



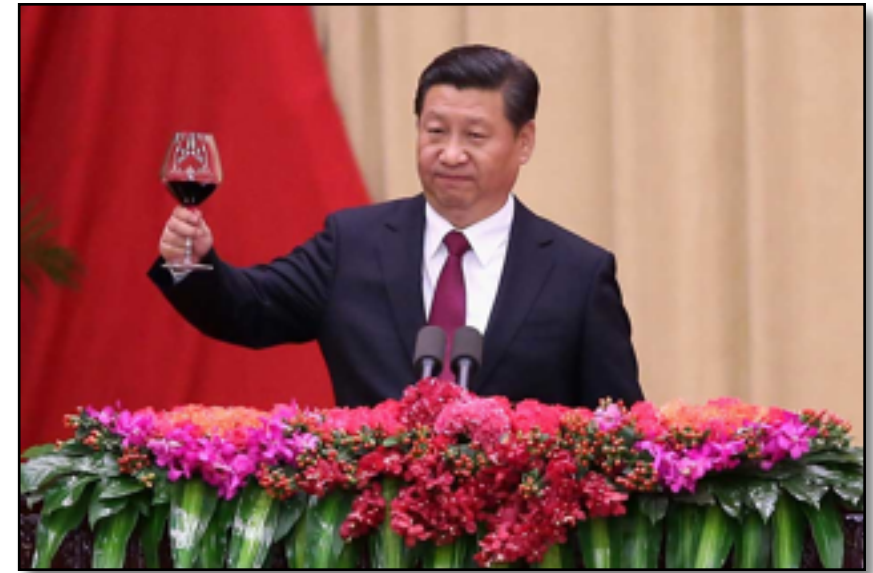
## The Chinese Dream and Democratization.

Presentation by Peer Møller Christensen Phd.

