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The Historical Pattern of Political Development in East Asia

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This paper begins with a simple premise. In order to understand the nature of democracy in East Asia, you need to understand the nature of authoritarian government there. The contemporary problems of democracy in the region, and its ability to deal with future challenges, cannot be understood except in the context of a region whose largest player is a rapidly-growing and relatively successful authoritarian regime--that is, China. For the purposes of this paper I am not considering this challenge as a matter of foreign policy--though I expect that accommodating a rising China will be an extremely large problem for the international system. Rather it is a question of development models. East Asian democracy will be evaluated not by comparison to authoritarian regimes in Africa or the Middle East, but in comparison to China; we therefore need to understand the China model, its strengths and weakness, as a prelude to discussing the future of democracy in Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and other countries.

As I will shortly argue, the field of comparative politics has not developed an adequate conceptual framework for categorizing and understanding different forms of authoritarian government, in comparison to the very rich vocabulary we have for classifying democratic regimes. Put differently, we don't have a language for describing the state, shorn of the institutions of law and accountability. We need to fill in this gap, and understand how the specific characteristics of East Asian government arise out of the historically-determined development path that East Asia followed. In many respects, there are as many similarities between democracies and non-democracies in East Asia, as there are between democracies in this region when compared to others. This constitutes both an advantage and a challenge for the future of democratic development there.

THE EAST ASIAN HISTORICAL SEQUENCE

In a nutshell, the core states of East Asia--China (both the PRC and Taiwan), Japan, and Korea--developed relatively high-quality, centralized, bureaucratic states early in their histories, and consolidated relatively uniform national identities over ethnically homogeneous populations

centuries before any of them developed countervailing institutions of law and accountability that would check and balance state power. As I argued in my book *The Origins of Political Order*, the first society to develop a modern state in the Weberian sense of the term--one based on impersonal recruitment, meritocratic bureaucracy, uniform administration, and the like--was China, which accomplished this already at the time of the foundation of the Qin dynasty in 221 BC.¹

Modern liberal democracy is a combination of three sets of institutions: the state itself; the rule of law, which is a system of social rules regarded as binding on the actions of the de facto ruler; and mechanisms of accountability, which in the modern world are periodic multiparty elections. The state concentrates and uses power to enforce its will; the rule of law and accountability mechanisms by contrast serve to constrain state power. The success of a liberal democracy depends on achieving a balance between strong state power and the checks and balances constituted by the legal and electoral systems. Unchecked state power is dangerous from any number of perspectives; on the other hand, liberal democracies that are weak or paralyzed also do not produce good outcomes for their citizens.

In contrast to other world civilizations, China never developed a rule of law. The law codes of the Qin, Han, Sui, Tang, and Ming dynasties were all species of positive law, administrative enactments of the Emperor. Needless to say, dynastic China also failed to create formal institutions of accountability. In Europe, state power was limited initially by the early emergence of law, and then by the ability of certain well-organized social actors outside the state to resist state power and force states into a constitutional compromise. The precocious consolidation of a modern state allowed Chinese governments over the centuries to prevent the spontaneous emergence of new social actors that would challenge its power, such as a blood aristocracy, a commercial bourgeoisie, independent cities, religious institutions, or an organized peasantry.

This Chinese pattern of governance then set the pattern for the rest of East Asia. Japan and Korea, and later the polities in Southeast Asia under Chinese cultural influence, inherited Confucian traditions of coherent centralized states and meritocratic bureaucracy. All of East Asia's traditional states were undermined, altered, and replaced in the process of confrontation with the West; but in the second half of the 20th century a powerful and highly institutionalized executive branch re-emerged in nearly all of them.

Unlike many new democracies in other parts of the world, which had weak states and needed to build up state capacity at the same time that they established rule of law and accountability institutions, East Asian democracies could presuppose the existence of a strong and coherent state. The problem of democratic development lay more on the side of society: for the most part East Asian societies lacked strong and well-institutionalized social groups that could effectively resist state power, as well as a political culture that legitimated social protest and adversarial politics. With the onset of industrialization, new social actors like a bourgeois class, trade unions, and students began to emerge, and in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, the state was further checked by the international system (in the guise of the American military). This permitted the development over time of democratic regimes in which indigenous social actors further evolved that were able to balance the state on their own.

