

Taiwan's Democratization Experience and the Future Democratization of China -- from Huntington's Democratization Theory*

Yeau-tarn Lee

*Associate Professor & Director
Sun Yat-sen Graduate Institute for Social Sciences and Humanities
National Chengchi University*

Abstract

In *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, Samuel P. Huntington noted a particular group of regime transitions that occurred in a certain period of time, trying to explain why, how, and what consequences these countries faced on their way to democratization and the implications from these transitions for the endurance, future, and directions of other democracies. This article tries to borrow Huntington's theory to study Taiwan's democratic experiences and the prospects for China's democratization in the future. One of the key findings is that whether the fourth wave democratization can take place in China will depend on the leadership. "Economic development makes democracy possible; political leadership makes it real."

Keywords: Samuel P. Huntington, democratization, political leadership, Taiwan, China

* The full text of the Chinese original, including footnotes and reference, appears in the *Prospect Quarterly*, October 2007.

I. Introduction

In the late 20th century, one of the most unique phenomena in political history was the so-called third wave democratization which spread around the entire world. The third wave began in 1974 in Portugal, when there were only 39 democratic countries in the world. Thirty-some years have since passed. In the "2006-2007 Freedom in the World: The Annual Survey of Political Rights and Civil Liberties," published by Freedom House, 123 of the 193 countries in the world were electoral democracies, including 90 countries being rated free, and 58, partly free.

During the past three decades of the third wave, a number of emerging democracies have come into being, and democracy has become the most popular form of political governance. After 30 years, we also found that the wave has been on the wane. Statistics indicate the growth of emerging democracies has been slowing down (Table 1). Currently, the focus is on various Islamic countries and the massive Mainland China. Can they partake in the fourth wave democratization?

Taiwan initiated democratization approximately in 1986 when the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) was established and in 1987 when the late President Chiang Ching-kuo announced the end of the martial law rule. After the full-scale parliamentary elections in 1991 and 1992 and the direct presidential election in 1996, Taiwan successfully completed the democratic transition. In the same year, Taiwan was listed as one of the electoral democracies and free democracies. Compared to other emerging democracies, such as the Philippines, Thailand, and Russia, in the third wave, Taiwan's democratic progresses were commendable.



**Table 1: Number of (electoral) democracies and changes
(1974, 1990-2006)**

year	Number of democracies	Total countries in the world	Share of democracies/ total countries	Growth rate of democracies
1974	39	142	27.5%	n/a
1990	76	165	46.1%	n/a
1991	91	183	49.7%	19.7%
1992	99	186	53.2%	8.1%
1993	108	190	56.8%	8.3%
1994	114	191	59.7%	5.3%
1995	117	191	61.3%	2.6%
1996	118	191	61.8%	0.9%
1997	117	191	61.3%	-0.9%
1998	117	191	61.3%	0.0%
1999	120	192	62.5%	2.5%
2000	120	192	62.5%	0.0%
2001	121	192	63.0%	0.8%
2002	121	192	63.0%	0.0%
2003	117	192	61.0%	-3.3%
2004	119	192	62.0%	1.7%
2005	123	192	64.0%	2.0%
2006	123	193	63.7%	-0.3%

Source: Author compiles from reports by Freedom House during 1990 to 2006. Freedom House, *Freedom in the World: The Annual Survey of Political Rights and Civil Liberties, 1990-2006*, (New York: Freedom House, 1991-2006), March 28, 2007, <http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/press_release/fiw07_charts.pdf>.

The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century by Samuel P. Huntington has attracted great attention since its publication in 1991. In this book, Huntington noted a particular group of regime transitions that occurred in a certain period of time, trying to explain why, how, and what consequences these countries faced on their way to democratization and the implications from these transitions for the endurance, future, and directions of other democracies.

It has been generally accepted that Huntington's theory explains the democratic transition process of most countries. However, little has been done to delve into whether this may hold true for the democratic transition in Taiwan or if we can predict such possibilities in China. Taiwan was one of the countries studied in Huntington's book, but he did not go deeper to analyze Taiwan individually. Therefore, further analysis is needed.

This article follows this structure: First is an introduction to the issues and purpose of this study. The second chapter briefly explains Huntington's democratization transition model, and the causes and processes of the third wave democratization. This is followed by the application of his theory to examine Taiwan's democratization experiences to test the applicability. The fourth chapter tries to use Huntington's theory to predict the possibility of China's democratization. The fifth chapter is the conclusion.

II. Huntington's Democratization Model

The factors behind a country's democratization are complicated, and no single factor is sufficient to explain the democratic development in all countries or in a single country. The path to democracy in each country is the result of a combination of causes. In Huntington's words, the causes of democratization differ substantially from one place to another, and no particular democratization model is applicable to all processes.

1. Six factors for third wave democratization

Despite the difficulty in generalization, Huntington still considers it necessary to summarize the causes for the first wave and the second wave democratization in order to study the third wave. He believes that the first wave of democratization was attributed to economic

and social developments, particularly in the British settler countries, the victory of the Western Allies in World War I, and the dismantling of continental empires. Political and military factors were clearly predominant in the second wave of democratization, namely, the Western Allies' victory in World War II, and these established Western democracies' decolonization to impose democratic systems. From the perspective of the previous two waves of democratization, Huntington built upon these for his perspective of the third wave. He pointed out that among various factors leading to the third wave of democratization in the 1970s and 1980s, six factors are predominant: economic development and economic crises, declining legitimacy and the performance dilemma, religious changes, new policies of external actors, demonstration effects or snowballing, and political leaders' decisions. The six are explained as follows:

A. Economic development and crises

Economic development improved people's incomes and education levels, promoting the expansion of the middle class, whose pursuit of a free society favored a power structure of democracy. In Huntington's view, when economic development reached a certain level, a sudden economic crisis or economic bankruptcy inevitably challenged the authoritarian regime to transform into a democratic government.

