Internet and Democracy
– A study of the Internet’s influence in a democratization process in China

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Abstract
The phenomenon of the Internet, instant access to information from all over the world and interacting on social media has become a part of our daily lives. However in China, the media and the Internet is strictly controlled to suppress any opposition, thus limiting and violating the freedom of speech. Some argues that free media promotes democratic values, hence the purpose of this study has been to examine the impact that a free access to information could have on the Chinese society and how the influence of the Internet could impact the Chinese Communist party’s political power.

The methodology for this study has been a single case study approach, and the collection of empirical data has been conducted by semi-structured interviews with scholars, NGO and government official. The conclusion was that the respondents had shared views on the level of influence that a free access to information on the Internet could have, however it was clearly indicated that it was important for promoting democracy. It was also concluded that the Chinese government has been able to stay in power due to suppression, economic development and to some extent legitimacy. The impact of a free Internet could have on the party’s political power depends on how well the government can convince the population that they politics is still legitimate and effective.

Key words: modernization, media, human rights, social conditions
# Table of Content

Abstract .......................................................................................................................... 1

Abbreviations .................................................................................................................. 4

1. Introduction .................................................................................................................. 5
   1.2 Background ............................................................................................................. 6
   1.2 Problem Statement ............................................................................................... 7
   1.3 Purpose and Research Questions ........................................................................ 8
   1.4 Importance of This Study ................................................................................... 8
   1.5 Theoretical Framework ....................................................................................... 9
   1.6 Method .................................................................................................................. 9
   1.7 Definitions ........................................................................................................... 10
      1.7.1 Democracy ..................................................................................................... 10
      1.7.2 Human Development ..................................................................................... 10
      1.7.3 Human Rights ............................................................................................... 11
      1.7.4 Economic Development ................................................................................ 11
      1.7.5 Economic Growth ......................................................................................... 11
   1.8 Disposition ............................................................................................................ 12

2. Previous Studies ......................................................................................................... 12

3. Theoretical Framework ............................................................................................... 16
   3.1 Choice of Theory .................................................................................................. 16
   3.2 Modernization Theory ......................................................................................... 17
   3.3 Review of Modernization Theory ......................................................................... 18

4. Methodology ............................................................................................................... 21
   4.1 Qualitative Single Case Study ............................................................................ 21
      4.1.1 Benefits and Disadvantages ......................................................................... 21
   4.2 Collection of Empirical Data .............................................................................. 22
      4.2.1 Interview Structure ....................................................................................... 23
      4.2.2 Conducting the Interviews ........................................................................... 23
      4.2.3 Challenges .................................................................................................... 24
      4.2.4 Limitations .................................................................................................... 25
   4.3 Critical Assessments of the Material  4.3.1 Primary sources ................................. 25
   4.3.2 Secondary sources .......................................................................................... 26
   4.4 Validity and Reliability ......................................................................................... 26

5. Result of Empirical Data ............................................................................................. 28
5.1 Presentation of the Respondents .................................................................................. 28
5.2 Chinese Citizens and Their Political Influence .......................................................... 28
5.3 Conditions and Other Contributing Variables for Democracy ....................................... 29
5.4 Human Rights in China ............................................................................................... 31
5.5 Causes for Censorship and Its Effect on Citizens ......................................................... 34
5.6 The Role of the Internet ............................................................................................... 36
6. Analysis and Findings ..................................................................................................... 39
   6.1 Lipset’s Conditions for Democracy ........................................................................... 39
      6.1.1 Education ......................................................................................................... 39
      6.1.2 Economic Development and Growth ................................................................. 40
      6.1.3 Middle Class .................................................................................................... 40
      6.1.4 Political Legitimacy and Effectiveness ............................................................... 41
   6.2 The Influence of the Internet ...................................................................................... 43
      6.2.1 Impact of a Free/Freer Internet ......................................................................... 45
      6.2.1.1 The Internet and the CCP’s Political Power .................................................. 47
7. Discussion ....................................................................................................................... 49
8. Conclusion ....................................................................................................................... 53
Appendix A: Interview Schedules ..................................................................................... 55
   A.1 Interview Schedule in Swedish ................................................................................ 55
   A.2 Interview Schedule in English .................................................................................. 58
Appendix B: Presentation of the Respondents .................................................................. 60
   B.1 Marina Thorborg ....................................................................................................... 60
   B.2 Bob Vellucci ............................................................................................................. 60
   B.3 Mattias Chu ............................................................................................................... 60
   B.4 Björn Kjellgren ........................................................................................................ 60
References ............................................................................................................................. 61
Abbreviations

CCP – Chinese Communist Party
CDP – Chinese Democratic Party
FDI – Foreign Direct Investment
GDI - Gender-Related Index
GEM - Gender Empowerment Measure
HDI - Human Development Index
HPI - Human Poverty Index
LGBT - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
PPP - Purchasing Power Parity
SMO – Social Movements
1. Introduction

This chapter will give an overview of the background, problem and research questions for this thesis. A brief introduction of the chosen method and theoretical background will be presented, as well as the importance of this study and its relation to development studies will be further explained.

China is a country that has enjoyed decades of economic growth, development and higher living standards. However, many aspects of the average Chinese citizen’s life are still limited. The population does not have freedom of speech, religion, association and demonstration, violating the first generation of human rights.\(^1\) With the rapid, but uneven economic development, many new social issues and violations against human rights have arisen. There are many individuals imprisoned today for trying to protect their or others rights in a peaceful way.\(^2\) Traditional media (television, newspapers, radio) was used by the Chinese Communist party (CCP) to disseminate propaganda.\(^3\) Although traditional media has become more liberalized\(^4\), the censorship still restricts the content and news that is published.\(^5\) Due to this, many citizens have turned to the Internet for uncensored and free-spoken news and debates. The Internet has revolutionized our daily life in almost every country around the world; now information can be shared in seconds across continents. Social media enables us to talk to people across the globe, putting human interaction “online”. However, information on the Internet is still subjected to censorship for the Chinese citizens.

Being able to share information instantly can also increase the awareness about violations and increase the transparency within governments. The Internet can therefore support democratic values by allowing and aiding people to unite, and it is worth studying what impact a free Internet would have for the Chinese society and politics.

\(^1\) Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2010, p. 8  
\(^2\) Almén, Svensson, Lundahl & Kjellgren, 2008, p. 49  
\(^3\) Lei, 2011, p. 294  
\(^4\) Tang & Sampson, 2012, p. 459  
\(^5\) Ibid, 2012, p. 460
1.2 Background

When Mao Zedong came into power and declared the People’s Republic of China in October 1949, the population was to experience both improvements, after almost a century of foreign aggression and civil war, but also some of China’s darkest years where millions of people lost their life due to his politics. From 1949 to his death in 1976, the people faced a large famine catastrophe, where around 30 million died in two years (1959-1961), consisting mainly citizens from the countryside. The coming years (1966-1976) would be characterized by harassment of what was called reactionary, consisting of teachers, local officials, citizens with “bad” family background or in the later years, anyone that the Red Guards - a group of high school and college students - believed was standing in the way of the Cultural Revolution.

When Mao died he left China broken and dysfunctional in many aspects, millions of people had died or been harassed for their political beliefs. During the Cultural Revolution, improvements on the countryside were made, the investment in public school attendance led to an increase in life expectancy and child mortality decreased. Literacy rose from 10% in 1949 compared to 90% literate in 2008. At the same time that China was opening up both to the world and to a market economy system, the party realized that many social aspects also needed change. Number of newspapers and television channels have risen and now rely on advertising revenue, and base the content from what the audience would like to watch and read. However, censorship is still a reality for the Chinese citizens, journalist or blogger.

Despite the progresses, China remains as one of the most autocratic countries in the world, harassing people with political or religious dissident. With the rapid, but uneven economic development, many new social issues and violations against human rights have arisen. There are many individuals imprisoned today, for trying to protect their or others rights in a peaceful way.

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6 Kjellgren, 2009, p. 43
7 Ibid, 2009, p. 53
8 Ibid, 2009, p. 58
9 Ibid, 2009, p. 65
10 Almén, Svensson, Lundahl & Kjellgren, 2008, p. 37
11 Ibid, 2008, p. 44
12 Ibid, 2008, p. 46
13 Ibid, 2008, p. 49
1.2 Problem Statement

During the last few decades, the world has been shaped by one phenomenon, above any other trend; the rise of democracy. During 1900’s, no state would be considered democratic with a modern view, and the definition of democracy as a political regime (party) that has been elected by popular vote, where all adults are able to vote, to represent the nation. For the majority of state in the world, democracy is the only source to political legitimacy. 140 years ago, states all around the world agreed that human rights were not an international concern. How a state treated its citizens on its own territory was protected under the state’s rights to exercise sovereignty. After the end of Second World War, the awareness of the horrific events that took place during the Holocaust increased, leading to governmental and civil society to both reflect and take action. This activity ultimately culminated to United Nations General Assembly to adopt the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 10th of December, 1948. Since then, human rights were given place in the international agenda. 15

Jack Donnelly argues that Asia in particular, trades off human rights in the benefit of a rapid economic growth, which often are viewed as justified and even desirable by the state. In dictatorships, political and civil rights are sacrificed for economic development16, like in the case of China’s authoritarian rule. These sacrifices of human rights are excused by the appeal of achieving development. He agrees that when poverty, lack of food and other basic needs are not satisfied, states must prioritize economic growth, but to only be used as a short-term solution. 17 However, China has sacrificed the political and civil rights for its citizen for over 30 years to economic development. Although the Chinese citizens have come to enjoy economic prosperity as well as an increased number of the middle class18, the issue is the continuous sacrifice of human rights. In the concept of human rights, there are three generations of rights. First generation rights are e.g. freedom of expression, right to liberty and association. Second generation focuses on economic, cultural and cultural rights, while the third contains the group rights. 19

If freedom of speech, right to liberty and other civil rights are violated, how can any other rights such as economic or social rights be correctly and fully fulfilled? China is known for

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14 Zakaria, 2009, p. 193
15 Donnelly, 2011, p 496
16 Donnelly, 2003, p. 109
17 Ibid, pp. 109-110
18 Tang, 2011, p. 374
19 Smith, 2012, p. 45
forced abortions and sterilization, work camps and custodial care without any legal process, to give some examples.\textsuperscript{20} These violations against reproductive health, social and civil rights are beyond the Chinese citizen’s control since they have limited or no political influence. If the population had political rights, many of these violations would be stopped and they could promote the political system that they prefer. Therefore, the censorship of the Internet could have an influence and impact on the Chinese society, and the government’s strict control over it is problematic.

\textbf{1.3 Purpose and Research Questions}

In the contemporary time, the Internet and social media has gained more space and influence in our daily lives. In China, where the number of users exceeds 560 million\textsuperscript{21}, the Internet is yet to be free and uncensored. Although, many hoped and believed that the rise of Internet would lead to democratization, it became a tool of further control for the CCP.\textsuperscript{22} How would the Chinese society most likely react to a free Internet? Could it impact the political power that the CCP have and maintain through control of media and other institutions? Thus, the aim of the thesis is to identify and study what influence free information on the Internet would for the Chinese society.

\textbf{The questions this thesis aims to answer are the following:}

- What influence would access to free (or freer) information on the Internet have on the Chinese society?
- What impacts can the growing influence of the Internet lead to in terms of the CCP’s political power?

\textbf{1.4 Importance of This Study}

Development, economic growth, globalization and human rights are key factors in democracy, which are often intertwined. Some scholars have argued that the better living conditions and economic security the citizens receive, the more will they demand for democratic institutions and political influence. Yet China are the example of the opposite, where rapid economic growth have lasted for over 30 years, hundreds of millions of people have been brought out of poverty, the middle class is growing and the general population has gained better living conditions and access to social services (although the access can vary greatly between urban

\textsuperscript{20} Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2010, pp.4-6
\textsuperscript{21} China Internet Network Information Center, 2013, p. 15
\textsuperscript{22} Lei, 2011, pp. 293-294
cities and rural countryside). Still, China has showed little movement towards democracy despite fulfilling many of the requirements that scholars coherently agree are necessary steps for achievement. Therefore, this subject is essential to study in a development context, not only due to the human rights aspect, but the climax of China’s economic development is growing closer, which may lead to an overthrow of the CCP in benefit of democratic rule, once economic prosperity is not enough as an excuse of the limited rights of the people.

