%	15.6%	
Completely democratic	26.9%	5.8%	15.5%	7.9%	6.9%	17.6%	12.2%	40.7%	15.6%	
Democratic but with minor problems	50.4%	47.4%	75.5%	51.1%	40.9%	64.1%	36.2%	49.2%	60.1%	
Democratic but with large problems	21.1%	39.5%	5.2%	39.2%	42.5%	15.9%	46.8%	9.5%	20.9%	
Not democratic	1.7%	7.3%	3.8%	1.7%	9.7%	2.4%	4.8%	0.5%	3.4%	
Sample size	13,431 (100%)	1,499 (100%)	959 (100%)	1,195 (100%)	1,139 (100%)	1,481 (100%)	1,368 (100%)	1,097 (100%)	897 (100%)	

Source: Asian Barometer Study, 2103, <http://www.easiasobarometer.org/chinese/news.html>.

kind of arbitrary and arrogant attitude is a classic example of “a single leaf before the eyes can blind you to Mount Tai; two beans in your ears can deafen you to thunder.”¹¹² If China still has people who maintain this kind of perspective, then this stance can only be described as “when vision is hazy, you confuse white with black; when the mind is closed, you take the superficial for the deep.”¹¹³

Yet the vast majority of everyday people in China believe that what China is implementing is precisely a kind of democracy. For example, table 11.4 shows that in mainland China 27 percent of the people believe their country’s political system is completely democratic; another 50.4 percent believe the system is democratic, despite the existence of minor problems. Taking these two groups together, you reach 77.3 percent. Those who believe China is not democratic are extraordinarily few, making up only 1.7 percent of the population. When these figures are compared with those of other regions of Asia, only in Viet Nam does a larger proportion of people believe that their country is completely democratic.¹¹⁴ Those who will object, saying that people in China do not know what democracy is, are simply displaying their own bias, which has clouded their vision. Democracy means that people are the masters of their own affairs, and to discuss democracy one must first trust the judgment of the masses and not see them as idiots who cannot stand on their own two feet. Those self-appointed Enlightenment saviors are in fact roadblocks on the path to democracy.

Why do Chinese people consider their own government to be democratic? Because their measure of whether a government is democratic is the degree to which it responds to the basic needs of common people, and the Chinese government has in fact a fairly vigorous responsiveness to those needs. Table 11.5 shows that in comparison to other regions in Asia, mainland China has the highest proportion of people who believe that the level of their government’s responsiveness to the people’s demands is “extremely strong,” reaching 28.2 percent, which is 4.7 percent higher than in Viet Nam and 25.8 percent higher than in Taiwan. If you add the people who believe that their level of responsiveness is “relatively strong,” then mainland China is still first, reaching 88.1 percent, 2.9 percent higher than Viet Nam, which comes in second at 85.2 percent, and 63.1 percent higher than Mongolia, which comes in last place.

If we respect the understanding that common people in China have regarding democracy, if we respect the judgment that common people in China have regarding their own country’s political system, then the “paradox” that this article began with can in fact be solved: the Chinese people prefer substantive democracy. Because the government responds to the demands of the people, the people naturally look upon their government as democratic; this is the kind of democracy that has been discussed at length in this article: representational democracy. The people have no reason not to trust a government that represents their interests.

Table 11.5 Different Peoples Across Asia Regarding the Level of Their Local Government's Responsiveness

Level of responsiveness government exhibits in relation to the people's demands	Mainland		Chinese		Thailand (2006)	Philippines (2005)	Mongolia (2006)	Singapore (2006)	Taiwan (2006)	Indonesia (2006)	Viet Nam (2005)	Cambodia (2008)
	China (2008)	China (2008)	Taiwan (2006)	Taiwan (2006)								
Very strong	14.2%	28.2%	2.4%	2.4%	10.3%	5.1%	2.8%	8.5%	2.4%	4.3%	23.5%	10.9%
Strong	46.7%	59.9%	35.4%	35.4%	42.6%	27.8%	22.2%	60.5%	35.4%	42.0%	61.7%	38.7%
Not too strong	33.8%	10.1%	51.4%	51.4%	43.3%	49.7%	65.0%	29.5%	51.4%	50.0%	14.3%	44.0%
No response	5.3%	1.8%	10.8%	10.8%	3.8%	17.4%	9.9%	1.4%	10.8%	3.8%	0.4%	6.4%
Sample size	14,326 (100%)	4,437 (100%)	1,512 (100%)	1,512 (100%)	1,369 (100%)	1,176 (100%)	1,191 (100%)	978 (100%)	1,512 (100%)	1,561 (100%)	1,122 (100%)	980 (100%)

Source: Asian Barometer Study, 2103, <http://www.eastasiabarometer.org/chinese/news.html>.