There are a number of important consequences for contemporary development that flowed from this particular institutional sequence. First and most importantly, almost all of the recent examples of successful authoritarian modernization cluster in East Asia rather than other parts of the world. Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong under British rule, Thailand, and of course China itself all developed rapidly in the second half of the 20th century (in Japan's case, the process started a century earlier) under the stewardship of authoritarian governments that were only weakly constrained by democratic accountability. In contrast to the highly predatory states that emerged in the Middle East, South Asia, Latin America, and particularly sub-Saharan Africa, many of East Asia's authoritarian rulers preserved a developmental focus that created a stable platform for later democratization. Most of the arguments in favor of sequencing growth and law prior to a democratic opening are based on East Asian models.

A second consequence of this development pattern is that many East Asian states have been able to engage in industrial policies to promote economic growth which, in the hands of a less capable state, would result in a self-undermining morass of rent-seeking and state capture.

The final consequence is that the quality of liberal democracy is different in East Asia than in Europe, North America, or other parts of the West. Japan was the first Asian society to experiment with democracy, first in the Taisho period in the 1920s, and more successfully under American tutelage after 1951. Authors like Barrington Moore once suggested that Japan could successfully democratize because its social structure differed from that of China and other Asian agrarian societies; as in the West, power during the Tokugawa period was diffused across a

feudal aristocracy, and village communities possessed a degree of community and self-organization not present in China.²

Nonetheless, Japanese democracy looks and feels different from democracy in Europe or particularly the United States, up to the present moment. First and most important is the domination of the political system by the Japanese state; a long tradition of analysis has pointed to the fact that it was bureaucrats, in alliance with the business community, who were the principal decision-makers who usurped the role normatively given to parliaments in determining policy.³ (This dominance has faded since the end of Japan's high-growth period in the early 1990s, which partly reflects a decline in the bureaucracy's competence.) Second, Japan was ruled by a single hegemonic party virtually uninterruptedly from 1955 to 2010; even today, when the country is led by the DPJ, it is not possible to say that the country has made a transition to a stable two-party system that result in periodic alternations between government and opposition. And finally, Japan has simply never developed a Western-style adversarial political culture in which social discontents and demands for accountability are rapidly translated into political action. There is obviously a huge amount of unhappiness on the part of the Japanese public concerning the Tohoku earthquake/tsunami/nuclear disaster in 2011, but surprisingly little political mobilization as a result.

Other newer democracies in East Asia are actually more "Western" than Japan: Taiwan, Korea, and Thailand have all seen more decisive shifts in power from government to opposition, and a more adversarial political culture. Even so, there has been a strong undercurrent of support for a Japanese-style dominant party system in Taiwan and Korea, and in both of these countries the role of the central bureaucracy has been very strong.

AUTHORITARIAN GOVERNMENT IN EAST ASIA

In many respects, the legitimacy and appeal of democracy in East Asia will depend not on how democratic countries in the region stack up on some global scale, but how they are seen in relation to the region's dominant authoritarian country, China. China, like Singapore before it, represents a huge challenge because it has been so economically successful; the temptation to copy parts of the China model are strong both in the region and beyond. But before we can critique the model, we need to understand it, and here we face a major conceptual gap.

The field of comparative politics has developed a very rich vocabulary for categorizing and analyzing liberal democratic regimes over the past generation, distinguishing their institutional features and relating the latter to both political and economic outcomes.⁴

The same cannot be said for the analysis of non-democratic systems. Some recent attempts to establish taxonomies of regime types that extends from fully democratic to fully authoritarian are those of Levitsky and Way, or alternatively in the work of Andreas Schedler.⁵ The primary contribution of this literature is to establish categories like “electoral authoritarian” or “competitive authoritarian” to describe regimes like Putin’s Russia or Chavez’ Venezuela that hold elections but are fundamental under the grip of an authoritarian leader. The criteria used in establishing these taxonomic hierarchies are based on democratic best practice, with different degrees of authoritarian deviation from this norm. And indeed, one of conclusions of Levitsky and Way is that organizations like Freedom House are too generous in which countries are included in their democratic category.

