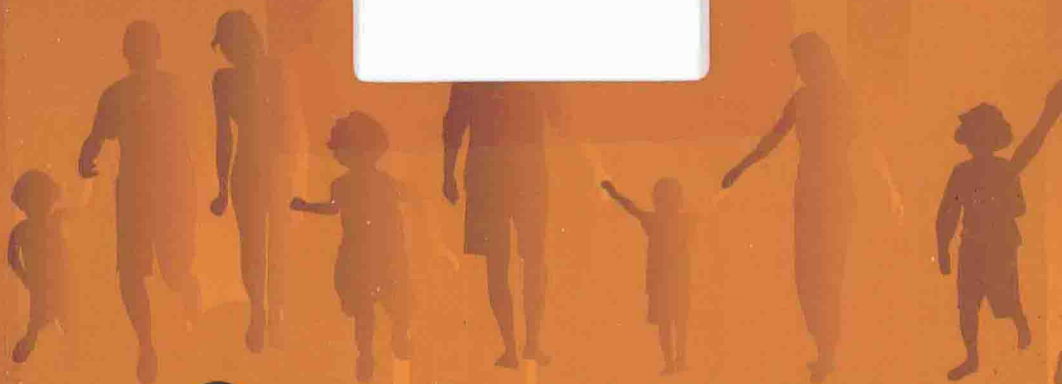




Contemporary China's
Academic classics

WHAT KIND OF DEMOCRACY DO CHINESE PEOPLE WANT

Zhang Mingshu



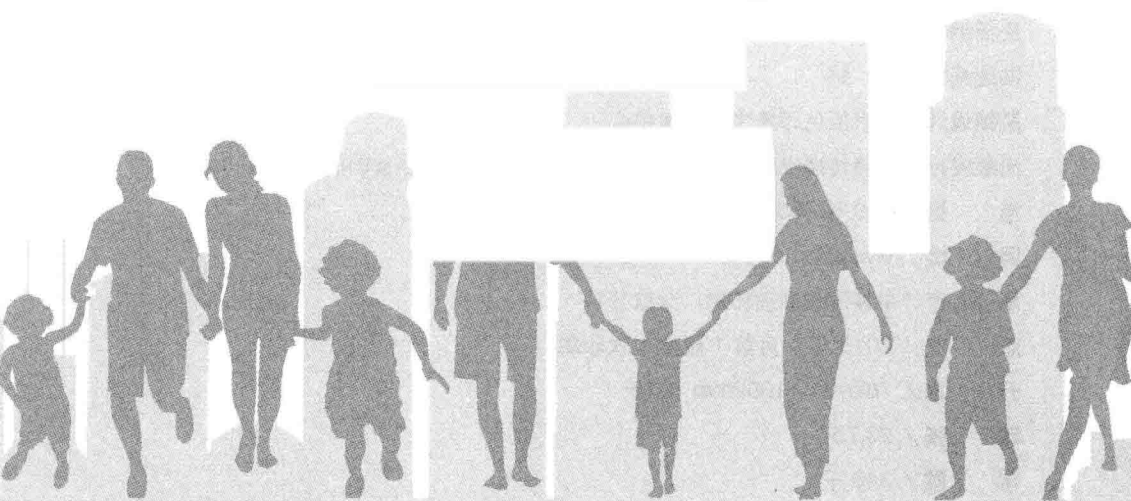
China Intercontinental Press



Contemporary China's
Academic classics

WHAT KIND OF DEMOCRACY DO CHINESE PEOPLE WANT

Zhang Mingshu



China Intercontinental Press

图书在版编目 (CIP) 数据

中国人想要什么样民主：英文 / 张明澍著；裴荻菲译．—北京：五洲传播出版社，2014.12

ISBN 978-7-5085-3064-2

I. ①中… II. ①张… ②裴… III. ①社会主义民主—民主政治—研究—中国—英文
IV. ① D621

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2015) 第 002070 号

中国人想要什么样民主

What Kind of Democracy Do Chinese People Want

著 者 / 张明澍

翻 译 / 裴荻菲

责任编辑 / 王 峰

助理编辑 / 彭 婷

装帧设计 / 北京原色印象文化艺术中心

出版发行 / 五洲传播出版社 (北京市海淀区北三环中路 31 号生产力大楼 B 座 7 层 邮编: 100088)

