

Chapter 18

Official Visions of Democracy in Xi Jinping's China



Heike Holbig

18.1 Introduction

The Chinese communist party regime (Chinese Communist Party, CCP) is widely reckoned as the antithesis of liberal democracy, with the latter defined by open, free, and fair elections. Democracy in China thus appears to most outside observers as an oxymoron, a contradiction in and of itself. Yet, within the country, the party-state has consistently been framed by its leaders and in the mass media as a democratic political system, employing multiple visions of democracy with and without adjectives. Against this backdrop, the objective of this chapter is to analyse the self-perceptions and worldviews of China as a major global power and an increasingly important actor in Eurasia; it is *not to normatively* evaluate Chinese democracy, or to euphemise official attempts of political self-legitimation. To put it differently, the focus is not on Democracy with a capital letter as political scientists usually apply it when they discuss democracy in Western countries, or when they deplore the backsliding of democracy across the globe. Rather, the focus is on using a context-sensitive approach to explore processes of experimentation, adaptation, localization, and reinterpretation of the notion of democracy with a lowercase d, that is, as a signifier open to multiple construals by all kinds of actors, and with all kinds of motivations. When Chinese discourses about “democracy” are quoted or paraphrased in the chapter, the intention is not to spread the word but to offer a better sense of the internal logics of justification as well as of the changing tonalities in party discourse. In the framework of the debate around the impact of China’s Belt and Road Initiative on political regimes in Eurasia, this chapter starts from an empirical point of view, taking into account the scepticism that some readers might feel when reading about China’s democratic self-adulations.

H. Holbig (✉)
Faculty of Social Sciences, Goethe University, Frankfurt, Germany
e-mail: holbig@soz.uni-frankfurt.de

The chapter will proceed as follows. To set the scene, Western perceptions of China's political system articulated in recent years are outlined. Against this backdrop of outside images, we will delve into the official self-images of Chinese democracy as propagated by the CCP. While the period before Xi Jinping is sketched only roughly, a more detailed analysis is offered of the period since late 2012 when Xi Jinping succeeded Hu Jintao as China's paramount leader. Five examples of the use of democracy in party language are selected to illustrate the changes in the official visions of the notion of democracy under Xi Jinping. The conclusion offers some reflections about the importance of understanding Chinese visions of democracy and the potential implications these might have for the international realm.

18.2 Western Perceptions of China's Political System

Western political science is unequivocal about China's political system being a textbook example of an autocracy. This is true for democracy indices such as Polity IV, Freedom in the World, the Democracy Index of the Economist Intelligence Unit, and the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Index. These indices have consistently ranked post-Mao China as an "autocracy," "not free," an "authoritarian regime," or a "closed autocracy" respectively. In 2016, Francis Fukuyama—author of the 1989 essay "The End of History"—pondered that "China is a real test case. It is the only alternative to a liberal, capitalist democracy. The country is technically and economically advanced—but it pursues modernization without democracy" (Die Zeit, 2016, author's translation).

From the perspective of political practitioners in the West, China is not only an autocracy, but one that increasingly and proactively challenges liberal democracies. Back in 2007, a German member of parliament described China's combination of a "modern authoritarian" political system with a "capitalist" economic system as one of the biggest strategic challenges for Europe (Von Klaeden, 2007, author's translation). Twelve years later, in March 2019, the European Union labelled China "a systemic rival promoting alternative models of governance" in its watershed "Strategic Outlook" on EU-China Relations (European Commission, 2019).

In the United States, shortly before the 2020 elections, Robert O'Brien, Trump's National Security Adviser, argued in a *Foreign Affairs* article, "For decades, conventional wisdom in the United States held that it was only a matter of time before China would become more liberal, first economically and then politically. We could not have been more wrong—a miscalculation that stands as the greatest failure of U.S. foreign policy since the 1930s [...]. Today, [...] the CCP's ideological agenda extends far beyond the country's borders and represents a threat to the idea of democracy itself" (O'Brien, 2020).