However, these criteria seek to measure only the quality of institutions related to rule of law and accountability. They do not contain independent measures of the quality of the state. In this realm there is a large deficiency in analytic categories: to the extent that we have a shared vocabulary, we revert to terms coined by Max Weber like patrimonial, prebendal, sultanistic, and the like; alternatively, there is a literature expanding on the authoritarian/totalitarian distinction.⁶ Indices like the Worldwide Governance Indicators developed by the World Bank Institute try to capture some of the qualities of states in their measures of “government effectiveness,” “regulatory quality,” and “control of corruption.” However, these are not well thought-out concepts based on a theory of how a state should work; they are rather convenient baskets in which the WBI researchers aggregated existing quantitative governance measures. (It is not clear, for example, why “regulatory quality” should not be a subcategory of “government effectiveness” rather than a standalone measure.)⁷ There is no clear mapping between the WBI indicators and the older Weberian vocabulary. Contemporary measures of corruption do not for example distinguish between patron-client relationships within a bureaucracy, and prebendalism, in which officials simply appropriate public resources for private use without an obligation to take care of clients. Nor do we have measures of the degree to which bureaucratic recruitment is merit-based or patrimonial.

MORAL ACCOUNTABILITY

There is a further respect in which our conceptual categories fail to take account of important distinctions between types of non-democratic regimes. Aristotle in the *Politics* makes a taxonomy of regimes based on two criteria, first, whether they are based on rule by the one, the few, or the many, and second, whether rule is based on the interest of the ruling group alone, or based on the common interest (τό κοινόν συμφέρον). Arraying these dimensions against one another leads to a six-fold categorization of regime types, and allows Aristotle to distinguish between kingship, in which rule of the one serves the common interest, and tyranny, in which it serves the tyrant's personal interest.⁸

Most people would as a matter of common sense would allow for the possibility of benevolent dictatorship; there is a clear moral distinction between Singapore under Lee Kwan Yew, for example, and the predatory rule of a Mobutu in Zaire or of Kim Jong-Il in North Korea. However, contemporary comparative politics has largely lost sight of the Aristotelian distinction between kingship and tyranny, and has no good way of categorizing non-democratic regimes that nonetheless can be said to serve a broader public interest. The closest we come to such a term is the admission that some authoritarian states are “developmentally”-minded, that is, seek to promote economic growth. And yet, the view that a non-democratic regime could promote common interests surely extends beyond questions of economics.

The term “accountability” has come to be almost exclusively associated with procedural accountability, that is, the presence or absence of free and fair multiparty elections. The idea that a regime can be procedurally unaccountable and yet morally constrained to act in response to perceived public interest is not one that receives much traction today. The failure to define accountability in terms of substantive outcome rather than procedure is problematic, however, on two grounds.

In the first place, it is clear that many procedurally accountable democratic regimes are in effect unaccountable in terms of actual governance. Voters often fail to hold leaders accountable due to poor information, indifference, ethnic voting, patronage, or manipulation. The mere fact that the regime has put formal democratic procedures in place is no guarantee that substantive accountability will result.

The second problem is one that applies particularly to East Asia. As noted above, dynastic China never developed either rule of law or formal accountability mechanisms to limit executive

discretion. However, moral accountability was central to the functioning of the system. This was, indeed, the essence of Confucianism: it was an ethical doctrine designed to moderate the behavior of rulers and orient them towards the interests of the ruled. This moral system was institutionalized in a complex bureaucracy whose internal rules strictly limited the degree to which emperors, whose authority was theoretically unlimited, could act.⁹ One of the important functions of that bureaucracy was to provide princely education and ensure that anyone who rose to a position of power understood that rule was not simply personal but a matter of fulfilling traditional duties.