1.5 Theoretical Framework
The chosen theoretical framework for this thesis is Seymour Martin Lipset’s modernization theory, and a review of the same by Przeworski and Limongi. Lipset believes that democracy is the final stage of modernization, and that there are conditions such as urbanization, education, industrialization, wealth and economic development that need to be fulfilled before the country is ready for democratic transition. Przeworski and Limongi reviewed this theory, and concluded that economic development does not have any connection to the emergence of democracy, but were important when the country has a democratic political rule. They also found that dictatorship would become more stable once it reached over a specific level of national income per capita, and the most likely level of income where a dictatorship would become democratized. Contemporary scholars with Lipset have argued that dictatorship is inevitable price to reach democracy.

1.6 Method
The chosen method have been a single case study, due to the chosen subject’s large size, that includes aspects of democratization, development and freedom of speech. A single case study is characterized by concentrating on one person, one group, an event, a country or a phenomenon, and is therefore appropriate for this thesis. This approach is not limited to examine the isolated phenomenon, but can also be seen together with its related context. The empirical data have been collected by conducting semi-structured interview with four respondents. The respondents have different backgrounds, ranging from scholars, government officials to NGO’s. Secondary sources such as scientific articles and books related to this field will also be used.

23 Lipset, 1959, p. 71
24 Przeworski & Limongi, 1997, p. 177
26 Ibid, 1997, p. 177
27 Johannessen & Tufte, 2003, p. 56-57
1.7 Definitions

Some terms will frequently reoccur in this thesis, and is therefore preferable to define these in order to ensure that the researcher and the reader interpret these terms in similar ways. This will reduce misunderstandings and confusion, as well increasing the validity.

1.7.1 Democracy

Democracy is a way for the state to rule the society, where consideration will be taken to the common needs of the people. In West, the liberal democracy means that the power comes from free election, where the people’s freedom and rights are guaranteed such as freedom of speech, security of person and right to demonstration etc. United Nations defines democracy as system of government were there are institutions and processes through which the citizens can express preferences about alternative policies (on national level). There should also be established restrictions on the exercise of power by the executive. Suffrage and right to participation in the selection of national leaders and policies should also exist.

Development can include various type definitions, depending on what context development is discussed in, however, in this thesis, development will refer to human development and economic development (or growth).

1.7.2 Human Development

Human development is a paradigm that emphasizes in extending choices and strengthening capabilities of the people. It was defined as a progression of increasing people’s choices. The most essential of these choices is to live a long and vigorous life, have access education and to resources necessary for a decent living standard. In addition, other choices included political freedom, human rights and personal self-respect. Human development can be measured by four indicators such as Human Development Index (HDI), Gender-Related Index (GDI), Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) and Human Poverty Index (HPI). These index measures the life expectancy of the population, adult literacy, enrollment ration in school, inequalities between men and women, political and economic participation of women and their opportunities.

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28 Forsknings - Vad är demokrati?, 2008-08-08
29 United Nations Social and Economic Council, 2006-01-05, p. 6
30 Jolly, Emmerijl & Weiss, 2009, p. 2
1.7.3 Human Rights

United Nations defines human rights as following; “Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, whatever our nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, language, or any other status. We are all equally entitled to our human rights without discrimination. These rights are all interrelated, interdependent and indivisible. Universal human rights are often expressed and guaranteed by law, in the forms of treaties, customary international law, general principles and other sources of international law. International human rights law lays down obligations of Governments to act in certain ways or to refrain from certain acts, in order to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals or groups.”  

The Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the General Assembly in December 1948 as a result of the Second World War. The declaration consists of 30 articles and is seen as a standard achievement for all nations and people.

1.7.4 Economic Development

Economic development is referred to a qualitative change and reformation in a country’s economy related to technological and social progress. Main indicator to measure economic development is GNP (Gross National Product) or GDP (Gross Domestic Product) per capita, which reflects to the growth in the economic production and the general material wellbeing of the country’s population.

1.7.5 Economic Growth

Economic development and economic growth are closely connected, while economic development indicates a qualitative change, economic growth refers to a quantitative change or increase of the country’s economy. Growth can derive from using more resources (physical, human or natural assets), or by using the same amount of resource but more efficiently. This can be measured in GNP and GDP. A result of economic growth is, it leads to a greater per capita income and improvement in the people’s average living standard.

31 United Nations (a), 2013
32 United Nations (b), 2013
33 United Nations (c), 2013
34 World Bank, 2004
35 Ibid, 2004
1.8 Disposition

In this chapter, the background of China’s current political state and Internet censorship has been presented as well as the problem, background and research questions. In the next chapter, previous studies that have been conducted in within this subject will be presented. In the third chapter, the theoretical framework of Seymour Martin Lipset’s modernization theory and a review of his theory will also be discussed to complete the theoretical framework. Further chapters will discuss the qualitative case-study method and structures of the interviews will presented, the results of the empirical data collection, and last chapters will contain the analysis and discussion. The final chapter will summarize the findings and advices for future research, and this chapter will be in both English and Swedish.

2. Previous Studies

Numerous studies have been conducted in the field of China, democratization and economic development. Seymour Lipset identifies fundamental key elements that required to achieve democracy (his theory will be elaborated in the next chapter); economic development, urbanization, literacy, media, education, wealth and industrialization. Since democracy is multidimensional, with various aspects that requires some form of fulfillment (or passed a crucial level), as Lipset also advocates, has been important to find studies that focus on the different dimensions.

Many have debated and studied the correlation, like Lipset, between economic development and democracy. In the context of China’s rapid growth, Mary E. Gallagher argues that China’s economic reforms have in fact haltered democracy. She believes, as many other scholars, that economic development is a significant factor for democratization. Some explain the trend of democratization in East Asia during the 1970’s and 1980’s with rapid growth, and the rising of the middle class and social movements. Gallagher states that China has maintained rapid economic growth for the past decades without surrendering to political liberalization. She argues that a key factor in the ability to economically reform without loosen any political control, is the foreign direct investment (FDI) liberalization. FDI has preceded both the privatization of China’s state industry and the development of domestic private sector, and has been the dominant external capital. FDI liberalization has affected the relationship between workers and the CCP, and resulted in a strengthened Chinese state, a

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36 Gallagher, 2002, p. 338
weakened civil society and ultimately a delay in the political liberalization. Gallagher also brings up different globalization theories that also predict that increased goods, money and ideas would push towards democracy. China’s economic development and increased openness (economically) has stabilized their authoritarian rule, and the leaders of the CCP have simply made globalization and growth work for them without losing power. 

Another scholar has also discussed, like Gallagher, about economic prosperity and democracy, utilizing Lipset’s theory. Henry S. Rowen argues that civil rights in China have improved slightly, while political rights still remain at the worst. Rowen’s article brings up other aspects of democracy beside economy, and argues that there has been a progress in the legal institutions, although the issue of corruption remains, more regulations has been made about the procedures in e.g. courts. He means that a more educated population will demand an improved legal institution. Today, there are village-elections, where the 1998 Organic Law of Village Committee required that they would be populated elected, held responsible and given authority in land allocation and education. Although the fairness and openness surrounding these elections varies and the procedures are not always followed, Rowen sees this as way for possible township elections, and a way for the CCP to deal with disorder by empowering the people. This could lead to slow, but steady steps towards a national election.

To understand what the censorship in China is and how it manifests, Rebecca MacKinnon’s article been chosen for the discussion and description about the phenomenon of the Great Firewall. This referred to the Chinese state’s censorship of the Internet. The Great Firewall blocks websites and hinder the user from finding any results on sensitive subjects (e.g. democracy, freedom, revolution). MacKinnon argues that CCP sees Internet as crucial tool for education, poverty reduction and a public service for its people, while it is at the same time, a threat to their political power and influence. She describes the different tactics that the CCP uses to censor the content on the internet, regulations that both domestic and foreign companies must follow, surveillance of the users activities, launching cyber-attacks towards activists, device and network control (installing surveillance software on computers, that censors and logs all activity), controlled public outreach (hired individuals to steer online

39 Rowen, 2007, p. 37
40 Ibid, 2007, pp. 42-43
41 Ibid, 2007, pp. 44-45
42 MacKinnon, 2011, p. 36
43 Ibid, 2011, p. 37
conversation and writing about the party in a good light) are a few of the approaches that CCP uses. A powerful tactic is also to shut down all internet and text-message service in areas where there is some form of riot or demonstration against the government in order to halt a potential spread.\textsuperscript{44} This is also something that Tang and Sampson have studied. They discuss around the mass media in China as a whole, stating that the conventional media is owned and run by the government, and are seen as the vocal sound of the party. Before the economic reforms in the 1980’s the mass media was the CCP’s propaganda tool, spreading state policies and decisions to the public. After the reforms however, the authors argue that the mass media has been liberate itself from the party to a certain extent. This is due to the commercial influence that has risen after the media marketization, and conventional media is now concern about audience appeal.\textsuperscript{45} The authors state that the Internet provides another channel of to voice their distresses for the common Chinese citizen. However, the Internet is not free and remains in effective control by the party, but the Internet is possibly easier to subvert than the conventional media which is controlled in a wider scale. Some strategies to bypass the censorship is by inserting punctuation in words that are considered sensitive (example: sensi.tive), using pin-yin (system for writing Chinese with the Roman alphabet), protesting against moderators if they delete the netizens posts. Since the websites are dependent on active contributors, the moderators have to exercise some restraint. These counter-control strategies makes it easier for netizens to discuss politics and social issues, and working in large numbers makes it more safe, since it’s difficult to monitor everyone.\textsuperscript{46}

To better understand the political views and actions from this group that are online often, Ya-Wen Lei has examined the link between the Internet user’s habit and their political view or willingness to actively participate in political collective action. She has conducted a survey in China to examine what the individuals use the Internet mainly for, dividing them in three groups; netizens, traditional media users and non-media users. Netizens refers to someone that uses internet to find information, also called wangmin. Traditional media users seek news or to watch TV shows online. Non-media users do not use Internet to do anything of the activities mentioned earlier.\textsuperscript{47} Her conclusion was that Chinese netizens are more politically opinionated than the other two groups, as well more willing to participate more actively in

\textsuperscript{44} MacKinnon, 2011, pp. 39-41
\textsuperscript{45} Tang & Sampson, 2012, p. 459
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid, 2012, p. 460
\textsuperscript{47} Lei, 2011, p. 299
collective action. She also writes about the CCP’s way of using the media and censorship for own propaganda, bolstering their legitimacy and continuing their ultimate control over it. Access to computers and Internet are usually something a relative wealthy family can afford, and in China’s case, mainly the middle class. Many scholars argue that a middle class is an important factor in the transition to, or the sustaining of democracy. Min Tang has researched around the political behavior and the possible role that the Chinese middle class might play in democratization. Lipset argued that economic development affects the political role of middle class, which Tang also refers to. The strengthening of a middle class leans the power balance towards pro-democratic forms. However, Tang argues that previous empirical studies have shown that the middle class has a dependency nature. The middle class have connections and are relying on state agencies and political elites for their prosperity, making them hesitant to challenge the current political economic arrangement. The dependency status can be applied in the context of the Chinese middle class, since the CCP controls the financial flow, and to where it should be distributed. Many of members of the middle class are employed by state, as governmental officials or agencies. Therefore, the security of work and source of wealth lies in the state’s hands. Tang argues that China has reached economic development by subjecting the middle class and entrepreneurs to political and economic dependency.

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48 Lei, 2011, p. 291
49 Ibid, 2011 p. 294
50 Tang, 2011, p. 374
51 Ibid, 2011, p. 374
52 Ibid, 2011, p. 375
3. Theoretical Framework

In the following chapter, the choice of theory for the analysis will be presented, including a discussion why the specific theory is preferable for this thesis. A critical assessment of the theory will also be included.

3.1 Choice of Theory

The chosen theoretical framework for this study is Seymour Martin Lipset’s modernization theory. He first composed his theory in his article “Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy”53, published in 1959. In this article, he reviews the conditions that a society is required to fulfill in order to transit into a democracy. Though Lipset’s theory is over 50 years old, it is still frequently used and mentioned in various scientific articles and studies, making it timeless. The theory is mainly known as modernization theory, although the concept refers to several theories by different scholars in the same field. Modernization theory in this thesis will therefore refer solely to Lipset’s theory.