In the same magazine, as part of his own electoral campaign, Joseph Biden called China "a special challenge [...]. China is playing the long game by extending its global reach, [and] promoting its own political model." To meet that challenge, he called for a "united front of U.S. allies and partners," and he envisaged holding a

“Summit for Democracy,” “to renew the spirit and shared purpose of the nations of the free world” (Biden, 2020).

As we can see from these quotes—and the many others on offer—China is not merely seen as one non-democratic regime among others. Rather, it has increasingly been pitted against the liberal democracies of the West and as the Number One challenge to “the idea of democracy itself” (O’Brien, 2020).

18.3 Official Self-Images of China's Political System Before Xi Jinping

These signals of “othering China” have not gone unheard in Beijing, and the party-state leadership has not hesitated to take up the challenge. In fact, China's political system had been framed as a democracy for a while. This has made it easier for party propaganda under Xi Jinping to stylize China as the world's largest democracy—and as a more genuine and more effective form of democracy than the liberal democracies of the West.

The term “democracy” (*minzhu*) has not once been considered an alien concept since the founding of the CCP a century ago. As part of the vocabulary of Europe's “long nineteenth century,” the term democracy had been adapted into the Chinese language via Japanese around 1900. In the social-Darwinist worldview of the time, it denoted the quintessential modern, civilized, and sovereign nation-state, with all the prerequisites necessary for a body politic in the survival of the fittest (Amelung & Holbig, 2016). “Democracy” also had a positive connotation in Mao Zedong's historical treatises on “new democracy” in the 1940s as the signifier of his strategy to co-opt social elites who fought for national emancipation alongside the CCP. The “People's Republic of China,” founded in October 1949, was based on the Leninist principle of “democratic centralism.” According to this principle, leaders are formally elected, and key policies collectively discussed, but the political decisions reached by these voting processes are binding upon all members of the party, and as vanguard of the revolution, the party leadership has the final say. The country's first constitution of 1954, modelled on that of the Soviet Union, established the National People's Congress as the embodiment of popular sovereignty under the leadership of the CCP. The most recent constitution of 1982, which addressed the Maoist excesses of the Cultural Revolution, reconfirmed the principle of democratic centralism and the formal status of the National People's Congress as the highest organ of state power (Holbig & Schucher, 2016).

The ideas of Chinese democracy in the reform era were spelled out most authoritatively in a White Paper published in 2005. This document defines the main features of “socialist political democracy.” Most importantly that “1) China's democracy is a people's democracy under the leadership of the Communist Party of China [...],” and 2) “China's democracy is a democracy in which the overwhelming majority of the people act as masters of state affairs. [...].” (SCIO, 2005).

The notion of “people’s democracy” (*renmin minzhu*) appears as a pleonasm to Western ears. In socialist jargon, it denotes the alternative to Western democracies based on multiparty systems which are considered to be dominated by capitalist elites. The idea that the people act as “masters of the state” combines the party’s legitimating claim of people’s sovereignty with the principle of party leadership, which is regarded as a prerequisite to ensuring the people’s role as masters of the state.

As the 2005 White Paper elaborates further, China features multiple elements of a democracy, among them:

- a system of People’s Congresses which formally elect state leaders (though only from among preselected candidates);
- a system of Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conferences acting as symbols of the party’s United Front (which are constituted of co-opted social and economic elites);
- experiences with grassroots democracy in villages and urban resident committee elections (which are manipulated by the party);
- citizens’ economic and political rights and respect for human rights (which was codified in the constitution in 2004 but interpreted in parochial ways).
- so-called inner-party democracy (*dangnei minzhu*), which includes experiments with inner-party elections, where party organizations and members can nominate candidates, and where the ratio of excess candidates has been raised over time to make these inner-party elections more competitive (SCIO, 2005).