电 话 / 010-82005927, 010-82007837 (发行部)

网 址 / www.cicc.org.cn

承 印 者 / 中煤涿州制图印刷厂北京分厂

版 次 / 2015 年 1 月第 1 版第 1 次印刷

开 本 / 787mm × 1092mm 1/16

印 张 / 23.75

字 数 / 340 千

定 价 / 108.00 元

CONTENTS

Preface / 1

I. Why study the subject “what kind of democracy do Chinese people want” ? / 1

II. China’s “Political Man” / 5

III. How to study “what kind of democracy do Chinese people want” and the arrangement of the book / 7

Chapter I Democracy: Good or Not? / 15

Section I Do you think democracy is good? / 16

Section II China and U.S., which one is better? / 31

Section III Are you satisfied with the status quo of China’s democracy? / 48

Section IV Discussion / 55

Chapter II What Is Democracy? / 63

Section I What is democracy? / 66

Section II Consultation or voting? / 76

Section III What is the most important condition for being a leader? / 84

Section IV Whether the secretary got it right? / 91

Section V How to evaluate two-party system? / 98

Section VI Discussion / 106

Chapter III Why Do We Need Democracy? / 111

Section I What needs greatest improvement in Chinese democratization? / 112

Section II What is the most important issue to be addressed through political structure reform? / 121

Section III Where do you put freedom and rights? / 129

Section IV Discussion / 138

Chapter IV The Best Attitude to Politics / 141

Section I What is the best attitude towards politics? / 141

Section II To what extent the government influences your life? / 151

Section III Who should be responsible for traffic congestion? / 159

Section IV What will you do in witness of a bribe? / 165

Section V Discussion / 173

Chapter V How to Participate in Politics? / 175

Section I Will you push the government to change the decision when your rights are infringed? / 176

Section II How will you choose to influence the government? / 194

Section III When will you choose to parade? / 205

Section IV Discussion / 218

Chapter VI Actual Acts of Political Participation / 221

Section I Have you ever taken some actions to influence the government decision-making? / 222

Section II Do you like to talk about politics? / 237

Section III How to regard the direct election? / 247

Section IV Discussion / 269

Chapter VII Political Knowledge / 273

Section I Do you know the Russian President's name? / 274

Section II How much do you know about laws and regulations? / 282

Section III What is the significance of the 18th National Congress of the CPC? / 294

Section IV Discussion / 306

Chapter VIII China's "Political Man" / 309

Section I What kind of democracy do Chinese people want? / 309

Section II Ethical Political Culture VS Scientific Political Culture / 317

Section III Major Findings / 329

Section IV Types of China's "Political Man" / 332

Conclusion China's Way to Democracy / 341

Appendix Questionnaire on Political Quality of Chinese Citizens / 351

Preface >

I. Why study the subject “what kind of democracy do Chinese people want”?

In 1988, this book's author took on the key subject of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, “the survey and research of Chinese citizens' political quality”. The research results were publicized in the book named *China's Political Man* by Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Press in 1994. The most valuable notion of this book is using the idiom of “curbing devils and promoting kindness” to show the completely different attitudes towards politics in eastern and western political cultures. In the western political culture, the purpose and function of politics is to curb devils. The government stops anyone from compromising others' and social interests in the pursuit of his own interest. In China's political culture, the purpose and function of politics is to promoting kindness.¹ In this culture, it hopes the government to do more. For instance, the government sets the objectives for individuals and the society to pursue and leads people to achieve these objectives.

In 2011, the author took on the national situation survey and research project of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences again, “survey and research of Chinese citizens' political quality”. The author switched his focus on “what kind of democracy do Chinese citizens want” this time.

Why? For a long period of time, people, home and abroad, are saying that China's political system reform lags behind the economic system reform. In recent years, corruption is getting worse. Social tensions are becoming increasingly acute. Many people say we must carry out political system

reform to solve these issues.