Workshop on “Chinese Dreams” at University of Aalborg

13 - 14 November 2014

# The Chinese Dream

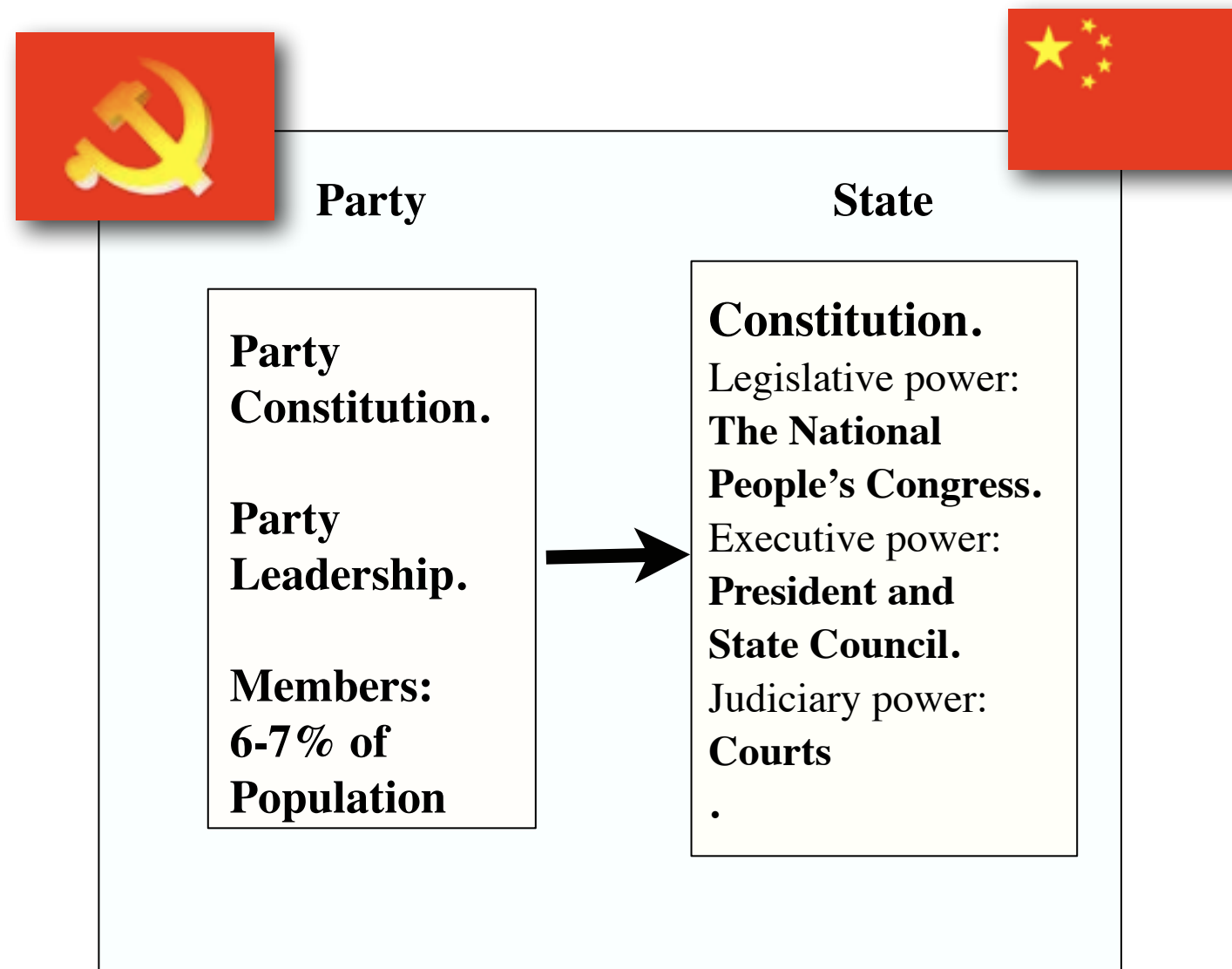


**Xi Jinping**, March 2013 :

“ In order to build a moderately prosperous society, a prosperous,  
**democratic, civilized and harmonious modern socialist country** to  
achieve **the China Dream** of great rejuvenation of the nation, we need to  
achieve national prosperity and revitalization of the happiness of the people,  
which deeply reflects **the Chinese people’s dream** today and is in  
consistence with our **glorious tradition.**”

(Source : *China Story Yearbook* 2013.)

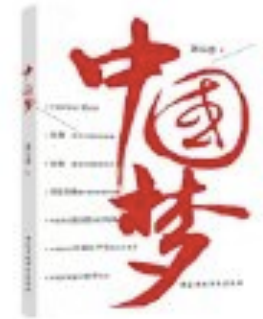
# China's Political System and Democracy.



# Analytical fields.



Official and semi-official plans  
and policies



Intellectual discourse  
on democracy

Public attitudes  
to democracy



# Intellectual discourse about democracy.

## Political Confucianism

meritocracy.

## Neoconservatives

skepticism about political reforms because **a hasty democratization might lead to a new weakening of state power**. Many neoconservatives also believe that **China is not yet ready for democracy**.

## Liberalists, Neoliberals, Social Liberals and Social Democrats

all advocate the establishment of a **constitutional democracy**. The different shades of liberalists furthermore **oppose direct democracy**, believing that it could lead to destabilizing mass demonstrations and unrest.

## The New Left

emphasizes the **connection between political and economic democracy**, and laud some of the experiences with political institutions from the Maoist past, the so-called “**mass democracy**” of the Cultural Revolution. **Direct democracy**.

## The Old left

may be divided into two groups: Maoists and Orthodox Marxists. The **Maoists oppose a bourgeois multi-party system** and, like the New Left, support “**mass democracy**.” **Orthodox Marxists** advocate a combination of **economic and political democracy**, and respect for the principles of the **Paris Commune**.





# Wang Shaoguang on Democracy.

民主四讲 (Four Lectures on Democracy)  
SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2008.



The New Left.