Recent research by three American scholars provides support for this conclusion. They have discovered that “if one wants to understand why the Chinese people have such a high level of trust in their government, the most important reason is the government’s responsiveness ‘to the needs of the masses.’”¹¹⁵ The research of the director of the Asian Barometer, the Taiwanese scholar of politics Chu Yun-han, is in complete accordance with the conclusion stated earlier: “This political regime displays the resolve and the ability to protect the poor and to ensure that they have the basic necessities for life; it is steadily carrying out political reform and strengthening the rule of law; the people can feel its sense of responsiveness to their own needs. These are the major reasons why the people continue to have faith in government organs.” He also asserts, “Because of China’s particular cultural tradition and revolutionary legacy, as well as because of the particular position it occupies in the world, it is currently constructing an alternative system of public discourse regarding political legitimacy, charting its own course of political modernization.”¹¹⁶

This is of course not to say that China’s political system is perfect. China’s political system, like any other political system, has many problems, and, indeed, some of them are quite severe, which will require great efforts to improve. There is absolutely no reason to be content with the status quo and remain complacent. But the fact that China’s political system still has flaws does not mean that we should undeservedly belittle ourselves and take our strengths as weaknesses and carelessly abandon them. It is foolish to blindly follow in others’ footsteps without deep and careful reflection. If you listen only to others and denigrate your own accomplishments, you will reach a point of no return. The political systems of the world exemplify the notion that “heaven has its shortcomings and earth its strengths.”¹¹⁷ As such, the proper attitude is one that “weighs [various things] and then understands what is heavy or light; that measures [various things] and then understands what is long and short.”¹¹⁸ Only then can one “maintain calm and make the world as peaceful as the great Mount Tai.”¹¹⁹

Notes

1. Wang Shaoguang, “Daiyixing minzhu he daibiaoxing minzhu” (Representative democracy and representational democracy), *Kaifang Shidai* (February 2014): 152–74.
2. Francis Fukuyama, “The End of History?” *The National Interest* 16 (Summer 1989): 3–18, n.p. cited.
3. Paul Kingsnorth, *One No, Many Yeses: A Journey to the Heart of the Global Resistance Movement* (New York: Free Press, 2004).
4. David McNally, *Another World Is Possible: Globalization and Anti-Capitalism* (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring, 2006).
5. *Sortition* is a term that denotes the selection of political officials at random by drawing lots from a larger pool of qualified people. It was a characteristic of Athenian

- democracy based on the notion that allotting qualified people at random to governing bodies would prevent elections from being corrupted by oligarchic networks of power that could buy and sell votes. For a more detailed discussion, see Mogen Hermans Hansen, "Direct Democracy, Ancient and Modern," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Politics of Democratization in Europe: Concepts and Histories*, ed. Kari Palonen, Tuija Pulkkinen, and José María Rosales (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 37–54.
6. *Translators' note*: Here Wang uses a phrase—*jinsi niaolong shi de minzhu*, "gilded-cage democracy"—that denotes a structure that while shiny and seemingly resplendent is nonetheless entrapping.
 7. Mainland Chinese scholars often like to translate the English term *legitimacy* as *hefaxing*, though legitimacy and *hefaxing* have no necessary relationship. As such, the translation used in Hong Kong—*zhengdangxing*—is more appropriate.
 8. The Edelman Trust Barometer surveys more than 31,000 people from twenty-six different countries. In China, it surveys 1,500 people, including 1,000 people it deems as coming from the "general population" and 500 from the "informed public." The latter designation denotes people between the ages of twenty-five and sixty-four who have university degrees, have annual household incomes in the top quarter of their age group for their country, are accustomed to reading the news or watching it on television, and consistently pay attention to public-policy issues.
 9. Edelman Trust Barometer, 2013, <http://www.edelman.com/insights/intellectual-property/trust-2013/>.
 10. Considerable academic work has been written on the basis of such survey work. Owing to limitations of space, I will not list them all individually.
 11. John James Kennedy, "Maintaining Popular Support for the Chinese Communist Party: The Influence of Education and the State-Controlled Media," *Political Studies* 57 (2009): 517.
 12. Heike Holbig and Bruce Gilley, "In Search of Legitimacy in Post-revolutionary China: Bringing Ideology and Governance Back In," *GIGA Working Papers* 127 (March 2010): 6.
 13. For a work that uses statistical samples from across the nation taken in 2008, see Michael S. Lewis-Beck, Wenfang Tang, and Nicholas F. Martini, "A Chinese Popularity Function: Sources of Government Support," *Political Research Quarterly*, April 30, 2013, doi:10.1177/1065912913486196. For a work that uses statistical samples from five different cities taken in 2011, see Yang Zhong and Yongguo Chen, "Regime Support in Urban China," *Asian Survey* 53, no. 2 (2013): 369–92. For a work that uses statistical samples from across the nation taken in 2012 and 2013, see Wenfang Tang, Michael S. Lewis-Beck, and Nicholas F. Martini, "Government for the People in China?" *The Diplomat*, June 17, 2013, <http://thediplomat.com/2013/06/17/government-for-the-people-in-china/>.
 14. This view is very popular in the West. For example, in an op-ed piece Paul Krugman wrote the following: "Where does this government's legitimacy come from? Primarily it comes from economic success" (Paul Krugman, "China's Ponzi Bicycle Is Running Into a Brick Wall," *New York Times*, July 19, 2013, <http://cn.nytimes.com/opinion/20130725/c25krugman-blog/en-us/>). In recent years, there have also been some who have highlighted the "responsiveness" and "adaptability" of the Chinese system as a means of explaining its "legitimacy." It is true that the Chinese system is responsive and adaptable, yet if one persists in maintaining the framework of "authoritarianism," then one will have no ability to explain why the system has these qualities, to say nothing of explaining its "legitimacy."

