A Comparative Survey of

DEMOCRACY, GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

Working Paper Series: No. 118

Jointly Published by

GLOBALBAROMETER™

Sources of Regime Legitimacy in East Asian Societies

Yun-Han Chu
Distinguished Research Fellow,
Institute of Political Science at Academia Sinica,
and Professor,
Department of Political Science, National Taiwan University, Taiwan

Wen-Chin Wu
Assistant Research Fellow,
Institute of Political Science, Academia Sinica, Taiwan

Asian Barometer

A Comparative Survey of Democracy, Governance and Development

Working Paper Series

Jointly Published by

Globalbarometer

The Asian Barometer (ABS) is an applied research program on public opinion on political values, democracy, and governance around the region. The regional network encompasses research teams from thirteen East Asian political systems (Japan, Mongolia, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, China, the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia), and five South Asian countries (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal). Together, this regional survey network covers virtually all major political systems in the region, systems that have experienced different trajectories of regime evolution and are currently at different stages of political transition.

The ABS Working Paper Series is intended to make research result within the ABS network available to the academic community and other interested readers in preliminary form to encourage discussion and suggestions for revision before final publication. Scholars in the ABS network also devote their work to the Series with the hope that a timely dissemination of the findings of their surveys to the general public as well as the policy makers would help illuminate the public discourse on democratic reform and good governance.

The topics covered in the Series range from country-specific assessment of values change and democratic development, region-wide comparative analysis of citizen participation, popular orientation toward democracy and evaluation of quality of governance, and discussion of survey methodology and data analysis strategies.

The ABS Working Paper Series supercedes the existing East Asia Barometer Working Paper Series as the network is expanding to cover more countries in East and South Asia. Maintaining the same high standard of research methodology, the new series both incorporates the existing papers in the old series and offers newly written papers with a broader scope and more penetrating analyses.

The ABS Working Paper Series is issued by the Asian Barometer Project Office, which is jointly sponsored by the Institute for Advanced Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences of National Taiwan University and the Institute of Political Science of Academia Sinica.

Contact Information

Asian Barometer Project Office

Department of Political Science

National Taiwan University

No.1, Sec.4, Roosevelt Road, Taipei, 10617, Taiwan, R.O.C.

Tel: 886 2-3366 8456

Fax: 886-2-2365 7179

E-mail: asianbarometer@ntu.edu.tw

Website: www.asianbarometer.org

Sources of Regime Legitimacy in East Asian Societies*

Yun-han Chu

Distinguished Research Fellow, Institute of Political Science, Academia Sinica and Professor, Department of Political Science, National Taiwan University.

Wen-chin Wu

Assistant Research Fellow, Institute of Political Science, Academia Sinica

* Paper prepared for delivery at Asian Barometer Conference on New Challenges to Asian Democracies in the Age of Globalization, Internet Revolution and Democratic Recession, August 9-10, 2016, Taipei.

Sources of Regime Legitimacy in East Asian Societies

Introduction

The concept of regime legitimacy is central to the understanding of modern political life. Legitimacy by definition concerns how power may be used in ways that citizens consciously recognize and accept. All modern political regimes depend on the public's willing acquiescence and support for their survival and effective functioning. A legitimate régime acquires and exercises its governing authority primarily through consent and mutual understandings, not coercion. Regimes that lack legitimacy devote more resources to maintaining their rule and less to effective governance, which reduces support and makes them vulnerable to overthrow or collapse.[1]

It is important to differentiate normative legitimacy from empirical legitimacy. Normative legitimacy is the rightness of the regime's claim to rule. Behavioral or empirical legitimacy is the level of the relevant public's diffuse support for the regime. In contemporary time, normative political theory typically expects democratic regimes to be more legitimate than authoritarian regimes because democracy is built on the consent of the ruled and universal suffrage. In a democracy diffuse regime support is supposed to remain robust over time because citizens understand that the regime is accountable and the authorities or their policies can be changed if they perform badly and displease the citizens. Empirically, however, a measure of popular support can be found in states with many different kinds of regimes, some democratic and some not, a point often overlooked by theories that concentrate exclusively on democratization.[2] Ample survey data have shown that public's diffuse support for the regime varies

---

[1] Gilley, Bruce, "The meaning and measure of state legitimacy: Results for 72 countries," *European Journal of Political Research* 45 (2006), pp. 499-525.

[2] William Mishler and Richard Rose, "Learning and re-learning regime support: The dynamics of post-communist regimes," *European Journal of Political Research*, 41, 1 (January 2002): 5–36.

considerably across democracies and the observed level of regime legitimacy under non-democratic regimes could be substantially higher than that of emerging democracies.[3] Normative political theory, however, can be of value to empirical analysis, and vice versa. Normal political theory can help empirical political scientists to formulate hypotheses about plausible explanatory sources of regime legitimacy. At the same time, empirical political scientists can assess the social and historical relevance of normative political theories, especially among competing theoretical perspectives, in different political contexts.

In this paper we juxtapose the normative propositions stemming from the Confucian tradition against the received views under the Western liberal tradition about what are supposed to be the most important pillars supporting regime legitimacy in the contemporary world. We examine these divergent claims with the latest wave of Asian Barometer Survey (ABS thereafter). In particular we compare their empirical relevance to a systematic understanding the sources of regime legitimacy in East Asia. We further compare their relative explanatory power between the Confucian societies, namely mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan, Singapore and Vietnam, and non-Confucian societies in the region. In so doing, we are in a stronger intellectual position to tackle two related issue. First, we address the puzzle about why the observed level of regime legitimacy under non-democratic regimes has been substantially higher than either established or emerging democracies. Second, we can engage the on-going debate over Asian values in a more focused and rigorous way.

---

[3] Pippa Norris, *Democratic Deficit: Critical Citizens Revisited*. (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Peter Kotzian, "Public support for liberal democracy," *International Political Science Review*, 32, 1 (2011): 23- 41; Zhengxu Wang, Russell J. Dalton, and Doh Chull Shin, "Political Trust, Political Performance, and Support for Democracy," in R. Dalton and D. Shin, eds., *Citizens, Democracy, and Markets Around the Pacific Rim*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 50-72.

Competing Views on Sources of Regime Legitimacy

Max Weber in his classic treatment of the issue proposed three types of political legitimacy: traditional, charismatic, and rational-legal. A regime is legitimate when its constituents believe -- whether because of ideological solidarity, patriotism, nationalism, or good governance -- that a government has the right to exercise authority in its regime.[4] Regime legitimacy is vital for the stability of any regime type. Martin Lipset pointed out that regime stability not only depends on continued economic development, but also the effectiveness and legitimacy of the political system.[5] Linz and Stephan argue that it is impossible for all citizens to confer legitimacy on a regime, but if a majority of people fail to recognize the legitimacy of the regime, no government can survive.[6]

Andrew Nathan argues that four bodies of theory offer hypotheses about causal chains that might affect the public's diffuse support for its regime. First, modernization theory suggests that socio-demographic changes in the population (urbanization, rising education levels, rising income levels) may render citizens more aware and critical of government; this in turn can affect legitimacy in different ways depending on regime type and performance. Second, communications theory suggests that access to and the contents of media can affect regime legitimacy positively or negatively, given a particular regime type and regime performance, depending on what kinds of messages the media convey.[7] Third, public opinion studies suggest that perceived government

---

[4] Russell, Jacob Hale . 2008. Regime legitimacy and military resilience : lessons from World War II and Yugoslavia. Thesis (S.M.)--Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Dept. of Political Science, 2008.