The core of political system reform is “democracy”. Speaking of democracy, it is closely related to the subject of “what kind of democracy do Chinese people want”. First, according to our understanding, democracy has different types. Broadly speaking, one is the western democracy, which is originated from ancient Greece, goes through hierarchy monarchy in the Mid Century, and weathers the western Renaissance and revolutions. This western democracy is upheld by Britain and U.S. nowadays. The other is China’s current democracy. We call it the socialist democracy with Chinese characteristics. What kind of democracy that Chinese people want? Of course, some people do not agree to classify democracy like this. They believe that democracy is just like an egg. It is an egg in U.S., so is in China. We cannot classify eggs into eggs of U.S. and those of China. They argue eggs in China and U.S. are the same. They argue there is difference between democratic and undemocratic. There is no difference between western democracy and China’s democracy. Is this argument tenable? Based upon the advocacy of mainstream media, China needs the socialist democracy with Chinese characteristics. But, compared with the thousand-year old western democracy (even the modern democracy in the West has a history of three or four hundred years), China’s socialist democracy with Chinese characteristics is still in the making and immature, which needs further clarification. As mentioned by then premier Wen Jiabao when he made a speech in Tsinghua University on September 14, 2012, he said we had built socialism for so many years, but we did not know clearly what socialism was and how to build socialism.² When we build socialist democracy with Chinese characteristics, we should learn from western democracy. Actually, we’ve learnt a lot from western democracy, such as National People’s Congress (hereinafter refer to as NPC). According to the Constitution, NPC is the most important power organ in China’s politics. But did China have such an organ in its history? No. NPC is drawn upon from the western parliament. Someone translates the western parliament as the Congress. NPC’s conference formats, parliamentary procedures, voting and the like are drawn upon from the West. Therefore, when we build China’s socialist democracy, we should figure out what to draw upon and what not to. To figure it out, we

need to carry out political system reform to build socialist democracy with Chinese characteristics, and we need to figure out “what kind of democracy do Chinese people want”.

Secondly, according to the research of modern political scientists, a democratic system, be it the western democratic system or the socialist democracy with Chinese characteristics, needs to fit the cultural environment where it exists, and then it can survive and operate normally, so as to play its role. In 1960s, American political scientists Gabriel Abraham Almond and Sidney Verba produced *The Civic Culture*, famous in the circle of politics. This book has many versions in U.S., and it has been translated and published by many presses in China. The most influential finding result of this book is a kind of political culture named civic culture which is compatible with democracy. This culture consists of three kinds of political attitudes. First, indifference to politics (ignorance); second, abiding by politics (submission); third, proactive participation in politics (participation). These three attitudes have mixed together subtly in the time-honored history, and developed the civic culture compatible with modern democracy. The classic civic culture is an outgrowth of the British and American modern history.³ Of course democracy here means the western democracy. The reason why this book is so influential in the world is that it corrects a persistent misunderstanding. For quite a long time, people believe that democracy is based on proactive participation in politics by citizens. The more enthusiastic citizens are, the better the democracy quality is.

“What kind of democracy do Chinese people want?” In other words, what kind of political culture does China have? Ignorance, submission or participation? Or the mix of these three attitudes? If it is the mix of the three, what is the proportion of them? Does it fit democracy? Or does it fit the socialist democracy with Chinese characteristics or the western democracy?

Take another example. In 1960, Almond and Verba led an investigation team to conduct a survey in U.S., Britain, Germany, Italy and Mexico. There is such a question in the survey, saying supposed that a decree is in the making. You think this decree is unfair or harmful. What would you do? When asked, an American retired worker shrugged and replied, “I can organize a formal group or incite friends or neighbors to write a petition

letter and sign petitions." In U.S., about 56% correspondents gave the similar response. However, in Mexico, when asked, a Mexican woman seemed confused. She paused and thought for a while, and then replied, confused, "I don't know. I have no one to talk to. In such a case, I don't know what to do." In Mexico, nearly 48% correspondents gave the similar response just like the woman.⁴

In 1988, when the author took on the subject of "survey and research of citizens' political quality" of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (hereinafter refer to as CASS), he conducted the survey in 13 cities nationwide. In the survey, one question is similar to the question of Almond investigation team. Supposed that if you believe a government decision is detrimental to your interests, will you think of doing something to influence the government decision. If so, what actions will you take? Most correspondents say they will do the reporting to their leaders or related government departments.⁵

Two decades later, the author took on the subject of "survey and research of citizens' political quality" once again in 2011. The survey was conducted in four cities. When asked the same question, the majority of correspondents still choose to do the reporting to related government departments.