B. Declining legitimacy and the performance dilemma

A number of authoritarian regimes confronted legitimacy problems due to performance dilemma, and their legitimacy declined in the wake of military setbacks, economic bankruptcy, and two oil crises.

C. Religious change

Western Christianity emphasizes the dignity of the individual and the separation of church and state. Some Catholic leaders played leading roles in movements against political repressions. Huntington

thus has a plausible preposition that Christianity has been a pervasive force in the making of democracy.

D. New policies of external actors

The actions of governments and institutions external to one country might influence, sometimes decisively, a country's democratization. Namely, external actors helped to overthrow a despotic regime in a country, or hindered the country on the path toward democracy.

E. Demonstration effects or snowballing

Successful democratization in one country encouraged others to follow suit. In countries with domestic political problems, democratization was a resort to solve imminent political quagmires.

F. Political leaders' decisions

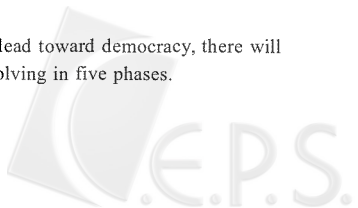
Huntington believes that a democratic system is installed not necessarily by economic development or other trends, but by political leaders and their policies. Whatever their motives were, political leaders have been the determinant for democratization.

2. Three types of third wave democratization

After examining the six main factors, Huntington then studies the transition processes of democratization, and divides them into three types: transformation, replacement, and transplacements. The three are studied as follows:

A. Transformation

When governing elites take lead toward democracy, there will be a transformation, normally evolving in five phases.



a. Emergence of reformers

There emerges a group of leaders or potential leaders within the authoritarian regime who believe that movement in the direction of democracy is desirable and necessary, thus creating the first-order force for political change.

b. Acquiring power

Reformers take a steering position in the existing regime in one of three ways -- when the authoritarian leader dies, is replaced in a regular change of power, or is ousted -- and they start pro-democracy engineering.

c. The failure of liberalization

The democratization process is not at all smooth, and is likely to stimulate some forces for repression, or even retribution from anti-democracy forces.

d. Subduing the standpatters

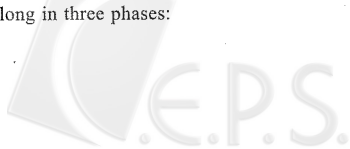
The achievement of power enables the reformers to start democratizing but cannot eliminate the ability of the standpatters to challenge the reformers. So, the priority for reformers is to neutralize the oppositions in the government, the military, the party and other bureaucracies, and replaced high-ranking standpatters with those in favor of reforms.

e. Coopting the opposition

In the democratization transition, reformers have to work with opposition leaders and social groups to iron out major differences.

B. Replacement

Opposition leaders take the lead in pushing democratization and they gain strength until the authoritarian regime collapses or is overthrown. The replacement moves along in three phases:



a. Struggle to produce the fall

When reformers within the government are weak or non-existent, the opposition must unite with other groups and institutions against the existing authoritarian regime to become a force strong enough to counter the standpatters in the government in order to achieve the goal of overthrowing the conservative government.

b. The fall of the regime

When the opposition is gaining strength, it can take actions to overthrow the authoritarian government, either through a military coup d'état, or in regular succession, or through a forced stepdown.

c. Struggle after the fall

When an authoritarian government collapses, reformers must quickly fill in the power vacuum and seek support from other countries to solidify their own legitimacy. Sometimes, struggles may emerge among the previous reformers over legitimacy, which requires consultations.

C. Transplacement

In a transplacement, democratization is produced by the combined actions of the government and the opposition. In this process, the government might be willing to negotiate a change of regime, and it has been pushed or pulled into formal or informal negotiations with the opposition, particularly the democratic moderates. In successful transplacements, the dominant groups in both the government and the opposition must accept that they were incapable of unilaterally determining the nation's future system, and must pursue a negotiated transition for democracy.

Although Huntington mentioned Taiwan a number of times in this book, he did not go deeper to examine Taiwan as a case study.

One reason is that Taiwan did not actually move into the critical phase of democratization until 1991. Therefore, it is worthwhile examining Taiwan as a case study through Huntington's theory. He sketchily brought up China a few times when discussing why and how the third wave occurs without exploring the possibility of democratization in China. This paper then uses Huntington's theory to examine China as a case study as well.

III. Taiwan's Democratic Experience

This chapter is divided into two parts to apply Huntington's theory to test why and how democratization occurred in Taiwan.

1. Causes for Taiwan to initiate democratization

A. Economic development

During the years of authoritarian rule, the government did not lose power due to economic bankruptcy. On the contrary, Taiwan was praised as an "economic miracle" for the government's appropriate economic policies. In this period, Taiwan's economy achieved a real economic miracle for developing a society with comparatively evenly distributed income, which paved the way for smooth political transitions in the later phase. Economic growth resulted in the change in social class that witnessed the rise of the middle class with a growing number of businessmen, professionals, teachers, and government servants. Huntington believes that the middle class became the activator for Taiwan's social transition, for people of this class believed that they could promote their interests through elections. Taiwan's middle class started in 1980 to voice their demands for the government to expand the scope of political participation, which kicked off the democratization process.