There are of course any number of strong reasons to prefer procedural accountability over moral accountability. One basic problem with the latter concerns information: even if a despot is benevolent, how does he or she know what the common interest is, in the absence of a free press and formal procedures like elections that reveal preferences? Moreover, in the absence of procedural accountability, how does one ensure a continuing supply of benevolent despots? In dynastic China, this was known as the “bad emperor” problem: every now and then a terrible tyrant would emerge and burst the boundaries of custom and accepted morality, doing enormous damage to the society.

EVALUATING STATE PERFORMANCE

It is not my intention to try to lay out a comprehensive framework for analyzing state effectiveness that would close the gaps in the existing measures. A full measure would be very complex and probably sector-specific as well, since in most states the performance of some ministries and agencies is superior to others. Let us begin however by using three categories of state modernity and use that as a starting point for analyzing Chinese authoritarian government. These categories are institutionalization, recruitment, and responsiveness.

Institutionalization

By institutionalization, I mean here not institutions as rules in the extremely broad sense of Douglass North (a definition that encompasses both formal law and culture), but the thicker definition contained in Huntington’s *Political Order in Changing Societies*, in which institutions are “stable, valued recurring patterns of behavior” that can be more or less complex, adaptable, autonomous, and coherent.

If we ask how well institutionalized is China, the answer would in most respects be “highly” when compared to virtually all other authoritarian regimes. This is a result of the fact that it is ruled by a Communist Party that has evolved as a highly complex, adaptable, autonomous, and coherent organization, one that is run by an elite cadre system and is able to mobilize members across an extremely large society. Samuel Huntington was much criticized for arguing in *Political Order* that the former Soviet Union was highly developed politically, especially in light of communism’s collapse in 1989. He was surely wrong in saying that the party was a mechanism for eliciting political participation. But surely his view that the party represented a highly institutionalized organization was true.

The same can be said about the Chinese Communist Party. When compared to, say, the Arab dictatorships of Mubarak, Ben Ali, or Qaddhafi, the Chinese regime is far more rule-bound. Leadership does not revolve around a single individual and his family; since 1978, the Party has developed a collective leadership system that observes term limits and vests power in the Standing Committee of the Politburo. Leadership succession, one of the great weaknesses of many authoritarian regimes, is thus much less of a problem in China, non-transparent though the process is. Like all classic Leninist parties, the CCP has an elite structure that can transmit instructions from the hierarchy down to the neighborhood level. Its ability to enforce rules, from economic directives to control of political opposition, is very high compared to other authoritarian regimes.

The most problematic area concerning the Party’s institutionalization lies in its adaptability. Certainly an organization that shifts from being a doctrinaire Communist party to one that includes businessmen and professionals (as under Jiang Zemin’s “Three Represents”) and fosters a capitalist economy is a model of adaptability. But there are also clear limits in the party’s ability to jettison ideological Marxist-Leninist baggage; its paranoid response to the Arab Spring suggests a failure to envision a more liberalized form of dictatorship.

Recruitment and Patrimonialism

One of the hardest things to judge is the degree of patronage and corruption that exists within the Chinese political and administrative system. China has a poor reputation with regard to corruption; it ranks at number 78 on Transparency International’s 2010 Corruption Perception Index, close to Greece, Vanuatu, and Colombia.¹⁰ This index, however, is singularly unhelpful

in explaining the nature and extent of corruption in the Chinese system. The term *guanxi*, or informal influence, is familiar to many people, and there are clearly factions and patronage chains that operate throughout the CCP's structure. There are countless anecdotal stories appearing in the Chinese press or on microblogs of corrupt deals involving local officials, developers, and other elites, which periodically erupt into major scandals like the melamine tainted infant formula of 2008 or the shoddy construction revealed by the Sichuan earthquake that same year. Selection of political leaders, like the transition taking place in 2012, is a totally non-transparent process.