It is obvious that Americans, Mexicans and Chinese want different kinds of democracy. If the issue of "what kind of democracy" is the question of the basic features of China's political culture, given that the political system must be compatible with the cultural environment where the system exists, we must answer this question. Because first, let's suppose the basic feature of culture is unchangeable, which is upheld by many culture scientists. They believe that the culture has been revolutionized and formed through hundreds of years in history. The culture or its basic feature is unchangeable. The notion could be called the theory of "unchangeability of political culture". If we accept this notion, we must clearly know "what kind of democracy do Chinese people want". Based upon the answer to this question, we will consider the arrangement of political system reform. Second, suppose that we can change the political culture through a prolonged and controllable (at least to some degree) process, we guide it to the development direction as we expect, so that this political culture will be compatible with the democratic system which we think better. This

notion could be called the theory of “changeability of political culture”. Most politics scientists are for the theory of “changeability of political culture”, since conclusions derived from the theory of “unchangeability of political culture” are pessimistic and hard to accept. Almond and Verba said in *The Civic Culture* that factors such as education could boost the formation of civic culture.⁶ Take a deeper look at the transformation of China’s political culture around 1949, and we may easily become supporters of the theory of “changeability of political culture”. Therefore, it is equally important to answer the question of “what kind of democracy do Chinese people want” under the assumption of unchangeability of political culture and the assumption of changeability of it. As long as we clearly know what kind of democracy do Chinese people want, we could define which aspects of this political culture need to change.

To sum up, the question of what kind of democracy do Chinese people want is taken as the focus of the second round of the survey and research of Chinese citizens’ political quality, since it is related to China’s political system reform. In our efforts to build the socialist democracy with Chinese characteristics through the political system reform, we need to figure out whether we should exclude, copy or draw upon the western democracy. If we decide to draw upon the western democracy, to what degree we should learn from the West?

II. China’s “Political Man”

The key of 2011 “Survey and Research of Chinese Citizens’ Political Quality” is to answer the question of “what kind of democracy do Chinese people want”. But this book covers more on the whole. The book depicts and analyzes Chinese citizens’ political quality and China’s political culture features at the beginning of 21st century and at the turning point or transition period of China’s political development. In other word, the book is to draw a picture for China’s “Political Man” in this particular era.

From this angle, this book is the sequel of 1988’s survey and research program and 1994’s “China’s Political Man”. This book continues to apply the previous analysis framework, namely political concept, political knowledge

and political participation to study Chinese citizens' political quality and China's political culture. This book borrows the concept of "Political Man" from American political scientist Seymour Martin Lipset's *Political Man*. It uses "China's Political Man" to describe Chinese citizens' features in political culture, as economists use "Economic Man" to describe people's features in economic side, and administration scientist use "Administrative Man" to describe people's features in administration side.

The first aspect of Chinese citizens' political quality is political concept. Among the three factors, political concept is the most important. It determines the political quality. Applying Almond's notions, we can say a person's political concept is ignorance. It means he is indifferent to politics. A person's political concept is submission. It means he is always submissive towards the government or authorities. A person's political concept could also be participation. It means that he is willing to participate in decision-making process and to influence the result. A person's political knowledge and participation is based upon his political concept. His political knowledge and participation are in line with his political concept. A person with the participation political concept would be different from the person with ignorance political concept in terms of political knowledge and participation attitudes as well as behavior. The ignorant also participate in politics, but they are indifferent towards it. It is the passive participation. A person's political concept may be a combination of the three. If so, his political participation and knowledge should also be in line with his political concept.

At the current stage, as for citizens' political concept, our priority is "what kind of democracy do they want". It does not mean that we do not care about the other aspects of his political concept. We also study the other aspects of his political concept because our study and research are constant and comprehensive. Just as the 1988's project research, although the focus back then is different from the latest one, the study and research in 1988 still constitutes a part of our constant research. It is a part of our academic accumulation. Therefore, we can compare Chinese citizens' political quality or China's political culture development at different stages. It is of great significance, undoubtedly.