Wang Shaoguang, Chinese University of Hong Kong :

Of course, I think that **democracy is a good thing in itself**. To a very high degree it is a belief which is very hard to verify. I think that **to let ordinary people participate in political life and make decisions concerning their own living conditions is important**. In my opinion **ordinary people have sufficient competence to know what is good for themselves, they do not need others to make decisions for them**. Not everyone agree with me in this . Some people call me a **democratic fundamentalist** , they argue that the original kind of democracy cannot be realized, but has to be replaced by some kind of representative system.

(Interview with Wang Shaoguang : “Why is democracy a good thing ?”, *Nan fang Renwu Zhoukan*, 23.3.2012.)

“Without financial transparency, there is no democracy”

Wang Shaoguang : “Mei you touming jiu bu shi minzhu”, *Jingji Guancha Bao*, 14.8. 2007

“USA and China are both ruled by elites...  
Now, an alliance between the political, economic  
and intellectual elites is ruling China.”

( *Zhongguo . Zhengdao* , Zhongguo Renmin Daxue Chubanshe, Oct. 2014)



# Nation State and Civilizational State. “Exceptionalism.”

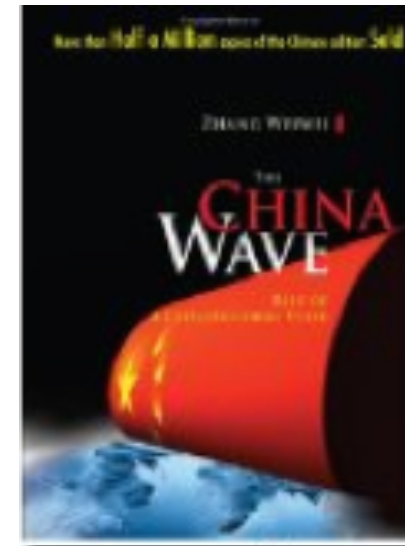
## A nation state

- a **sovereign nation**.
- state : a **political** and **geopolitical** entity
- nation : a **cultural** and **ethnic** entity.
- Nation state : the two coincide.



Zhang Weiwei  
Fudan University, Shanghai

Neo-Conservative



Zhang Weiwei : *The China Wave. Rise of a Civilizational State*, World Century Publishing Corporation, 2011

Eight characteristics of the civilizational state of China :

1. a super-large **population**
2. a super-vast **territory**
3. super-long **traditions**
4. a super-rich **culture**
5. a unique **language**
6. unique **politics** ( **efficient, meritocratic system of government** )
7. a unique **society** ( **family- and group oriented** )
8. a unique **economy**.

**China** is already a civilizational state, which **amalgamates the nation state and the civilizational state**, and combines the strength of both.

# Public attitudes to Democracy.



Zhang Mingshu  
Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

## **What Democracy do the Chinese Want ?** Survey on Political Attitudes in China.

Wang Mingshu :  
中国人想要什么样民主  
(*Zhongguo Ren Xiangyao Shenmeyang Minzhu*)  
Social Sciences Academic Press, 2013.

The survey was performed in 2011 among 1750  
respondents from four cities :  
Beijing, Shenzhen, Xiaogan and Yucun





# Public attitudes to Democracy.

Is democracy good or bad ?	
	%
Good	54,9
Bad	2,7
Depends on whether it is a democracy in accordance with China's conditions.	40,2
Other	0,0
Not clear	2,2
Total	100,0

Source : Zhang Mingshu, 2013, p. 14.

# Public attitudes to Democracy.

<b>Relation between income and the perception of democracy being good or bad.</b>					
	Good	Bad	Necessary to take into consideration if it is in accordance with China's conditions	Other	Not clear
	%	%	%	%	%
High income	40.0	10.0	45.0	0	5.0
Medium income	55.7	2.2	40.0	0	2.2
low income	54.7	2.8	40.2	0	2.2
Other	54.5	9.1	36.4	0	0.0
	54.9	2.7	40.2	0	2.2

Source : Zhang Mingshu, 2013 p. 301.