In order to use his theory in my analysis, I have also chosen to complete the framework with Przeworski & Limongi’s review (1997) of Lipset’s theory.

Lipset’s theory is well-suited for this thesis, mainly due to the multi-dimensional approach he uses to explain the relationship between economic development and the emergence of democracy. Since China has gained rapid and strong economic growth in the last three decades, it is legitimate to question why China has still only shown none or little indications for democratization. In my analysis, I aim for this theory to be explanatory.

Modernization theory has received various criticisms; some criticized that the focus were only on the domestic factors, ignoring the external or foreign factors or issues. Another critic was the simplified conceptualization around tradition, modernity and its relationship. Criticism was also raised to the failed understanding of the political significance of traditional phenomenon; e.g. religion, ethnicity, caste. Main arguments were that modernist could not provide a coherent and holistic explanation for why certain events turned out in one way and not another. Wider perspectives and factors like global economic system and the influence of Western interest were also lacking.54

53 Lipset, 1959
54 Haynes, 2002, pp. 11-12
3.2 Modernization Theory

Seymour Martin Lipset argues there are two principal characteristics of the social systems that bear on the problem of stable democracy: economic development and legitimacy.55 The most widespread generalization relating political system with other characteristics of a society has been the correlation between democracy and economic development. Starting from Aristotle to present time, scholars have argued that only in wealthy society with few people in poverty, would there be a condition where the population would intelligently participate in politics.56

Lipset also debates around the issue of defining how certain countries are “more democratic” and “less democratic”.57 Democracy is not a quality of social systems which either exists or not in his beliefs, but a compound of characteristics which can be ranked in different ways.58 Lipset wanted to test this hypothesis by examining the variables of education, economic development, wealth, industrialization and urbanization, while studying democratic and “less democratic” countries (mainly Europe and Latin America).59

It has been proposed that the more educated the population is, the better are the chances for democracy.60 Lipset uses David Lerner’s argument about how urbanization lays the foundation for literacy and media growth. Literacy develops media which in its turn spread literacy.61 For the low class (e.g. poor, working class) economic development would mean an increased income, higher economic security and higher education.62 Increased wealth does not only relate to the development of democracy by changing social conditions, but it also affects the political role of the middle class. Lipset illustrates this to a change of the stratification structure from a pyramid with a large bottom consisting of the lower class into a diamond with a large middle class.63

Stability of a democratic system does not solely depend on the efficiency in the modernization, but also of effectiveness and legitimacy of the (current) political system. Effectiveness refers to the actual performance of the political system, how it fulfills the basic functions of the

55 Lipset, 1959, p. 71
56 Ibid, 1959 p. 75
58 Lipset, 1959, p. 73
59 Ibid, 1959, p. 75
60 Ibid, 1959, p. 78
61 Ibid, 1959, p. 82
62 Ibid, 1959, p. 83
63 Ibid, 1959, p. 83
government and how it meets the expectations of the majority of the individuals in the society. Legitimacy refers to the capability for the political system to maintain the beliefs in that the existing political institutions are the most appropriate ones for the population.64

3.3 Review of Modernization Theory

There could be two assumptions to the correlation between economic development and democracy; either democracy emerges through development, or it emerges independently of development, but is more likely to sustain longer, argues Przeworski and Limongi. Two explanations exist for this; endogenous and exogenous. 65 The endogenous explanation is modernization theory, as mentioned earlier, believes that democracy is the final product of development, once the state has fulfilled other conditions; it is prepared for new political rule. Even if one assumes that dictatorship dies as likely as democracies emerges from development, one could argue that democracies emerges also from various reasons like war, economic crisis or foreign pressure. Democracy from development would not have a privileged role in modernization.66 The exogenous explanation is that democracy survives better in a modern country, but is not a product of modernization. Democracy would appear randomly with regard to the development, but more likely to die in poor countries and sustain in wealthy ones.67

They continue by arguing that if the theory about democracy emerging from development is true, then it would be more likely that authoritarian regimes would transit into democracies. The authors states that transitions are likely, but only if it is lower than $6,000 power purchasing power parities (PPP) per capita. Above that sum, the richer the dictatorships become the more stable will they be. 68 If the per capita is lower than $1,000, the dictatorship will survive or succeed one another. Transition becomes more likely from $1,001 to $4,000 per capita, but will be most likely above $4,000 (but not over $6,000).69 The authors argues that the number of dictatorships that became wealthy, threw off dictatorships and embraced democracy are few (South Korea, Portugal, Brazil are brought as examples). They argue that

64 Lipset, 1959, p. 86
65 Przeworski & Limongi, 1997, pp. 156-157
66 Ibid, 1997, p. 158
67 Ibid, 1997, p. 159
68 Ibid, 1997, p. 159
69 Ibid, 1997, p. 160
there exist different reasons why countries throw of dictatorships; they do not necessarily have to share the same causes.\textsuperscript{70}

Lipset believed that democracies were more likely to become destabilized when countries would grow rapidly, seeing “extremist movements” as a threat to democracy (referring mostly to fascism and communism), since these movements where a product of rapid development. However, Przeworski and Limongi disproves Lipset’s argument by their empirical study (which is presented in the same article), concluding that rapid growth does not destabilize democracy. Rather so, a growing democracy has a longer life expectancy (64 years) than a democracy that is declining incomes (19 years). Poor democratic countries however, are very fragile in economic crisis and are only expected to last nine years.\textsuperscript{71} The conclusion that Przeworski and Limongi make is that the emergence of democracy is not a bi-product of economic growth and development, but rather established by political actors pursuing goals (for both democracy and dictatorship). Initiating democracy can be established at any level of development, and only when it has been, do economic factors play a role. The wealthier the country is, the more likely that the democracy will survive.\textsuperscript{72}

On this topic of political order and democracies, Samuel Huntington and Guillermo O’Donnell are two scholars whom have both researched and questioned Lipset’s conditions for democracy. Both scholars argued that there exists a level where continuous development will decrease the likeliness of democracies to survive.\textsuperscript{73} For Huntington it did not matter whether the regime was authoritarian or democratic, and argued that countries would face destabilization regardless of the regime during modernization, occurring somewhere the intermediate level of development.\textsuperscript{74} He argued to have some trends that instead of competiveness and democracy in the “political modernization” areas, there was what he called “erosion of democracy”. It was tendency towards one-party regimes and autocratic military regimes, instead of stability, there was reoccurring revolts and coup d’états.\textsuperscript{75}

O’Donnell claims that democracies dies when a country drains the early stages of import substitution, which also would occur around the same level that Huntington argued for, the intermediate level. He refers to his own study in South America during 1970’s that the lower

\textsuperscript{70} Przeworski & Limongi, 1997, pp. 162-163
\textsuperscript{71} Ibid, 1997, p. 167
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid, 1997, p. 177
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid, 1997, p. 169
\textsuperscript{74} Huntington, 1968, p. 1
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid 1968, pp. 35-36
and higher level of modernization shows a connection to non-democratic political systems, while an intermediate modernization are associated with democratic political systems.\textsuperscript{76} While Lipset saw development as exogenous, his contemporaries believed that dictatorship was the inevitable price for development. Huntington and Jorge Dominguez that if less developed country were to grow economically, the country must limit the population’s democratic participation in political affairs. Hence, dictatorships are needed to promote development.\textsuperscript{77} Huntington argued that political participation must be held down, at least in order to promote growth. The authors state that the best way for democracy was a circuitous one, since dictatorship leads to development, and development in turn promoted democracy.\textsuperscript{78}

\textsuperscript{76} O’Donnell, 1978, p. 204
\textsuperscript{77} Huntington & Dominguez, 1975, p. 60
\textsuperscript{78} Przeworski & Limongi, 1997, p. 177
4. Methodology

In this chapter, the chosen methodology for the empirical data collection and analysis will be presented. The benefits and disadvantages of the case study approach will be discussed, as well as the limitations and challenges that the semi-structured interview approach has.

4.1 Qualitative Single Case Study

The chosen method for this thesis is the qualitative case study approach. Johannessen and Tufte describe a case study to be characterized by two things: a definition of the included aspects in study, as well as a definition of the factors that are outside the limitations of the thesis. The authors state that a case study is to gather as much information possible in a limited, selected phenomenon (the case).\(^\text{79}\) Due to the chosen subject’s large size, that includes aspects of democratization, development and freedom of speech, a single case study is the most appropriate. A single case study is characterized by concentrating on one person, one group, an event, a country or a phenomenon. A single case study is not limited to examine the isolated phenomenon, but can also be seen together with its related context.\(^\text{80}\)

The aim of this thesis is to identify what influence access to free information on the Internet has for the Chinese society, and to find relevant information, interviews have been chosen as the methodology. Thus, the case study approach will mainly rely on qualitative empirical data collected from four interviewees, but also use secondary sources such as scientific articles and books related to this field.

4.1.1 Benefits and Disadvantages

The benefits of a qualitative method, as mentioned above, have its strength in the study of a single phenomenon. Within the phenomenon, it may contain other aspects or factors that are essential and closely related to the phenomenon. By doing a single case study, the researcher is able to fully dedicate on the subject, without having to overlook the context. Due to the many dimensions the subject of the Internet’s influence in democratization and the society, a single case study is the most appropriate, as well doable within the 10 week timeframe for this thesis.

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\(^{79}\) Johannessen & Tufte, 2003, p. 56
\(^{80}\) Ibid, 2003, p. 56-57
There are some criticisms towards a qualitative method. Bryman argues for example that it is a challenge to replicate a qualitative research, since the chosen topic and approach depends on her/his personal interest. The individuals (in this context, the interviewees) that are chosen are affected by the researcher’s age, gender and personality. Since qualitative data are unstructured, the interpretation of it will also be affected by the researcher’s subjective evaluation and understanding. Some have also criticized the method for having issues with generalization outside the situation they were “produced”. The researcher may study a minor group or few individuals; however the critics argue that it is impossible to generalize the result in other environment/contexts. Other critics argue that there is a lack of transparency; it can be quite unclear why the researcher chose certain questions, interviewed or observed certain individuals. Bryman states that the qualitative data analysis is rarely explained, for the reader to understand how the researcher analyzed the data, and researcher came to the conclusion that she/he did.

4.2 Collection of Empirical Data

To increase the validity of this thesis, interviews have been conducted with scholars, government official and NGO whom have specified in the field of human rights, political rights, civil rights and Internet-related issues. The structure of the interviews has been semi-structured, with at least one individual in each target group (scholars, government employees and NGOs). In the group of scholars, two respondents have been able to participate. The aim is to gain a deeper understanding and knowledge surrounding the connection between internet censorship and its effect on the CCP (negative and positive). The semi-structured interview approach have been chosen for balancing the specific themes that I want the respondents to answer, while at the same time allowing them to answer the questions freely.

To have better overview of the current situation, it will be preferred to interview as many as possible within the timeframe to gather a general idea of the censorship’s effect by having various perspectives.

An interview schedule was written in advance, which included my purpose, the structure of the interview and questions. The aim was for the respondents to better understand my purpose of the interview, but also giving them room to prepare, since many of my questions includes large terms (democracy, human rights, development etc.) and knowledge within a specific

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81 Bryman, 2011, p. 270
82 Ibid, 2011, pp. 270-271
83 Ibid, 2011, p. 301
field. The benefit of writing an interview schedule in advance is, as a researcher, to grasp an overview of the questions that need to be answered according to the aim for the thesis. It is important that the interview questions are not formulated in a way that excludes alternative ideas or perspectives that can arise during the collection of data. The researcher should not have preconceptions while conducting the research, since it will affect the answer that is given by the respondents.  

4.2.1 Interview Structure
The structure of the interview has been to mail the respondents a short explanation of my purpose, sharing the rights that they have, as well the interview questions. This approach was chosen since the subject touches several related topics (as mentioned in the section above regarding empirical data collection). By doing so, the respondent could gain a clear understanding of the theme of the interview, and in an early stage be able to ask me to clarify any terms or question that she/he does not grasp (due to vague definition or the question was not put in the right context) completely. In the beginning of the interview, a quick summary of the aim of the thesis will be given, as well asking permission for quotation (or if they prefer anonymity). After the interview, the respondent has a chance to take part of the finished thesis.