15. Chu Yun-han, "Sources of Regime Legitimacy and the Debate Over the Chinese Model," *ABS Working Paper Series*, no. 52 (2011): 23, <http://www.asianbarometer.org/newenglish/publications/workingpapers/no.52.pdf>.
16. Tang, Lewis-Beck, and Martini, "Government for the People in China?"
17. Chu Yun-han, Larry Diamond, Andrew J. Nathan, and Doh Chull Shin, eds., *How East Asians View Democracy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).
18. Zhengxu Wang, *Democratization in Confucian East Asia: Citizen Politics in China, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam* (Amherst, MA: Cambria Press, 2007); Doh Chull Shin, *Confucianism and Democratization in East Asia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).
19. Zhang Mingshu, *Zhongguoren xiangyao shenmeyang minzhu: Zhongguo "zhengzhi-ren"* (What kind of democracy do Chinese people want? China's "political man") (Beijing: Shehui Kexue Wenxian, 2013).
20. *Translators' note*: In the Chinese version of this essay, Wang refers to Taiwan by the compound "Zhongguo Taiwan" (Chinese Taiwan), used to demonstrate to his Chinese audience that he considers Taiwan to be part of China in line with the People's Republic of China's "One-China Policy." We have included the original neologism in our English translation to preserve for English readers the political positioning of Wang's original wording.
21. In this survey, respondents were asked four different times how they understood democracy, with possible answers to the questions being presented in different orders each time. Respondents could choose one answer from four different choices: "Good Governance," "Social Equality," "Democratic Process," or "Freedom." The different arrangement of the answers was done to avoid a particular answer being favored solely on the basis of the position in which it appeared in the original questions.
22. Yun-han Chu and Min-hua Huang, "East Asian Youth's Understanding of Democracy," paper presented at the conference "Democratic Citizenship and Voices of Asia's Youth" organized by the Institute of Political Science and Academia Sinica and cosponsored by Asian Barometer Survey, National Taiwan University, September 20–21, 2012, 6.
23. Zhang Mingshu, *Zhongguoren xiangyao*.
24. Chinese communities who live in Malaysia (along with other overseas Chinese communities) are still accustomed to using the term *daiyishi*.
25. Ying Qi and Liu Xunlian, eds., *Daibiao lilun yu daiyi zhengzhi* (Representational theory and representative politics) (Changchun: Jilin Chuban Jituan Youxian Zeren Gongsì, 2008).
26. Liu Junning, "Daibiao, haishi yiyuan?" (Representative, or parliamentarian?), *Chahu*, 2013, <http://business.sohu.com/20130813/n384072126.shtml>.
27. Liu Junning, "Daibiao, haishi yiyuan?"
28. For a classic formulation of this position, see Joseph Schumpeter, *Zibenzhuyi, shehui-zhuyi yu minzhu* (Capitalism, socialism, and democracy), trans. Wu Liangjian (Beijing: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1999), esp. chap. 21, "The Classical Doctrine of Democracy," and chap. 22, "Another Theory of Democracy."
29. In recent years, a number of scholars and politicians have critiqued electoral politics, for even if elections are carried out in a free and competitive manner, they are stunningly easy to manipulate. Such critics have turned their attention to sortition as an alternative or supplement to electoral democracy.
30. For a relatively recent iteration of this point, see Bryan Caplan, *The Myth of the Rational Voter: Why Democracies Choose Bad Policies* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007).