## Public attitudes to Democracy.

Understanding of democracy.	
	%
Democracy is a state where regular elections are held, and the leaders are elected in competition between several political parties.	15.3
Democracy is a state where the government and leaders correctly represent the interest of the people , serve the people and are supervised by the people.	84.7
Other	1.0
Total	100.0

Source : Zhang Mingshu, 2013 p. 57

## Public attitudes to Democracy.

Is the present situation in China in establishing democracy satisfactory ?	
	%
Not good enough,must be further developed.	42.8
Comparatively good and in accordance with China's present conditions	56.5
Other	0.7
Total	100.0

Source : Zhang Mingshu, 2013 p. 42

## Public attitudes to Democracy.

What should be improved in democracy-building in China ?	
	%
No regular competitive elections	18.9
Insufficient public control with government	46.3
Corruption severe	72.3
Leaders are not wholeheartedly serving the people	51.9
Bureaucracy severe	47.7
Other	0.5



# Conclusions by Zhang Mingshu about public political attitudes in China.

Basic difference between the Chinese and the Western political culture.

West : **Scientific political culture.**

China : **Moralist political culture.** (With roots in traditional Chinese culture and Confucianism)



**“Rule by Virtue”** more important than **“ Rule by Law”**

**Content** more important than **form** and **processes**.

More important to solve problems with **corruption and lacking public control with the government** than to secure **civic rights and freedom**.

**Consultation** better than **voting**.

**Rather a Chinese Democracy than a democracy formed after a foreign model.**

**Tendency towards the center :**

**Left :** 38.1 %

**Right :** 8.0 %

**Center :** 52.5 %

Is China or USA better (in a political sense) ?	
	%
China better than USA	38.1
USA better than China	8.0
The conditions of China and USA are different, therefore it is not possible to make a simple comparison.	52.5
Do not know	2.5
Total	100.0

Source : Zhang Mingshu, 2013 p. 42

# Official and semi-official plans and policies.

## White Book on Democracy 2005

### Building of Political Democracy in China

Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China  
October 2005, Beijing

**China's democracy is :**

a democracy guaranteed by the **people's democratic dictatorship**.

a people's democracy **under the leadership of the CPC**.

a democracy in which the overwhelming **majority of the people act as masters of state affairs**.

**not yet perfect; the people's right to manage state and social affairs,**

**economic and cultural undertakings as masters of the country are not**

**yet fully realized; ... the mechanism of restraint and supervision over the**

**use of power needs further improvement;**

**China's building of political democracy** will abide by the following principles:

Upholding the unity of the **leadership of the CPC**,

**the people being the masters of the country**

**ruling the country by law.**



Zhou Tianyong  
Central Party School of CPC

## “Storm the Fortress.”

January 2008.

Zhou Tianyong et.al (eds): *Storm the Fortress. A Research Report on Reform of China's Political System after the 17th Party Congress.*

A **30-year - plan** for **democratization** of China developed  
by a **group of researchers affiliated with the Central Party  
School in Beijing.**

Contents:

**Democratization** of the political system should aim at **limiting the political power of the Communist Party.**

**Gradual democratization** over **three phases**, all together covering 60 years:

First phase, **1979 to 2001**, primarily **economic reforms.**

Second phase , **2002 to 2020**, establishing of **a political system with ”modern democracy and rule of law”.**

Third phase , **2021 to 2040**, **further development of the democratic and legal system.**



**Examples of the contents of the report:**

**Chapter 3 : How to establish an efficient system of checks and balances between the powers of the political system.**

**The National People's Congress should have authority to draft the state budget and control government spending.**

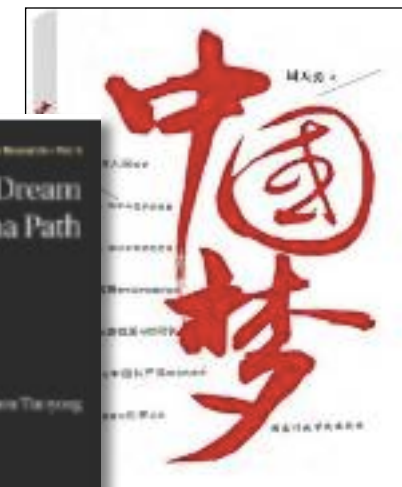
**Chapter 6 : How to let popular and religious organizations, the development of civil society and a genuine freedom of press and speech, contribute to the building of a harmonious society.**



