

# Analysis of the reasons of democratization



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In general, the reasons of democratization shift in different countries. Samuel P. Huntington raises five main elements to explain his points of view. The author would like to examine how these five factors resulted in the democratization in South Korea and are the exclusive reasons. Besides, does China have difficulty to become a democratic country only because it lacks of these five conditions?

Infection results: it means when the other countries start to call for the democracy, the countries nearby would be affected and the citizens would appeal to their government to reform and therefore forms the domino effect. For instance, the third wave in East Europe in 1990's and the fourth wave democratization in North Africa in 2011.

The collapse of the authoritarian government: when the current regime couldn't provide the basic need of its people and maintain the order of the politics, civilians will call for the reform and even the revolution to rebuild the democratic regime. The collapse of USSR is one of the examples and we can see that due to its serious problem brought by the economic recession.

The growth of economic system: the notion of the liberalism indicates that the boost in economic growth will create the richer middle-class which would ask for the opportunities of getting involved in politics. In this kind of situation, the social mobilization and the information will become faster to decrease the legitimacy of the authoritarian government. South Korea and Taiwan belong to this part.

The choice of political leaders: one of the crucial keys come from the elites of the ruling classes, especially when the leaders become aware of the

transition of the environment makes the democracy is the only cure to maintain the current regime. For instance, the former President of South Africa Frederik Willem de Klerk led South Africa to a democratic country.

Influence of actors outside of the country: the impact of actions from foreign organizations or countries would construct the pressure to the autocratic regime. For example, the collapse of the Philippine of Marcos regime.

### **The reasons for South Korea's democratization**

The reasons for South Korea's democratization are extensive and diversified.

We can take our points of view from different angles including economic growth, social structure, political culture and the transition of history. The theory of Huntington elaborate the overall structure enables us to relate different events happened in South Korea to the factors of democratization.

The author would like to use Huntington theory as the main stream to explain the reasons of democratization. We can general discover some of the elements of the theory of Huntington are the main reasons to give an impetus to the democratization but some are not.

Economic growth is not necessary to become the direct element to democratization of South Korea

Just like Huntington mentioned in his book of the third wave, " An overall correlation exists between the level of economic development and democracy have no level or pattern of economic development is in itself either necessary or sufficient to bring about democratization." [1] We can conclude from most of the third wave countries that the success of the democratization of third countries that there will be mass middle-class

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emerging before the formal democratization. This could be proved by the countries in the third wave are mostly the higher developing countries.

[2]However, the GDP growth rate in South Korea in 1960 -1980's is averagely 8. 5-8. 9%[3], which is higher than lots of Latin American countries. But the time of democratization in South Korea was later than Latin American countries. This is explained by Huntington in his article in 1984 that he thought this is an exception.[4]To conclude, Huntington pointed out there might be two reasons; the first one is the tradition Confucianism emphasize the structure of the social levels, authority, community, and loyalty which postponed the society's requests of democracy, and the second reason is because the rapid economic growth happened in a relatively equal income distribution environment. However, when it reached the critical point in 1980's, it forced South Korea to begin its democratization.[5]

The change of religion is a catalyst to the democratization in South Korea

Huntington thought that the western Christian is powerful evidence to the third wave democracy. Though people in South Korea mainly believe in Buddhism and affected by the Confucianism, the population of Christian were increasing rapidly after WWII. The increase of number of Christian reflected that the impact of churches to the politics increased. It can be proved by Mr. Kim Sou Hwan, the Cardinal and the National Council of Churches in South Korea strongly supported the direct election of President in 1986 and 1987. [6]

The new policy from other countries

South Korea has been threatened by the military force of DPRK; therefore, it has depended on the protection and the aid from the United States. U. S. is the main force outside of South Korea to affect its politics. When the value of human right is a main stream in the world, Jimmy Carter, which is well-known by his human rights diplomacy; he publicly condemned Park Chung Hee regime of human rights violation. The Congress of U. S. even cut 90 million military aid fund to South Korea in Dec. 1974 with the reason of human rights violation.[7] Besides, Ronald Reagan alerted President Chun Doo Hwan not to execute Kim Dae-jung, otherwise the relationship between South Korea and the States will be harmed.[8] Hence, we can conclude that the influence of the United States might be one of the elements for the democratization, especially after 1980's.