Overall, the White Paper of 2005 shows that the Chinese party-state strived to position itself as a full-fledged, high-grade, and successful democratic system long before Xi Jinping’s ascent as the country’s paramount leader. However, the claim that the Chinese party regime is a democracy has been articulated in much more assertive ways under Xi Jinping’s leadership. This is to be illustrated in the following section by five examples of visions of democracy offered by the party leadership since 2012.

18.4 Envisioning Democracy Under Xi Jinping

18.4.1 *The Merits of Meritocracy*

During the final years of the Hu-Wen era, domestic and international voices openly criticized the political stalemate and stagnation which they blamed on the weak collective leadership style cultivated by Hu Jintao. Many hoped for a bold new vision and authority at the top, and for a strongman leader to get things done. Indeed, this is what they got. In October 2012, just a few weeks before the 18th Party Congress that would baptize Xi as the new secretary-general of the party, Chinese television disseminated an animated video titled “How Leaders Are Made” which went viral among Chinese and foreign audiences (“How Leaders are Made,” 2012).

The five-minute clip compares how leaders rise to power in the US versus in China. The US process—featuring a smiling Barack Obama—is caricatured as a series of drawn-out and costly election campaigns, political string-pulling, and the overriding importance of the final act of voting. In contrast, the Chinese process is depicted as a selection of the president—featuring a smiling Xi Jinping—on the basis of merit and skill. Candidates are said to earn these skills over the course of long political careers, moving up the administrative ladder and facing various acid tests. The clip concludes,

Many roads lead to national leadership, and every country has one for itself. Whether by a single ballot that gets the whole nation out to vote or by meritocratic screening that requires years of hard work like the making of a kung fu master, as long as people are satisfied and the country develops and progresses as a result, it's working. (“How Leaders Are Made,” 2012)

Although the term “democracy” is not used in the clip, it invokes the central elements thereof, such as public interest and popular consent. In this Chinese version of democracy, merit replaces campaigning, candidates are screened instead of elected, and performance output tops procedural input and accountability.

18.4.2 *Democracy with Adjectives*

The second example demonstrates the subtle shift in emphasis in the official discourse on China's “democracy with adjectives” that can be observed between the lines in the Report of the 18th Party Congress Report in November 2012. The notion of inner-party democracy, which had been promoted by Xi's predecessor Hu Jintao, was now downplayed. Instead, the document stressed the importance of so-called “consultative democracy.” As I have discussed elsewhere, this concept was imported and adapted in party theory circles over the course of more than a decade. To make a long story short, “consultative democracy” (*xieshang minzhu*) is a localized version of Jürgen Habermas' notion of “deliberative democracy” (*xieshang minzhu*) which he introduced to students in Beijing back in 2001 (Holbig, 2016). His idea of open-ended public communication among free and equal citizens, who confer and make decisions based on the “unforced force” of rational argument, has gained much currency among Chinese academics since its introduction. In the course of its official Chinese adaptation, however, Habermas' original idea of a horizontally structured deliberation between citizens was re-interpreted as a vertical pattern of consultation organized top-down by the party centre, as illustrated by the following passage from the report of the 18th Party Congress.

Socialist consultative democracy is an important form of people's democracy in our country. ... Extensive consultations should be carried out on major issues relating to economic and social development as well as specific problems involving the people's immediate interests ... to solicit a wide range of opinions, pool wisdom of the people, increase consensus, and build up synergy. We should adhere to and improve the system of ... political consultation

under the leadership of the Communist Party of China. (CPC Central Committee, 2012, section 2)

Five years later, in his report to the CCP's 19th Party Congress in October 2017, Xi Jinping rephrased this idea even more succinctly, saying, "The essence of the people's democracy is that the people get to discuss their own affairs. Consultative democracy is an important way of effecting Party leadership and a model and strength unique to China's socialist democracy" (CPC Central Committee, 2017, Sect. 1). Thus, in the official Chinese notion of consultative democracy, the people, represented by selected members of important social and ethnic groups are consulted in a hierarchical fashion by the party-state to forge a consensus, thereby legitimizing party rule via a consultation process circumscribed by the CCP's organizational and ideological leadership monopoly. In other words, not only has Xi Jinping reduced the extent of inner-party competition and collective leadership which Hu Jintao had promoted. He also appears to be more inclined than his predecessor to keep "democratic consultation" within proper limits and to open this exercise only to segments of society that the party can control (Cabestan, 2019).