31. For example, when it comes to election time in America, there are always American officials who explain to the Chinese government that they should not take American candidates' rash "election talk" seriously. As early as 1981, Deng Xiaoping had this to say about his meetings with George H. W. Bush and other American politicians: "In Reagan's electoral platform, there were indeed some words that made us uncomfortable. When Mr. Bush came to see us, we told him: we understand that things said during elections will not necessarily be implemented after one comes to power. What we care about is what Mr. Reagan will do after he comes to power" (Deng Xiaoping, "Fazhan Zhong-Mei guanxi de yuanze lichang [1981-nian 1-yue 4-ri]" [Principles for the development of Sino-American relations (January 4, 1981)], Xinhua Wang, March 4, 2002, http://news.xin-huanet.com/ziliao/2002-03/04/content_2546615.htm).
32. Since 1998, 338 former members of the U.S. Congress have already become lobbyists. See Jonathan D. Salant, "Congress Members Sprint for Money to Lobby after Election," *Bloomberg*, May 8, 2013, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-05-08/congress-members-sprint-for-money-to-lobby-after-election.html>.
33. According to a report in the *New York Times* in July 2013, since Bill Clinton left the White House in 2001, he and Hillary have spun their fame and prestige into a family business based around speaking engagements, one whose profits have already reached more than \$100 million. See Amy Chozick, "Hillary Clinton Taps Speechmaking Gold Mine," *New York Times*, July 11, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/12/us/politics/hillary-clinton-hits-the-lucrative-speechmaking-trail.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0.
34. Bernard Manin, Adam Przeworski, and Susan C. Stokes, introduction to *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation*, ed. Adam Przeworski, Susan C. Stokes, and Bernard Manin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 3.
35. Hanna F. Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967).
36. Robert A. Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1971), 1.
37. Mao Zedong, "Guanyu muqian dang de zhengce zhong de jige zhongyao wenti (1984-nian 1-yue 18-ri)" (Regarding some important questions of Party policy in our current moment [January 18, 1948]), in *Mao Zedong xuanji* (Selected works of Mao Zedong) (Beijing: Renmin, 1991), 4:1215.
38. Mao Zedong, "Lun lianhe zhengfu" (On coalition government), in *Mao Zedong xuanji*, 3:1031.
39. Mao Zedong, "Nongcun diaocha de xuyan he ba" (Introduction and postscript to rural surveys), in *Mao Zedong nongcun diaocha wenji* (Collection of Mao Zedong's rural surveys) (Beijing: People's Press, 1982), 17.
40. Mao Zedong, "Duoyu laodongli zhaodao le chulu, yiwen de anyu" (Commentary on "Surplus Labor Has Found an Outlet"), in *Zhongguo nongcun de shehuizhuyi gaochao* (The socialist high tide in the Chinese countryside), ed. General Office of the CCP Central Committee (Beijing: People's Press, 1956), 2:578.
41. Mao Zedong, "Zai Yan'an wenyi zuotanhui shang de jianghua" (Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art), in *Mao Zedong xuanji*, 3:864.
42. Mao Zedong, "Dang weihui de gongzuo fangfa" (The work methods of the Party committee), in *Mao Zedong xuanji*, 4:1441.
43. Brantly Womack, "In Search of Democracy: Public Authority and Public Power in China," in *Contemporary Chinese Politics in Historical Perspective*, ed. Brantly Womack (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 53–89.
44. Brantly Womack, "The Party and the People: Revolutionary and Post-revolutionary Politics in China and Vietnam," *World Politics* 39, no. 4 (1987): 479–507.