On the other hand, when compared to the neo-patrimonial politics of many other developing countries, China's system is far more impersonal and modern. Following a very ancient tradition, there are highly meritocratic features to the system, beginning with recruitment into the party and state bureaucracy, and promotion within these hierarchies. While *guanxi* may be necessary to open doors, one can stride through them only on the basis of a track record. Most of the stories of egregious corruption come from the lower levels of party and government; while high party cadres enjoy huge perks for themselves and their families, one does not get the sense that they are diverting huge sums of money to their own accounts on the scale of, say, senior Russian political figures. The informal vetting of new members of the Standing Committee of the Politburo is extensive; it is hard to be considered without having extensive administrative experience across a variety of provinces and economic sectors.

Again, one question for the future is whether, as Minxin Pei elsewhere suggests, this system is breaking down. The 2000s have seen the rise of a class of "princelings," whose family backgrounds and opportunities have propelled them into positions of power. As Martin Shefter suggested, Communist parties in their early days tend to exhibit relatively lower levels of corruption because they had to fight their way to power and had few resources to distribute; once securely in power, however, there is a tendency toward repatrimonialization and the self-perpetuation of elites. It is of course very difficult to measure the degree to which this has happened in contemporary China.

Upward Accountability and Democratic Mimicry

There is virtually no formal downward political accountability in the Chinese political system. There are limited local elections, and Chinese citizens have the right to sue local government

agencies for performance failures as in other Asian countries. Most observers contend however that these institutions do not confer any significant power on citizens to change government behavior. An independent press, which in democratic countries constitutes a critical downward check on state power, is strictly controlled.

Formal accountability in the Chinese system is entirely upward, towards the Party and the Party's higher decision-making echelons. In this respect, the current Chinese government replicates the structure, and revives the problems, of centralized government in dynastic times. Because lines of accountability flow upwards through an enormous bureaucracy, the central problem for the senior levels of the government is how to monitor and control the behavior of the lower levels, a classic principal-agent problem. In dynastic China, there was a tendency to layer levels of hierarchical control on top of one another: the central bureaucrats in Luoyang or Chang'an or Beijing would monitor several layers of provincial bureaucrats; a corps of eunuchs would monitor the central bureaucrats; and a "eunuch rectification office" would monitor the eunuchs.¹¹ This is not terribly different from the current situation of a party sitting on top of and monitoring a formal government bureaucracy.

The Party uses a number of techniques, some classic and some novel, to enforce downward accountability. Local governments are rated on their economic performance, and local officials are made to compete against one another for resources and promotions. While corruption is, as noted, prevalent at lower administrative levels, there are informal red lines over which officials cannot tread; when they do, accountability can include a summary trial and execution.

The central problem of any centralized hierarchy is one of information. Even if one does not concede the principle of democratic accountability, authoritarian governments will operate more effectively with greater knowledge of what is happening at a grassroots level. In principal-agent terms, there has to be some way of monitoring agent behavior that is not dependent on the agent's own reporting. This then explains a couple of phenomena about contemporary China, first, the much expanded use of polling in government administration, and a degree of tolerance of criticism of government performance over the internet.

The Chinese government's control and monitoring of the internet is legendary, and, with its reported 50,000 censors, much more extensive than in other authoritarian countries. As is well-known, when the extensive microblogging and internet discussions move toward criticism of government performance, they are usually shut down. But that several-hour window in which

comments circulate allows the government not just to identify its critics, but also to listen to what they say. It is reported that Hu Jintao receives regular reports of public opinion as expressed on internet forums and Sina.com's Weibo (Twitter-like) service.

Through this kind of mechanism, the Party does not just shape public opinion, but seeks to stay on top of it enough to be able to respond to popular pressures before they erupt into violent acts of social protest. One can look at this cynically and say that the government is letting people blow off steam just enough to protect its own power and privileges; or one can regard it as a form of democratic mimicry by which the rulers seek to be responsive to public opinion.

In a sense, Chinese authoritarian governance is structured like corporate governance in a modern Western firm. In both cases formal accountability runs only upward, to the senior levels of the Party in the Chinese case and to the shareholders/board in corporations. Neither is downwardly accountable in formal terms to either citizens on the one hand or workers/customers on the other; however, if the hierarchy behaves heedlessly of the wishes of these stakeholders, it will suffer.