18.4.3 *Democracy Without Adjectives*

Democracy does not only come *with* adjectives in the Chinese official discourse, however. Soon after Xi Jinping's installation as party leader, the propaganda apparatus presented a set of twelve "Socialist Core Values" (*shehuizhuyi hexin jiazhi*). According to the report of the 18th Party Congress, the Socialist Core Values "are the soul of the Chinese nation and serve as the guide for building socialism with Chinese characteristics" (CPC Central Committee, 2012).

Praised as "the common denominator for the values of socialism" (Seeking Truth, 2012, p. 12), the twelve core values are laid out on three different levels, that of the nation-state, society, and the individual, with four values ascribed to each level. At the nation-state level, "prosperity" and "democracy" come first, followed by "civility" and "harmony." These four values are seen as national objectives and as shaping the interpretations of all other values. At the level of society, the four core values are "freedom," "equality," "justice," and "rule of law"; and at the personal level, "patriotism," "dedication," "integrity," and "friendliness." Within this hierarchical set of values, it is important to note that "democracy" is not positioned at the level of society but of the nation-state, thereby signalling that it is a quality ascribed to the nation as a whole, not to procedures or structures within the state. In the authoritative text published for the official inauguration of the Socialist Core Values campaign in May 2013, the term was defined along the lines of the 2005 White Paper, but extended to include the vision of "a beautiful and happy life" for the people:

Democracy is a beautiful aspiration of human society. The democracy we strive for is a people's democracy, and its true core is the people acting as masters of the state. Democracy is the life of socialism, and the political guarantee for creating a beautiful and happy life for the people. (People's Daily, 2013; author's translation)

The Socialist Core Values campaign continues until today. In a recent study, Miao (2021) has analysed a collection of almost 400 propaganda posters that have been disseminated online and offline across the country since 2013, coming to a very interesting finding: While the twelve core values have been replicated as a complete set over time, only six of them have been given detailed illustration in the propaganda posters—namely “prosperity, civility, and harmony as national-level values, and patriotism, friendliness, and integrity as personal-level values” (Miao, 2021). “Democracy,” as well as “freedom,” “equality,” “justice,” and “rule of law” are often *absent* from the theme-specific posters. As the author argues, these missing values.

... have very specific ... definitions, all of which fall under the strict guideline of the party-state. As individuals are not expected to interpret or contribute towards these values, but instead are considered the beneficiaries in a society where these values will be allowed to prosper, values such as democracy and rule of law are not popularised in the poster collection. (Miao, 2021, p. 169).

Despite the relative toning-down of “democracy” compared to some other core values, its ubiquitous presence on rural walls, urban subway billboards and online might have a two-pronged effect. On the one hand, propaganda inculcates the notion of “democracy” without adjectives in people’s minds and everyday language. On the other hand, the very notion of democracy is tamed and immunized against potential challengers who might strive to interpret democracy in more specifically procedural ways than the official idea of a “beautiful aspiration of human society” (People’s Daily, 2013, author’s translation).

18.4.4 China as the “World’s Largest Democracy”

With an understanding of the domesticated version of democracy presented in China, it might not come as a surprise that Chinese official media have hailed the country as the “world’s largest democracy.” In August 2015, the party-controlled *Global Times* (*Huanqiu Shibao*) ran this headline: “Which Is Ultimately the Largest Democratic Nation?” (Han, 2015). The answer is obvious, but it is important to see how the argument is built.

