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Youth Support for and Engagement in
Democracy in Asia:
Lifecycle Effect or Generational Change

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Youth Support for and Engagement in Democracy in Asia:

Lifecycle Effect or Generational Change
Separating Three Mechanisms

- Lifecycle
  - Younger people and older people differ in their political values/attitudes/behaviors
  - People change as they age

- Generational Change
  - People of different age differ because they belong to different generations
  - Not because of age difference
  - Values are formed when people are young, and remain stable for the rest of life

- Recency—Adult Learning
  - People’s change values/views because of recent events/information even after age of socialization
  - As a result, people of different age groups or different generations often reach at the same values/attitudes/behaviors
Differentiated intervention strategies

- Lifecycle effects: Age-specific programs

- Generational changes: shaping the social and political environment in which young people grow up

- Recency/Adult-learning: general public communication programs
  - need to take into account the age differences in media/information habits
Hypotheses

• Participation and engagement behaviours
  • lifecycle effect
  • Generational changes

• Basic democratic values—generational change
  • Liberal democratic values (linear with long-term trends of social changes)
    • Modernization theory at work in East Asia
  • Partisanship, ideological tendency (likely to be non-linear, “political generation”)

• Satisfaction with democracy/government performance—recency, adult learning
Cohort/Age-group Analysis Strategies

- Lifecycle effect: people of the same age will demonstrate similar values/attitudes/behaviours at different time points.

- Generational change: people of the same generation will demonstrate similar values/attitudes/behaviours at different time points.
  - except the youngest generation, as their values are still forming.

- Recency/Adult-learning:
  - People of all generations will demonstrate similar values/attitudes/behaviours at all time.
  - People of the same generation show different values/views/behaviors at different time points, but intergenerational patterns remain the same.
Liberal Democratic Values: ABS wave1 vs. wave2 (Taiwan)
Democracy is more important than economic development (Taiwan data)
Democracy is always preferable to other types of political regimes (Malaysia)
Follow politics/discuss politics (Malaysia)
Political generations:
Democracy always preferable
Often follow political news

(Korea)
Lifecycle effects:
Satisfaction with democracy
&
How often do you follow politics
(Malaysia)
Lifecycle: democracy more important than economic development (The Philippines)
Lifecycle: democracy more important than economic development (The Philippines)
Psychological involvement: How interested are you in politics? How often do you follow politics (Thailand)?

Lifecycle effect? People of some age groups show similar tendency at two time points.
People’s attitude increases as they age, but remain stable for a while (between 30-50 years old, then decline as they age)
How often do you follow politics (Thailand)

- People’s attitude increases as they age, but remain stable for a while (between 40-60 years old, then decline as they age)
Political generations + Recency
Persuade others to vote for a certain candidate or party (Taiwan/Korea)
Political generation + Recency: satisfaction with democracy (Singapore)
Generational change and adult learning: following politics and discussing politics (Singapore)
Generational change + adult learning/recency
Democracy more important than eco development (Malaysia)
Recency/Adult Learning: Support Democracy, Wave 2 data
Tentative Conclusions

- Some pro-democratic values demonstrate clear generational change patterns. The younger generations in Asia are more pro-democratic than their parents.
- Some behaviors and attitudes related to democratic engagement demonstrate lifecycle patterns. Youth-specific programs are necessary to engagement young people in Asia more effectively.
- Political generations do exist, therefore it is critical to understand each generation of Asian youth with more focused effort.
Generational changes

Value

20s ➔ 30s
30s ➔ 40s
40s ➔ 50s
50s ➔ 60s
60s ➔ 70s
70s ➔ 80s

T ➔ T+10
age
Generational Change Observed in Panel Data

Generational/Cohort Effects

Value

age

Generational/Cohort Effects

0
1
2
3
4
5
6
G 1 G 2 G 3 G 4 G 5 G 6

T
T+10
Generational changes

Value

20s ➔ 30s
30s ➔ 40s
40s ➔ 50s
50s ➔ 60s
60s ➔ 70s
70s ➔ 80s

T ➔ T+10

age
If we have panel data

Generational/Cohort Effects

- G1, G2, G3, G4, G5, G6
- T, T+10
Taiwan 2001-2006

Support for Democracy

Democratic Values

2001

2006

1941 and before
1942-1951
1952-1961
1962-1971
1972-1982
1982 and after
SD W1
SD W1 (cont.)

Tentative Conclusions

- post-industrial (Japan): High LDV, all generations
- Recently entered post-industrial (Taiwan, HK, Korea); Modernizing societies (China, Vietnam, Thailand): higher LDV among more recent generations
- Slow-growing economies: no intergenerational differences in LDV
**Adult Learning**

- Recency
- Political discourse
Adult Learning
Political Discourses in Taiwan

Intensity

1987 1996

Taiwan Identity

Democracy
Liberal Democratic Values

- Same political rights regardless of education
- (reject) people should follow leaders
- (reject) discussions of ideas should be allowed by government
- (reject) too many groups disrupt harmony
- (reject) judges should accept views of the executive branch
- (reject) too many ways of thinking bring chaos
Support for Democracy

- Democracy is preferable than other forms of government- Preferability
- Democracy can solve our country’s problems- efficacy
- Democracy is more important than economic development- priority
- Democracy is desirable for our country- desirability
- Democracy is suitable for our country- suitability
Generational/Cohort Effects

Value

G 1 G 2 G 3 G 4 G 5 G 6
T
T+10

# Generational/Cohort Effects

- **Value**
  - **G 1**
  - **G 2**
  - **G 3**
  - **G 4**
  - **G 5**
  - **G 6**

- **Age**
  - **20s**
  - **30s**
  - **40s**
  - **50s**
  - **60s**

- **T**
- **T+10**

The diagram illustrates the generational/cohort effects over different age groups, with values increasing over time for **G 1** to **G 6**. The curves for **T** and **T+10** show distinct patterns, indicating how generational impacts evolve over time.
Persuade someone to vote for a certain candidate/party (Taiwan)
Democracy more important than eco development (Taiwan)
Liberal Democratic Values - age group differences
(Taiwan data)