III. How to study “what kind of democracy do Chinese people want” and the arrangement of the book

The research approach of this book is the empirical approach which is widely applied by CASS. We carry out the research based upon the actual investigation. It is not only the theoretical analysis and deduction, which is called the normal approach. Take the question of “what kind of democracy do Chinese people want” as an example. We do not deduce conclusions by analyzing historical materials or theoretical books. We randomly sampled 1,750 Chinese citizens at the age of 18 or above and asked them “what kind of democracy do you want”. And then we sum up the finding results, and use the computing programs to analyze to see what proportion of them want democracy and what proportion of them do not want democracy, as well as what proportion of them want this kind of democracy and what proportion of them want that kind of democracy.

Of course, it is the simple explanation of our research approach. It is more complicated in practice. This book uses many tables. For the previous seven chapters, each chapter may contain about 20 tables. We used so many tables because of our research approach this time. As mentioned previously, our research is empirical approach. Conclusions in the book, be it the general conclusions of the book or the conclusions of some specific questions, are presented by research data, including statistics and analysis data. For instance, the book comes up with an idea that Chinese citizens’ political concept appears converging trend, which is in correlation with the middle-class level of economic and social development. We first design one or more questions with multiple choices. One choice could reflect the converging trend of the political concept. We use statistics to show how many people have made this choice which could reflect the converging trend. And then we use computer analysis software to conduct correlation analysis between this converging trend of political concept and the middle-class level of economic and social development, the political participation attitudes and behavior, and the political knowledge. These statistics and

analysis results will be clearly represented by tables. Therefore, tables do not contain static figures. Tables are the digital presentation of live thinking which comes from long-term and numerous theoretical researches. Such thinking is called hypothesis in sociological research approach. These hypotheses are mired in the questionnaire. Through analyzing the questionnaire results, we use tables to examine whether these hypotheses are valid or not. Those hypotheses which have been proved valid or basically valid are incorporated into the book. Those approved to be invalid are abandoned or rectified for further study. This is the universal approach for worldwide scientists when they conduct the sociological research. It is the same to our traditional approach, from practice to understanding and back to practice again. The above-mentioned is to explain why this book contains so many tables and why the discussions in the book are basically centering around those tables.

The survey is entrusted with Beijing Municipal Statistical Information and Consultancy Center, a professional institute for sampling survey affiliated to Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics. The center has large amounts of investigators to do the phone interviews and door-to-door interviews. Apart from the survey tasks entrusted by Beijing Municipal government, this center also takes on kinds of survey tasks entrusted by entities from all walks of life. The center not only conducts survey in Beijing, but also takes on survey tasks outside Beijing. The division of labor between researchers and the center is as follows: researchers are responsible for designing the questionnaire and revising the questionnaire after the pilot survey. Researchers require that the sampling survey which is conducted by the center must reflect the situation in urban and rural areas nationwide, and the survey must be done in a scientific and objective way. Professionals with the Beijing Municipal Statistical Information and Consultancy Center are responsible for sampling survey schemes. Their professional investigators will do the door-to-door survey. While rolling out the survey, investigators need to get trained. Researchers explain the questionnaire to investigators and answer the questions raised by investigators during training sessions. Researchers participate in the survey in each locality to monitor the quality of door-to-door interviews. The door-to-door interviews are done in this way:

investigators read all the questions and choices behind each question on the questionnaire to the correspondent. When investigators make sure that the correspondent understands the meaning of each question and choice, investigators will fill in the questionnaire based upon the correspondent's choices. After the survey, investigators will present a small gift to the correspondent. When all the survey is finished, the Beijing Municipal Statistical Information and Consultancy Center will input finding results into the database according to the format requirement of the analysis software, SPSS, and submit it to researchers.

According to the researchers' requirement, the sampling scheme designed by Beijing Municipal Statistical Information and Consultancy Center includes four cities, Beijing, sampled from the group of municipalities and metropolis; Shenzhen, sampled from provincial capitals and coastal cities; Xiaogan city of Hubei Province, sampled from prefectures; Yushu city of Jinlin Province, sampled from counties and county-level cities. Our research targets at citizens at the age of 18 or above who live in urban areas. The total sample stands at 1,750. Major indicators of the samples, such as educational attainment, gender, age, especially educational attainment, are basically identical with the population survey materials published by the National Bureau of Statistics.