[5] Seymour M Lipset,. 1981. *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press.

[6] Juan J.Linz, and Alfred Stepan. 1978. *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown, and Reequilibration*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

[7] Pippa Norris. Democratic Deficit: Critical Citizens Revisited. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

performance affects legitimacy; regimes that deliver on issues that the public considers important gain support, and those that don't lose support. Finally, political culture theory suggests that deeply-rooted attitudes about authority will affect citizen's acceptance of different kinds of regimes.[8]

Andrew Nathan's synthesis are congruent with some emerging literatures addressing the puzzle of why some non-democratic regimes could enjoy a substantially higher level of popular support than democratic regimes. These recent efforts to resolve these puzzling empirical results have put forward three alternative explanations, all of which are of theoretical importance to democratic studies.

The first explanation suggests that regime legitimacy turns out to be created, maintained, and destroyed less at the input and more at the output side of the political system. Non-democratic regimes, while denying democratic rights to their citizens, might still enjoy a higher level of political support if they deliver economic wellbeing and good governance. On the other hand, mechanisms of popular accountability and democratic representation do not immunize democracies from poor economic performance and bad governance.

The second explanation suggests that some democracies have a lower level of regime support than non-democracies may be attributed to the presence of critical citizens nurtured under the polemic and contentious nature of democratic politics. On the other hand, it is conceivable for some non-democratic regimes to enjoy a higher level of political support due to the nature of authoritarian politics. These regime pre-empt viable political alternatives by suppressing political opposition and independent news media and occupying all organized space.

---

[8] Andrew J. Nathan. "Political Culture and Regime Support in Asia". Paper for the Panel on "Prospects for Political Reform" at the Conference on "The Future of U.S. – China Relations" USC U.S.-China Institute April 20-21, 2007.

The third explanation, the culturalist approach, suggests that the observed level of regime legitimacy stems not just from the functioning of the political system but also from the prevailing political predispositions held by its citizenry. This approach potentially challenges that most of existing works apply Western concepts of legitimacy, such as the work of David Beetham, to the politics of East Asia (Chu, 2013).[9] According to the culturalist approach, some political regimes may benefit in part from the default condition of being endowed with a large portion of deferential and compliant citizens. An important variant of the culturalist approach is oftentimes dubbed under the "Asian values" discourse. According to the work by Lucian Pye and Samuel Huntington, East Asia has vivid paternalistic power and superior-inferior relations, which will never disappear with the modernization of the social economy.[10] In contrast, rapid social economic shifts will result in an individual sense of insecurity, creating a new form of power-dependency.[11] In addition, Huntington argues that Confucianism values group interests greater than individual interests, political authority more than individual freedoms, and social responsibility over individual rights. Meanwhile, Confucian society lacks traditions that guard against the consolidation of national power, and thus the concept of individual rights has never existed. Essentially, Confucian thought encourages social harmony and cooperation, avoids conflict, values the attainment of social order and maintains hierarchical social structures. More importantly, Confucian thought regards society and the country as identical, and thus

---

[9] Chu. Yun-han. "Sources of Regime Legitimacy and the Debate over the Chinese Model." *China Review*. Vol. 13, No. 1 (Spring 2013): 1-42.

[10] Lucian W. Pye, "Civility, Social Capital, and Civil Society in Asia," in Robert I. Rotberg (ed.), Patterns of Social Capital: Stability and Change in Historical Perspective (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 381.

[11] Lucian W. Pye, *Asian Power and Politics: The Culture Dimensions of Authority* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 325.

leaves no space for autonomous social groups. These characteristics of traditional East Asian culture will not assist the development of democracy in the region.[12]

According to Tu Weiming, "the Confucian scholar-official still functions in the psycho-cultural construct of East Asian societies."[13] More recently, based on the findings of the ABS, Doh Chull Shin found that the majority of East Asians in other countries with a Confucian legacy also tend to be attached to "paternalistic meritocracy", prioritize economic well-being over freedom, and define democracy in (rather than procedural) terms.[14] Shi and Lu Jie demonstrated with empirical data that in China the popular understanding of the concept of "democracy" does not match the meaning defined in the liberal democracy discourse; rather, it is based on the guardianship discourse. There is a widely shared view among ordinary Chinese people that "democracy" means government for the people (and by elites), rather than government by the people. They explain this is the reason why, as long as the Chinese government "serves the people," it is deemed "democratic" and legitimate.[15] Those findings confirm culturalist notions of a regime's substantive legitimacy rooted in traditional values and reproduced through early socialization experience.

Under the culturalist formulation, it is entirely conceivable that people who are still under the influence of traditional Asian values, which privilege group interests over individual interests, political authority over individual freedom, and social responsibility over individual rights, might be intimidated by the chaos and conflicts

---

[12] Samuel P. Huntington, "After Twenty Years: The Future of Third Wave," *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 8, no. 4(1997), p. 10.

[13] Tu Weiming, ed., *Confucian Traditions in East Asian Modernity: Moral Education and Economic Culture in Japan and the Four Mini-Dragons* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996).

[14] Doh Chull Shin, *Confucian Legacies and the Making of Democratic Citizens: Civic Engagement and Democratic Commitment in Six East Asian Countries* (Cambridge University Press, 2011).

[15] Tianjian Shi and Jie Lu, "The Shadow of Confucianism," *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 21, Number 4 (October 2010): pp. 123-130

brought about by democratization while embracing paternalist politics under authoritarianism. Furthermore, if the current regime is a direct descendant of a revolutionary regime, state legitimacy and regime legitimacy are oftentimes fused into one. The so-called revolutionary legacy anchored on nation-building or anti-imperialist struggle will have its lingering impact through political socialization. In this sense, political culture matters and legitimacy is in the eyes of the beholders.

These alternative explanations in a significant way resonate well the normative arguments stemming from Confucian political theory. While it is difficult to apply Confucian political theory to modern societies where the market economy flourishes, mass media permeates, social structure becomes highly differentiated, and nation-state monopolizes governing authority, one can still identify some key arguments about what constitute and sustain the legitimacy of political authority that are supposed to transcend time and space. We tentatively identify four key elements underscored by traditional Confucian teaching:

1) The delivery of material wellbeing to the people. The scope of material wellbeing might include delivering economic prosperity, provision of basic necessity, access to public service, and protection of human safety.

2) A responsive government that addresses the people's needs and win over their heart.

3) A trustworthy public authority that command the trust and respect of the people.

4) A government manned by people who are capable and virtuous, protect the public interest, abide by the law and refrain themselves from abusing the power of the office, and treat people from different social strata and backgrounds in a fair and equal manner.

What distinguishes the Confucian arguments from the prevailing normative claim growing out of the Western liberal tradition is whether these four elements are sufficient

and adequate in and by themselves for constituting and sustaining the legitimacy of political regime without the standard fixtures of a liberal democracy. The normative democratic theory would argue, instead, that while these elements emphasized by Confucian political theory are relevant and even important in sustaining regime legitimacy but they are not essential, much less sufficient and adequate. For normative democratic theory the installment and application of democratic rules and procedures -- in terms of civil liberty (protection of freedom and rights), popular accountability through regular, free and fair elections under a system of competitive political parties, horizontal accountability through separation of power, and rule of law -- are essential and supposedly more important than the four elements ordained by the Confucian political theory.

We are not arguing that the elements emphasized by Confucian political theory and the elements privileged by Western liberal tradition are always mutually exclusive. On the contrary, there are some overlaps between the two. For instance both Confucian political thought and Western liberalism place emphasis on the importance of controlling corruption, law-abiding government, and equal and fair treatment.