4.2.2 Conducting the Interviews
Bryman exemplifies some important requirements when conducting an interview using Kvale’s list to conduct a successful interview. Kvale argues that the researcher must ask short, simple questions to make the respondent clear of the question asked. He also emphasizes on that the researcher should reflect and develop the significance of the respondent’s answer, without impose the researchers own interpretation. To be able to remember what has been discussed earlier in the interview and relate it to the answers given is another requirement. Merriam states that the interaction between the interviewer and the respondent is important as well, the interviewer should be neutral and avoid to argument and not to be judge the respondents answer, even if it goes against the values and norms that the interviewer might have.

Bryman, Merriam and Kvale’s tips and requirements for good interview structure have been taking into deep consideration and have been followed accordingly as much as possible.

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84 Bryman, 2009, p. 305
85 For further reading, see Steinar Kvale (1996), InterViews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing, California: Sage
86 Bryman, 2009, p. 306
87 Merriam, 1994, p. 91
Therefore, after a question is asked, the respondent will be able to answer freely, touching other subject if they wish. The purpose is to not interrupting the respondent with follow-up questions, until she/he feels that the questions have been answered. Before follow-up questions, the aim is to summarize the answer that was given, making sure that the respondent was not misunderstood. Before ending the interview, I will also ask the respondent if she/he would like to add anything that they felt that have might be missed or not brought up.

The interviews have been conducted in Swedish, since both researcher and the respondents speak it fluently. Swedish have been preferable to allow the respondents to talk more freely and prevent them from possibly be limited by language barriers. The collected materials from the interviews have been translated into English, and the reader should be aware that some meaning or words might have been lost, however I have been as accurate as possible while translating. Appendixes of the interview structure have been enclosed at the end of the thesis, in both English and Swedish, allowing the reader to take part of the questions asked to better understand the themes and answers that will later be presented under chapter 5.

4.2.3 Challenges
Secondary material has been easy to find, but it has been a minor challenge to find relevant articles to my research questions. Many studies have an economical perspective and are focused to explain the rapid growth, rather than fully examining it’s relation to democracy.

The primary sources, in the forms of interviews, has been a big challenge to find relevant organizations, scholars or experts that have time or are willing to participate in this thesis. One respondent was unable to participate and had to decline due to an official trip, and finding a substitute proved to be a quite challenge against time. However, I was able to come in contact with a scholar and Sinologist working at Royal Institute of Technology. During the interviews that were conductible, it has been a challenge to be able to ask every question that had been prepared, while at the same time respecting the limited time that each individual could offer. However, it become clear that some questions were superfluous and others were very similar to each other, which resulted that the respondent answered these questions unintentionally while trying to answer another one. The best approach was to add some questions together, while others were completely removed.
4.2.4 Limitations

Due to the timeframe given for this thesis, it has restricted the number of interviews that can are possible to conduct as well as the amount of time that can be used to research relevant respondents. This includes sending the respondents inquiries of interest and giving time for them to respond. There is limited number of organizations, scholars and government employees that has relevant knowledge/experience within the chosen field in Stockholm, Sweden. Inquiries were sent to organization overseas, however no answer or reply was received. Therefore, it has been hard to find a larger number of respondents that was able to participate or have enough knowledge about censorship and political rights in China. For this reason, it has only been possible to conduct four interviews, with respondents from different backgrounds (presented in chapter 5). A higher number of respondents would have been preferable, in order to increase validity as well as be able to make a generalization of the analysis and findings. It is important for the reader to be aware that this thesis lacks enough material to make a detailed generalization of the situation occurring in China. Another issue is that some respondents were not able to answer all of the interview questions due to lack of experience and/or knowledge within certain arenas. Nevertheless, all the information available has been used to make an as accurate analysis and conclusion.

4.3 Critical Assessments of the Material

4.3.1 Primary sources

In order to be able to generalize at all in this phenomenon, by using the collected empirical data, it is preferred to have as many participants in order to increase the validity. However, this thesis will rely on four interviews, with respondents with different backgrounds and employment within the relevant field. It is important to remember that the generalization that is made and the given information by these interviewees are based on their personal knowledge and experience. If more interviews had been conducted, it could have impacted the result. This is also a criticism towards the qualitative approach, since the numbers of respondents usually are few and therefore difficult or impossible to generalize a population. However, the thesis aims to understand a phenomenon and not to generalize an opinion of a large group of individuals, and a generalization to theory is therefore justified. As mentioned in under limitations, some of the respondents have been unable to answer questions due to lack of enough knowledge to be able to speculate or give an accurate answer.

Bryman, 2009, pp. 270-271
This issue affects the quality of the thesis, and the result of this thesis could have been different if more respondents would have participated.

4.3.2 Secondary sources
The secondary sources have solely consisted of scientific studies and articles. Scientific articles have been preferable due to their high creditability (peer-reviewed), which gives this thesis more “ground” and increase its validity. In chapter 2, previous studies within this subject were presented. Gallagher discussed around FDI and its impact on the Chinese government. Although she provides this thesis with a more economic perspective on this issue, Gallagher can focus too much on the economic aspect of democracy. She argues that FDI has helped to strengthen the Chinese state and weakened the civil society, however FDI are just one of many causes that helps the CCP to remain in power. A broader discussion around this would have been preferable. MacKinnon’s article are very informative, however the article could sometimes give a vibe that the author was not completely objective in the way of her writing. The nature of her article can be perceived as an argumentative one, however her article was objective, although could seem as subjective occasionally, and she used various scholars’ studies to strengthen her arguments.

4.4 Validity and Reliability

There are two types of validity, intern and extern. The intern validity refers to what degree the result of study is consistent to the reality. Does the researcher study what she/he aims to study? The information that is collected is always dependent on interpretation (by the researcher for example). To increase the internal validity, the researcher should reconstruct the interpretation or result that she/he has concluded.\textsuperscript{89} External validity however, refers to what degree that the results from a study can be applied in other situations. In order words, extern validity is how well the results can be generalized. In qualitative studies, extern validity might be harder to achieve due to methods of case studies and limited selection of objects to study.\textsuperscript{90}

Reliability refers to what extent the result of a study can be replicated. Will the result be the same if a second researcher did the same study? Reliability is more problematic for social science researchers than those studying in natural science. Phenomenon is constantly changing in social science as well with people’s views and behavior.\textsuperscript{91}

\textsuperscript{89} Merriam, 1994, pp. 177-178
\textsuperscript{90} Ibid, 1994, p. 183
\textsuperscript{91} Ibid, 1994, p. 180
The four respondents for that were interviewed for this thesis is not enough for a high external validity, and should be seen as low. A higher number of respondents could increase the validity; however, since this phenomenon is changing year to year, the generalization could quickly be seen as out of date. Internal validity in this thesis is at the intermediate level due to the low number of respondents. With limited empirical data, high internal reliability cannot be argued for, however, the steps and decisions that have been chosen have been chosen have been thoroughly explained throughout the thesis. Reliability, like the external validity should be seen as low. This is primary due to the difficulty to make a generalization of a phenomenon that is constantly changing. Within this subject, were the respondents have answered several subjective questions, it is difficult to achieve the same results unless interviewing the exact same respondents again. Even if they were interviewed, new events or information could change the answer they would give; therefore, this study has a low reliability.
5. Result of Empirical Data

In this chapter, the respondents and their expertise within Chinese politics and human rights will be presented as well the result of the collected empirical data, which has been divided into separate themes. A more detailed background presentation will be located under Appendix B in the end of the thesis.

5.1 Presentation of the Respondents

The first respondent is Professor Marina Thorborg, a scholar and professor in economic history, next respondent is Bob Vellucci, working with human rights, country information and as Urgent Action Coordinator at Amnesty International. My third respondent is Mattias Chu, deputy director (for department for Asia and the Pacific), specialized in Chinese political affairs, at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Sweden. My fourth and last respondent is Björn Kjellgren, a Sinologist and deputy principal at Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm, Sweden.

Please note that the respondent’s answers and opinions do not reflect in any way Amnesty International, Södertörn University, Royal Institute of Technology, or Ministry for Foreign Affairs as a single unit. Although the respondents might base some information and expertise from their current employment, their answer should be seen as subjective to each individual and representing their employer and organization in any form.

5.2 Chinese Citizens and Their Political Influence

China is considered a multi-party state, although in practice China is a one-party state without free elections.\(^92\) Any opposition towards the CCP’s political power is forbidden, one example is the Chinese Democratic Party (CDP) that was formed in 1998, but has since its formation been subjected to harassment and oppression.\(^93\) The Chinese government claim to guarantee some general freedom of speech, right to opinion, right to demonstrations, freedom of religion, however all these rights are in practice oppressed on various levels, argues Mattias Chu. Each year, ten thousands of the so called “mass incidences” (protests and demonstrations caused by discontentment in the population) are directed by the citizens.\(^94\) Freedom of speech is very

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93 Ibid, 2010, pp. 10-11
94 Ibid, 2010, p.1
limited in China; however there are 500 million internet users in China alone, who debates and criticizes online. Some material can be out on blogs or webpages for an extended period (before being removed/censured), depending on the sensitivity of the subject.

The possibility to influence the government in China is dependent on what social class you belong to, argues Marina Thorborg. To exemplify this, she gives an example about the magnetic railways that was planned to be extended in Shanghai. The intended route would go across a wealthy neighborhood with rich habitants. The men in this area feared impotence due to the exposure to the magnetic field and ultimately had it cancelled. When asked how this group was able to influence the government to not extend the railway, she answered that many of the rich groups in China are relatives or friends to party members of the CCP. The party does not allow relatives to become a member; therefore it is common that the rest of the family members work in corporation as businessmen. Businessmen, on the other side, are allowed to enter the party. By having close connections to the party, they are able to influence more than the rest of the other groups in society can. While there are a small group in society that has connections and are able to demand changes, Bob Vellucci believes that village elections are a method for the government to keep the population calm, giving them some sense of freedom, although the real power that the population actually have can be discussed. However, many of the candidates are chosen directly by the party, states Thorborg If the elected candidate are not a member, or supports the party, and refuses to join, the candidate would be removed from his/her position.

5.3 Conditions and Other Contributing Variables for Democracy

50% of all today’s developing countries are democracies, while the post-industrialized ones are 100% democratized. China’s development and dictatorship is should be considered normal, compared with the other countries in the same position. The country is still in the process of growth, and has not yet reached its culmination, argues Thorborg. She emphasizes on the importance of education and the role of the middle class. She argues that although China claim that 93-97% of all the children are attending school, the government have lowered the number of characters that is needed to be considered enough for being literate. The characters have been dropped from 3000 to 1500 characters. She argues that it is not only important to be able to read, but also to pronounce the words similarly, and if the population lacks these skills, the chances are smaller for change and democratization.
The middle class in China has not grown large enough to be able to become a factor for change. Thorborg refers to the democratic transition in South Korea and Japan, where the middle class were big and demanded political influence. Only in the post-industrialized areas, e.g. Shanghai, Beijing and cities around the costal line have a larger middle class, and it can debated over how much influence they could have. It is important to remember that 40% of China’s whole population lives on the countryside, often employed in agriculture. CCP initially desired a big working class rather a big middle class, which was more adjacent to the ideology, but realized that China could not take the next step in development by following this. The party desires China to have high technology and be competitive on the international market, which could only be achieved with a large middle class. The situation in China is more complicated than many believes, however Thorborg argues that the more educated the population is, the more will the middle class grow and that it is just a matter of time until they will be large enough to demand influence.

China needs an equivalent to the Swedish Parliamentary Ombudsmen, argues Björn Kjellgren. In China, there exist bodies within authorities that work solely to take complaints from the citizens about exercise of authority. No authority is as independent like the Parliamentary Ombudsmen, and this is something China really needs, however Kjellgren states that is a big wish to hope for. He also hopes, along others that the Chinese courts will become freer from political pressure, which has been a classical issue: lack of strong line between the state and the party. The party would continue to have the political power, but the court will rule by the law and not have to take into consideration if Xi Jing Ping is advocating against or for something during that particular time. Parliamentary Ombudsmen is therefore on the top of Kjellgren’s list in order to transit into democratization. The second important factor is free labor organizations. The labor organizations that exist in China now are more like social clubs that arrange field trips, he says. The development of democracy is driven by the existence of interest organizations that can be the voice of the people. Kjellgren states that if he had to choose, he would rather have free labor organizations rather than multiple-party system. For example, the famers would have their own one party, one for liberalists and rich people would have another party etc. However, if free or freer labor organization would exist, it would benefit the population on the bottom of the society, since they are suffering most, having their rights violated most and would benefit most out of human rights. But China is not ripe enough for this yet, he argues. If the state do not want to become very unpopular, they need to take

\footnote{Xi Jing Ping is the current general secretary for the CCP}
the citizens needs more seriously, and this could be a smaller step than allowing free labor organizations. The government could do this by improving the legal security or enforce something like the Parliament Ombudsmen, and since they would belong to the government, the party would not lose power.