The article starts with an attack against the West, above all the United States which, in the author’s view, had tried for a long time to exclude China from the global values discourse for being “undemocratic.” In contrast, India—which in the eyes of the West was the “world’s largest democracy”—is found to enjoy an unjustified high level of trust from the West due to the same normative bias. Against this backdrop, the article then argues that it is time for China to break free from the “discourse trap” and secure its prerogative of interpreting global values, including the essence of democracy. “Democracy” is described as a historically formed term that has developed differently in various epochs and regions and for which there are no fixed standards. The Arab Spring and its aftermath are mentioned to show that the Western democratic model

is not compatible with non-Western cultural contexts. The lesson to be learned is that, without stability and order, neither prosperity for the people nor civilizational progress will be achieved.

The article then claims that China represents a particularly “genuine” and “effective” form of democracy compared to others. In contrast to many façade democracies across the globe, the author argues, China ensures that different social strata are adequately represented in the political process. Unlike in “certain states,” the Chinese people do not merely have the choice between different “political dynasties” on election day. Instead, they are involved on a daily basis in a number of important decision-making processes through a range of consultative mechanisms. Overall, the article concludes, socialism with Chinese characteristics has been proven to represent the true interests of the people, and the country’s economic success proves the vitality of the democratic system; thus, China can be considered the “largest democratic nation.” The article ends with a moralistic tone; last but not least, it pleads, it is time for China to make this clear and no longer silently accept its—false—undemocratic image (Han, 2015).

What we find here is a new dimension in China’s official vision of democracy, if not a new habitus of the Chinese leadership. Whether these claims appear plausible or not, what matters here is that these claims, as such, challenge Western democracies. The intention is to end Western discourse hegemony, project China’s own discourse power, and contest Western interpretations of global values. The claims also imply that China outperforms its Western counterparts in various regards (Holbig & Schucher, 2016).

18.4.5 Democracy in the “New Era”

The role of democracy in the “New Era” inaugurated by Xi Jinping at the 19th Party Congress in October 2017 entailed the definition of a new “principal contradiction” in China’s society. According to the Marxist strand of historical materialism, each period of social development is characterized by a specific principal contradiction, and its correct identification allows for its resolution by the vanguard party, and thereby the furthering of the socialist cause.

In line with this logic, the Mao era had been characterized by the contradiction between the “proletariat and the bourgeoisie,” which had to be solved via class struggle. In the early reform era under Deng Xiaoping, the principal contradiction was “between the ever-growing material and cultural needs of the people versus backward social production” (Xinhua, 2017). According to Xi Jinping, this contradiction has been solved thanks to China’s unparalleled economic performance and the improvement of peoples’ livelihoods over the past four decades. Thus, in the New Era, the principal contradiction is no longer about quantity but quality. It is now a contradiction “between unbalanced and inadequate development and the people’s ever-growing needs for a better life” (CPC Central Committee, 2017), and this is where democracy comes in. The “better life” which people demand, in Xi’s words,

includes “democracy, rule of law, fairness and justice, security, and a better environment” (CPC Central Committee, 2017). Indeed, “democracy” appears here as the first among various aspirational values that are propagated as expressions of a “better life”—and as a vision among other visions that the party promises to realize with a view to satisfying the people.

To put this vision in historical perspective, by the middle of the twenty-first century, Xi Jinping envisages the development of China into a “rich and strong, democratic, civilized, harmonious and beautiful modernized socialist strong nation” (CPC Central Committee, 2017, literal translation of *fuqiang minzhu wenming hexie meili de shuhuizhuyi xiandaihua qiangguo*). In the official English translation provided by the Xinhua News Agency, the same phrase is rendered as a “great modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious, and beautiful” (CPC Central Committee, 2017), thereby avoiding the repetition of “strong” vis-à-vis international audiences. In the Chinese original, the term “strong” (*qiang*) is indeed used twice—Xi Jinping’s innovative contribution to the CCP’s strategic target for 2049 when the People’s Republic of China will celebrate its centennial.

