

# DEMOCRACY

What the West can learn from China



Wei Ling Chua *China Edition*

The Art of Media Disinformation Is Hurting  
the World & Humanity



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*What the West Can Learn from China*

*Through the Eyes of an Outcast Journalist*

WEI LING CHUA



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## ***About the Author***

Wei Ling Chua is a freelance journalist accredited by the *Australia News and Feature Services* (ANFS) and the *International News Syndicate* (INS). However, since 2009 he has been banned from accessing any of the benefits derived from his accredited membership due to an assignment he submitted to the Morris Journalism Academy questioning the honesty and ethics of the Western media. Wei Ling Chua specialises in media disinformation.

## *Introduction*

After decades of ideological propaganda, it is now a widely held view that Western democracy is the ultimate goal of human civilisation, the aspiration of people around the world. The term “democracy” seems linked to all that is positive: good governance, prosperity, human rights, civil liberty, equality, social harmony, the rule of law and the legitimacy of a government. As a result, wars could be justified in the name of promoting democracy; and even governments that consistently enjoy high ratings in opinion polls among their people – higher than Western democracies receive – are considered illegitimate and labelled as a “regime”. Ironically, democratically elected governments with anti-America sentiment such as Putin’s administration in Russia and Chavez’s government in Venezuela have been branded as autocratic and denounced as well. In the absence of monetary rewards to encourage deeper thinking and information in the news media about the achievements of other cultures (see “Money Talk”, one of the coming instalments for a detailed analysis), Western societies appear to have submitted themselves to the tunnel vision summed up by Winston Churchill: “Democracy is the worst form of government except for all those others that have been tried.”



While believing that they live in an open society, the Western public is among the most misinformed people on the planet. The daily beaming of celebrity scandals and lifestyles and negative news and images of war, conflict, poverty and suffering on every TV screen (including fabricated stories and images, as will be illustrated throughout this series of books in the upcoming instalments) has successfully created generations of people with a false sense of superiority about their society and political system.

It can rightly be asked if the current form of Western democracy is the true goal of human civilisation. Should people be content with Churchill's decades-old assertion that there aren't better alternatives?

In reality, Western democracies are in serious trouble, facing an unprecedented level of debt, unemployment, political corruption in the form of political donations, advertising and lobbying, and social dissatisfaction. It is the Western political system that requires urgent reform, or risks a revolution from the 99% – its people – in the foreseeable future.

## Evaluation of Chinese and Western political systems in theory, structure, process and performance

### Let the figures do the talking

PEW Research question: *"How satisfied are you with the country's direction?"*<sup>1</sup>

**Table below:** Percentage of citizens satisfied with the country's direction (PEW survey 2002 – 2012)

**Note:** best to view the table below horizontally on Kindle.

Country\Year	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2002
China	82%	85%	87%	87%	86%	83%	81%	72%	48%
Germany	53%	43%	39%	43%	34%	33%	29%	25%	31%
Britain	30%	32%	31%	21%	30%	30%	35%	44%	32%
USA	29%	21%	30%	36%	23%	25%	29%	39%	41%
France	29%	25%	26%	27%	29%	22%	20%	28%	32%
Japan	20%	25%	20%	25%	23%	22%	27%	-	12%
Italy	11%	-	-	-	-	16%	-	-	24%
Spain	10%	15%	22%	21%	50%	51%	50%	51%	-

Greece	2%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Canada	-	-	-	51%	-	47%	-	45%	56%
South Korea	-	-	-	10%	13%	9%	-	-	14%
Australia	-	-	-	-	61%	-	-	-	-
Sweden	-	-	-	-	-	66%	-	-	-
Netherlands	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	49%	-
Czech Republic	14%	-	-	28%	-	23%	-	-	36%
Hungary	-	-	-	6%	-	-	-	-	-

PEW Research Center's Global Attitude Project is a nonpartisan "fact tank" in Washington. The Center began to ask the question: "How satisfied are you with the country's direction?" in dozens of countries in 2002. The table here, which I compiled from the annual PEW data since then, indicates that the Chinese are much more satisfied with their government than citizens of Western democracies. Unfortunately, PEW does not survey or publish data annually for all countries on their website, so, for example, data for Italy, Greece and Australia were not available in some years.