5.4 Human Rights in China

There are two generations of rights, in which the first one is about political rights and the second about the economic and social rights. Very simplified, says Kjellgren, the first generation rights is about the state to not interfere with the citizen’s rights, while the second is about the state that needs to interfere in the private sphere to improve the citizen’s life.

The second generation of rights in China has some Marxists background, believing that the citizens need a strong government machinery to protect them from used by private companies and such. With this background in mind, it is not surprisingly that China argues that they believe the second generation is more important than the political rights, considering the state that China is currently in. Freedom does not mean anything if people are starving, something that Kjellgren argue has some validity. Some argue that China’s population is not starving anymore, although they still are facing enormous social and economic issues, but many believes that with the rising middle class, people will start to talk more about their rights. Others argue that this is very simplified generalization and that it’s not going to happen. However, Kjellgren argues that there are indications that it is going forward, and gives a concrete example; the government has for the last years been working hard to create a new process legislation, after noting the importance to keep an eye on the human rights, primary the rights of people that is suspected of committing crimes. You do not change this kind of thing by making people think differently, but rather make change by changing the game rules. If the legal system can establish and be executed, then it will change the game. He adds that many the things that are good in China are only looks good on paper. China has environmental legislation and work protection legislation that looks very decent, but it does not work as stated in practice. How will the new process legislation become and how it will work in practice, he asks. The rights that is only on paper is still important nonetheless, because the citizens can point to it and say; “you made these rights and you said that it supposed to be this way”, Kjellgren argues. The more you improve the rights on paper, the more they open up themselves for criticism and citizens who are dissatisfied over the difference on the paper and the reality. Every year China undergoes mass incidents that are hold on a local level and
mainly towards the local authority, since it is on this level where you can possibly make some change.

However, there are also indicators of things going the opposite direction. The government is trying to find new, smarter ways to censor internet, and for the past few years, people are forced to register themselves on internet cafés in order to use them. This is a way for the government to say that we know exactly what you are doing, and hope that people will avoid doing stupid things, says Kjellgren. China is not opening up on all aspects, and basic understanding is that China is very complex system.

Historically in China, it has been more focus on the individual’s obligation and duty to society rather than what rights they have, argues Thorborg. The right the citizens did have and could plead was the right to be treated with dignity. The state has the responsibility to take care of the individual, and therefore the citizens have an obligation to follow the state’s wishes. It was considered embarrassing and inappropriate to oppose or question the state. Having rights is more of a Western phenomenon, therefore is no tradition of individuals that would stand/oppose against the rest argues Thorborg. However, during the students’ demonstrations against the government in 1989, the media and the society were on the students’ side, indicating that the society was opening up for the conception of human rights. She argues that many people believe that economic and political politics are related; economic development would lead to political freedom. They are not connected, and argue that people do not realize this.

Beside the issue of limited freedom of speech, there are also problems within demographic area. Until now it has been that the group of population that is fit for work has surpassed the old population in numbers. Today, these two groups are equally large; ultimately leading to that more resources must go into keeping the old population alive, resulting in less money that can be spent into various investments. The pace of the growth has simply been too quick. One solution would to allow the population to give birth to more than one child, however the government will not allow more children since there is no recourses to sustain a larger population. Corruption internally in the party persists to be an issue. Thorborg asks: “Who is guarding the guardians?” She states that there is power vacuum at the party’s top members, resulting in that they can act and do as they please. They are unable to guard themselves, and

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96 Thorborg, 2013-04-23
seeing everybody else abusing the system makes it harder for them to resist doing the same. The lack of control results in corruption.

China has limited freedom of speech; those who challenge it are often sentenced to stay working camps or imprisonment, and the overall situation is not good, states Vellucci. He gives an example of one individual, who was criticizing the government after a local earthquake, and was prosecuted with a second individual who solely was responsible for publishing the article. Many critics are also subjected to forced disappearance after criticism.

Further issues regarding human rights are for example forced evictions. Families are forced to move from their homes (to give room for new buildings or project by the state), and rarely get adequate compensation for the property that the families have lost. Death sentences are a huge problem in China from a human rights perspective. Amnesty International estimates the number of death sentences conducted each year could be over 3000, however no accurate statistic exists. Many of the convicted individuals have been deprived of freedom without any legal process. They are often moved to working camps, detained in house arrest or sentenced to custodial care against their will, states Chu on the issues of death sentences.

I asked whether the violations against human rights are linked to the government’s tactics to remain in power, or if the violations would continue regardless (independently) no matter what party is in political power. Vellucci answered that almost every violation of human rights in China can be linked to remain their political power. After the events in North Africa and “Arabic Spring”, the Chinese government is worried and is trying to strengthen their power.

China has during the past years increased their control over the media and the Internet. However, the way of communication and where people turn to communicate has changed as well, ever since the Internet was introduced to the public. The individuals who directly criticize or challenge the state’s power (and/or influence), as well advocates for democracy and human rights, are the ones that are more likely to be subjected for brutal attacks, argues Chu. Issues like death sentences that are still being applied in China, ‘black jails’ and the strict one-child policy. During 2010, the so called black jail has emerged, where private security companies are drifted by assignments from the local authority.\footnote{Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2010, pp.5-6} The one-child policy in China is strict; many citizens have their reproductive rights violated due to the policy. The
punishment for having more children, usually consist of expensive fines, however the Chinese government have also conducted forced abortion (sometimes very late in the pregnancy) and forced sterilization, although this is forbidden according to the law.\footnote{Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2010, pp.4-5}

When asked about the human rights that China have fulfilled (or provided to certain extent), Chu says that China has lifted hundreds of millions of citizens out of poverty. The government has expressed their ambitions for improving social security (education, health care etc.). China strives to not only be a large exporter, but to also to become more innovative and sustainable, move up in the value chain, and avoid the so called middle income gap. The leadership often emphasizes the importance of education, innovation and a strengthened welfare system, says Chu.

\textbf{5.5 Causes for Censorship and Its Effect on Citizens}

Currently, there are around 50,000 employees who are solely working with monitoring the Internet. Several users that has fallen into the state’s interest (due to opinions and criticism) has been giving the choice to either take a good job that the state offers (to monitor the internet) or be imprisoned, says Thorborg. Those who were criticizing on the Internet, is now monitoring Internet themselves. However, the educated groups, who are writing in a more academically language, are able to write more controversial things without facing consequences, she states. Of course, certain conditions apply, for example the time around the publication of an article is important, since you are able to write more about e.g. Tibet if there is nothing special happening there at the time. However, if there is a coming election or events surrounding Tibet politically, you will most likely be censored.

There is a limitation to freedom of speech; however it is of a more zick-zack pattern, Thorborg argues. It goes up and down all the time, for example that the intellectual are able to say more publically than the rest of the population. I asked why some scholars and individuals in the academic world have been imprisoned for advocating human rights and democracy despite having more privilege. Was it because of the topics that they advocated? Thorborg answered that it depends mostly about the way they express themselves. Authors say often write directly what they mean, while a painter or artist like Ai Wei Wei express themselves in a way that gives room for interpretation (not as straight on the topic). She also raises the question about the Western population, who believes and stresses that the Chinese population
should stand up and demand democracy, despite exposing themselves to long prison sentences and other forms of punishment. Thorborg says that this is a moral question that should not be forgotten.

To be able to express critical opinions and debate over social issues has become harder during the past years, like Chu argued for. Many Swedes are surprised about how much that the Chinese citizens can actually say despite the censorship. There exist lively discussions online, for example on Weibo (Chinese equivalent of Twitter), where there are people blogging about their clothes and cars, but there is also investigating journalists or human rights activists, or people interested in lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) questions. These bloggers are not being censored; the reason is because they are not writing that state should be removed from power, but rather that people should respect other people’s sexual preferences. In this way, the discussion can continue, Kjellgren says. The discussion that exists is important, participation is crucial for democracy, not only that the citizens are able to participate, but that they actually do. In China’s history, there have never been as many people that are taking part of the public debate as they do today. Han Han is famous blogger whom has written many very criticizing posts about the government, but in ironic way without saying straight out what he means, allowing him to bypass the censorship while being able to criticize, states Kjellgren. Usually bloggers that write sensitive material is not affected by the censorship harsher than having their posts removed. The police do not arrest everyone that writes something sensitive, and if they do, it has been highly sensitive material. Baidu, the big search engine in China writes out openly that some searches are not shown to the users due to laws and guidelines. The censorship is not something that the state trying to hide argues Kjellgren.

There exist a grey zone which is going forward and backwards both online and in traditional media. If a big incident happens and is potentially sensitive, none of the traditional newspaper will want to write anything about it and waits for official directives from the party. If it is important, directives will be sent to how the media, letting them know what aspects they should bring and in what terms can report this. Kjellgren gives an example of when Liu Xiao Bo received the Noble Prize for Peace in fall of 2009, while being imprisoned in China. The search engine censor all results including the characters for Liu Xiao Bo, and after a few days, the results started to show off Liu Xiao Bo, however nothing on the Nobel Prize winning Liu Xiao Bo. Eventually results could be found of the man in question, but only negative comments and criticism towards Norway for giving him the award. Same thing happened
during the Arabic spring, where you could not search for “jasmine revolution”, and later results showed up, but it has been censored to search for “jasmine revolution in China” The government enhance the search engine, allowing people to search and write about it, but in a correct way (in CCP’s view). Websites and articles disappear often in China, both due to censorship but also because there is no publicity moral in China to keep an article online. For these reasons, there is a common habit to copy things that users view as interesting. If something is to be removed, it would be removed for the origin where it was first published, but the post could already have been copied many times already and to other places/sites. There are always ways around the censorship, people can connect to foreign servers to access blocked sites. Most citizens are not political interested and feel no need or will to go through that process. They mainly uses internet to look for sports results or recipes, much like Swedish people do. However, the citizens that experienced Mao’s rule feel that the society has become much more open and less politicalized. There was a time during Mao where everything was politicalized, now there is a private sphere where you can do whatever you wish (in your home) without anyone interfering. It exist a small civil society with NGO’s and interest association groups and religious activity.

5.6 The Role of the Internet

The government’s purpose is to identify, censor and close websites that are considered inappropriate. It is considered sensitive to criticize the Chinese government’s power monopoly, the highest leadership in the party or the Chinese superiority in Tibet. China has a filter system which seeks the forbidden words in e-mails and websites, says Chu. The older party members have started to question the censorship, arguing that the censorship is violating the constitution. Chu believes personally that there are some supportive grounds to lighten up the censorship within the party, but whether it will actually happen or not is not clear.

The regime not only censors sensitive material, but also disseminates propaganda for CCP. The censorship has a very strong political influence, but Chu points out that we, here in the Western part of the world, also are limited in our freedom of speech. Swedish penal law does for example protect ethnic groups from racist statements. China therefore argues that democracy is therefore relative, and that no country really has freedom of speech (in defense of the censorship). His impression of the current situation is that the freedom of speech is severely limited in China, and issues that were regarded as “soft” ones, are today considered sensitive (e.g. disabilities’ rights and women’s rights). During 2000-2006, Chu saw a trend of
CCP lifting the strictness and giving the citizens a little more freedom of speech, but has for the past five to six years taken a turn. Many strong critics and dissidents have been sentenced to long imprisonments, which Chu believes set examples. The scope and effect of Internet might have taken CCP by surprise, and the possibilities and the pressure it can put on the government explains increased censorship.

In a coup d’état, people will turn to first to television and radio for information. Both television and radio have the power to spread information to a large number of people. If you can control the flow of information, you can also control what kind of information that is being shared. Internet is another type of tool to spread information. When asked if controlling information could be used both to benefit democracy and maintain authoritarianism (follow-up question), Vellucci stated that by stopping the information to be shared between citizen, the government can remain in power. If people do not have access to information, they do not know to act either.