45. Mao Zedong, "Guanyu lingdao fangfa de ruogan wenti" (Some questions concerning methods of leadership), in *Mao Zedong xuanji*, 3:899.
46. Mao Zedong, "Lun lianhe zhengfu," 3:1095.
47. Mao Zedong, "Zuzhi qilai" (Organize), in *Mao Zedong xuanji*, 3:933.
48. Mao Zedong, "Guanyu muqian dang de zhengce," 4:1215.
49. A relatively early work that championed participatory democracy was Carole Pateman, *Participation and Democratic Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970). In the past twenty years, works that have critiqued representative democracy and have advocated for participatory democracy have become more numerous. For example, see William R. Nylen, *Participatory Democracy Versus Elitist Democracy: Lessons from Brazil* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), and Thomas Zittel and Dieter Fuchs, eds., *Participatory Democracy and Political Participation: Can Participatory Engineering Bring Citizens Back In?* (New York: Routledge, 2007).
50. Wang Shaoguang, "Buying danwang de gonggong juece canyu moshi: Qunzhong luxian" (A participatory model for public-policy decision making that should not be forgotten: The mass line), in *Qunzhong luxian dajia tan* (Everyone discuss the mass line), ed. Li Zhu (Beijing: Huawen, 2013), 331–37.
51. Regarding the inequality that defines participation in American politics, see Kay Lehman Schlozman, "What Accent the Heavenly Chorus? Political Equality and the American Pressure System," *Journal of Politics* 46 (1984): 1014; Frank R. Baumgartner and Beth L. Leech, "Interest Niches and Policy Bandwagons: Patterns of Interest Group Involvement in National Politics," *Journal of Politics* 63, no. 4 (2001): 1191–213; Kay Lehman Schlozman, Sidney Verba, and Henry E. Brady, *The Uneheavenly Chorus: Unequal Political Voice and the Broken Promise of American Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 2012).
52. Deng Xiaoping, "Wanzheng de zhengque de lijie Mao Zedong sixiang" (Thoroughly and correctly understanding Mao Zedong Thought), in *Deng Xiaoping wenxuan* (Selected works of Deng Xiaoping) (Beijing: People's Press, 1994), 43.
53. Deng Xiaoping, "Wanzheng de zhengque de lijie Mao Zedong sixiang," 45.
54. Li Yuanchao, "Dao qunzhong zhong qu, bai renmin wei shi" (Go to the masses, salute the people as teachers), *Xuexi Shibao*, September 12, 2011.
55. Peng Mei, "Quanguo tuiguang qunzhong gongzuobu yu Xinfangju heshu bangong" (Expand across the nation the cooperative work between mass work units and the State Bureau for Letters and Calls), *Nanfang Dushi Bao*, March 13, 2001, <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2011-03-13/051122104145.shtml>, posted on Sina Net at <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2011-03-13/051122104145.shtml>.
56. "Hainan shuaixian tigao Xinfangju xingzheng jibie, chengli shengwei qun Gongbu" (Hainan leads the way in raising the administrative rank of the Bureau of Letters and Calls, establishes provincial committee mass work unit), *Xin Jingbao*, July 13, 2011, <http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/14562/15150598.html>.
57. Huang Shaohe and Zhuang Yan, "Ningde 20-duo nian jianchi 'sixia jiceng' de zhizheng shijian he jingyan qishi" (Twenty-plus years of upholding the "four mechanisms of going to the grass roots" in Ningde administrative practice and experiential knowledge), *Fujian Ribao*, May 2, 2012, <http://www.gog.com.cn/zonghe/system/2012/05/02/011433612.shtml>.
58. Xu Jingyue, et al., "Xi Jinping zai shengbuji lingdao ganbu zhuanti yantaoban jieyeshi shang jianghua" (Xi Jinping's remarks at the concluding ceremony of the special-topic seminar for leading provincial-level cadres), *Zhongguo Zhengfu Wang*, February 24, 2011, http://www.gov.cn/ldhd/2011-02/24/content_1809442.htm.
59. "Xi Jinping zuo shengbuji lingdao yantaoban zongjie jianghua" (Xi Jinping makes summary remarks at the special-topic seminar for provincial-level leaders),

- Guowuyuan Canshi shi Wangzhan, 2012. *Translators' note*: Xi's speech is currently available at http://news.ifeng.com/mainland/special/hujintaojianghua2012/content-3/detail_2012_07/24/16265511_0.shtml.
60. Zhou Hanmin, "Renmin, gaige, minzhu shi shiba da baogao de zhu xuanlü" (People, reform, and democracy are the main themes of the Eighteenth Party Congress report), Shanghai shi Shehuizhuyi Xueyuan Wangzhan, 2012, <http://www.shsy.org.cn/node933/shsy/jczt/node1839/userobject1ai1760559.html>.
 61. "Zhonggong zhongyang zhengzhiju zhaokai huiyi, Xi Jinping zhuchi" (The Politburo convenes, Xi Jinping serves as chair), Xinhua Wang, December 4, 2012, http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2012-12/04/c_113906913.htm.
 62. "Zhonggong zhongyang zhengzhiju zhaokai huiyi, Xi Jinping zhuchi."
 63. Google Analytics offers a similar service.
 64. *Translators' note*: The final suggested work method in this sentence—"strategies that start with one work unit but can be scaled up to an entire region"—is a translation of the Chinese phrase *yi dian dai mian*, more directly translated as "fanning out from a single point to an entire area." The phrase refers to using the successful techniques developed by a single work unit in a single area and scaling them up across multiple units and areas.
 65. Such as the regulation issued by the General Political Department of the People's Liberation Army in April 2013 and approved by the chairman of the Central Military Commission, Xi Jinping, which demanded that leaders and cadres higher than the regiment level in the People's Liberation Army as well as the People's Armed Police go to the field to link up with soldiers, serving, working, and living among them so as to conduct on-the-ground investigation of front-line challenges. See "Jing Xi Jinping zhuxi pizhun Jiefangjun zong zhengzhibu xia fa 'guilü'" (Regulations issued by the People's Liberation Army's General Political Department and approved by Chairman Xi Jinping), Zhongguo Zhengfu Wang, April 21, 2013, http://www.gov.cn/jrzq/2013-04/21/content_2384523.htm.
 66. Zheng Keyang, "Yi zhengfeng jingshen kaizhan piping he ziwo piping" (Use the spirit of rectification to carry out criticism and self-criticism), *Qishi* 16 (2013), http://www.qstheory.cn/zxdk/2013/201316/201308/t20130813_259183.htm.
 67. What must be pointed out is that many people speak of the mass line and mass movements in the same breath. Although mass mobilization has been used in the past in the implementation of the mass line, the mass line does not necessarily need to employ mass mobilization to be carried out.
 68. Wei Liqun and Zheng Xinli, eds., *Xin shiqi diaocha yanjiu gongzuo quanshu* (Encyclopedia of survey and research work carried out in the new period) (Beijing: People's Press, 2006).
 69. Mao Zedong, "Nongcun diaocha de xuyan he ba," 14.
 70. "Zhongyang guanyu diaocha yanjiu jue ding" (Central Committee decision regarding survey research), October 1, 1941, Zhongguo Gongchandang Xinwen Wang, n.d., <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64184/64186/66644/4490536.html>.
 71. Mao Zedong, "Daxing diaocha yanjiu zhi feng" (Energetically encourage investigation and research work) (January 13, 1961), in *Mao Zedong wenji* (Works of Mao Zedong) (Beijing: Renmin, 1996), 8:233–34.
 72. The three-volume work *Zhongguo nongcun de shehuizhuyi gaochao* (The socialist high tide in the Chinese countryside), published in 1956, includes materials regarding survey work performed during the collectivization movement. The volume's introduction was written by Mao Zedong. For the survey and investigation work that was carried