In noting these features of the Chinese state, I am not trying to argue that the Chinese government is accountable in any sense comparable to democratic governments. The Party argues that it has a tacit authorization to rule China as it does, and there is some polling data that indicates that many Chinese believe the government is acting in their best interests.¹² But how will we ever know whether this is true in the absence of formal accountability mechanisms, and freedom of speech? Real democratic accountability is desirable not just as a means of achieving economic growth, but as an end in itself. Every day the rights and dignity of ordinary Chinese citizens are ignored or denied by the government, and the wellspring of anger that this creates underlies the huge numbers of violent social protests that break out each year.

Nonetheless, the ability of the Chinese government to give citizens things they want—in particular, security, jobs, and rising living standards—is clearly higher than for most authoritarian regimes. Unless we understand this, we will not understand the challenge that China poses to democratic practice in the region and further afield.

DEMOCRACY AND THE FUTURE OF THE STATE IN EAST ASIA

Several countries in East Asia are heirs to a Chinese-style centralized state, which lies at the core of their economic success. Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan have all had highly competent

developmental states that pursued ambitious industrial policies during their high-growth phases, and only later added rule of law and democratic institutions to them that served as checks on executive power. Instead of asking the typical question of how the democratic institutions will fare in and of themselves, I want to pose the question of how the presence or absence of rule of law and democratic institutions will affect the performance of the state in East Asia. I believe that this is a legitimate question for a conference devoted to East Asian democracy, since democracy will be judged in large measure on how it affects economic performance and other outcomes of state behavior.

The rule of law and democratic accountability are important to high-quality state performance. If governments are not rule-bound and predictable, if they do not protect property rights, then they will constitute obstacles to economic performance. And if they are not democratically accountable, there will be no way of removing bad leaders or giving them feedback on their performance. The Chinese government's recent refusal to permit public discussion of the causes of the high-speed rail accident does not bode well for the future of rail safety.

On the other hand, it is possible to have so many checks and balances in a democratic system that the costs of making decisions becomes excessive and the process bogs down. Obviously, the problem is more severe when institutional separation of powers is supplemented by what Cox and McCubbins call "separation of purpose," i.e., strong disagreements on policy issues within the electorate. An example of the former would be the reported inability of the national government in Japan to override a legal prohibition on the airdropping critical supplies by helicopter during the recent Fukushima Daiichi nuclear reactor crisis. Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan have all been suffering from what one might label a crisis of increasing separation of purpose over the years, as democratic politics has increasingly become polarized around parties which have been more interested in gaining tactical advantage than in making difficult decisions about national issues. This has led to stasis on important issues like economic reform in Japan or national defense in Taiwan.

An important empirical question that I have never seen systematically addressed is the impact of democracy on bureaucratic quality in East Asia. I noted earlier that East Asian democracies were built around strong states and relatively weak organized social actors. As time has gone on, this balance has been shifting rapidly. Powerful interest groups have emerged

which, as Mancur Olson once observed, tend to accumulate during long periods of peace and stability.¹³ A common analysis of the Japanese inability to act on a variety of fronts from trade liberalization to agricultural modernization is the ability of relatively small interest groups to block significant reform. One of the hallmarks of classic postwar Asian governance was the state's ability to discipline private sector actors when necessary or, as Haggard and Levine put it, a lower propensity for rent-seeking and state capture when compared to other regions.¹⁴ Anecdotally, it would seem that is less characteristic of East Asian democratic governments now than it was 40 years ago.

All countries in East Asia, whether democratic or authoritarian, will face certain large problems in the coming two decades that will test their political systems. It is worth speculating as to whether the region's authoritarian or a democratic system will be better able to handle them.

One issue concerns the shift out of an export-driven growth model, which all countries in the region employed to a greater or lesser extent, to a more balanced system in which exports are supplemented by strong domestic demand. Raghuram Rajan has pointed out that the Japanese effort to do this has been a notable failure: though Japanese leaders have recognized the need to move towards a domestic demand-based system since at least the time of the Plaza Accord in the 1980s, relatively little progress has been made in increasing levels of consumption or reducing the productivity gap between export oriented industries and the rest of the economy.¹⁵ The reasons for this are at least partly political: the stimulus efforts undertaken since the bursting of the bubble in the early 1990s have been highly inefficient, being directed towards interest-group driven infrastructure projects that yielded little in terms of increased productivity while putting Japan on a fiscally unsustainable path.