Internet would have an enormous role for democratization, believes Chu. By opening the Great Firewall, the Chinese websites would be free which would be crucial for a change towards democratization. Many forget that free Chinese websites are key, not solely allowing Facebook or Twitter to be accessible by the Chinese citizens. He argues that many citizens do not look to traditional media (public television, radio, newspaper) to get information, since they are aware that the traditional media are censored. Instead, they go online to read open and outspoken blogs or news websites. As mentioned earlier, some material can be out on blogs or webpages for a quite some time (before being removed/censured), depending on the sensitivity of the subject. This affects the citizen’s behavior and could be a threat to the CCP, whom is not going to lighten up the censorship in the first hand.

Internet is important; it is not only about free elections, but also participation. There exist hateful comments and material towards other (public) persons, like there are hateful mails sent here in Sweden. However, freedom of publication and speech should not be underestimated. Social media is currently a compensation for freedom of liberty of press that is lacking in China. It is not easy to write a sensitive article and try to get it published in newspaper; instead you can post it online. Kjellgren then says that it is hard for others to find your blog, since there exist millions of them and without the possibility to directly search for something specific, it is harder to search for the nicknames or alternative name that users give sensitive words. Only a third of China’s population has access to internet, leading to an
exclusion of people; however Kjellgren argues that previously, the whole population was being excluded from debating. Since two years back, the use of Internet on cell phones has surpassed the numbers of Internet users on computers. Many own a smart phone, where they can take a picture and post it directly to a blog, which in its turn can spread to others. If the event becomes big news, even the traditional media will report about it, feeling embarrassment if they did not. If the traditional media report about it, then the government needs to react. This is way for citizens to influence, and try to make the government to take action and prevention. In order to keep the power, the party needs legitimacy which can be gained by responding to the citizen’s demands.

The group that has access to Internet, and is the one third of the population, that has access to it consists of the middle class, argues Thorborg. They benefit from the current political rule, and have better social rights (access to education, health care etc.) than those living on the countryside. The middle class might debate politics and urge for revolt if Internet was to be free, but they would likely not want to change the benefits they already have (e.g. hukou\(^99\)). She argues that if the poor farmers on the countryside were able to get access to better information and free elections was held, they would demand economic equality and be able to enjoy the same benefits that the urban citizens have. It would cost the state more resources to provide same access to community services and equal benefits for all. Thorborg also states that it have been rumored that the government take three times more taxes from farmers than those living in urban cities. The CCP used to see the middle class as an undermining factor for their power and influence, but now they see the middle class as a bolstering element.

\(^{99}\) Hukou is the Chinese resident/house registering system, which gives the urban population better access to social community services than the citizens living in rural towns or the countryside. (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2010, p. 5)
6. Analysis and Findings

In this chapter, the results from the previous chapter will be analyzed with the chosen theoretical framework: Lipset’s modernization theory and Przeworski’s and Limongi’s review of the same. In the analysis, material from the previous studies will also be used to deepen and put the results in relevant context. The structure of the analysis will be divided into some of the conditions that Lipset defined as important for democracy to make it more legible, however all of these conditions are closely connected to each other. The last parts aim to identify the impact of the Internet and the CCP’s political power.

6.1 Lipset’s Conditions for Democracy

6.1.1 Education
Lipset argues that all relevant studies (in this contemporary time) have showed that education is much more significant for beliefs in democracy and democratic values than income or occupation.\(^\text{100}\) The more educated the people is, the better change for democracy to happen and to sustain. With education comes a better economic condition for the lower classes, who gains financial security and the general income of the household. These factors are essential argues Thorborg, but points a cautious finger, and states that the Chinese government has lowered the number of characters that is needed to be considered enough for being literate. The characters have been dropped from 3000 to 1500 characters, a decrease of 50%. Despite the new requirement, knowledge to read and pronounce the words similarly is more important for democratization to take place. A population who cannot communicate will have it difficult to push for democracy, she argues. Lipset was cautious about giving education too much significance, and did point out that Germany and France that was among the best and most educated countries in Europe, but education itself was not enough to stabilize democracy.\(^\text{101}\) He also argued that Germany had many of the conditions in progress, developing industrialization, wealth, education and urbanization which all were supporting democratic values and system. But events that took place (First World War and post-war era) hindered democracy from gaining legitimacy and therefore weakened the stability to handle crisis.\(^\text{102}\)

\(^{100}\) Lipset, 1959, p. 79
\(^{101}\) Ibid., 1959, p. 79
\(^{102}\) Ibid., 1959, p. 72
6.1.2 Economic Development and Growth
Thorborg argued that China’s development should be considered normal, since the country is still in the process of growth, only 50% of all developing countries are in fact democratized, while the percentage of developed countries are 100%. Gallagher believes that China has maintained rapid economic growth and being able to economically reform without loosen any political control or political liberalization. The key, she argues is FDI, which has in a strengthened the Chinese state, a weakened the civil society and delayed democracy. If this premise is true, could it be that China is an exception to destabilization that Huntington and O’Donnell argued for would occur in the intermediate level? Przeworski and Limongi concluded that democracy was most likely to occur between $4,001 and $6,000. If an authoritarian regime would surpass $6,000 PPP per capita, it will become more stable as the country becomes wealthier. According to the World Bank, China’s PPP in 2011 was $8,390, surpassing Przeworski and Limongi’s limit of PPP in when democracy is likely to occur. One can draw the conclusion that Gallagher’s, Przeworski’s and Limongi’s theories are accurate in the case of China and development. Although Lipset’s theory advocates the correlation between economic development and democracy, he also saw economic development, along with political legitimacy as a destabilizing factor for democracy. However, Huntington observed what he called “erosion of democracy”. This erosion referred to inclinations towards one-party regimes and authoritarian military regimes, with reoccurring revolts and coup d’états.

6.1.3 Middle Class
Lipset argued that increased wealth does not only relate to development of democracy by changing social conditions for the population, but it also affects the political role of the middle class. He argued that the middle class could reward democratic and moderate parties and penalize the extremist groups. The middle class in China, according to Thorborg is not currently large enough to demand or influence change. The CCP initially desired a big working class rather a big middle class, which was more adjacent to their ideology, but realized that China could not take the next step in development by following this. The party desires for China to have high technology and be competitive on the international market,

103 Gallagher, 2002, p. 338
105 Przeworski & Limongi, 1997, p. 169
106 World Bank, 2013
107 Huntington, 1968, pp. 35-36
108 Lipset, 1959, p. 83
which could only be achieved with a large middle class. The situation in China is more complicated than it looks, however Thorborg emphasized again on education and it will be a matter of time before the Chinese middle class will become a crucial factor for democracy.

Although many scholars do agree about the important role that the middle class have in democratization, Lipset’s arguments holds some criticism. He did not take in consideration that the middle class can work in favor for non-democratic groups (dictatorship, extremist groups). Tang argues that the Chinese middle class has a dependency nature, relying on state agencies and political elites for their economic prosperity. This makes the middle class hesitant to challenge their current (economic) arrangements. A large group of the middle class is employed by the state working as government officials or agencies. Thus, security of future employment and source of income and wealth is dependent on the government. China has reached economic development by subjecting the middle class and entrepreneurs to political and economic dependency, she argues. Thorborg also saw this as an issue; the middle class have better social rights than those living on the countryside. The middle class might debate politics and urge for revolt if the Internet was to be free, but they would likely not want to challenge the benefits that they receive today by e.g. the hukou system. The CCP changed from seeing the middle class as an undermining factor for their power and influence, but now instead regard the middle class as a bolstering element to their continuous hold of political power.

6.1.4 Political Legitimacy and Effectiveness
Political legitimacy and effectiveness was identified by Lipset as important to maintain the belief of the population that the current system (referring solely to democracy) was desirable and could provide the basic needs of society. China has been able to lift hundreds of millions of people out of poverty, enforced mandatory school attendance, leading to an increased educated population and literacy. As Chu mentioned, China has expressed their ambitions for improving social security, become a large exporter, more innovative and sustainable. The leadership often emphasizes the importance of education, innovation and a strengthened welfare system. The efficiency of the CCP has therefore been satisfactory, although the gap between rich and poor still remains big. However, the lower class has gotten

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109 Tang, 2011, pp. 374-375
110 Lipset, 1959, p. 86
improved opportunities and the overall life expectancy has also grown during the Cultural Revolution\textsuperscript{111}, and has since continued to progress.

Although Lipset used legitimacy and effectiveness as stabilizations for democracy, the variables could also be used to explain authoritarianism or any kind of form of one-party regimes or autocratic military regimes. CCP has undoubtedly been progressing well economically with continued rapid growth, becoming a significant actor internationally in politics and trades and increased the welfare and social security for its people. Could it be that the CCP aims to gain legitimacy and effectiveness, so that they can remain in power?

Kjellgren’s argued for a Chinese equivalent to Parliamentary Ombudsmen as a way to separate the state from party. In order to satisfy the population and avoid unpopularity, he believed that better legal security with these Ombudsmen would be a small step that China can take, without fearing to give up or lose power. He also spoke about the use of smart phones and the ability to share picture and news instantly, and if an incident becomes large enough, the traditional media would publish the news as well, leading to the party having to take responsibility or acknowledge the incident. In order to keep their legitimacy, the CCP have to establish new guidelines to prevent it from happening next time, mainly to avoid being put in the spotlight. However, addressing this issue calms the people, making them feel heard and cared for, “satisfied” their needs or demands, ultimately regaining legitimacy and effectiveness. Kjellgren also argued that the average Chinese person is not politically interested, just as many Swedes do not participate in politics regularly. Censorship might not affect their daily life as much as the Western population believes, and other concerns might be more prioritized to solve.

All of the aspects that have been presented in this chapter have a close connection with each other, on one side, the CCP prevents the people from speaking up, criticizing and demand the change they want. On the other hand, there is the middle class and the rich group that have benefited the most out of the economic reforms and regardless of their political debates online, they are hesitant for the current system to change. This tells us that the group/s that has most tools (internet, education, resources) to promote democratic values and system may be preventing it more than embracing it. As earlier my criticism towards Lipset, he only regarded the middle class as a positive factor for democracy, and never anticipated that they could in

\textsuperscript{111} Kjellgren, 2009, p. 65
fact strengthen an authoritarian regime, in order to maintain their social and economic benefits even if they are limited in some of their freedom.

6.2 The Influence of the Internet
Lipset could not take Internet into consideration when he wrote his article back in 1959; however, he saw media as a whole as one of the factors for democracy, arguing that media, literacy, and education were all dependent on and promoting each other.\(^\text{112}\) His theory is either outdated or incorrect or both, in the subject of media (and Internet). Certainly, Lipset could not possible have foreseen the technology that was going to become invented and the affect it has on people in all society with smart phones and always being “online”. Regardless, his beliefs, like the role of the middle class, he overlooked or did not taken in count, that media can be used by elite, dictator or party that media and literacy is supposed to prevent.

The Chinese government’s purpose is to identify, censor and close websites that are considered inappropriate. Some subjects like criticism towards the CCP’s power monopoly or the leadership in the party is seen sensitive. China has a filter system which seeks the forbidden words in e-mails and websites. The regime does not only censor sensitive material, but also disseminates propaganda for the CCP. The censorship has a very strong political influence, argues Chu and point that the Swedish penal law does for example protect ethnic groups discrimination or racist comments. This is something common in the Western world, and China argues that no country have true freedom of expression, therefore the interpretation of it is relative and subjective. The subjects or words that are considered sensitive changes with time and events, and soft subjects like women’s rights and disabilities’ rights is now seen as sensitive, despite being allowed before, says Chu.

The censorship is a regulation that both domestic and foreign companies must follow, as well as surveillance of the user’s activities. Cyber-attacks, device and network control, surveillance and controlled public outreach and localized shut down of internet and text-message service in areas of crisis and demonstrations is just a few examples of how the CCP can control the society through censorship. One can wonder why China has created advanced tools for censoring media and internet. Both television and radio have the power to spread information to a large number of people. If they can control the flow of information, they can also control what kind of information that is being shared and Internet is simply just another tool to spread information, argues Vellucci. In a coup d’état, people will turn to first to television and radio

\(^{112}\) Lipset, 1959, p. 82
for information, making it more important to be able to control information in order to keep power by stopping the information to be shared between citizen. If the people do not have access to information, they do not know to act either.