- out to prepare Mao Zedong's report "On the Ten Great Relationships," see *Mao Zedong zhuan (1949–1976)* (Biography of Mao Zedong, 1949–1976), ed. Pang Xianzhi and Jin Chongji (Beijing: Zhongyang Wenjian, 2003), 468–506.
73. Wen Yanshi, "Ershi shiji liushi niandai chu zhongyang lingdao tongzhi de diaocha yanjiu" (Survey and investigation work of the leading cadres of the Central Committee during the early 1960s), *Dang de wenxian* 13 (2013), Zhongyang Wenxian Yanjiushi Wangzhan, http://www.wxyjs.org.cn/ddwxzszs/wzjx/2013n3/201305/20130516_139304.htm.
 74. Xi Jinping, "Wo shi ge nenggou tixing ziji, yueshu ziji de ren" (I am a person who is able to remind himself, a person able to control himself), *Renmin wenxian* 3 (2004), Renmin Wang, <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/paper2086/11500/1037377.html>.
 75. Zhang Feng'an, "Xi Jinping, cong Shaanxi de shan'gou yilu zou qilai" (Xi Jinping, starting out from the mountain valleys of Shaanxi), 21 *Shiji Jingji Baodao*, March 1, 2008, Fenghuang Wang, http://news.ifeng.com/special/2008lianghui/huanjie/ziliao/200803/0310_2978_433841.shtml.
 76. Chen Fang, "Xi Jinping zhuzheng Zhejiang, jiuge yue paobian liushijiuge xian" (When Xi Jinping governed Zhejiang, in nine months he visited sixty-nine counties), Fenghuang Wang, November 2012, http://news.ifeng.com/mainland/special/zhonggong18da/dujia/detail_2012_11/15/19187238_0.shtml.
 77. Zhang Feng'an, "Xi Jinping, cong Shaanxi."
 78. Xi Jinping, "Wo shi ge nenggou tixing ziji."
 79. Kan Feng, "Zhongyang xin lingdaoceng miji 'zou jiceng,' zuji bianji ba shengfen" (The new cohort of central Party leadership intensively "goes to the grass roots," leaving tracks across eight provinces), Xinhua Wang, February 2013, http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2013-02/05/c_124322246.htm.
 80. Hu Angang, "Jiti diaocha jizhi" (Mechanism for collective surveys and research), in *Zhongguo jiti lingdao tizhi* (China's system of collective leadership) (Beijing: Renmin Daxue, 2013), 103–26.
 81. Mao Zedong, "Fandui benbenzhuyi" (Oppose book worship), in *Mao Zedong nongcun diaocha wenji*, 2.
 82. Mao Zedong, "Zhi Zhang Pinghua" (To Zhang Pinghua), in *Mao Zedong shuxin xuanji* (Selection of Mao Zedong's letters) (Beijing: People's Press, 1983), 582.
 83. Mao Zedong, "Nongcun diaocha de xuyan he ba," in *Mao Zedong nongcun diaocha wenji*, 17.
 84. Chen Yun, "Zuo hao shangye gongzuo" (Conduct commercial work in a good way), in *Chen Yun wenxuan* (Selected writings of Chen Yun) (Beijing: Renmin, 1995), 3:34.
 85. Xi Jinping, "Tantan diaocha yanjiu" (Discussing survey and research work), *Xuexi Shibao*, November 16, 2011, Zhongguo Gongchandang Xinwen Wang, <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64093/64094/16349466.html>, emphasis in the original. Xi gave this speech at a ceremony for an incoming cohort of students marking the beginning of the autumn semester at the Central Party School.
 86. Lü Chuanbin, "1956 nian Mao Zedong mishu Tian Jiaying hui jiaxiang diaocha shimo" (The story of how Mao Zedong's secretary Tian Jiaying in 1956 went to his hometown to conduct survey work), Xinhua Wang, January 2012, http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2012-01/19/c_122605061.htm; Yin Fuying, "Yijiuliuyi nian Tian Jiaying Zhejiang nongcun diaoyan" (Tian Jiaying's rural survey of Zhejiang in 1961), *Bainian Chao* 12 (2002): n.p.
 87. Mao Zedong, "Fandui benbenzhuyi," 10.
 88. Mao Zedong, "Guanyu renzhen diaocha gongshe neibu liangge pingjun wenti de yifeng xin" (Letter on diligently investigating the two different questions regarding