Nevertheless, we can still observe that prior to 2005 the Chinese government received only 48% in the satisfaction survey in regard to the country's direction (which was still higher than most Western democracies in that year with the exception of Canada at 56%). However, since 2005, the Chinese government has decisively led the world with an approval rating as high as 87% while most Western countries receive a mere 30% and below. Though there are many reasons for the upward trend in citizen satisfaction towards the Chinese government, the main ones include the economy, and the responsiveness of the government towards the collective voices of the people. We will get into these issues later on. In the meantime, one should note that even Asian countries that have adopted Western-style democracies, such as Japan and South Korea, have

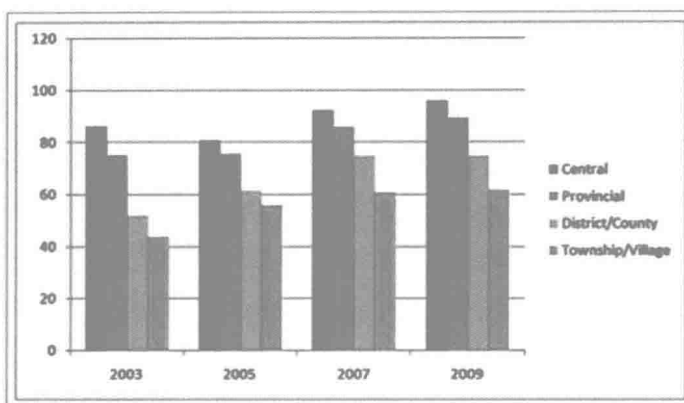
received very low scores in the PEW survey. Now, let's have a look at a few other surveys that tell the same story.

*Tony Saich's Survey 2003 – 2009 ("Chinese governance seen through the people's eyes")*



[www.eastasiaforum.org/2011/07/24/chinese-governance-seen-through-the-people-s-eyes/](http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2011/07/24/chinese-governance-seen-through-the-people-s-eyes/)

**Percentage of citizens relatively satisfied or extremely satisfied with government**  
(Author's own surveys 2003–2009)



Tony Saich is Professor and Director of the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. The above chart is a screenshot from Professor Saich's *article* on the East Asia Forum (24 July, 2011). Interestingly, Saich broke down his survey into four levels of government: Central, Provincial, District/County and Township/Village. The results demonstrate an upward trend in people's satisfaction across all four tiers of the Chinese government from 2003 to 2009. The central government enjoyed the highest level of citizen satisfaction (approximately 86% in 2003, 80% in 2005, 91% in 2007 and 95% in 2009), whereas the lower the level of the government, the lower the level of citizen satisfaction. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that the overall level of citizen satisfaction across all

four tiers of the Chinese government is on an upward trend. That means each level of the Chinese government has improved their performance over time.<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately, I have to draw to the reader's attention the reality that – information that is in favour of the Chinese government – such as the above named Tony Saich Survey and the PEW survey – is rarely reported by the mainstream media. Despite the fact that there is a very high level of citizen satisfaction for the Chinese government, we have been told year on year by the news media that the Communist Party of China (CPC) is a brutal regime, hated by the people, and has a problem with its legitimacy.

The latest is from the US government-funded “dissident”: Chen Guangcheng (the blind “lawyer”), who reportedly posted a video to the US government-funded China Aid, called for, “China’s next generation of leaders to implement political reform, or else face a violent end to the Chinese Communist Party rule.” (Radio Free Asia, 3 December, 2012)<sup>3</sup> Weeks later, Chen was reported making similar statements to the Associate Press: “China’s system is doomed,” (*The Australian*, 29 January, 2013)<sup>4</sup> and again on 4 February, 2013, to the US government-funded Voice of America (VOA) that, “the Chinese government had lost its legitimacy.”<sup>5</sup> It is worth noting that before Chen left China for the US several months ago, his complaints had all been local (see an upcoming instalments, “The Untold Story – Chen Guangcheng & US Government”, for details of how the US government recruits these so-called “dissidents” to smear against the Chinese government with the coordination of the Western media). However, over the last few months, the blind man began to attack the central government in every interview by the Western media. He appeared to be “well-informed” despite his blindness. It would be reasonable for one to wonder if the so-called “free” education extended to Chen at

the New York University, the book deal, and the bestowing of the so-called “human rights” awards were not for free after all. Chen had obviously worked very hard for all those “freebies” that he appeared to spend more time on smearing the Chinese government than studying.

### ***Other Surveys:***

An *NBC News/Wall Street Journal Survey* (11, 13-14 March, 2010) revealed that the American Congress enjoyed only a 17% approval rating, and that 50% would “vote to defeat and replace every single member of Congress, including their own representative.”<sup>6</sup>

PEW survey (15 December, 2011) indicated that “just 20% of voters say they would like to see most members of Congress re-elected in the next congressional election. Two-thirds (67%) think most members of Congress should be replaced. This exceeds – by double digits – previous highs set in 2010, 2006 and 1994.”<sup>7</sup>

*Washington Post-ABC News* poll (12 – 15 January, 2012) showed that 84% of Americans disapprove of the job Congress is doing. Only 13% of Americans approve of how things are going after the 112th Congress’ first year of action.<sup>8</sup>

Gallup Poll (8 February, 2012): “Congress” job approval at new low of 10% – Republicans and Democrats equally negative”.<sup>9</sup>

Gallup Poll (11 January, 2013): “Congress begins 2013 with 14% approval.”<sup>10</sup>

As one may observe from the above surveys, there are consistently very low levels of citizen satisfaction towards the performance of the American politicians and the Congress. The number of Americans wishing to replace the entire Congress with new faces is at an upward trend year on year – in the 2011 survey, only 20% of respondents would like

to see most members of Congress re-elected. The job approval rating towards the Congress is at a historic low and in a downward trend at only 10% in February, 2012.