As we can learn from these slogans, democracy is part and parcel of the official party-state vision for China, not only in the present, but even more so in the future. At the same time, the claim for a democratic China is inscribed in the overarching claim for becoming a strong nation and a great power by the middle of the century. What we see here might be the re-emergence of a vocabulary that was characteristic of a Social Darwinist worldview of the late nineteenth century, of a struggle between nations, where being “democratic” appears to be advantageous for the survival of the fittest in the international realm (cf. Amelung & Holbig, 2016).

18.5 Conclusion: Implications for China’s International Interactions

To conclude, I offer some reflections about what the official Chinese visions of democracy might imply for China’s interactions with other world regions and countries, including via its Belt and Road Initiative, since 2013. Firstly and generally, this chapter illustrates the importance of taking into account the self-views and world-views of actors in different regions and their changing roles in international power constellations. This approach also allows for better assessment of Chinese expectations, ideological positions, strategic portfolios, and preferences vis-à-vis other countries and actors.

Secondly, China’s official visions of democracy can be seen as an almost ironic response to the widespread perceptions that China challenges not only Western liberal democracies but the idea of democracy itself. Whether these visions are plausible and credible or not appears less important than the contestation of what is perceived to be long-standing “discourse hegemony” of the West. China’s *alternative* discourse

on democracy might gain traction in times of newly emerging geopolitical alliances. Together with its economic clout, China's rejection of the perceived "discourse hegemony" could make a growing impression on actors in Eurasia and other world regions. Against the backdrop of the declining global appeal of Western-type liberal democracy with the rise of populist leaders in the US and Europe, we cannot rule out the possibility that Eurasian actors increasingly perceive China as an alternative international rule-maker and, possibly, also as a leader in the "democratization" of international relations.

Last but not least, much will depend upon the self-image of Western democracies. The varying effectiveness of public health responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in countries worldwide has shaken, if not severely damaged, the self-confidence of liberal democracies in their superior capacity to deliver public goods. It is hard to tell whether China's robust response to the pandemic at home and its vaccine diplomacy abroad will lend more credence to its official visions of democracy. However, the malaise of Western liberal democracies—which has worsened in the wake of the pandemic—tends to weaken the normative underpinnings of Democracy with a capital letter and thus buttresses China claims to contest the perceived discourse hegemony of the West and ability to project its own interpretations of global values such as democracy and other "beautiful aspirations of human society."

References

- Amelung, I., & Holbig, H. (2016). Introduction: Protecting the weak. Welfare during East Asia's long twentieth century. *Critical Asian Studies*, 48(3), 309–314.
- Biden, J. R., Jr. (2020). Why America must lead again. Rescuing U.S. foreign policy after Trump. *Foreign Affairs* (March/April). <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/ united-states/2020-01-23/why-america-must-lead-again>
- Cabestan, J. -P. (2019). The contradictions of Xi Jinping's socialist democracy. In J. G. Bowie (Ed.), *Party watch annual report 2019. Scrambling to achieve a moderately prosperous society* (pp. 24–34). Center for Advanced China Research.
- CPC Central Committee. (2012). Firmly March on the Path of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics and Strive to Complete the Building of a Moderately Prosperous Society in All Respects (*Jianding bu yi yanzhe Zhongguo tese shehuizhuyi daolu qianjin, we quanmian jiancheng xiaokang shehui er fendou*). Full text of Hu Jintao's Report to the 18th Party Congress, delivered on 27 November 2012. Communist Party of China (CPC). Official English translation. http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/zt/18th_CPC_National_Congress_Eng/992917.htm. Accessed 2 October 2021.
- CPC Central Committee. (2017). Secure a Decisive Victory in Building a Moderately Prosperous Society in All Respects and Strive for the Great Success of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era (*Juesheng quanmian jiancheng xiaokang shehui duoqu xin shidai Zhongguo tese shehuizhuyi weida shengli*). Full text of Xi Jinping's Report to the 19th Party Congress, delivered on 18 October 2017. Beijing: Communist Party of China (CPC). Official English translation. http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/download/Xi_Jinping%27s_report_at_19th_CPC_National_Congress.pdf. Accessed 3 October 2021.
- DIE ZEIT*. (2016, March 17). Die Demokratie stiftet keine Identität. Ist das Modell des Westens am Ende? Ein Gespräch mit dem amerikanischen Politikwissenschaftler Francis Fukuyama, *DIE ZEIT* No. 13.