- egalitarianism within communes), in *Jianguo yilai Mao Zedong wengao* (Mao Zedong's manuscripts after the founding of the PRC) (Beijing: Zhongyang Wenxian, 1996), 9:440.
89. Ma Shexiang, "Jianguo chuqi 'Mao Zedong shi' de diaocha" (Survey and investigation work in "the style of Mao Zedong" conducted early in the period after the founding of the PRC), *Zhongguo Zhengdang Ganbu Luntan* 4 (2012), Makesizhuyi Zhongguo-hua Luntan, <http://marxism.org.cn/detail.asp?id=3083&Channel=12&ClassID=12>; Song Binquan, "Liushi niandai chu daxing diaocha yanjiu zhi feng jishu" (Account of the energetic encouragement of survey and investigation work in the early 1960s), *Dangshi Yanjiu yu Jiaoxue* 4 (1994): 43–48.
 90. Xi Jinping, "Tantan diaocha yanjiu."
 91. Xi Jinping, "Tantan diaocha yanjiu."
 92. Zhonggong Zhongyang Bangongting (General Office of the CCP), "Guanyu tuijin xuexi xing dang zuzhi jianshe de yijian" (Suggestions on promoting the construction of learning-oriented Party organizations), *Zhongguo Zhengfu Wang*, February 2010, http://www.gov.cn/jrzq/2010-02/08/content_1531011.htm. As early as 1958, in the document *Work Methods: 60 Guidelines*, which Mao Zedong took a leading role in drafting, the twenty-fifth guideline clearly stipulated that leading cadres should conduct survey work: "Members of the Party committees of the central government, provinces, municipalities under direct central government authority, and autonomous regions at both primary and secondary administrative levels must, except in cases of illness or old age, each year spend four months outside of their office, going to the grass roots to conduct survey and research work, hold meetings, and go to a wide cross-section of areas [in their jurisdiction]. They should adopt two kinds of [work] methods: ride the horse to see flowers and get off the horse to see flowers. Even if one must spend three or four hours discussing something in a single place, that is acceptable. One must interact with peasants and workers, increasing one's understanding. Some meetings of the central government can be conducted outside of Beijing, and some meetings of the provincial Party committees can be conducted outside of the provincial capital" (Mao Zedong, "Gongzuo fangfa liushi tiao [cao an]" [Work methods: 60 guidelines (working draft)], *Xinhua Wang*, January 1958, http://news.xinhuanet.com/ziliao/2005-01/06/content_2423605.htm).
 93. Xi Jinping, "Tantan diaocha yanjiu."
 94. Mao Zedong, "Fandui benbenzhuyi," 9.
 95. Mao Zedong, "Nongcun diaocha de xuyan he ba," 16.
 96. Xi Jinping, "Tantan diaocha yanjiu."
 97. Mao Zedong, "Nongcun diaocha de xuyan he ba," 15–17.
 98. Mao Zedong, "Guanyu nongcun diaocha" (Regarding rural surveys), in *Mao Zedong nongcun diaocha wenji*, 27.
 99. Xi Jinping, "Tantan diaocha yanjiu."
 100. Mao Zedong, "Zhi Deng Xiaoping" (To Deng Xiaoping), April 25, 1961, in *Mao Zedong shuxin xuanji*, 578.
 101. Mao Zedong, "Fandui benbenzhuyi," 2–3.
 102. Xi Jinping, "Tantan diaocha yanjiu." Xi Jinping has noted that "presently some cadres are adept at gauging their leader's every word and expression, making a few preparations, milling about with the plans provided by superiors, and offering up a few materials in response. Clearly, this kind of survey work will not allow one to see the true nature of a situation, gain genuine knowledge about it, and make the correct conclusions regarding it." He thus warns that one must avoid "doing surveys perfunctorily, focusing on potted plants and miniature trees, happily listening and looking around

