

## **Abstract**

This paper looks at the history of social welfare (particularly famine relief) and political accountability in China and compares it to that in Europe. Chinese history from the 14th century to the present suggests that levels of social welfare do not always correlate with levels of democratic political representation and government administration. The paper proposes that there may be lessons from non-European practices that could be applied to welfare challenges in the contemporary world.

**Keywords:** China, Social spending, Democracy, Social welfare, Famine relief

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