Both respondents and previous studies indicate strongly that the Chinese government has in fact used the traditional media as a propaganda tool. Before the economic reforms in the 1980’s, the mass media spreading state policies and decisions to the public\textsuperscript{113}, states Tang and Sampson. Although the mass media has been able to liberate itself from the party to a certain extent after the reform and media marketization, the CCP still remain at strong control over the spread of information. Lipset, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, has failed to take this into account, and did not see media as variable that can instead of promoting, hinder the democratization process. However, MacKinnon argues that the CCP does not see Internet as a phenomenon that should not be able to be access; rather they see Internet as crucial tool for education, poverty reduction and a public service for its people\textsuperscript{114}, as long as they can maintain control over it. As effective as the CCP might be on censorship, the Internet is harder to control than the traditional media, a reason for the population to “go online” and transform it to a channel where they can debate and share news that is censored on TV and newspapers.

The reoccurring theme and the main purpose of this thesis have been to identify what kind of impact a free or freer access to information on Internet would have on the Chinese society. However, both Kjellgren and Thorborg pointed out that there is a limited part of the Chinese population that has access to Internet. As Thorborg argued that they have also the group that has access to the Internet. They might debate and discuss about politics online, but actually to carry out their ideas is not likely. Lei conducted a survey of Chinese netizens, and came to the conclusion that netizens are more politically opinionated than the other two groups, as well more willing to participate more actively in collective action\textsuperscript{115}. However, Lei did not specify if the collective action was online or real demonstration on the streets. Tang and Sampson argued for that netizens work in large numbers, which makes it safer for them since it is harder to monitor everyone at the same time. There exists cheap Internet cafés around China, but requires the users to share personal information, making it harder for them to surpass the

\textsuperscript{113} Tang & Sampson, 2012, p. 459
\textsuperscript{114} MacKinnon, 2011, p. 37
\textsuperscript{115} Lei, 2011, p. 291
surveillance. Tang’s study argued for a dependent Chinese middle class and as the beneficiaries (compared to rural side population) of the CCP’s economic reforms and hukou-system, the middle class is not seen as factor that can or wants to challenge the CCP. However, if Internet was free, the regulation on the requirement to have to register with personal information might be sloped, and access to all information even for the poorer population that does not own a computer would be easier.

6.2.1 Impact of a Free/Freer Internet

The empirical material that was collected from the respondents have not been coherent, two respondents, Chu and Vellucci (which makes up for 50%) argued that a free Internet would be crucial for democratization, while the other two respondents argued that Internet would have an important role, but not fully as a determinate factor. Kjellgren argued for free labor organization and a Chinese equivalent to Parliamentary Ombudsmen, a better legal security that can be independent of the CCP’s influence, to be the most important factors for democracy. Thorborg, as mentioned earlier as well, believed education and middle class was the crucial aspects, although also pointing out the issues that the two factors are currently concerned with.

The answer to the research question about the impact is therefore not completely clear; however, there are reports, both by United States Department of State (2011) and Human Rights Watch (2013) which confirms the strict censorship and the negative effect it has on citizen’s freedom of speech. In June of 2010, the information office of the State Council announced that they would guarantee certain freedom of speech as long as it did not endanger security, damage state’s interest, undermine state power and spread regulations and other forbidden content between other users. The definition of what is considered to endanger security could be question, and it has been indicated from the empirical results that censorship has in fact become more strict, meaning that the guarantee of certain freedom of speech has not been enforced in practice. The report by U.S Department of State brings up example of individuals that have been arrested for subverting state power, after posts and pictures about the Jasmine Revolution was posted by the individuals.

The two scholars that have been interviewed have both answered in similar ways, that free Internet would impact the Chinese society in a positive way, however they are many aspects

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116 Tang, 2011, p. 374
117 U.S Department of State, 2011, p. 27
118 Ibid, 2011, p. 30
of the society that might need improvement before the Internet could have a bigger impact. It could be argued that the scholars might view this issue in a more analytical way; both due to their long study within the field of China, but also because scholars often analyze the world with more variables to consider. This could explain the two indications of the respondent’s answer, however reports on human rights by various sources still stress out the censorship and limited freedom of speech as one of things that characterize China and the authoritarian rule.

There is not a single correct answer to the research questions, and the phenomenon of the Internet and its impact is constantly changing by each year and each change of president. However, previous studies and the empirical data indicates that the censorship of the Internet is affecting the society in a negative way, but Human Rights Watch argues that citizens are more willing to challenge authorities over livelihood issues, forced evictions and land seizures. Internet users are pushing more aggressively for transparency and political change. A free or freer Internet would increase the demand for transparency and the power to decide over one’s life. Many human rights violation or other social issues often have roots in the fact that citizens lack political power and input in decisions that affects them (decisions decided by the government). Access to free information would only have a positive impact on the society by letting all citizens to be able to take part in domestic news and foreign news that is not “corrected” by the CCP. As the previous studies indicates and some of the respondents, the Chinese citizens are aware of the censorship in the traditional media, going online instead to find the “real” news. A free Internet would allow the users to openly discuss politics or social issues, the fact is that they are already doing it, but using different means to hide it.

Allowing all citizens (with access to a computer) to be able to take part in the discussion would lead to a stronger opposition towards the CCP, and in large numbers can the citizens demand better social rights and force the party to take action towards the continuous violation of human rights. Freedom of speech in this context would have a large impact in promoting the other conditions that Lipset argued for would lead to democracy. However, Przeworski and Limongi argued that it could become less likely for a country to transit into democracy if it was too wealthy, and China is well above the highest income the authors had set. Freer Internet could change the trend, because the awareness of rights and the demand for more freedom have undeniably risen since the Internet was introduced.

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119 Human Rights Watch, 2013
120 Przeworski & Limongi, 1997, p. 160
6.2.1 The Internet and the CCP's Political Power

The CCP and the Internet is closely linked in the issues of free access to information and censorship. The CCP is trying to maintain the political power they have by suppressing all opposition and criticism towards the regime, which has been concluded by MacKinnon and respondent Chu. As mentioned in earlier under headline “Political Legitimacy and Effectiveness” in this chapter, Lipset argued that political legitimacy could convince that the current political system was desirable, while effectiveness was how well the regime could provide the basic needs of the people. However, opening up the Internet and letting the citizen be able to access free and uncensored material would not necessarily be equal to democratic transition or the fall of the CCP. Kjellgren discussed that the Chinese government has been but in the spotlight when certain events/issues have surfaced to the population’s awareness, the party was forced to address the issues and make sure to not let it occur again (which Kjellgren mainly believed was mostly because they did not want to have more issues with the same problem rather because they felt that the issue was urgent to solve). This, he said, made the citizens feel heard and cared for, and thus the CCP did not lose legitimacy in the eyes of the people. The CCP has indeed lead China through economic prosperity and rapid economic growth, increasing the living standards, life expectancy and literacy.

Kjellgren also argued that many individuals in China are not politically interested and censorship does not affect them as severely as we might believe. Even if information was free on the Internet, the crucial aspect to remain in power might be for the CCP to prove that their political system is legitimate. By enforcing better e.g. legal security processes or trying to improve or solve other social issues could therefore benefit the CCP’s legitimacy and effectiveness. Hence, a free Internet could make the population to demand more freedom, to have equal rights and human rights. It is then up to the CCP and their actions to decide whether they can remain in political power by agreeing to (some of) the people’s demands, winning their belief that the party’s politics are still benefiting the population.

By doing so, the CCP can stabilize their political autocratic rule by legitimacy and effectiveness. However, both the Human Rights Watch’s report and answers from the respondents indicates that the people are debating fully online. Lipset argued that “A crisis of legitimacy is a crisis of change” and the CCP could very well face a crisis of legitimacy and be removed of their political power, by either to step down willingly or by force (by

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121 Lipset, 1959, p. 86
122 Ibid, 1959, p. 87
opposition and/or the citizens). Democratic values would most likely be enforced, due to the
demands of more freedom of self, but Przeworski and Limongi argued for that democracy
could very well emerge due to economic crisis, war or conflicts.\footnote{Przeworski & Limongi, 1997, p. 158} Thus, a free access to
information on the Internet could be first step towards democracy, as well could it have less
impact and the autocratic rule could continue.
7. Discussion

In the analysis, it became evident that Lipset overlooked the role of middle class, education and that legitimacy and effectiveness would be used and applied by autocratic states. Certainly, many of these aspect, Lipset was unable to foreseen like Internet and the impact it has on us today, the international political agenda (that focuses much on human rights) and so forth. However, some conditions that he discussed can still be criticized. Thorborg brought up an important note on the definition of literate had changed in China. Thus, one can question the quality of the education and the mandatory classes that students takes, which can differ greatly between countries. It can also differ depending on whether the population lives in an urban area or on countryside. Hence, even if an individual has a bachelor degree in a chosen subject, it would not automatically mean that she/he has the same knowledge as someone that has taken the same subject in another country. Thus, even if the definition for being educated is to have a bachelor degree from a university as a universal standard, it does not guarantee that the population is educated with uncensored and up-to date material.

Sweden has so called ‘Universitets- och Högskolerådet’ (Swedish Council for Higher Education) that evaluates foreign studies (taken by Swedish and international students) to estimate if their knowledge and quality of the studies is equivalent to a Swedish high school diploma or university degree. Sweden also has ‘Universitetskanslersämbetet’, former known as Högskoleverket (Swedish Higher Education Authority) that aims to evaluate university and colleges’ quality of programs and courses, preventing schools from differing in quality. Studies are conducted regularly to test students from all over the world to compare the quality and knowledge that the students have in each country. Unfortunately, many developing countries, including China, lack these kinds of institutions and although the percentage of educated has risen, it remains an issue both the access to resources and decent schools for the population living on the rural areas or countryside. There exist formally no school fees; however the schools often take out charges for literature, making it expensive for the poor population to send their children to good school. Some parents choose to send the children in schools with lower quality, in where it often lacks educated teachers.\(^\text{124}\)

\(^{124}\) Almén, Svensson, Lundahl & Kjellgren, 2008, p. 37-38
A conclusion of this is that the middle class have access to the best schools and the best quality of education. The children in middle class also have better opportunities to enroll in university and through that, get a well-paid job. One can say that the middle class have good access both from good income, but also the beneficial system of for example hukou that gives them better social services. The economic development and the resources that have been gained through it have not been equally distributed over the population, resulting in that the rich becomes richer and poor remains poor with only a slight improvement. As both Tang and Thorborg argued for, the middle class seems have little intention to actually challenge the CCP and the political system. It might not seem too strange for the middle class (and the rich as well) to try to preserve their benefits; if resources were equally shared between urban and rural areas and between rich and poor, surely the standards that the middle class is used to would be lowered due to decreased resources that can be provided for each areas.

With a history of famine and poverty, the middle class avoids falling back to that as much as possible. Usually, scholars argue that the middle class benefits the poor, by demanding rights and institutions that promote higher living standard, benefiting the other classes as well as a “bi-product”. However, the results of this study indicates that the middle class want more freedom in the private sphere and expression, but is not ready or willing enough yet to challenge the party (and face the consequences of doing so) and possibly losing some benefits. However, it is also indicated that the population overall are more willingly to demonstrate and demand change. Thus, it shows that there is awareness and undoubtedly do parts of the middle class want change and most likely advocates for it, but it might not be enough to make changes yet.

This could relate to the issue of legitimacy and effectiveness. With the improvement that has been done by the CCP for the Chinese society, the population cannot disregard this and thus sees the CCP as legitimate and effective. The question is how long the CCP can survive on the improvements that have been done before the population will start to demand more and more. The CCP is currently restoring and sustaining their legitimacy by addressing events (usually crimes or violation against rights) publically, solving and preventing it for happening again. Usually the events is brought up to light by information sharing on Internet (bloggers, forums) until it reaches the traditional media, in where the government cannot ignore it and have to acknowledge its existence. Within the globalized world we live in, events that might be censored by the CCP in the media could still reach out to other countries, which raise awareness outside China what is going on. Pressure from foreign countries is harder for the
CCP to dismiss, and not to lose legitimacy internationally as well, they need to (on paper at least) make changes. Kjellgren pointed out that the government has good regulations on paper that never seems to be put in practice however.