One would wonder why such depressing year-on-year survey figures have failed to compel the mainstream media to look for answers as to why citizen satisfaction has gone so low in America. The reality is that the entire political system in America is at a stage of stagnation and decline without much pressure from the news media calling for reform. This is in sharp contrast to the situation in China under the leadership of the Communist Party where the culture of self-reflection and self-criticism, founded during Mao Zedong's era, has been rooted into the entire political establishment.

## **China will not follow the path of the West**

The truth is that there are many flaws and deficiencies in the design and practice of Western democracies. The Chinese government is fully aware of these flaws and is determined not to repeat the mistakes made by the Russians and Eastern Europeans two decades ago.<sup>11</sup>

In January, 2013, the then-incoming Chinese President Xi Jinping reiterated in a Party meeting that China will not follow the path of the West and stressed the importance of adhering to the existing socialist political system and direction. He asserted the importance of pragmatism and the spirit of ongoing reform. This is an excerpt from Xi's speech:

CPC members should always harbor the spirit of "cutting a road when [they] come to the hill and building a bridge when [they] come across a river . . . forge ahead and explore boldly along the path. CPC members should deepen reform and opening up, make discoveries, innovations and progresses. Party members should be brave in analysing and

responding to pressing problems that the public want solving and in promoting innovation in practice, theory and institutional building.” (CNTV, 5 January, 2013)<sup>12</sup>

It is in such a spirit of ongoing self-reflection and reform that China is able to defy all odds and put the country back in one piece; even after more than a century of Western colonial exploitation and military aggression that had effectively bankrupted the country with dozens of unequal treaties,<sup>13</sup> followed by decades of brutal Japanese occupation that resulted in the deaths of up to 20 million Chinese and the injuries of another 15 million by the time the Japanese surrender in 1945 (68 years ago).<sup>14</sup> In addition, when the Western-backed dictatorial and corrupt regime in China led by the then Nationalist Party fled the mainland to the Chinese province of Taiwan in 1949, the Party emptied national treasuries across the country, including 650,000 pieces (3,000 containers) of ancient artefacts from the imperial palace in Beijing.<sup>15</sup> These antiques are currently in storage and displayed at Taipei’s National Museum, the Chinese name of Taipei’s National Museum is named after the imperial palace in Beijing, “故宫”. Consequently, Chinese mainland was left with nothing except dire poverty and chaos at the time the CPC took over as government in 1949.

Under the influence of the Western media, many people think negatively about the CPC. However, no one can deny their achievements and contributions to the Chinese people since 1949. As examples, China has transformed from the “sick man of East Asia” to replace its former invader, Japan, as the world’s second largest economy in 2010, and is likely to replace America as the world’s biggest economy within a decade or so. Under the leadership of the CPC, China doubled its national average life expectancy from 36 years in 1949 to 71 in 2004.<sup>16</sup> Even at a time of dire poverty and technological backwardness, China managed to halt



the threat and advancement of the American-led military coalition in the Korean War (1950 – 1953), and fully withdraw all its military personnel several years after both sides agreed to cease military hostility. In contrast, the US continues its imperial military presence in South Korea to this day.

China has also managed to overcome technological sanctions imposed by the West and has produced its own satellites, GPS system (Beidou), and space station. Today, China is not only the world's factory for consumer products, but also a powerful player in the field of high-end technology. Despite the US Congress's hysterical attitude towards Chinese Corporates such as Huawei, a recent report (29 April, 2013) by wired.com revealed that, "the Pentagon is so starved of bandwidth that it's paying a Chinese satellite firm to help with its communication and share data," for their military operations in Africa.<sup>17</sup> China has also managed to tap into the satellite launching and manufacturing market by securing business from European, South American, and African nations such as France,<sup>18</sup> Nigeria,<sup>19</sup> Belarus<sup>20</sup> and Venezuela.<sup>21</sup> Its GPS system (Beidou) is making inroads into neighbouring countries such as Laos, Brunei, Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam and the Philippines, and is scheduled to cover the world by 2020.<sup>22</sup> China is currently leading the world in the technology and usage of high speed trains.

China's education system is among the world's most successful: according to the OECD, in the Programme for International Student Assessment (which tests students from 65 countries in reading, maths and science), Shanghai, China was number one in the world for all three categories. In comparison, America ranked 23<sup>rd</sup> in science, 25<sup>th</sup> in reading and 28<sup>th</sup> in maths. (*Business Insider*, 9 April, 2012)<sup>23</sup>

Katherine Morton, a Senior Fellow at the Department of International Relations (Australia National University) believes that the real economic