- European Commission. (2019, March 12). *EU-China—A Strategic Outlook. Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the European Council and the Council*. <https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/communication-eu-china-a-strategic-outlook.pdf>. Accessed 15 December 2021.
- Han, Z. (2015, August 27). Which is the largest democratic nation after all? (*Jiujing shei shi zuidade minzhu?*). *Global Times (Huanqiu Shibao)*. http://opinion.huanqiu.com/opinion_world/2015-08/7361939.html. Accessed 28 August 2021.
- Holbig, H. (2016). Demokratie als translinguale Praxis: Chinesische Aneignungen “deliberativer Demokratie”. In S. Schubert & A. Weiß (Ed.), “*Demokratie*” jenseits des Westens: Theorien, Diskurse, Einstellungen. *Politische Vierteljahresschrift (PVS), Sonderheft 51* (pp. 188–205). Nomos.
- Holbig, H., & Schucher, G. (2016, June). ‘He who says C must say D.’ China’s attempt to become the ‘World’s Largest Democracy’. *GIGA Focus Asia* No. 2. <https://www.giga-hamburg.de/en/publications/giga-focus/he-d-china-s-attempt-world-s-largest-democracy>. Accessed 16 February 2022.
- “How Leaders are made” (*Lingdaoren shi zenyang liancheng de*). (2012, October 15). Video clip released by “On the Road to Rejuvenation” Producers Collective (*Fuxing lu shang gongzuoshe*). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M734o_17H_A. Accessed 02 Oct 2021.
- Miao, Y. (2021). Romanticising the past: Core socialist values and the china dream as legitimisation strategy. *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*, 49(2), 162–184.
- O’Brien, R. C. (2020, October 21). How China threatens American democracy. Beijing’s ideological agenda has gone global. *Foreign Affairs*. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2020-10-21/how-china-threatens-american-democracy>
- People’s Daily. (2013, May 22). Socialist core values (*Shehui zhuyi hexin jiazhi guan*). *Renmin Ribao*. <http://theory.people.com.cn/n/2013/0522/c40531-21565926.html>. Accessed 4 February 2021.
- Seeking Truth (*Qiushi*). (2012). Research report on core socialist values (*Shehui zhuyi xin jiazhi guan yanjiu baogao*). *Qiushi*, 24(2), 12–26.
- SCIO. (2005). *White paper: Building of political democracy in China*. State Council Information Office (SCIO) Publishing House. <http://www.china.org.cn/english/2005/Oct/145718.htm>. Accessed 27 September 2021.
- Von Kladden, E. (2007, October 23). *Asien als strategische Herausforderung und Chance für Deutschland und Europa. Asienstrategie der CDU-CSU-Bundestagsfraktion*. www.cducsu.de/sites/default/files/asienstrategie_web.pdf. Accessed 27 September 2021.
- Xinhua. (2017, October 20). Grasping the new characteristics of the principal social contradiction in depth (*Shenke bawo shehui zhuyi zhuyao maodun bianhua de xin tedian*). *Xinhua News Agency*. http://news.xinhuanet.com/2017-10/20/c_1121833637.htm. Accessed 15 September 2021.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter’s Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter’s Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