With all the variables that Lipset indicated were conditions for democracy, one thing in particular that China battles with is human rights. Lipset did not bring this up, maybe because he saw it being fulfilled on the process towards democracy, or maybe it was not important enough (at the time of publication). Human rights are one of biggest criticism that has been raised towards China, in almost all types (social, cultural, religious, economic, political and civil). As Donnelly argued for early on in this thesis, China justifies the sacrifice of human rights for development and this is also something Huntington and O’Donnell believed in. Dictatorship is inevitable price for democracy, since dictatorships promote development that in its turn will promote the aspects of the society (e.g. Lipset’s variables) which will make it more likely for democracy to emerge and sustain. However, with the rising influence of the Internet, it has become easier for society to bring awareness to the domestic population but also rising awareness outside of China. Without the Internet, maybe we would not know very much about the imprisoned activists that we do today, and not be able to question the Chinese government for their actions.

The Internet has enabled the citizens to have more freedom of expression, although the CCP does not desire this outcome. Kjellgren also indicated that the citizens can influence the government to some extent by sharing information and pictures online to push the government to address the issue and to be held responsible. This was not possible before the Internet and all information was going through the traditional media (or possibly verbally from neighbor to neighbor). Thus, the Internet has impacted the society in a positive way for the citizens, and hopefully can this contribute to better fulfillment of rights, equality of rights, higher transparency (corruption in the party and in the legal system is high) and slow steps towards democratization. If we return to Huntington and O’Donnell’s argument above (dictatorship = development = democracy) the question is if China has developed enough for democracy to be able to emerge and to sustain, or will it face crisis and return into an autocratic rule (led by the CCP or another party)? There is no clear answer in which path it will take, however, the respondents have argued for that China needs to mature in the aspects of institutions and certain groups needs to grow before China can transit into democratic rule and maintain it. One concern is the way of transition, will it be a peaceful and easy transition of power, or will China face violent revolutions? The Internet have had an important influence in the Arabic
Spring, where the people could call for demonstration, unite and spreading the events going on social media to raise awareness in both the cause of the revolution but also any violations towards the people by their government.

The Internet has become a new, powerful source that can reach out to millions by simply clicking on a button. The Internet is too wide and too decentralized to be able to control fully, although China has created advanced tools and hired thousands of people to monitor the Internet, the reality is that much sensitive information goes through the censorship filter. The Internet has come to stay, and now the questions if and when China will become a democratic country lies within how the CCP addresses the Internet.
8. Conclusion
The conclusion of the research questions about the impacts that the Internet might have on the Chinese society has been that the Internet plays an influential role in increasing the means that the Chinese population can question the CCP and its power. However, the respondents have not answered consistently, where two of the respondents (which make up 50%) believed that the Internet has an important impact, but that other aspects like legal security or bigger middle class was desirable first, before the Internet could be a critical influence in a democratization process. The remaining two (50%) respondents believed that the Internet was crucial in order to promote the emergence of democratization. The reason for the unconsented answers could that the first two respondents are scholars that have been studying within the field of China for many years, thus analyzing the situation with more variables to take into consideration. It could also be because the subject is difficult to predict, thus harder to get a coherent “correct” answer from multiple respondents. A higher number of respondents for this study would have been preferred in order to increase the validity and reliability. More participants could also lead to a different results and finding, and further studies are recommended to conduct about the Internet and its impact on the Chinese society and politics (or other societies), since this phenomenon is constantly changing.

After close observation, it became evident that much of Seymour Lipset’s modernization theory’s social conditions were applicable to some extent, but many times were subject for criticism, e.g. overseeing the role of the conditions. For example, Lipset stressed out the important role of the middle class, but did not take into consideration that the Chinese middle class are benefiting from the CCP’s economic and social policies (e.g. hukou system), and although they criticize the government, there are little indication that they would actually challenge the party in practice. Similar conclusion was made on education, where the quality and access varied depending on urban or rural areas. Economic development promotes democracy Lipset argued, however Przeworski and Limongi found that the wealthier a dictatorship became, the less likely that it would transit into democracy. It was confirmed that China’s wealth surpassed the highest limit of PPP per capita that they has set out, and therefore making democracy less likely to emerge. However, Lipset published his article in 1959, before the emergence of the Internet and it could be argued that he would most likely have changed his belief in some of the conditions if he reviewed the contemporary world.

Regarding the second research question about the impacts that the growing Internet could have on the CCP’s political power, the study has concluded that it depends on how well the
CCP can convince the population that their politics are still valid and legit. The government has undoubtedly improved major aspects of the society and thus gained legitimacy. However, with increased wealth and education, so does the demand for aspects of freedom. Lipset argued that legitimacy and effectiveness could both destabilize or sustain democracy, which can also be applied to an authoritarian regime. One respondent argued for that when the CCP addresses an issue that upsets the population, they feel cared and heard. Hence, a free access to information on the Internet must not lead to the fall or the CCP or democracy; however, it is difficult to say in which path the China will go on, but the answer lies within how the CCP addresses the Internet.
Appendix A: Interview Schedules

This appendix includes the interview schedule that was written in advanced for the interviews with the respondents. The schedule will be presented in both Swedish and English, although Swedish was the language during interviews.

A.1 Interview Schedule in Swedish

Intervjuplan

Syfte

Syftet med denna uppsats är att undersöka och identifiera Internets roll i en (framtida) demokratisering i Kina. Därtill kommer organisationer och experter att intervjuas om deras erfarenhet och kunskap om situationen gällande mänskliga rättigheter (främst politiska rättigheter i denna kontext, men även om social, kulturell och civila rättigheter då dessa är sammankopplade) och huruvida Kina har uppfyllt dessa rättigheter.

Frågeställningar

- Vilket inflytande kan fri tillgång till information på Internet ha på det kinesiska samhället?
- Vilken påverkan kan det växande influensen av Internet ha gällande det kinesiska kommunistpartiets politiska makt?

Den intervjuande har rätt till följande;

- Att vara anonym
- Avbryta intervjun när man vill
- Ta del av uppsatsen när den är klar (tidigast i juni 2013)

Upplägg

- Intervjun kommer att inledas med frågor kring den aktuella situationen av mänskliga rättigheter i Kina, som sedan kommer gå över i olika teman kring demokrati och politiska rättigheter
När intervjun är klar kommer jag sammanfatta kort de svar jag har fått under intervjun.

**Intervjufrågor**

Innan intervjun

- Jag skulle vilja inleda med att få vet lite mer om dig själv. Vad för har du bakgrund? Vad är din expertris inom detta område?
- Får jag ditt godkännande att citera dig?

**Demokrati**

- Vilka möjligheter har medborgarna att påverka sin regering i Kina?
- Idag är Kina en enpartisstat, även om man på pappret är flerpartistat. Det finns indikationer på att samhällsstrukturerna har börjat röra sig. Till exempel har den kinesiska regeringen infört och praktiserat idag så kallade ”village elections” på främst på landsbygen och i byar, men har även genomförts i mindre urbana städer. Hur upplever du/ni detta? Vilka faktorer skulle enligt din/er expertis vara avgörande i en demokratisering i Kina?

**Följdfrågor**

- Varför skulle de faktorer som du/ni har identifierat som avgörande i demokratiseringsprocess, så viktiga? (Frågas endast om intervjupersonen ej har förklarat sina val av faktorer)

**Mänskliga rättigheter**

- Hur ser den generella situationen ut i Kina angående mänskliga rättigheter?
- Finns det rättigheter uppfylls inte korrekt/tillräckligt eller bryts? Om ja, vilka? Ge gärna exempel.

**Yttrandefrihet och censur**

- Det är allmänt känt att den kinesiska regeringen har begränsat befolkningens möjligheter till att få uttala sig och kritisera regeringen. Varför väljer regeringen att begränsa Internet genom censur (vilket jag syftar till deras motiv)? Hur gör dem det?
• Vilka möjligheter har den kinesiska medborgaren att göra anspråk på sin yttrande-, och åsiktsfrihet?

• Vi pratade tidigare om avgörande faktorer i demokratisering, där du nämnde $x$ och $y$. Under den Arabiska våren så hade Internet en viktig roll i revolutionen. Vilken roll kan ett fritt Internet ha i demokratiseringsprocess i Kina enligt dig?

• Varför har Internet en sådan liten/stor eller ingen roll i processen?
A.2 Interview Schedule in English

Interview Schedule

Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to examine and identify the role of Internet in a (future) democratization in China. In addition, organization and experts will be interviews about their experience and knowledge surrounding human rights (primary political rights in this context, but also if social, cultural and civil rights since these are connected) and how China has fulfilled these rights.

Research Questions

- What influence would access to free information on the Internet have on the Chinese society?
- What impacts can the growing influence of the Internet have in terms of CCP’s power?

The respondent has the right to the following;

- To be anonymous
- Stop the interview if needed
- Read the thesis when it is finished (earliest June 2013)

Structure

- The interview will start off with questions around the current situation regarding human rights in China, and will after that go into different themes surrounding democracy and political rights.
- A conclusion of each theme/subject will be made to ensure that I have understood the respondent right. The respondent can be able to correct if I have misunderstood or interpreted wrong. Thereafter, the interview will continue to the next theme.
- When the interview is finished, I will conclude quickly the answers that was given during the interview.

Interview Questions

Before the interview

- I would like to start off by to get to know you a little bit more. What is your background? What is your expertise within this field?
Do I have your permission to cite you?

**Democracy**

- What possibilities does the citizens have to influence their government in China?
- Today China is in practice a one-party state, although they are on paper a multi-party state. There are indications that the social structure is starting to change. For example, the Chinese government has introduced and is practicing village elections on the countryside and rural cities. What is your opinion on this? What factors would you say, according to your expertise, is crucial in a democratization process?

**Follow-up question**

- Why are the factors that you have identified as crucial for a democratization process so important? (Asked only if the respondent has not explained his/hers choice of requirements)

**Human Rights**

- How is the general situation in China regarding human rights?
- Are there rights that is not fulfilled or not fulfilled correctly/足够? If yes, which? Could you give some examples?

**Freedom of speech and censorship**

- It is commonly known that the Chinese government has limited the populations’ possibilities to discuss and criticize the government. Why does the government choose to restrict Internet by censorship (which I refer to their motives)? How do they do it?
- What possibilities does the Chinese citizen have to claim their freedom of speech and freedom of opinion?
- We talked earlier about the crucial factors in a democratization, where you mentioned x and y. During the Arabic Spring, Internet had an important role in the revolution. What role do you think that a free Internet have in democratization process in China according to you?
- Why does Internet have such a small/big or no role in the process?
Appendix B: Presentation of the Respondents

B.1 Marina Thorborg
Marina Thorborg is a scholar and professor in economic history, whom has been studying within the field of China (e.g. Chinese politics, such as agricultural policies, industrialization and gender questions to give a few examples) for the past 35 years. She has been working both within Sweden and overseas, and has visited China more than 50 times for research purposes. Mrs. Thorborg has for the past years worked as a professor at both Stockholm University and Södertörn University in Stockholm, Sweden.

B.2 Bob Vellucci
Bob Vellucci works for Amnesty International in Stockholm, Sweden with human rights and as an Urgent Action Coordinator. He is originally from the United States, and has studied at both American and Swedish universities. Mr. Vellucci started working for Amnesty International in 1991. He started this career as intern, working his way up, and started working in different projects for Amnesty in 1994. He is now currently working with human rights and works as Human Rights, Country Information / UA Coordinator in Amnesty International Sweden.

B.3 Mattias Chu
My third respondent is Mattias Chu, deputy director (for department for Asia and the Pacific), specialized in Chinese political affairs, at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Stockholm, Sweden. Mr. Chu has studied overseas, from France to China, receiving three different diplomas that vary from globalization to law studies. Mr. Chu worked in Geneva for a period with globalization questions, before starting his employment at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

B.4 Björn Kjellgren
My last respondent is Björn Kjellgren, a sinologist and deputy principal at Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm, Sweden. He started of his academic career as a Sociologist, and took a post-graduate degree in Sinology, in which he researched about China’s cultural and social consequences in the modernization process. Mr. Kjellgren did many years of field studies in Southern China, and was a scholar in social anthropology for five-six years at Stockholm’s University prior to his current employment. He has also written a book series about China’s old and modern history with other scholars.
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Interviews

Chu, Mattias. Interviewed in Stockholm, Sweden on 2013-04-25
Thorborg, Marina. Interviewed by phone in Stockholm, Sweden on 2013-04-23