The questionnaire used in the survey prioritizes the focus of the survey, namely, to answer the question of "what kind of democracy do Chinese people want". Second, the questionnaire has taken into consideration the extension and comparability of the survey done in 1988. The author hopes the project of "the survey and research of Chinese citizens' political quality" could keep on going. Each survey should have its own focus during the specific period of time, but the basic content should be continuous and comparable. The questionnaire used in this survey contains 30 questions, including one question about the basic information of the interviewees. It has one more question compared with that of 1988's survey. Among those questions, 20 of them are the same to those in 1988's survey. The questions' format is different, but their focus is the same. Due to the tremendous changes in the society, the wording of some questions and hypothesis background should change accordingly. But these questions' focuses remain unchanged. For instance, as

for the question about “how would interviewees like to voice their opinions towards the government decision”, we add an entry of “voice opinions online” on this questionnaire. As for the question about the basic information of the interviewee, we add an entry of “boss” on this questionnaire. (Boss means the shareholder and management of enterprises which are not controlled by the State, including private enterprises, enterprises which are controlled by private capitals and joint ventures.)

Ten questions which are different compared with the previous survey are meant to reflect the different focus between two surveys. In 1988, it is the first time that we took the questionnaire to conduct political culture research. Back then, the similar research was rare. Therefore, in terms of political concept back then, the focus was people’s general attitudes towards politics, namely their general opinions on politics, and their understanding about the sensitive issue of whether we are a socialist or capitalist society. For instance, we asked the interviewees “what is your take on the difference between socialism and capitalism” and “do you have a better impression on the capitalist society”. These questions could reflect the researchers’ focus on the political culture at the beginning of reform and opening up. The survey is different this time. Researchers switch their focus on a concrete issue, people’s opinion and attitudes towards democracy. This time we are not confined to the issue of whether we are a socialist or capitalist society. We do not ask interviewees “do you think we are a socialist or capitalist society”. We follow the principle of seeking truth from facts. We just ask the questions needed in the research. We are not obsessed with the question of whether we are a socialist or capitalist society.

The questionnaire used in the survey is attached in the Appendix.

The public always have doubts about the widely used questionnaire approach. For instance, when asked “do you think democracy is good or not”, interviewees’ understanding about democracy may differ while they answer this question. So can we guarantee the accuracy of the survey? Of course, we can. The rationale is that although interviewees have different understanding about democracy, we do not require that people should have the same understanding about it in practice. A person’s understanding about democracy may be vague or wrong, but his democracy-related

behaviors are controlled by his mindset and thinking, no matter how he understands democracy.

To analyze the survey results, we not only use the aggregate statistical data (questionnaire feedbacks of all interviewees), but also have the statistical materials based upon four dimensions of interviewees, in terms of educational attainment, vocation, locality and age. As for these four groups of interviewees in the four dimensions, we need to look at their different responses on each question. In addition, as for a few questions, there is no need to incorporate all interviewees' responses into our analysis. But we still incorporate all interviewees' responses into our research, so the materials are objective and complete. Readers and researchers, if interested, could make your own analysis on these questions. As for the four dimensions, take educational attainment as an example, we classify it into junior high or below, senior high, college, post graduate, according to the classification standards of National Bureau of Statistics. The first section of the first chapter contains the instruction about the classification, since it would be easier for readers to understand these four dimensions together with concrete questions.

This book contains three parts, political concept (Chapter 1, 2, 3), political participation awareness and experience (Chapter 4, 5, 6), and political knowledge (Chapter 7). There is a discussion at the end of each chapter, so as to summarize this chapter. And then, the book tries to depict the whole image of China's "Political Man" (Chapter 8). In other word, the book is to describe the feature of Chinese political culture. Of course, the key is the issue "what kind of democracy do Chinese people want". In addition, the book is to describe all kinds of China's "Political Man", such as people with college education and those without, civil servants and the laid-offs, people in Beijing and those in Yushu city, people born in 1990s and those born in 1960s, and what are their features in terms of political concepts, political participation awareness and experience, and political knowledge.

In the conclusion part, the author talks about how China embarks on this democratic path. From Chapter I to Chapter VIII, the book focuses on the survey results, analyzing and discussing results, and then deducting conclusions from the analysis and discussion. This part is objective and deals