Domino effect is the Momentum of South Korea's democratization

The chain effect and the function played a more important role in the third wave than the previous first and the second wave because the communication technology was highly developed. Even some events happened in the other side of the world, people still can retrieve the information within a day. Ferdinand E. Marcos was overturned by the people's power in Feb. of 1986 and the hope of democracy stroke South Korea. The leaders in opposition party gained great inspiration to become one force for the follow-up actions.[9]

## **The reasons why People's Republic of China isn't a democratic regime and the possible approach to democracy**

The issues of political reform and the democratization always draw the attention of the world. In 2010, China's Premier Wen Jiabao appealed for the political reform for seven times received great deals of attention in the media. After the "Jasmine Revolution" in the Middle East this year, these issues have even become the focus of the attention. But why PRC is still a so-called authoritarian regime instead of the democratic regime even though it holds so many elements in the theory of Samuel Huntington? We can see that the greatest social conflicts are the corruptness and the polarization between the rich and the poor. For more than 30 years, its government has used all kind of methods to solve those problems but unfortunately become worse. For corruptness, the only method the government hasn't used is the supervision by the people. As for the unbalanced issue of distribution, the government emphasizes the people's livelihood lately and it would like to solve by the method of raising the minimum wage. It is a good thing to place importance on the people's livelihood but it should raise its aspect of view from the livelihood to the democracy to eliminate the corruptness. In this part, the author still takes the points of view from Huntington to analyze the possibility for democratization of PRC.

Economic development and the economic crisis: the rapid economic growth might threaten the authoritarian regime but not guaranteed to build up a democratic system. In the opposite, it might make the leaders to root out the opposite counterforces to maintain the communism system. However, some scholars indicate that if the economic growth in China can persist to reach

2500 USD of GDP per capita, there might be liberalization of politics.[10]If the middle-class of Chinese Society could become more powerful, they can appeal to the government to carry out the political reform by a moderate method. And it should be a positively factor to the democratization of PRC. That's matches what Huntington mentioned before," economic growth makes democracy possible."

The predicament and the decline of the legal government: When the leaders of PRC face the crisis of their regime, they might refuse this kind of situation as well as carry out the brutal forces to solve the mitigation of their prestige. The Tiananmen Square Incident happened in 1989 though was not a threat to the Chinese government, the number of riots ascends hurriedly since then. There might be more collides once the government cannot smoothly solve the problem properly. This bottom-up struggling power forms a great challenge to the government.

The impact of the religion and Confucianism: Falun Gong has long time been suppressed by the Chinese government and this situation of pursuing for the freedom of religion draws people's attention and might bring more and more people to support Falun Gong. Some people criticize the thought of Confucianism is one of the reasons why China cannot become a democratic country while the other group of people support the Confucianism is compatible with democracy. However, the pluralism and the feature of tolerance in the traditional culture of Confucianism often didn't transform to the inclusive policy but maintain the monarchism in the history of China. Even though the elements of Confucianism might sustain in the politics of China, the ideas form the West is possible to change the ruling style of the

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Chinese leaders. The authoritarianism will still be the principle while the government tries to keep balance between the economic growth and the development disorder. And this kind of tendency of resisting the wave of democracy would bring about the protests and reform form the society naturally.

The transition of U. S. policy: Since both countries established diplomatic relations in 1978, lots of human rights crises happened in China cause the both-side relationship drop into the swamp. For instance, the Tiananmen Square Incident in 1978 and the Tibet suppression in 2009 let the Chinese government gain great pressure form the world. Each U. S. President had his own policy to deal with China but generally speaking, the peaceful rising China and the humanitarian-based China can make the world more stable and benefit to the United States.

Domino effect: Though the revolution in China was initially highlighted as a large progress in the society movement of this year, most people do not think there will be much impact on China's democratization. However, the one-party system in China is in contrast to its neighbor countries such as Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, and Phillipine. We cannot exclude that Taiwan might be one of the pattern that China could demonstrate in the future. But it seems difficult to prove in a short time that its neighbor countries will completely affect PRC's democratization.

## **Conclusion**

From the previous analysis, we can see that the elements that Huntington raised can generally match the democratization in South Korea and provide



the potential blue-print for PRC's democratization. However, those theories can only help us to predict the way and the reasons of the democratization in China in the future. Undoubtedly, the factor of leader plays an important role in the process of democratization. For South Korea; how to prevent from democratic breakdown, democratic erosion and reach to completing democracy, deepening democracy, and organizing democracy are the ultimate goals and the vital missions. For PRC; it seems to be an impossible mission for reaching democratization, but we know that there is no regime could last perpetually. Obviously, the force of reform starts to emerge in China. No matter the open economic policies, capitalism, and the impact of globalization will assemble together. The problem is that will this force shake the current regime. We'll see.

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