Will authoritarian China be able to do better in this regard? The Chinese government has recognized the need to stimulate domestic demand for some years now and has committed substantial sums towards development of poorer inland areas. At this point we simply don't know enough about the efficiency of those investments to say whether they will have the desired long-term effect. There are clearly interest groups that have an impact on Chinese decision-making, if for no other reason than the fact that many Chinese officials have gotten rich as a result of collaboration with a variety of developers, industrialists, and the like. Is the Chinese authoritarian system strong enough that it can actually resist the blandishments of coastal export

interests, or has it already been captured? This is an empirical question whose answer is not currently clear.

A second important long-term issue concerns the necessary renegotiation of the social contract as a result of falling birthrates and increased longevity. As is well known, Japan has been a leader in this regard, but all states in East Asia, democratic or authoritarian, will suffer the same fate during the first half of the twenty-first century. China's birth rates have not fallen as dramatically as those of Japan, Korea, Taiwan, or Singapore, but even with a lifting of the one-child policy it will start down this road with perhaps a 15 year delay. Increasing dependency ratios will entail a number of painful decisions including higher taxes on the smaller future cohorts of workers; cuts in pension and health care benefits; higher retirement ages; and possibly the rationing of medical procedures.

As is clear from the mounting fiscal woes of virtually all developed democracies, these are not decisions that they make easily or well. Superficially, it would appear obvious that an authoritarian system would have an easier time forcing painful tradeoffs on a population that had no formal means of protesting. But here we get to one of the great advantages of a democratic system based on consent of the governed: precisely because democratic systems consult and require the consent of more social actors, decisions once taken enjoy much greater support. In Cox-McCubbins terms, they trade off decisiveness for resoluteness. While an authoritarian system like China's may force unpopular decisions on an unwilling populace, it risks generating a social explosion in response when the sacrifices are as draconian as the ones envisioned here.

NOTES

¹ Francis Fukuyama, *The Origins of Political Order: From Prehuman Times to the French Revolution* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011).

² Barrington Jr. Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966).

³ See, inter alia, Gerald L. Curtis, *The Logic of Japanese Politics: Leaders, Institutions, and the Limits of Change* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

⁴ On the economic side, see Torsten Persson and Guido Tabellini, *The Economic Effects of Constitutions* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003).

⁵ Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, "The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism," *Journal of Democracy* 13(2), 2002: 51-65; Andreas Schedler, *Electoral Authoritarianism: The Dynamics of Unfree Competition* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2006); and Schedler, "The Menu of Manipulation," *Journal of Democracy* 13(2), 2002: 36-50.

⁶ This distinction was originally made in Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy, 2nd ed.* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965). One of the more comprehensive efforts to characterize such states is Juan J. Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000).

⁷ For a critique of the Worldwide Governance Indicators, see Melissa Thomas.

⁸ Aristotle, *Politics* III.v.1. Marc Plattner has described this taxonomy in a presentation to the Draper Hills Summer Fellows, Stanford, 2011.

⁹ For some examples of how constrained Chinese emperors were in the Ming Dynasty, see Ray Huang, *1587, a Year of No Significance: the Ming Dynasty in Decline* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981).

¹⁰ http://transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2010/results

¹¹ See *The Origins of Political Order*, chapter 21.

¹² See Tianjian Shi, "China: Democratic Values Supporting an Authoritarian System," in Yun-han Chu et al., ed., *How East Asians View Democracy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

¹³ See Mancur Olson, *The Rise and Decline of Nations* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1982).

¹⁴ See for example Stephan Haggard and Robert R. Kaufman, *The Politics of economic adjustment: international constraints, distributive conflicts, and the state* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992).

¹⁵ Raghuram Rajan, *Fault Lines: How Hidden Fractures Still Threaten the World Economy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010).