Parallel to Confucian political theory, the philosophy of communitarian approach coincidentally also challenges the Western liberal framework. It embraces legitimacy but conceptualizes regime in a fundamentally different way from liberalism. First of all, a communitarian notion of the role of the state deviates from the liberal tradition. According to the latter, the existence of the state is founded upon the social contract and individual values, and thus the aim of the state is to pursue and protect basic individual political rights. At the same time, the state becomes meaningless if it loses its role as a protector of individual rights and freedom. In contrast, communitarianism argues that society dwells within a collective value system and claims that the fulfillment of collective goals is a higher priority than individual interests. Thus society

values communal interests over those of individual citizens. The State exists for itself and the communal interest and asks each citizen to sacrifice to meet the collective goal. Next, communitarianism tends to downplay party politics as they view party politics to be merely an institutional arrangement for a few politicians to pursue political power. Finally, communitarians are not interested in the "distribution of power" and liberal "checks and balances," and instead desire high political participation from members of community.[16]

In the following, we examine the on-going debate over the legitimacy of the East Asia regimes through a rigorous analysis of two recent waves of ABS data from 13 countries and territories. In doing so, we place emphasis on the subjective opinions, attitudes and values held by the regular citizens. We take the position that no matter how experts and international organizations evaluate the legitimacy of any given regime, in the final analysis political legitimacy flows out of the heart of the people, who are the final judge on the extent to which their own political system is accepted as legitimate and its core institutions and incumbent elite deemed trustworthy.

In particular, we undertake three analytical tasks in an integrated multivariate framework. First, we compare the relative explanatory power of the elements ordained by Confucian political theory with that of the elements emphasized by the Western liberal tradition in explaining differences in level of regime support across different types of regimes. Next, we compare Confucian societies with non-Confucian societies to see if the Confucian propositions about regime characteristics and performances abode even better in societies that inherited Confucian cultural legacy. Third, we examine how traditional political-cultural predispositions interact with perceived regime characteristics and performances to affect respondents' support for their

[16] Henry Tam, *Communitarianism: A New Agenda for Politics and Citizenship* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), pp 12-8.

country's current regime.

Measurement, Variables and Statistical Models

Our measurement of regime support has been constructed from a series of questions included in the questionnaire of ABS Wave 4 (ABS4 thereafter). The questions ask respondents about their preference, pride and confidence in their own system of government (detailed in the Appendix).[17] Special attention has been taken to differentiate the "system of government" from the specific government in office, their performance and governance. Also, this concept also does not focus on the trust in specific institutions, but is an umbrella for the system as a whole. As constructed, regime support is synonymous with David Easton's "diffuse regime support" and Bruce Gilley's regime legitimacy.[18] The new battery of questions allowed for a strong comparison of differences across regime types and the region as a whole. Unlike Latin America and Europe, Asia is highly diverse in the types of regimes, with many of the regimes "hybrid" in character, usually electoral authoritarian systems. Thus, there is a need to capture regime variation to understand regime support in the region.

Empirical Analysis

In this section, we first present the distribution of responses to questions focusing on regimes support in countries surveyed by the ABS4. We also contrast the results of ABS4 to its previous wave (ABS3).. Then we present how the overall level of regime support is correlated with other values emphasized by Confucian and western liberal

[17] In the ABS4 , we employed four items measuring the supportive attitude toward regime in terms of the current political system in general: 1) Over the long run, our system of government is capable of solving the problems ours country faces; 2) Thinking in general, I am proud of our system of government; 3) A system like ours, even if it runs into problems, deserves the people's support; 4) I would rather live under the system of government than any other that I can think of.

[18] Easton, David. (1965). *A Framework for Political Analysis.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall; Gilley, B. (2006). The meaning and measure of state legitimacy: Results for 72 countries. *European Journal of Political Research*, *45*(3), 499-525.

traditions, respectively. Furthermore, we conduct linear regression analysis with different model specifications In brief, the main finding of this section is that governments in East Asia have been able to establish their legitimacy without the standard fixtures of a liberal democracy. Instead, they can by and large rely on other desirable characteristics and performance criterion prescribed by the Confucian tradition to legitimize their rule. These empirical findings answer the puzzle why hybrid regimes and authoritarian regimes could enjoy higher level of popular legitimacy in East Asia.

Data: To test our theory on sources of regime support, we use the data of the ABS4that cover 13 countries in Asia.[19] The sample size is 19047.

Dependent Variable: As discussed in the previous section, we rely on a four-item battery of the ABS4 to operationalize the concept of regime support. For each of these four questions, respondents are requested to choose one among the following four options in both ABS3 and ABS4: "strongly agree," "somewhat agree," "somewhat disagree," and "strongly disagree." We take two approaches to deal with respondents' answer to these questions. First, we use binary variables to recode respondents' answers into either of the following two categories: "agree" and "disagree." In other words, respondents who agree or strongly agree on the statement specified in the question express higher support for the regime of their countries. We use these binary variables to present the level of regime support from different dimensions in each country. To illustrate the dynamics value changes in East Asia, we also contrast the results between ABS3 and ABS4.

Second, we recode respondents' answers to the four questions into the [-2, +2] interval with five discrete numbers, with a larger value indicative of higher regime

[19] The surveyed countries include Japan, Hong Kong, Korea, Mainland China, Mongolia, the Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore, Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia, and Myanmar. We exclude Myanmar because it was not surveyed until ABS4..

support and a zero as neutral toward the regime.[20] Based on this new scale and the four questions on regime support, we employ the technique of factor analysis and calculate the factor score of each respondent. Accordingly, we use this factor score as the index of regime support. We will discuss the preliminary results of these questions focusing on regime support in the following paragraphs.

The first question investigates how citizens perceive their system of governments' capacity of solving problems facing their countries. We present the survey results of this question in Figure 1. As Figure 1a illustrates, citizens in the three fully democratized countries, including Japan, Korea, and Taiwan, have lower confidence on their system of government's capacity to solve problems, while citizens in other authoritarian or hybrid regimes except Hong Kong have higher confidence. Notably, citizens in Singapore and Vietnam have the highest confidence in their system of government's capacity of solving problems in the ABS4 data, but their counterparts in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Japan have the lowest confidence. A similar pattern also appears in the ABS3 data in Figure 1. This contrasting result illustrates the main puzzle we aim to disentangle in this paper. That is, why do citizens still have high regime support in authoritarian counties like China, Singapore, and Vietnam? However, it is also worth noting that the perceived effectiveness of the current political system has significantly declined in the eyes of the citizens in both China and Cambodia. The foundation of the regime legitimacy is no longer as robust as it was several years ago.

[Figure 1a about here.]

Figure 1b presents the results on to what extent citizens are proud of their system of government in each country. The pattern in Figure 1b is similar to Figure 1a. In particular, citizens in fully democratized countries, South Korea in particular, are less

[20] In other words, "strongly agree" is recoded as 2, "somewhat agree" as 1, "somewhat disagree" as -1, and "strongly disagree" as -2. Other answers are grouped as 0 to make these missing values neutral to our theoretical expectation.

proud of the system of their governments than those in authoritarian or hybrid regimes. Meanwhile, about 90% of citizens in Singapore are proud of their government, and citizens in China and Vietnam also express higher levels of sense of pride for the country's system of government than many other countries surveyed by the ABS3 and ABS4.

[Figure 1b about here.]