B. Declining legitimacy of the ruler

Taiwan's rapid economic expansion resulted in a burgeoning middle class and the increase of the intellectual. Under the authoritarian rule of the Kuomintang (KMT), social elites increasingly felt dissatisfied with the authoritarian environment, and therefore demanded an expedited liberalization. Confronted with rising calls for greater political participation, the KMT pursued open local elections and increased the number of seats for parliamentary representation to reduce some social pressures for reforms. However, this opening-up did not dampen the social elites' enthusiasm for democracy. A series of diplomatic setbacks from the 1970s weakened the representation of the KMT government, and undermined its governing legitimacy. The real disappearance of KMT authoritarian rule can be gauged by two democratization indices - the full parliamentary election and the direct presidential election. After May 1991, when the Period for the General Mobilization against the Communist Rebellion was brought to an end, and the Provisional Articles were abolished, a full election of the National Assembly was held later that year. The significance of the full parliamentary election to the Legislative Yuan in December 1992 marked the first time that the KMT allowed democratic competition from political parties, providing opportunities for the opposition to become the ruling party. Most observers lauded this election as Taiwan's milestone toward democratization. In the first direct presidential election in March 1996, Lee Teng-hui garnered 54% of the popular vote to win the election. The direct presidential election and Lee's victory closed the chapter of authoritarian rule under the two president Chiangs -- Chiang Kai-shek and his son, Chiang Ching-kuo. For the first time, Taiwan was ranked a free democracy by Freedom House.

C. Religious and the traditional Confucian influences

In Huntington's view, Confucian societies and societies under

Confucian influences are not favorable for democracy. He said that before 1999 there only two democracies in East Asia – the Philippines, a Catholic state, and Japan, where Confucian values had already been reinterpreted. The Presbyterian Church and other non-political international organizations provided both material and spiritual support for Taiwan's dissidents, and expressed their concerns about human rights -- both contributed somewhat to Taiwan's democratic liberalization.

D. Policy change from external power states

As Huntington noted, the United States has had a certain influence in the democratization of Asia. In September 1986, the DPP was established at a time when Taiwan was still under martial law rule. American senators and congressmen called on President Chiang Ching-kuo to swiftly lift martial law, allow the establishment of new political parties and open full-scale parliamentary elections. They also urged the KMT not to crash the newly-established DPP. The House of Representatives Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific and Subcommittee on Human Rights of the International Relations Committee jointly passed the Resolution on Taiwan Democracy, which urged Chiang to allow the establishment of new political parties, protect freedom of expression, assembly, and organization, and implement a sound parliamentary democracy. In the late 1980s, Washington went through both economic means and arms sales to push the KMT toward economic liberalization and political democratization. Due to Washington's pressure, the DPP became a reality, unleashing the full democratization process on the island.

E. Demonstration effects or snowballing

The collapse of President Ferdinand E. Marcos in the Philippines in 1986 and the Stephen Cardinal Kim Sou-hwan's pursuit of democracy in South Korea troubled authoritarian leaders and encouraged

opposition democratic groups in Asia. While enjoying their economic development, Taiwan people apparently were enlightened by the democratic movements in these two neighboring states and loudly demanded that the KMT government scrap various restrictions and limitations. The successful experiences in the two countries provided a demonstration effect on Taiwan.

F. Leader's decision

The KMT in Taiwan was described as a "quasi-Leninist regime," unlike the Leninist regime of the Communist Party of China, which maintains full control. Free from ideologies like authoritarian rule by the proletariat or the party monopoly of political power, the KMT has upheld a doctrine to move from the period of political tutelage to a period of constitutional democracy. As democracy is enshrined as the highest goal, the political governance must operate within a certain area and under limitations. When confronted with external crises (withdrawal from the United Nations and severance of diplomatic relations with the United States), the highest political leader boosted the confidence of the Taiwan people in the government by massive investment in the infrastructure and heavy industries on the one hand, and by wooing native Taiwanese to join the party for political participation. As Taiwan's economic development has advanced to the level where people were asking for greater political participation, the KMT government began to contemplate ways of liberalization and democratization. It was not until 1987 when President Chiang Ching-kuo lifted martial law rule that Taiwan's democratization was really set in motion. His successor, Lee Teng-hui, implemented democratic reforms that made the "in-coming foreign regime" change to a "government elected by the people" in a liberal and free society. The two leaders made decisions about heading toward democracy, making a tremendous contribution to the present democracy in Taiwan.

To sum up, using Huntington's six factors of democratization to examine Taiwan's track of democratization, this paper argues that economic development and leaders' decisions are the two predominant factors for Taiwan's democratization. Economic progress built up a healthy environment conducive to Taiwan's democratization, leading to the declining legitimacy of the KMT authoritarian rule and a change in the Confucian belief – another two factors that stimulated democratization. External states' policy changes and the demonstration effect affected the mindsets of political leaders, who became tolerant to different voices and even pro-active for Taiwan's democratization. Factors in both the objective environment and the leaders' subjective attitude were in place and correlated, resulting in the realization of Taiwan's democratic miracle. This exemplifies Huntington's conclusion in his book that, "Economic development makes democracy possible; political leadership makes it real."

2. Taiwan's democratization process

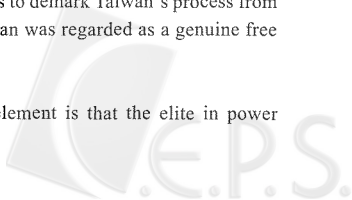
Taiwan's economic development and the leaders' policy changes brought about a democratic transition, which was not accompanied by an abrupt collapse of the authoritarian rule, nor an economic slowdown, social turmoil, or a serious political struggle. Taiwan achieved the transition from an authoritarian system to a democracy in a "tranquil revolution."

What are the unique aspects of Taiwan's democratization in comparison with other emerging democracies that went through a similar transition process? First, the process of democratic transition in Taiwan is not a democratic restructuring. Second, Taiwan's democratization process was a direct transition to democracy from a one-party authoritarian rule, not from or through a military government. Third, Taiwan's democratic transition did not involve a major political

or economic crisis or socio-economic requirements. Fourth, Taiwan's democratic transition contained potential ethnic conflicts and confrontation, resulting in the Taiwanization of the ruling power. Fifth, Taiwan's democratization challenged both the legitimacy and the legality of the government. The reformers in the ruling party initiated negotiations with the moderates in the opposition camp for democratic outcome in a rational way with minimum street violence. Rational concessions and little violence make Taiwan's democratic transition stand out.