# Zhou Tianyong and “The Chinese Dream.”



Zhou Tianyong: *The China Dream and the China Path*,  
World Scientific Publishing Company; 1 edition (December 4, 2013)  
Zhou Tianyong: 中国梦 (Zhongguo Meng) ,  
Guojia Xingzheng Xueyuan Chubanshe 2013



**“Chinese people’s dream** of a spiritual life in the 21st century is to live and work in a **free, democratic, fair, just, harmonious society** of mutual aid, where they can freely explore their talents, **under the leadership of the CPC.**”

(Zhou Tianyong : *The China Dream and the China Path*, Social Sciences Academic Press (China), 2011)

“China not only needs a **free, democratic and dynamic society**, but also an orderly society. It needs **a strong party** and a government that follow scientific and democratic policymaking procedures and are able to implement these policies and solve various problems for the people, in order to create a **free, democratic, orderly and stable environment** for the people to live in and for the country to develop.”

(Zhou Tianyong : “Chasing the Chinese Dream”, *Beijing Review* No 10 March 10, 2011)

**“All State Owned Enterprises in China should be supervised by the People’s Congress at the proper level.”**

(Zhou Tianyong: 中国梦 (Zhongguo Meng )Guojia Xingzheng Xueyuan Chubanshe 2013)



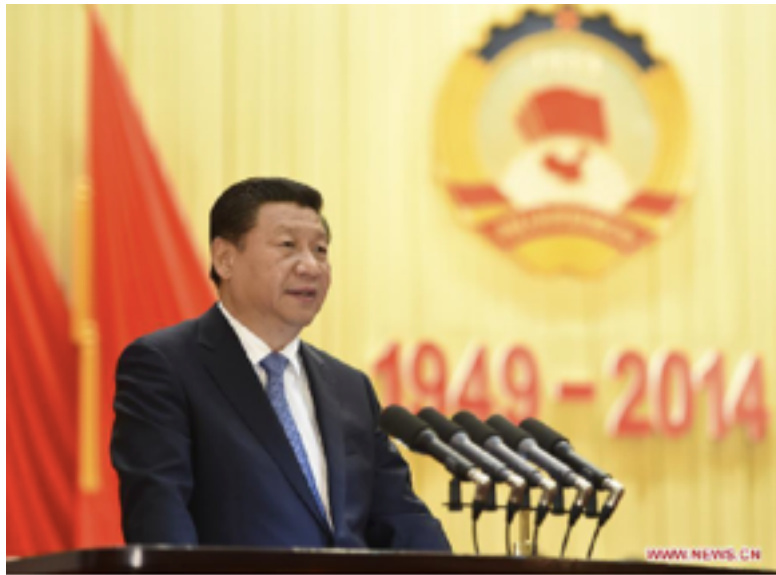
# Policies since the 18th Party Congress 2012.

**Anti-corruption campaign** started immediately after the Party Congress



Zhou Yongkang

Xi Jinping hails **consultative democracy**..



At a ceremony marking the **65th anniversary** of the **Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC)** in Beijing, China, Sept. 21, 2014

“**Democracy is defined not only by people's right to vote** in an election but also the right to participate in political affairs on daily basis, ..  
**Through the system of consultative democracy**, such as political advisory bodies, **the public are consulted** when important state affairs are decided “

**The 4th Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party** between **20 and 23 October 2014**.

Decision on “**Rule of Law**”.

- **Respect for the Constitution**
- **Respect for laws.**

**New Budget Law** demanding **transparent budgets** announced.



# Conclusion = Concluding Questions.

On one hand :

Is the “Chinese Dream” a digression from the democratization of China ?

Is Chinese tradition and culture -including Confucianism - used as a legitimization of the existence of elite rule in China ?

Does the ordinary Chinese have another dream of a democratic China ?

or

On the other hand :

Is China so different from the rest of the world that the political system could be fundamentally different from the Western - and still be called democracy ?