Figure 1c and Figure 1d further investigate other aspects of citizens' diffuse support for their regimes. Figure 1c presents the results of the question focusing on how citizens will "stick with" the system of their government even if the system runs into difficulty. The results demonstrate that citizens in those authoritarian or hybrid regimes are more supportive for their country's system of government, even when these systems run into problems. By contrast, citizens in fully democratized countries register lower level of allegiance to their political systems under difficult situation. Once again, both the sense of pride and the strength of popular allegiance have weakened somewhat in China after the power succession in 2012 and significantly weakened in Cambodia in the recent past.

[Figure 1c about here.]

Figure 1d presents the results of the question on whether or not citizens will support for an alternative system to their current form of government. In Figure 1d, the majority of citizens in all countries except Korea are supportive for the current systems of their governments in both waves of ABS, regardless of their regimes types. This result suggests that the likelihood of fundamental regime change may be insignificant in most countries covered by the ABS.

[Figure 1d about here.]

Based on the survey results of these four questions, we create an index of regime support with exploratory factor analysis (EFA) for every respondent in the 13 countries

surveyed by the ABS. Specifically, we use EFA to fit the responses of these four questions to one dimension and derive the factor score for each respondent based on their answers.[21] Figure 2 illustrates the mean score of each country with a higher value indicative of higher support for the regime in ABS3 and ABS4. As Figure 2 demonstrates, this index of regime support takes a negative value in 7 countries covered by the ABS4, including Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Philippines, Mongolia, and Cambodia. Meanwhile, the remaining 6 countries have positive values on the index of regime support. This result is consistent with what we have seen in Figure 1a to Figure 1d.

The changes of regime support of these countries during ABS3 and ABS4 are worth discussing, too. First, regime support has been significantly increased in Japanese but decreased in Cambodia. Second, it deteriorates in countries that had experienced economic downturn and/or political turmoil, including Taiwan, China, Thailand, and Malaysia. Meanwhile, people's support for the regime remain on the same level in Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore, Vietnam, and Mongolia, implying the foundation of regime stability in these countries. Due to length limit, we leave detailed analysis of such changes for future research.

[Figure 2 about here.]

We now turn to discuss the relations between regime support and regime characteristics or performance criterion emphasized by either Confucian or Western liberal tradition in 13 countries of the ABS4. . First, we divide the 13 countries of ABS4 into two groups based on the legacies of Confucianism in these countries. In particular, we regard Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Mainland China, Singapore, and Vietnam

[21] The Cronbach's alpha statistic of these four item is 0.81

as Confucian societies. Accordingly, the other 6 countries, including Mongolia, the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Cambodia, and Malaysia, are coded as "others."

While the ABS4 investigates individual attitudes and values, we classify their answers into the following categories. The first category mainly include the values emphasized by the Confucian tradition, such as economic prosperity (Q1-Q3), provision of public service (Q39-Q44), provision of basic necessity (Q107), human safety (Q43), trust in institution (Q7-9, Q11-13), trust in officials (Q136), and government responsiveness (Q100 and Q115).

The second category includes the characteristics emphasized by the western liberal tradition, including popular accountability (Q101, Q113, and Q116), horizontal accountability (Q104 and Q114), transparency (Q111), civil liberty (Q108 and Q109), political competition (Q102), and citizen empowerment (Q151 and Q125).

The third category covers the characteristics underscored by both Confucian and the western liberal tradition, including clean politics (Q133-Q135), law-abiding officials (Q110 and Q112), and fair treatment on citizens (Q105 and Q106).

With these operationalizations, we recode respondents' answers with a [-2, +2] interval with five discrete numbers, with 0 as neutral attitude or value. Based on these new measures, we calculate the correlation between the index of regime support and other values emphasized by Confucianism and western liberal traditions in both Confucian and non-Confucian countries. We also calculate the same correlation for individual countries covered by the ABS4 .

As we can see from Table 1, the correlations between regime support and factors underscored under Confucian tradition, except provision of public service and human safety, are stronger in the Confucian countries than in non-Confucian ones. For instance, in the category "Provision of Basic Necessity", correlations between regime support and question on economic prosperity are much higher in Confucian countries than in

other countries less influenced by the Confucian tradition. Similar results can be found in categories of "trust in institution" and "trust in officials," and "responsiveness."

Nevertheless, there is no trade-offs between explanatory power of the factors emphasized by Confucian political theory and predicative power of the elements underscored by Western liberal tradition. Instead, certain regime characteristics emphasized by Western political liberalism such as quality of horizontal accountability still play an important role in shaping citizens' support for the regime in Confucian couintries. However, these characteristics and performance criterion emphasized by the Western liberal tradition do not result in significant difference between Confucian and non-Confucian countries, such as freedom protection, political competition, and citizen empowerment.

[Table 1 about here.]

In addition to using correlation, we regress factor score of diffuse regime support on three clusters of variables -- the ones emphasized by Confucian tradition, the ones by Western liberal tradition, and the ones underscored by both traditions -- respectively. We run the same regression model on two different samples, one on Confucian and the other on non-Confucian countries. In addition, we control for other variables that are believed to be associated with regime support, including demographic characteristics and political culture.

[Table 2 about here.]

We report the estimation results of our regression analysis in Table 2. In the first two models under the title B1, we regress regime support on demographic characteristics and variables under the auspices of the Confucian tradition, such as delivery of economic prosperity and government responsiveness. As the estimation results under the B1 column demonstrate, factors under the auspices of Confucian tradition play a significant role in shaping citizens' regime support in Confucian

countries, especially in areas of economic prosperity, provision of basic necessity, trust in institution, trust in officials, and government responsiveness. More importantly, for those 5 variables with statistical significances in the Confucian sample, only economic prosperity and responsiveness have smaller coefficient in the sample of Confucian countries than in the sample of non-Confucian countries. Furthermore, the adjusted R^2 is substantially higher for the Confucian sample than the one for the non-Confucian sample. These results suggest that our model can better explain cases of Confucian countries.

We also investigate how the factors under the auspices of the Western liberal tradition affect regime support in Confucian and non-Confucian countries. As the results under the B2 column suggest, the cluster of variables ordained by the Western liberal tradition is less influential on citizens' support for the regime in Confucian countries in categories of civil liberty and political competition, the core values of liberal democracy.

In Colum B3, we investigate how the regime characteristics emphasized by both Confucian and Western liberal traditions affect people's regime support in Confucian and non-Confucian countries, respectively. While the results of three categories are statistically significant in both samples, it seems that "fair treatment" is more influential in terms of shaping regime support in Confucian countries.

In column B4, we investigate the effects of political culture in both Confucian and non-Confucian countries. The results suggest that Confucian countries emphasized more on traditional political values, loyalty to national community, while non-Confucian countries emphasize more on deference to authority and conflict avoidance.

Based on the results reported from B1 column to B4 column of Table 2, we include all variables in the same model and estimate the effects of variables under the auspices of Confucian tradition along with variables ordained by the Western liberal tradition on

regime support. The results under the column All (B1-B4) are similar to what we have seen in B1. Provision of basic necessity, trust in institution, and trust in officials, are more important in terms of shaping individual regime support in Confucian countries than in non-Confucian countries. Government responsiveness is a very significant explanatory variable in both Confucian and non-Confucian societies.

Meanwhile, the explanatory power of the variables emphasized by Western liberal tradition, including transparency, freedom protection, and citizen empowerment, is insignificant in Confucian countries once we control for other dimension of political values.