Among Huntington's three democratic transition patterns – transformation, replacement, and transplacement, replacement could be the most drastic transition process. Luckily, Taiwan's democratic transition did not experience government collapse or a people's revolution to overthrow the government by violent demonstrations. Taiwan's process is a mix of the two relative moderate processes – transformation and transplacement. Huntington puts Taiwan's case into the transformation type, but he admits that the line between transformation and transplacement is fuzzy. On the other hand, Chia-lung Lin noted that Taiwan's democratization process should be considered to have begun at the time of Lee Teng-hui's years in office. Chiang Ching-kuo's reforms should fall into the category of political liberalization. Technically speaking, Lin's views make sense from the strict definitions of democratization and liberalization. However, when Huntington's *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* came out, Taiwan did not advance to a later phase of democratization. Thus, the following part will extend Huntington's views of the transformation process to demark Taiwan's process from the late 1980s to 1996, when Taiwan was regarded as a genuine free democracy.

In transformation, one key element is that the elite in power



believe that the movement in the direction of democracy is necessary and they take the lead to move the process along. Huntington reminds us that on the way to democracy, these elites might not see democratization as the final goal, and sometimes they see it as a means to other goals, for instance, in securing leadership. Chia-lung Lin used the mutual security model by Robert A. Dahl to explain the liberalization moves taken by Taiwan leaders in the late 1980s. He believed that after the Kaohsiung Incident, "non-partisan" dissidents began to consolidate for the goal of organizing an opposition political party. At the same time, the KMT regime was involved in scandals and crises, creating serious pressures on Chiang Ching-kuo. The birth of the DPP in 1986 became the drive for Chiang to veer toward political democratization.

After comparing the costs of either crushing or tolerating the dissident movement, Chiang realized that a tough stance to oppress the dissidents would lead to consequences too heavy to bear. He then initiated various reform propositions in a move to dilute the oppositions' strong force for reforms. Chiang's reforms included the announcement of the end of martial law, relaxation of restrictions on newspaper publishing and the establishment of political parties, the deregulation of family visits to Mainland China, and adjustment of various economic and social policies. He then became regarded as an initiator for political reform. Chiang had a conviction that for the survival of the KMT, the ruling party had to grow roots deeper in Taiwan. It was due to such a conviction that Chiang showed leniency to the formation of opposition parties, which created a favorable climate for social diversification.

When Chiang died in 1988, Taiwan's democratization was not stable. His successor, Lee Teng-hui, was challenged from all sides. He had to support the ruling party's legality and legitimacy to counter

the forces from the conservative side and also develop a consensus with the increasingly stronger opposition party for moderate reforms. In June 1990, Lee convened the National Affairs Conference to use collective consultation as a platform to win support from the Taiwan people in order to move on to the next goal of full parliamentary election. Still, Lee's reforms were challenged by those within the KMT and the process was not smooth at all. In 1993, Jaw Shao-kang, Wang Chien-hsuan and a few other legislators from the younger generation bolted the KMT in opposition to Lee Teng-hui's path. They established the New Party. However, this split of the KMT did not develop into a full-scale setback for liberalization or reversal of the reform path. On the contrary, the withdrawal from the ruling party further reinforced Lee's position in the party.

The establishment of the New Party dealt a blow to Lee's leadership but failed to sway his determination to move democratic reforms. At the same time, to strengthen his base for reforms, Lee took advantage of the support from Taiwan people and the DPP in government restructuring and major policy-making. As Adam Przeworski mentioned, in a democratic transition, the key threshold is reached when certain people within the ruling group take actions to seek external support. At the same time, Lee began adjusting his foreign policies and Mainland policies to gradually put in operation the decisions made at the National Affairs Conference, including direct presidential election. In the first direct presidential election in 1996, Lee won the election with a high popular vote, vindicating his correct direction toward democratic reforms and further pushing Taiwan into the next phrase to solidify the democratic process.

In spite of a few contentions and demonstrations developing into minor and sporadic conflicts, Taiwan's democratization process has been smooth in general. This is very close to what Huntington

observed about the third wave countries – the overall levels of violence were quite low. Though the causes of democratization differ substantially from one place to another and from one time to another, the multiplicity of theories and the diversity of experience suggest the probable validity of the following propositions: First, no single factor is sufficient to explain the development of democracy in all countries or in a single country. Second, no single factor is indispensable for the development of democracy in all countries. Third, democratization in each country is the result of a combination of causes. Having said this, we come to a view that only when situations ripen can democracy embark on a smooth road. With factors coming into play soundly, Taiwan naturally moved toward democratization. But, it is undeniable that the crucial role of the political leadership is the dominant factor for Taiwan to complete the democratic transition. Factors such as economic development, declining legitimacy of the ruling regime, religious and culture change, the influence of external actors, and the demonstration effect create conditions conducive for democratization, but they do not make it necessary. The first five are causes, and democratization process needs a causer – political leadership. In studying democratization, causes and the causer must be given equal weight.

IV. The Possibility of Democratization in China

Freedom House made public a report titled “Freedom in the World, 2007,” on January 17, 2007. In a ranking of the level of freedom in the world in 2006-2007, Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea were ranked at the second highest level in the world (averaging 1.5), with the highest degree of freedom in Asia. China is still ranked as a non-free country, with a degree at the second lowest level (average 6.5). The comparison between Taiwan and China is listed in Table 2.