a bit, like a dragon fly skimming over the surface of a body of water, being satisfied with gaining just a small smattering of knowledge.” He suggests, therefore, that “within survey and investigation work one can operate according to a ‘fixed line,’ yet one should also ‘make individual choices regarding one’s movements,’ going to see some places that you did not prepare to see, conducting some random investigations that you did not plan in advance or provide forewarning for. One must strenuously seek to correctly, comprehensively, and deeply understand a given situation, avoiding the phenomenon that one has ‘been investigating,’ defending against perfunctory investigations.” According to Xi, “recently some leading cadres, including cadres at the provincial level, have gone deeply down among the grass roots and the masses to conduct investigation work in a straightforward manner, investigations that are not forewarned in advance, in which they are not accompanied by others.” According to reports, the provincial Party secretary of Zhejiang Luo Zhijun’s recent rural investigations, which have involved him living in the countryside, have been conducted particularly thoroughly. He has not been accompanied by cadres from a variety of administrative levels, who would provide reports across stratified channels, but rather has brought with him two or three assistants and directly entered village homes, with village cadres providing directions on how to get there. He has not allowed cadres from the township level to get near, and it is only at the discussion forum held after he has finished living in the village that he has engaged with municipal and provincial Party committee secretaries. For more, see Guo Bensheng, “Shengeng qunzhong, shengwei shuji xiaxiang ji” (Going deeply to the masses: The provincial Party secretary’s jottings regarding going to the countryside), *Xinhua Wang*, March 2013, http://www.js.xinhuanet.com/2013-04/22/c_115480589.htm.

103. *Translators’ note*: Wang is referring to the idiom “though sparrows are small, their five internal organs are complete,” which comes originally from Qian Zhongshu’s (1910–1998) famed satirical novel *Weicheng* (Fortress besieged, 1947). Here, the idiom is used to suggest the need to make detailed investigations of small test cases, which will aid investigators in grasping the problems of an entire region or larger social situation.
104. Xi Jinping, “Tantan diaocha yanjiu.”
105. Xi Jinping, “Tantan diaocha yanjiu.”
106. Xi Jinping, “Tantan diaocha yanjiu.”
107. Chen Yun, “Jianchi anbili yuanze tiaozheng guomin jingji” (Uphold the principle of proportionality in regulating the national economy), in *Chen Yun wenxuan*, 3:250.
108. Chen Yun, “Zenyang shi women de renshi geng zhengque xie?” (How can we make our understanding more correct?), in *Chen Yun wenxuan*, 3:188.
109. Mao Zedong, “Shijian lun” (On practice), in *Mao Zedong xuanji*, 1:290.
110. Xi Jinping, “Tantan diaocha yanjiu.”
111. See Wang Shaoguang and Fan Peng, *Zhongguo shi gongshi xing juece: “Kaimen” yu “mohe”* (The China model of consensus decision making: A case study of health-care reform) (Beijing: Renmin Daxue, 2013); Wang Shaoguang and Yan Yilong, *Zhongguo minzhu juece moshi: Yi wunian guihua zhiding wei li* (A democratic way of decision making: Five-year plan process in China) (Beijing: Renmin Daxue, 2015).
112. *Translators’ note*: These sayings come from the “Tianze” (Heaven’s Model) section of the *Heguanzi*. For more on the *Heguanzi*, see R. P. Peerenboom, “*Heguanzi* and Huang-Lao Thought,” *Early China* 16 (1991): 169–86.
113. *Translators’ note*: From Su Dongpo’s (Su Shi, 1037–1101) poem “Mingjun ke yu wei zhongxin fu” (The enlightened man can receive sincere advice), in *Su Shi wenji* (The writings of Su Shi), annotated by Kong Fanli (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1986), 24–25.

114. When these questions are asked in China, the proportion of people who select that “they do not know how to respond” or who select “no response” is relatively high. Providing each region’s respondents with these two additional choices is done in order not to force them to respond if they do not wish to. However, even taking into account those who select one of these two responses, the percentage of people in mainland China who believe that their political system is completely democratic is still a relatively high 20 percent, surpassing every other region except Viet Nam; if you add those people who believe their country’s system is democratic, though it possesses some small flaws, the proportion surpasses the proportion in the Philippines, Indonesia, and Chinese Taiwan, while it is essentially on par with the proportion in Mongolia.
115. Tang, Lewis-Beck, and Martini, “Government for the People in China?”
116. Yun-han Chu, “Sources of Regime Legitimacy and the Debate Over the Chinese Model,” *China Review* 13, no. 1 (2013): 24.
117. *Translators’ note*: A quotation from the “Heaven’s Gifts” chapter of the *Liezi*. Here the passage refers to the idea that every political system has its strong and weak points.
118. *Translators’ note*: A quotation from the “King Hui of Liang” chapter of *The Mencius*.
119. *Translators’ note*: A quotation from Song essayist and statesman Ouyang Xiu’s essay “Xiangzhou Zhoujin tang ji” (Jottings regarding the Zhoujin Hall in Xiangzhou), an essay about the Northern Song official Han Qi’s return to his hometown to govern it. Ouyang praises Han’s moral rectitude as the basis of his ability to provide the people good governance. For a full version of the essay, see Ouyang Xiu, “Xiangzhou Zhoujin tang ji” (Jottings regarding the Zhoujin Hall in Xiangzhou), in *Jieti huiping “guwen guanzhi”* (The best of classical prose, annotated with accompanying commentary), ed. Wu Chucai and Wu Diaohou, annotated by Hong Benjian et al. (Shanghai: East China Normal University, 2002), 2:617–21.