To summarize the empirical findings of this section, we conclude that the key elements identified by Confucian tradition, such as the delivery of material wellbeing and political trust, are more crucial than the ones underscored by Western liberal tradition over shaping citizens' support for the regime in Confucian countries. Government responsiveness is a much more important factor explaining the level of diffuse regime support than horizontal accountability across East Asia.

Tentative Conclusion

What we intend to argue in this article is not that Western liberal theory does not regard delivery of material wellbeing, provision of basic necessity, being responsive to people's need, and winning the trust of the people on political authority (both in terms of trust in institution and officials) are not important to regime legitimacy. However, the Western liberal tradition emphasizes that the "input" and "procedure" aspect of the political system, in terms of freedom protection, popular accountability, transparency, competition, and check and balance are essential and far more important than the former. It argues that without them no political regime in modern time can enjoy real legitimacy. In contrast, under the Confucian tradition, these elements in the former cluster plus

integrity of political officials (clean politics), law-abiding government and fair treatment of the people in and by themselves are adequate and sufficient to legitimatize the regime without the standard fixtures of liberal democratic form of government.

While our findings fit the data from Confucian societies better than non-Confucian societies, the overall explanatory power of the variables under the auspices of Confucian political theory is still greater than that of the Western liberal tradition in virtually all East Asian societies (including both Confucian and non-Confucian ones) and across different regime types. This suggests that the social and historical relevance of Confucian political theory is not limited to Confucian societies. Much like Communitarian theory, Confucian political theory presents a formidable challenge to Western liberal tradition in a much wider socio-cultural space beyond Confucian societies. As far as the Asian region is concerned, the explanatory power of the former is more transferrable and generalizable than the later. In that sense, it could be just equally "universal" as the later as a framework of reference.

Figures and Tables

Figure 1a:

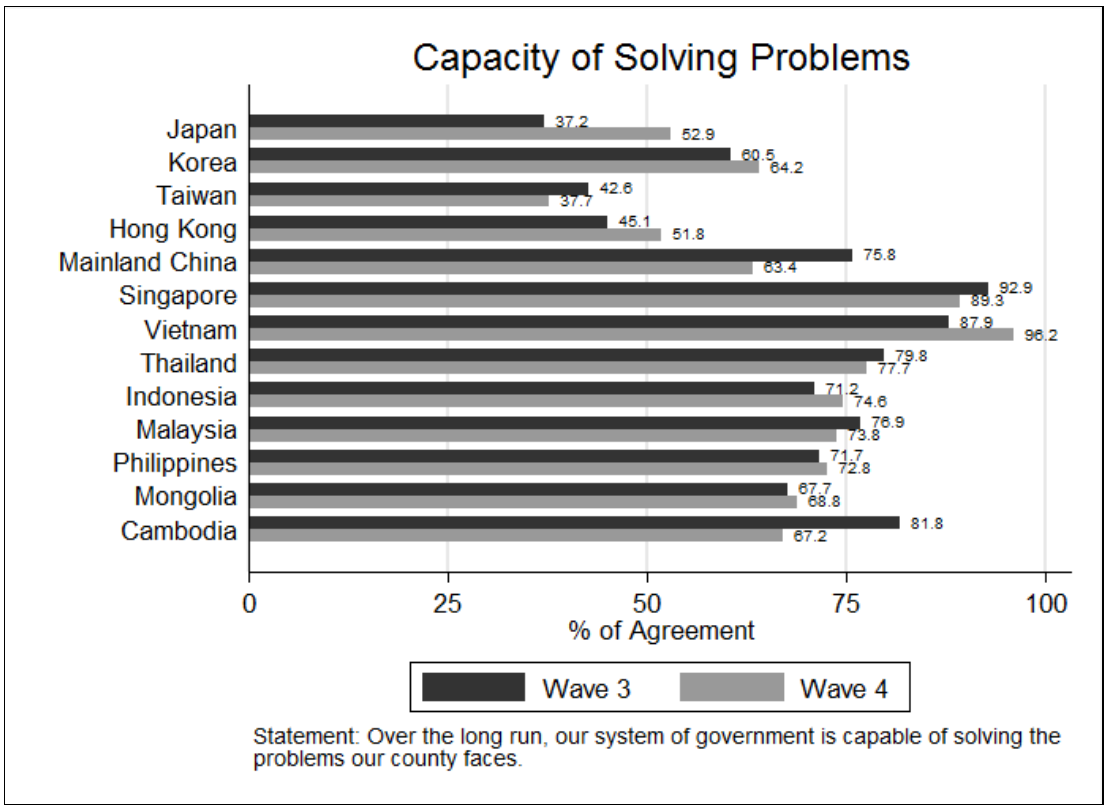

Figure 1b:

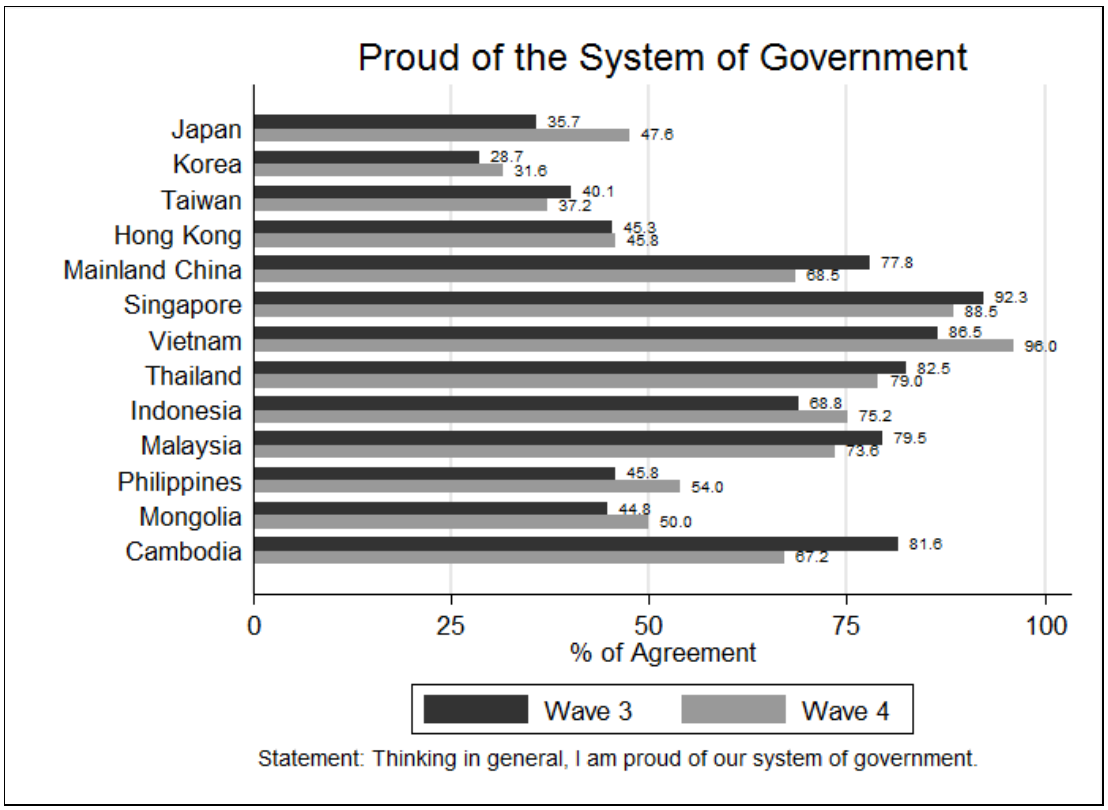

Figure 1c:

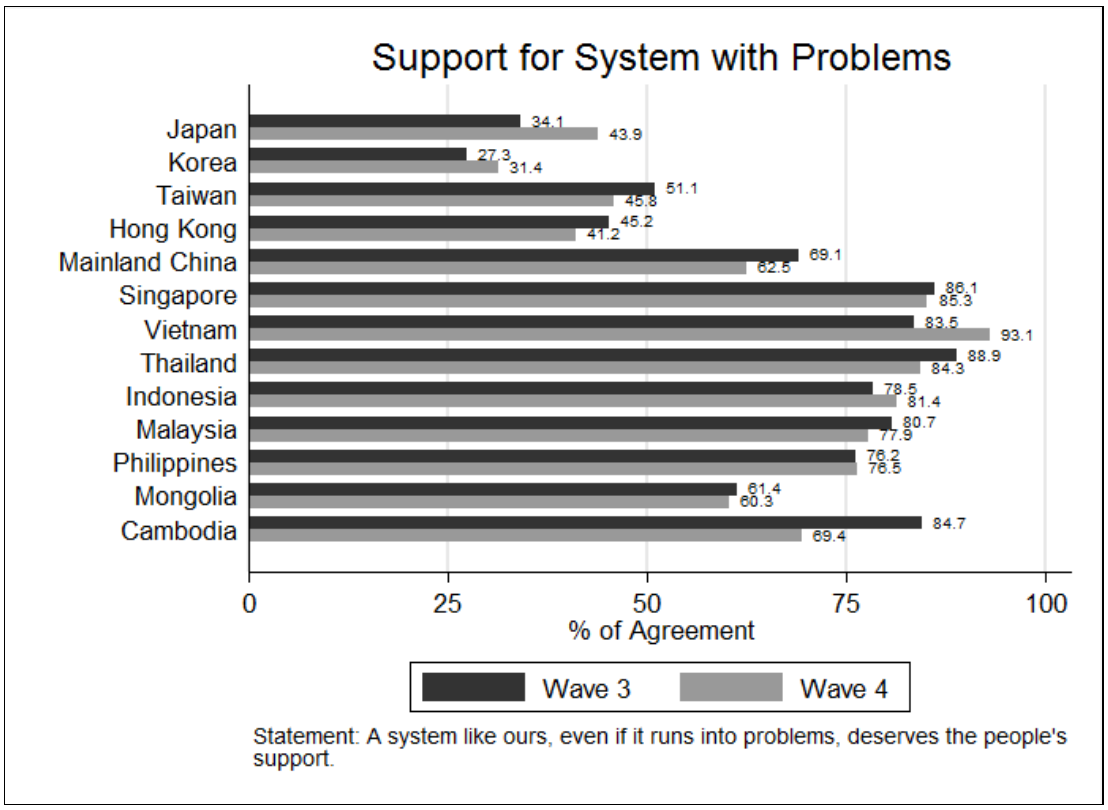

Figure 1d:

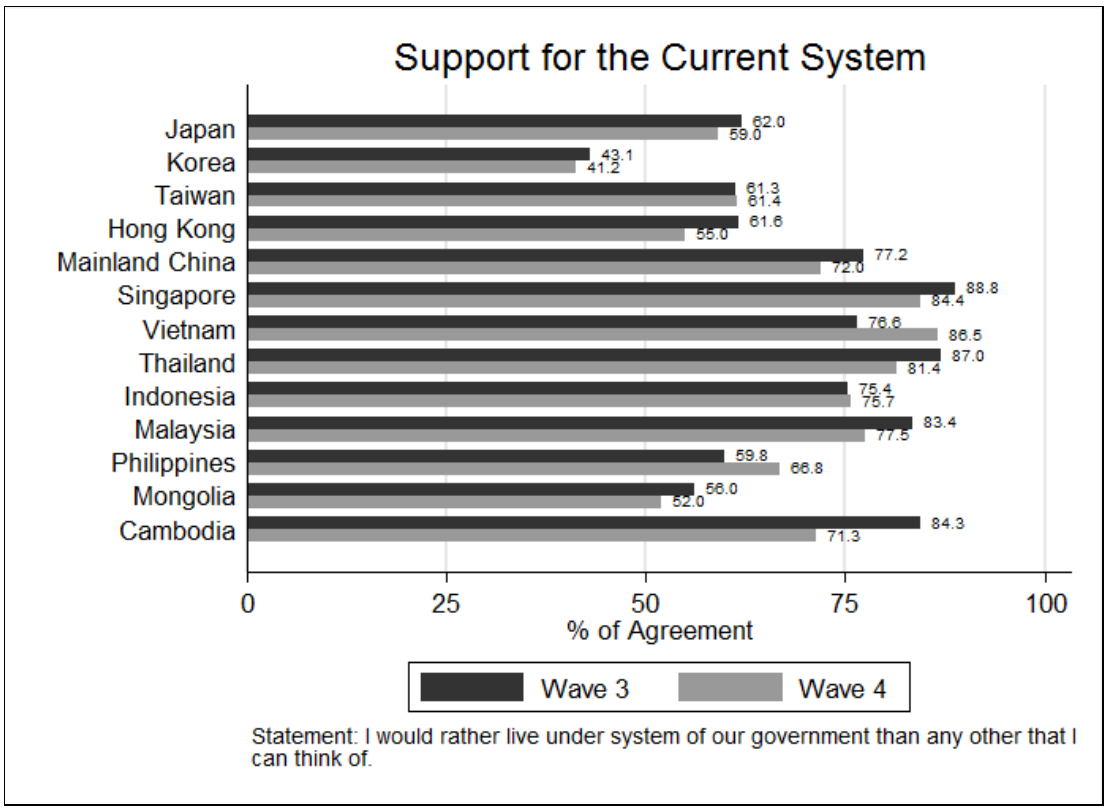

Figure 2: Index of Regime Support in East Asian Countries

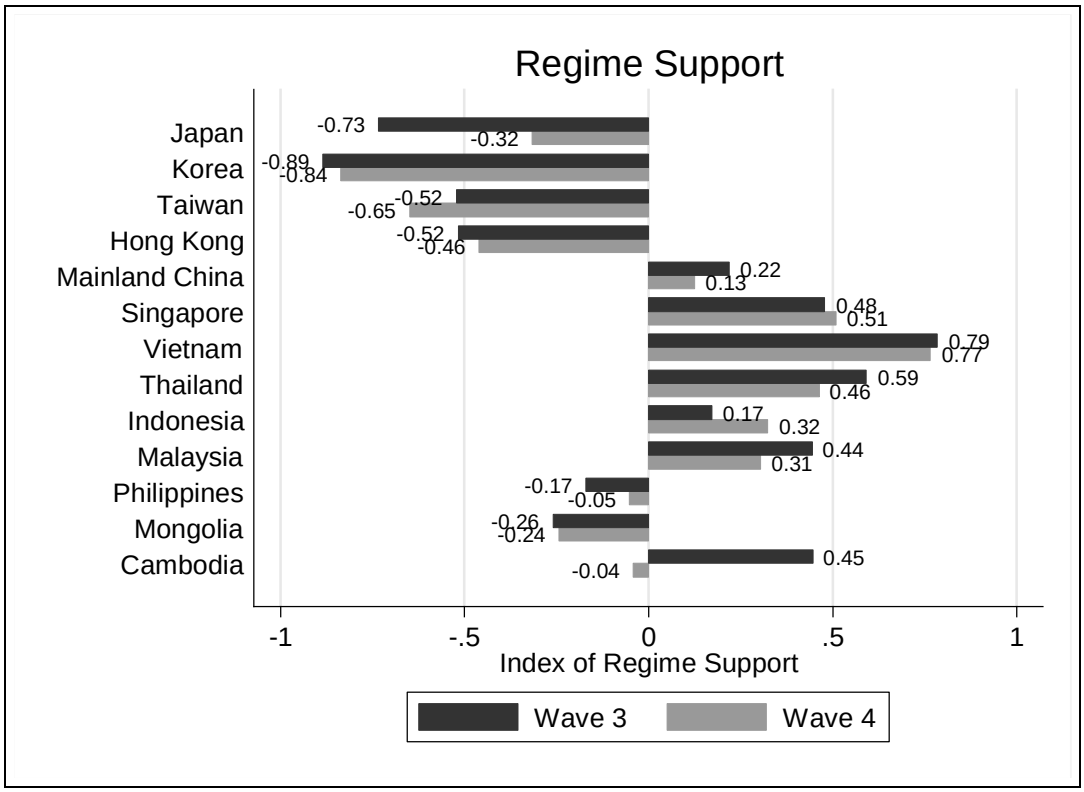

Table 1: Correlation Between Regime Support and Values of Confucian and Western Values

Variables	Tradition		Individual Confucian Country						
	Confucian	Western	Japan	Korea	Taiwan	Hong Kong	China	Singapore	Vietnam
Characteristics of the Regime									
Characteristics Emphasized by Confucian Tradition									
Economic Prosperity	0.473**	0.299**	0.189**	0.180**	0.342**	0.182**	0.264**	0.194**	0.241**
Provision of Public Service	-0.244**	0.283**	0.173**	0.111**	0.172**	0.147**	-0.183**	0.260**	-0.231**
Provision of Basic Necessity	0.357**	0.230**	0.254**	0.236**	0.244**	0.117**	0.245**	0.245**	0.262**
Human Safety	0.139**	0.204**	0.165**	0.114**	0.167**	0.161**	0.124**	0.125**	0.135**
Trust in Institution	0.592**	0.455**	0.432**	0.371**	0.459**	0.439**	0.383**	0.496**	0.354**
Trust in Officials	0.478**	0.303**	0.364**	0.346**	0.318**	0.338**	0.290**	0.342**	0.449**
Responsiveness	0.506**	0.406**	0.401**	0.381**	0.368**	0.400**	0.313**	0.371**	0.310**
Characteristics Emphasized by Western Liberal Tradition									
Popular Accountability	0.350**	0.260**	0.412**	0.328**	0.317**	0.242**	0.278**	0.299**	0.277**
Horizontal Accountability	0.347**	0.259**	0.258**	0.208**	0.343**	0.256**	0.239**	0.309**	0.182**
Transparency	0.246**	0.191**	0.194**	0.193**	0.347**	0.357**	0.207**	0.159**	-0.00749
Civil Liberty	0.210**	0.248**	0.325**	0.295**	0.281**	0.203**	0.280**	0.219**	0.106**
Political Competition	0.214**	0.182**	0.265**	0.310**	0.115**	0.192**		0.308**	0.196**
Citizen Empowerment	-0.103**	-0.105**	0.0177	-0.0792**	0.0491*	-0.220**	-0.0908**	-0.0745*	0.0544
Characteristics Emphasized by Both Confucian and Western Liberal Tradition									
Corruption	-0.353**	-0.371**	-0.316**	-0.304**	-0.374**	-0.304**	-0.276**	-0.310**	
Law-abiding Officials	0.348**	0.294**	0.312**	0.225**	0.373**	0.383**	0.320**	0.239**	0.207**
Fair Treatment	0.451**	0.342**	0.311**	0.287**	0.325**	0.228**	0.269**	0.294**	0.312**
Political Culture	0.447**	0.258**	0.109**	0.316**	0.217**	0.378**	0.359**	0.282**	0.183**
Traditional Political Values									
Collectivist Orientations	0.385**	0.240**	0.231**	0.213**	0.211**	0.194**	0.358**	0.245**	0.339**
Deference to Authority	0.262**	0.154**	0.213**	0.296**	0.179**	0.288**	0.189**	0.183**	0.118**
Conflict Avoidance	0.299**	0.174**	0.187**	0.240**	0.102**	0.283**	0.213**	0.210**	0.214**
Loyalty to National Community	0.406**	0.195**	0.146**	0.269**	0.220**	0.298**	0.358**	0.280**	0.344**
N	11462	7585	1081	1200	1657	1217	4068	1039	1200

* p<0.05, ** p<0.01

Table 2: Sources of Regime Support

	B1: Confucian Tradition		B2: Liberal Tradition		B3: Both Traditions		B4: Political Culture		All (B1-B4)	
	Confucianism	Others	Confucianism	Others	Confucianism	Others	Confucianism	Others	Confucianism	Others
Demographic Traits										
Male	-0.002	-0.020	0.051	-0.030	0.016	-0.038	-0.003	-0.068	-0.009	-0.030
	[0.016]	[0.038]	[0.029]	[0.049]	[0.030]	[0.046]	[0.032]	[0.058]	[0.018]	[0.037]
Age	0.004	0.004	0.003	0.006	0.002	0.003	0.004	0.005	0.003	0.004
	[0.001]*	[0.002]	[0.003]	[0.002]*	[0.003]	[0.001]*	[0.003]	[0.002]	[0.002]	[0.001]*
Education	-0.011	-0.007	-0.106	-0.025	-0.072	-0.064	0.029	-0.055	0.012	-0.002
	[0.030]	[0.017]	[0.057]	[0.038]	[0.039]	[0.030]	[0.050]	[0.056]	[0.027]	[0.014]
Income	0.010	-0.021	0.015	-0.002	0.003	-0.016	0.024	-0.027	0.014	-0.017
	[0.006]	[0.010]	[0.025]	[0.019]	[0.025]	[0.014]	[0.022]	[0.025]	[0.007]	[0.007]
Characteristics of the Regime										
Characteristics Emphasized by Confucian Tradition										
Economic Prosperity	0.124	0.141							0.100	0.131
	[0.028]**	[0.042]*							[0.025]**	[0.035]*
Provision of Public Service	0.014	0.092							0.011	0.059
	[0.032]	[0.013]***							[0.018]	[0.015]*
Provision of Basic Necessity	0.111	0.091							0.058	0.031
	[0.017]***	[0.015]**							[0.011]**	[0.014]
Human Safety	0.043	0.047							0.022	0.028
	[0.018]	[0.015]*							[0.016]	[0.012]
Trust in Institution	0.318	0.286							0.221	0.204
	[0.015]***	[0.047]**							[0.014]***	[0.039]**
Trust in Officials	0.157	0.147							0.099	0.073
	[0.022]***	[0.021]***							[0.025]**	[0.021]*
Responsiveness	0.202	0.232							0.111	0.137
	[0.024]***	[0.028]***							[0.021]**	[0.029]**
Characteristics Emphasized by Western Liberal Tradition										
Popular Accountability			0.275	0.222					0.087	0.069
			[0.036]***	[0.035]**					[0.022]**	[0.023]*
Horizontal Accountability			0.270	0.195					0.044	0.067
			[0.043]***	[0.039]**					[0.017]*	[0.018]*

(Continued)