Table 2: Degree of Freedom in Taiwan and China

year	Taiwan			China		
	Political rights	Civil liberty		Political rights	Civil liberty	
1972-76	6	5	Non-free	7	7	Non-free
1976-77	5	5	Partly free	7	7	Non-free
1977-79	5	4	Partly free	6	6	Non-free
1979-80	5	5	Partly free	6	5	Non-free
1980-81	5	6	Partly free	6	6	Non-free
1981-87	5	5	Partly free	6	6	Non-free
1987-88	5	4	Partly free	6	6	Non-free
1988-89	5	3	Partly free	6	6	Non-free
1989-90	4	3	Partly free	7	7	Non-free
1990-91	3	3	Partly free	7	7	Non-free
1991-92	5	5	Partly free	7	7	Non-free
1992-93	3	3	Partly free	7	7	Non-free
1993-94	4	4	Partly free	7	7	Non-free
1994-96	3	3	Partly free	7	7	Non-free
1996-98	2	2	free	7	7	Non-free
1998-00	2	2	free	7	6	Non-free
2000-02	1	2	free	7	6	Non-free
2002-04	2	2	free	7	6	Non-free
2004-05	2	1	free	7	6	Non-free
2005-06	1	1	free	7	6	Non-free
2006-07	2	1	free	7	6	Non-free

Source: author compiles from *Freedom House* website, March 28, 2007, <http://www.freedomhouse.org>

Notes: Degrees 1-7, 1 represents free, and 7 the least free

Economically as well as militarily, China has quickly risen to become a focus of the world. However, along with its rise, worries about “China threat” have also come to forefront. Scholars believe that when conflicts erupt between democracies, the chance of war is very slim because they can resolve the conflict through consultations

or talks. If China can evolve from the present communist authoritarian regime to accept Western democratic values and become a democracy, this could be a landmark in modern political history. The significance will be no less than the Russian Revolution in 1917 or the Berlin Wall Coming Down in 1989. In this chapter, the author applies Huntington's causes and process of democratization and compares these with Taiwan's experience to examine the possibility of democratization taking place in China.

1. Causes for Democratization in Mainland China

A. Economic development

The new authoritarianism of China, introduced in the 1980s, argued that economic development requires stable political leadership. This is a prerequisite at a time when the conditions for democracy are not ripe. This theory upholds the legitimacy of the Communist Party of China (CPC) regime while it is pushing economic development. Scholars with different stand noted that when Mainland China's economy develops to a level of US\$2,500 per capita income, political democratization will begin to bud. If Mainland China maintains its economic momentum at a stable pace, the emergence of a middle class will initiate such democratization. In response to the first paradox, Taiwan's democratization experience indicates that the outcome of economic expansion will not necessarily be a panacea to buttress the ruling regime. Mainland China's opening-up and reform has created an economic legitimacy for the regime, which might provide a cushion for China to move toward democratization in a moderate way, but this will not keep the regime in power indefinitely. Particularly, the middle class is rising along with opening-up of society, which has built up the pressure for greater political participation and the process of democratization. One of the CPC's reactions to this development is that the capitalists are admitted to its leadership.

As noted by Huntington, "Economic development makes democracy possible." In the initial stage of economic development, democratization might not benefit economic development. For instance, opinion diversification could result in higher costs. When economic development reaches a certain level, a short-term crisis or economic bankruptcy could weaken authoritarian rule and trigger the transition process to a democratic government.

B. Declining legitimacy

Confronted with declining authority, which could occur at the time of a power transition, Mainland Chinese leaders tend to not only refuse to admit the authority is declining, but also resort to brutal oppression or forced submission to reinforce their weakening authority and ensure their survival. The 1989 Tiananmen Incident did not constitute a threat to the Communist regime. However, turbulent events in Chinese provinces surged to about 87,000 in 2005. Opening-up policies have resulted in instability. Particularly the widening gap between the haves and have-nots has resulted in social instability, which could undermine the legitimacy of the CPC. Such instability was rare in Taiwan's democratization process. CPC leaders have sensed the seriousness of these social problems and so have taken a number of measures to control them. Through the arrest and prosecution of former Politburo member Chen Liangyu on charges of corruption, the CPC has demonstrated its determination to curb wide-spread corruption. However, the widening income gap cannot be easily solved within a short period of time. If the government fails to dissolve social dissatisfactions, more conflicts and even riots could occur. These bottom-up contentions could seriously challenge the CPC's legitimacy.

C. Religious and Confucian influence

During Taiwan's democratization process, the government showed

respect to religious freedom and did not resort to tough measures to curb religious activities. Religious groups thus have played a positive role in the process. In China, the strong-state weak-society structure remains, and religion cannot counterbalance state. Religion is very unlikely to contribute to democratization in Mainland China, but some incidents organized by religious forces could be strong enough to undermine the foundation of the CPC regime. The Falun Gong movement in 1999 erupted without notice and shocked Zhongnanhai, posing a serious challenge to the authority of the authoritarian regime. This led Beijing to launch a strong attack against Falun Gong members, further instigating the sect to rebel against the government. In general, the development of religious freedom in China deserves great attention. In terms of Confucian influence, Suzanne Ogden believes that a few Confucian classics show a certain support for individualism and personal rights. However, this aspect of the Confucian tradition, which has persisted in Chinese culture and political thought, failed to be put into practice. Confucian philosophy and democratic values share something in common, but the pluralism and tolerance for differences in traditional Chinese culture were not transformed into social policies supportive of diversified pluralism. On the contrary, Chinese rulers tend to favor authoritarian rule to maintain political stability and order. If the ruler is lenient, those challenges to the empirical systems might be ignored or tolerated. If the ruler maintains a high-handed leadership style, dissident views are thus muted and silent. Although the Confucian essence will carry on in Chinese culture, and the flow of Western democratic thoughts might change the leadership style of Chinese leaders, China still regards authoritarianism as an imperative guiding principle at the current stage to maintain economic growth while preventing possible disturbances in the development. Such a resistance to democracy and persistence for authoritarian rule might cause social protests and fuel calls for reforms.

D. Policy changes of external power states

After the Cold War, the relationship between China and Western democratic countries experienced ups and downs. The 1989 Tiananmen Incident pushed Beijing-Washington relations to a nadir. However, vast economic interests inherent in the China market lured U.S. President William Clinton to veer the national strategy to "enlargement and engagement" in 1994. In 2000, George Bush, regarded representative of the conservative force, became the U.S. president. After the 911 incident in 2001, Washington was desperate to gain the support and cooperation of other countries for its global anti-terrorist campaign. As a big country in East Asia, China has become Washington's target for cooperation. Chinese leader Hu Jintao, while visiting the United States in April 2006, said Washington and Beijing should establish "constructive cooperation" on the basis of anti-terrorism. Washington hopes to broaden China's involvement in the international community to change China from a competitor to a responsible "stakeholder." Washington's strategic thinking, be it containment or engagement, will affect bilateral relations. However, China and the United States still have a chasm in their basic thinking. When Beijing remains against peaceful evolution, Washington's influence cannot penetrate into China to affect the political development on the Mainland. Compared to the democratization of Taiwan, on which the United States did have a certain degree of influence, China is a place where Western powers can hardly exercise influence.

E. Demonstration effect or snowballing

Despite a lack of evidence, the collapse of Marcos in the Philippines in 1986 and Cardinal Kim Sow-hwan's pursuit of democracy in South Korea did produce a demonstration effect for the democratic movement in the autumn in 1986 in China. China's one-party authoritarian rule is in sharp contrast to the freedom in Hong Kong and democracy in Taiwan. The political culture in Hong Kong, Taiwan,

and other free and democratic countries, such as Japan and South Korea, would infuse to some parts in China. Scholars noted that when China contemplates democratization, Taiwan will be the best reference paradigm. However, it is difficult to find enough material in the near future to prove that free areas and democratic countries close to China will show demonstration effect entirely.

F. Leader's decision

In countries considering democracy, the political elites must basically believe that democracy is the least worst form of government. Political leaders may produce democracy because they believe it is an end in itself, because they see it as a means to other goals, or because democracy is the by-product of their pursuit of other goals. Since reform and opening-up, China's rapid economic growths resulted in high social instability, tension, and pressures, and mostly, inequality and a sense of frustration. These have fueled calls by social groups for reforms in the political system, which has become a test to the CPC leaders.

Since reform and opening-up, the CPC has been active in promoting a cadre recruitment and selection system in a move to attract those with a high education, particularly major in natural science, to replace those with low education or military background. The CPC hopes to use pragmatism and professionalism in place of ideology in administration, so that leaders can quickly react to challenges. CPC leaders of the fourth generation have promoted grass-roots elections, and internal democracy and inspection in line with rule of law. These measures are basically of pragmatism, attempting to add legitimacy to the power base in addition to economic achievements; they are not for democratization. Despite so, these moves did show a flicker of hope for future democratization in China. A rule by technocrats and a rule of pragmatism were also evident in Taiwan's de-

mocratization process, showing potentials that the party-state system might embark on a path of incremental democratic reforms. Huntington says, "Political leaders make democracy real." The key to China's democratization lies in the choices of the ruling political elites in China.

In sum, using the experiences of Taiwan's democratic transformation to examine the future of China's future, economic development, declining legitimacy, religious and Confucian influences, and leaders' decisions will be the cause for such democratization. Economic development, declining legitimacy, and leaders' decisions are factors similar to Taiwan's process. But, unlike the situation in Taiwan, China will not be impacted by policy changes by external powers or the demonstration effect. The religious factor is a paradox in China's environment: it might not be a factor positive for democratization, but it will be a negative force for the CPC's legitimacy, such as the Falun Gong incident.

2. Possible process for China's democratization

Strictly speaking, the opposition force, which plays a major role in Huntington's theory of democratization, does not exist in Mainland China today. Under the framework of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), there are other political parties, which have shown better functions under the concept of rule of law in recent years. However, these parties exist largely more in name than in function. Therefore, we cannot see the emergence of the pre-conditions Huntington set for democratic transplacement. In other words, there is little chance for Mainland China to participate in democratization in the process of transplacement. If we examine Mainland China in accordance with Huntington's three democratization types – transformation, replacement, and transplacement -- the processes of transformation and replacement will be more likely than the third.



A. Transition model for Mainland China's democratization

The media reported that Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao said publicly that the government would promote direct elections in villages and towns in the next few years. At the press conference before the Eighth Sino-EU Summit, Wen said that China would promote democratic development and remain steadfast in reconstruction, including direct elections. Wen added that if Chinese could well manage a village, he believed they will be able to well manage a town, and so on. Chinese President Hu Jintao signaled the start of China's democratization process at the 22nd Congress on the Law of the World. He said that the Chinese government has paid attention to the influence of the rule of law on economic development and to the development of a harmonious society of socialism; the first moves will develop a society of democracy and rule of law, promote a democracy of socialism, and enrich the contents of democracy. He added that China will continue to promote democratic elections, democratic supervision, democratic policy-making, and rule of law in order to make democracy and rule of law come into full play in the promotion and protection of a harmonious society. The media noted that "though the ruling party in China and the highest leader of the Chinese government express their willingness to promote democratization, they have run into major obstacles; the Fifth Plenary Session Meeting Gazette mentions harmonious society, democracy and rule of law, but support measures are lacking."