Table 1: Cont'd

	B1: Confucian Traditon		B2: Liberal Tradition		B3: Both Traditions		B4: Political Culture		All (B1-B4)	
	Confucianism	Others	Confucianism	Others	Confucianism	Others	Confucianism	Others	Confucianism	Others
Transparency			0.116	0.101					0.026	0.006
			[0.043]*	[0.023]**					[0.014]	[0.009]
Civil Liberty			0.088	0.143					-0.003	-0.016
			[0.036]*	[0.016]***					[0.024]	[0.016]
Political Competition			0.117	0.088					0.039	0.042
			[0.071]	[0.012]***					[0.020]	[0.009]**
Citizen Empowerment			-0.092	-0.064					0.006	-0.004
			[0.015]***	[0.028]					[0.011]	[0.019]
Characteristics Emphasized by Both Confucian and Western Liberal Tradition										
Corruption					-0.263	-0.299			-0.091	-0.105
					[0.095]*	[0.036]***			[0.017]**	[0.014]***
Law-abiding Officials					0.179	0.166			0.047	0.088
					[0.030]**	[0.020]***			[0.018]*	[0.009]***
Fair Treatment					0.320	0.186			0.031	0.065
					[0.083]**	[0.035]**			[0.016]	[0.023]*
Political Culture										
Traditional Political Values							0.385	0.300	0.103	0.127
							[0.085]**	[0.074]**	[0.039]*	[0.042]*
Collectivist Orientations							0.200	0.200	0.048	0.090
							[0.045]**	[0.050]*	[0.030]	[0.029]*
Deference to Authority							0.038	0.085	0.026	0.052
							[0.027]	[0.068]	[0.017]	[0.027]
Conflict Avoidance							0.094	0.095	0.073	0.058
							[0.051]	[0.036]*	[0.026]*	[0.029]
Loyalty to National Community							0.163	0.110	0.068	0.058
							[0.051]*	[0.046]	[0.021]*	[0.022]*
Constant	-0.505	-0.348	-0.220	-0.349	-0.250	0.034	-0.659	-0.276	-0.630	-0.565
	[0.110]**	[0.058]**	[0.349]	[0.210]	[0.266]	[0.085]	[0.260]*	[0.235]	[0.134]**	[0.042]***
Observations	8715	7247	8715	7247	8715	7247	8715	7247	8715	7247
Adjusted R-squared	0.473	0.332	0.264	0.190	0.305	0.232	0.301	0.147	0.516	0.397

Note: Clustered standard errors in brackets. * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001.

Appendix: Questionnaire Items Used in the Analysis

Variables	Measurement	Questions
Diffuse Regime Support		**Q83**. Over the long run, our system of government is capable of solving the problems our country faces.
		Q84. Thinking in general, I am proud of our system of government.
		Q85. A system like ours, even if it runs into problems, deserves the people's support.
		Q86. I would rather live under our system of government than any other that I can think of.
Characteristics Emphasized by Confucian Tradition	Economic Prosperity	**Q1.** How would you rate the overall economic condition of our country today?
		Q2. How would you describe the change in the economic condition of our country over the last few years?
		Q3. What do you think will be the state of our country's economic condition a few years from now?
	Provision of Public Services	Based on your experience, how easy or difficult is it to obtain the following services? **Q39.** An identity document
		Q40. A place in a public primary school for a child
		Q41. Medical treatment at a nearby clinic
		Q42. Help from the police when you need it
	Provision of basic necessity	**Q107.** People have basic necessities like food, clothes, and shelter.
	Human Safety	**Q43.** Generally speaking, how safe is living in this city/ town/ village – very safe, safe, unsafe or very unsafe?
	Trust in Institutions	How much trust do you have in them? **Q7.** The president (for presidential system) or Prime Minister (for parliamentary system)
		Q8. The courts
		Q9. The national government
		Q11. Parliament
		Q12. Civil service
		Q13. The military(or armed forces)
	Trust in Officials	**Q153.** You can generally trust the people who run our government to do what is right.
	Government responsiveness	**Q100.** How likely is it that the government will solve the most important problem you identified within the next five years?
		Q115. How well do you think the government responds to what people want?

(Continued)

Appendix: Cont'd

Variables	Measurement	Questions
Characteristics Emphasized by Western Liberal Tradition	Popular Accountability	**Q101.** People have the power to change a government they don't like.
		Q113. How often do you think our elections offer the voters a real choice between different parties/candidates?
		Q116. How much do you feel that having elections makes the government pay attention to what the people think?
	Horizontal Accountability	**Q104.** When government leaders break the laws, there is nothing the court can do.
		Q114. To what extent is the legislature capable of keeping government leaders in check?
	Transparency	**Q111.** How often do government officials withhold important information from the public view?
	Civil Liberty	**Q108.** People are free to speak what they think without fear.
		Q109. People can join any organization they like without fear.
	Political Competition	**Q102.** Political parties or candidates in our country have equal access to the mass media during the election period.
	Citizen Empowerment	**Q151.** Sometimes politics and government seems so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what is going on.
		Q152. People like me don't have any influence over what the government does
Characteristics Emphasized by Both Confucian and Western Liberal Tradition	Corruption	**Q133.** How widespread do you think corruption and bribe-taking are in your local/municipal government? Would you say …?
		Q134. How widespread do you think corruption and bribe-taking are in the national government **[**in capital city**]**? Would you say …?
		Q135. In your opinion, is the government working to crack down on corruption and root out bribery?
	Law-abiding Officials	**Q110.** Do officials who commit crimes go unpunished?
		Q112. How often do you think government leaders break the law or abuse their power?
	Fair Treatment	**Q105.** All citizens from different ethnic communities in Country X are treated equally by the government.
		Q106. Rich and poor people are treated equally by the government.

(Continued)

Appendix: Cont'd

Variables	Measurement	Questions
Political Culture	Traditional Political Values	**Q158.** People with little or no education should have as much say in politics as highly-educated people.
		Q158. Government leaders are like the head of a family; we should all follow their decisions.
		Q159. The government should decide whether certain ideas should be allowed to be discussed in society.
		Q160. Harmony of the community will be disrupted if people organize lots of groups.
		Q161. When judges decide important cases, they should accept the view of the executive branch.
		Q162. If the government is constantly checked [i.e. monitored and supervised] by the legislature, it cannot possibly accomplish great things.
		Q163. If we have political leaders who are morally upright, we can let them decide everything.
		Q164. If people have too many different ways of thinking, society will be chaotic.
	Collectivist Orientations	**Q55.** For the sake of the family, the individual should put his personal interests second.
		Q56. In a group, we should sacrifice our individual interest for the sake of the group's collective interest.
		Q57. For the sake of national interest, individual interest could be sacrificed.
	Deference to Authority	**Q60**. Even if parents' demands are unreasonable, children still should do what they ask.
		Q61. When a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law come into conflict, even if the mother-in-law is in the wrong, the husband should still persuade his wife to obey his mother.
		Q62. Being a student, one should not question the authority of their teacher.

(Continued)

Appendix: Cont'd

Variables	Measurement	Questions
	Conflict Avoidance	**Q63.** In a group, we should avoid open quarrel to preserve the harmony of the group.
		Q64. Even if there is some disagreement with others, one should avoid the conflict.
		Q65. A person should not insist on his own opinion if his co-workers disagree with him.
	Loyalty to National Community	**Q154.** A citizen should always remain loyal only to his country, no matter how imperfect it is or what wrong it has done.
Demographic Traits	Male	
	Age	
	Education	(1) Under Primary Education; (2) Primary Education (3) Secondary Education; (4) University and Higher
	Income	(1) Lowest level; (2) Low level; (3) Middle level; (4) High level; (5) Highest level