Undeniably, when Jiang Zemin handed over the leadership to Hu Jintao, Wen Jiabao, and leaders of the new generation at the 16th CPC National Congress, the international community had strong expectations that this new generation would maintain the economic opening-up and open-door strategy, as well as steer authoritarian and communist China toward democracy. The first generation leader Mao Zedong seized state power; the second generation leader Deng

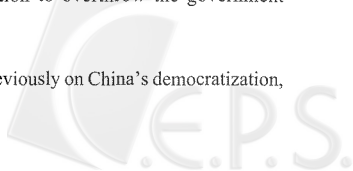
Xiaoping was praised as a market reformer; and the third generation leader Jiang Zemin left a rather vague historical legacy. Whether the fourth generation leader Hu Jintao can move China toward democracy is a focal point of world attention.

To keep economic growth rising, CPC leaders have to make adjustments in structures, thus initiating grass-roots elections, regulatory development, and the party's internal democracy. Seemingly, these aspects raise the prospects for democracy. What deserves great attention is that the fourth generation of CPC leaders, with Hu Jintao at the center, has still followed the principle of political minimalism up to today. They hope to prevent putting in place a direct democracy; and they try to limit democracy to a minimum. The so-called internal democracy is still a small portion of the entire authoritarian concrete, far from the party competition concept in a Western democracy. If China hopes to smoothly and stably advance toward democratization, there is a long way to go with numerous obstacles to overcome.

B. Replacement model in China's democratization

Compared to transformation, replacement is a democratization process prone to violence, and in Huntington's view, it only happens when the standpatters in the government are too strong to allow reformers to move democratization. In this situation, democratization occurs when the opposition is gaining strength and the government is losing strength until the government collapses or is overthrown. Normally, the process of replacement is accompanied with struggle between different power seekers. In short, replacement is a process in which the oppositions absorb dissatisfaction with an authoritarian government and resort to revolution to overthrow the government and seize power.

Given the causes discussed previously on China's democratization,



we can summarize two kinds of activators to launch a struggle or carry out revolution: one is the people of the lower classes who did not benefit from the economic opening-up and reform, and the second is the religious followers persecuted because of their religion.

Since China adopted economic reforms and opening-up, its economy has boomed, allowing many Chinese to move out of poverty and ascend to the middle-income class with assets and certain social status. According to a report by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the population of the middle-income class accounts for about one fifth of the total population in China, and is expanding by 1% per annum. It is expected that those in the middle-income level will represent 40% of the total population in 2020. Some analysts, however, believe that the number of middle-income class is not sufficient to carry significant weight in the promotion of political reforms. The class is more significant in the economic sense than the political sense. Other than the number being too few to push reforms in the communist authoritarian system, the middle-income class enjoys some economic gains and they do not necessarily tend to favor changes in the status quo. On the other hand, the lower level classes, who failed to benefit from economic reforms, might feel dissatisfied due to the widening income gap. When their anger and dissatisfaction reaches a certain level, and the government cannot improve the situation, class struggle and grass-roots revolution could erupt to overthrow the government and seek a replacement. This might be the first step toward a free democracy of equality.

Religious people who suffer persecution from the Communists might develop into an opposition force to stand against the government. According to the Voice of America, after the Chinese authorities declared the Falun Gong an illegal organization in July 1999, its members have suffered serious oppression. However, the group never

desists from opposition activities. In the past few years, the opposition activities have diversified and gone global with an attempt to attract the attention of international organizations, the public, and the media. Other than the Falun Gong, other so-called heretical organizations and unofficial religious groups also became the targets of Communist oppression. Media reports indicate an increasing number of arrests and detentions of non-official Catholics and house church Christians. Those who attempt to record these violations of human rights and to spread the news overseas also face the threat of arrest. In the name of global anti-terrorist war, the Beijing government has rationalized its oppression in Xinjiang, closing down non-official Islamic mosques and arresting imams and other “separatists, terrorists, and religious extremists.” Beijing has disregarded the power of religious faith and insisted on oppressing and arresting those it has regarded as religious heretics, which is tantamount to planting a time bomb that will go off against the regime in certain time.

By looking into the two processes – transformation and replacement, a smooth and gradual transition is preferable, which could avoid bloodshed and advance incrementally to foster a democratic culture. In 2005, China for the first time made public the “White Paper on Political Democracy.” One key element is to insist that China’s democratization must be led by the CPC, and reconfirm the historical necessity and legitimacy of communist leadership. It is not difficult to see that China cannot think out of the box of a communist authoritarian regime nor change its view that Western democracy does not suit China and Chinese society. The White Paper calls for a people’s representation system, a political consultative system, grass-roots democracy, democratic governance, and justice democracy, which are all under the one-party authoritarian structure. On the other hand, scholars believe that China cannot make a step further toward reforms simply because the rulers are afraid that once there is a demo-

cratic system in place, they will lose power; so this is the reason why they forestall systematic changes. It remains to be seen whether Chinese leaders can seize the opportune timing for democracy and choose the correct transformation process to lead China toward democratization. Nevertheless, we still hope that China is a "peaceful rise," and not a "China threat" to either Taiwan or the entire world.

V. Conclusion

Based on the analysis in the previous chapters, Huntington's views on why and how democratization occurs can roughly explain Taiwan's democratization process in the late 1980s through the 1990s. His views might offer some glimpses for us to gauge whether China may move toward democratization as well as why and how. Undeniably, in the democratization process, leaders, or "causers," to use Huntington's term, plays a very important role. In Taiwan, Chiang Ching-kuo put in place various reforms and liberalizations to pave way for the democratization process, followed by Lee Teng-hui's further efforts to complete smoothly the democratic transition. In the former Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev made wise decisions that led to a democratic path and ended the Cold War. Irrespective of the pressures from within and without, decisions and persistence by Chiang, Lee and Gorbachev are the predominant factors to move the democratization processes in their countries. Conversely, when all the social and economic conditions conducive to the emergence of democracy are ripe, democracy will not come into being if the authoritarian leaders resort to force to thwart reforms. As Huntington said in his conclusion, "Economic development makes democracy possible; political leadership makes it real."

In China, domestically, economy has been growing rapidly in recent years, leading to urbanization, the rise of a middle class, high

education levels, and religious and cultural changes, which might challenge the legitimacy of the communist one-party rule. Externally, there are demonstration and snowballing effects from the global democratization wave; major democratic countries in America and Europe put pressures on China to expedite democratic reforms. However, democratization will not become a reality if the sixth factor – political leadership – is non-existent. To examine the possibility of China's democratization in the future, the first and foremost factor is political leadership. Will Hu Jintao and his successor play the roles of Chiang Ching-kuo and Lee Teng-hui? When? If the CPC partakes democratization and starts, first, deregulation and grass-roots elections, and second, high-level and national elections, China might move toward a democratization process similar to the transformation in Taiwan. If the CPC stalls reforms and drags its feet, a major economic crisis, environmental catastrophe or major epidemic, such as SARS or avian flu, could erupt and become the hotbed for opposition forces to gain strength, forcing the ruling CPC, in the face of a challenge to its legitimacy, hold a general election and be overthrown overnight in what is a replacement process. China can hardly avoid political instability and disturbances.

Of course, no single model can explain a nation's democratization entirely. In addition to Huntington's theory, Robert A. Dahl said in *On Democracy* that key factors forming the basis of democratic politics are belief in democracy and political culture. Daniel Lynch said that Taiwan's democratization is a socialization process of global culture in "Taiwan's Democratization and the Rise of Taiwanese Nationalism as Socialization to Global Culture". Thousands of Taiwan students studying abroad absorbed the values of world cultures that provided the basis for Taiwan's democratization. Through democratization, Taiwan ensured the protection of freedom and human rights, that it has been ranked a free country over the past decade. This is

a genuine and successful cultural revolution in the Chinese community, and a true successful example of bridging to Western civilization following Japan's Meiji Restoration in Asia. Whether this explanation of a successful democratization is applicable to China remains to be seen. Lynch said that after China's reforms and opening-up, hundreds of thousands of Chinese students have studied overseas, but most of them refuse to accept the democratic system in Western societies, regarding democratization as a submission to American hegemony.

A further observation reveals that one cause for China's democratization might be the influence from Taiwan's democratization. At a time that China repeatedly launches united front tactics against Taiwan, Mainland Chinese people might think that if Taiwan, another Chinese community with a similar Confucian philosophical background, has developed into a democracy with party politics and in which people enjoy various freedoms, why can't China? Chinese leaders should realize that saber-rattling against Taiwan could be a double-edged sword: whether it may or may not influence the democratic process in Taiwan remains to be seen; but it might backfire and challenge CPC authoritarian rule. United front tactics are a sword that might bounce back and pierce the heart of the CPC regime. When democracy is widening in both scope and magnitude, Taiwan will function like a beacon showing the way of democracy for China. South Korea sponsored the Olympics Games in 1988, which marked its march toward reform of the political structure. For China, the Olympics in 2008 could be a milestone. In addition to various construction and economic developments, China will have to expand interchanges and interactions with international communities. Chinese intellectuals and the learned will have more opportunities to have dialogues with the elites of other democratic countries and gain further understanding of the essence and trends of democratic politics. In the next few years, if Taiwan and China can seize the opportunity

for interactions, this will benefit democratic developments on both sides.

Democratization of China's authoritarian regime is seemingly a mission impossible. But, we also believe no authoritarian regime can last forever. Obviously, some internal forces for reforms are taking shape in China. No matter whether these reforms are for preliminary political changes, for opening-up to the outside world due to market economy or globalization influences, or from the conflict between capitalism and class difference, these forces might converge to one opposition torrent. The key issues will be whether this becomes strong enough to shake the CPC authoritarian regime and whether the Chinese leaders will follow the democratic tide to choose a correct way to introduce democratic steps to engineer all kinds of structural reforms so that a peaceful transformation will reduce the social and political instability to the minimum. The leadership will be the key factor to determine the future of China's democratization.

Aleksander Smolar said there are three major revolutions and world wars in human history: the American Revolution, French Revolution, and the Russian Revolution in 1989-1991; and three world wars in the 20th century – WWI, WWII, and the Cold War. According to Huntington, democratization in human history can be demarked into three waves: The first long wave of democratization, exemplified by the United States and Great Britain before the first world war, the second short wave of democratization, represented by Germany and Japan after WWII, and the third wave of democratization, starting from 1974 when a coup d'état overthrew the Portuguese dictatorship to install a democratic government. We can note that in the 21st century, to avoid a fourth world war or a fourth major revolution, the focus is on China. In September 2005, Chinese President Hu Jintao said at the 60th Anniversary of the United Nations that China

was moving toward a harmonious society of socialism, a society of democracy, rule of law, fairness and justice, credibility and benevolence, vitality and stability, and harmony between human beings and nature. On October 19, 2005, the White Paper was published to highlight China's democratic progress. Indeed, whether China partakes in the so-called fourth wave of democratization after its economic boom is a test of the wisdom of the entire Chinese people. Democratization theory tells us that no war ever erupts between democracies, and democratic systems respect individual freedom and human rights. However, countries in the process of democratization are prone to instability, and it is highly likely that they might launch a war to divert internal pressures. Therefore, whether China can start the fourth wave of democratization is a subject that Taiwan people should look at beyond the unification-vs.-independence issue and pay close attention to. No matter whether China is going to become stable or unstable, Taiwan cannot escape from the subsequences and influences.

