



A Comparative Survey of

*DEMOCRACY, GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT*

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Democratic Conceptions in East Asian Societies: A  
Contextualized Analysis

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## **Asian Barometer**

A Comparative Survey of Democracy, Governance and Development

# **Working Paper Series**

Jointly Published by

**Globalbarometer**

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## **Democratic Conceptions in East Asian Societies: A Contextualized Analysis**

*Abstract:* Using a new survey battery of democratic conceptions from the third wave of the Asian Barometer Surveys (ABS III), this paper 1) examines the validity of this new survey battery in distinct political contexts and 2) explores the possible origins of democratic conceptions in the sampled East Asian societies. There are two key findings. First, IRT measurement models confirm the validity of this new survey battery in different contexts. And it effectively taps a unidimensional latent construct that registers the surveyed East Asians' propensity in understanding democracy, which falls on a continuous spectrum ranging from one end of a substance-based conception to the other end of a procedure-based conception. Second, within each sampled society, there is a significant amount of variance regarding its popular understandings of democracy. Further detailed multiple regression analyses show that two issues are critical for understanding this variance: government performance and the extent to which people cherish the intrinsic value of democracy. Moreover, the impact of government performance is conditional upon the political context in which it is embedded.

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Living in a society that is free and democratic is a widely shared goal in today's world. And thanks to the people who have risked their lives in pursuit of the goal they cherish dearly, democracy is making progress in becoming the only game in town in many societies, some of which skillfully dodged the Third Wave but were later transformed by the Color Revolutions or more recently the Arab Spring. Moreover, democracy has also successfully consolidated its status as the only game in contemporary political discourse: most authoritarian leaders publicly acknowledge that "democracy is a good thing" (Yu 2006) and claim their regimes to be some sort of a democracy.

Nevertheless, democracy is also a well-known contested concept, with numerous connotations. And the various meanings attached to democracy not only complicate civil and academic debates on how to assess and improve democratic practice, but also generate some considerable leeway for possible concept stretching that authoritarian leaders are keen on exploring to camouflage and facilitate their authoritarian rule. And many of the empirical puzzles identified by students of comparative public opinion cannot be effectively addressed, without systematically incorporating the distinct meanings that people associate with the D-word in different societies. For instance, in the third wave of Asian Barometer Surveys (ABS III), people in eleven East Asian societies are asked to evaluate the practice of democracy in their respective countries. And the weighted percentages of the people who are "Very satisfied" or "Fairly satisfied" are plotted in Figure 1, ranked in an ascending order.

[Figure 1 about here]

Contrary to most scholars' expectations, a large majority of people, i.e., more than 65%, in authoritarian societies like mainland China, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Singapore are quite satisfied with the practice of democracy in their countries. And some of these authoritarian societies even

outrank consolidated liberal democracies like Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. The first and also quite natural response from most readers is that the survey results from authoritarian societies cannot be trusted: the respondents simply lied, worrying about the possible retaliation from their repressive government. The impacts of preference falsification (Kuran 1995) or coerced silence (Noelle-Neumann 1984) on survey results can never be ruled out, which is not only the case in authoritarian societies for obvious reasons, but also in democratic societies due to social pressure or other concerns (Glynn et al. 1997; Krosnick 2002; Tourangeau et al. 2000). Nevertheless, a significant percentage of the same respondents did report negative assessment of their respective governments on issues like lack of freedom of association, insufficient political competition, or government corruption, which suggests that political fear cannot be the key factor that drives the pattern illustrated in Figure 1. Meanwhile, existing empirical research using the ABS data, as well as the data from other large-scale comparative survey projects like the World Values Survey, shows that the contaminating effect of political fear in political surveys from authoritarian societies is not substantively significant, in many cases even statistically insignificant (Ren 2009; Shi 1996, 2001). Another equally plausible explanation is the distinct meanings that people may have associated with the D-word. When popular democratic conceptions vary and do not necessarily follow the liberalism-based criteria that emphasize, *inter alia*, institutionalized protection of political rights and liberty, checks and balances, and election-centered party politics, it is very likely that popular assessment of the practice of democracy in different societies may diverge from most scholars' expectations. And the growing literature of popular understandings of democracy has effectively documented the existence of different democratic conceptions in many societies (e.g., Bratton and Mattes 2001; Canache Forthcoming; Carnaghan 2011; Dalton et al. 2007; Rose et al. 1998; Shi 2009; Shin 2011).

Democratic conceptions have consequential implications for both democracies and non-democracies, since they provide the lens through which people value the practice of democracy in their society. In democracies, when most citizens are not satisfied with the way democracy works, they may resort to more unconventional means like civil disobedience, e.g., Occupying Wall Street, to push for change or become apathetic and estranged from political participation. In non-democracies, when a large number of citizens are satisfied with the practice of democracy, regardless of the democratic conception they embrace, the authoritarian leaders enjoy the upper hand against the opposition's mobilization for regime transition; and, thus, they have every incentive to sustain or even indoctrinate the popular understanding of democracy that benefits and facilitates their authoritarian rule.

To enrich our understanding on democratic conceptions, as well as its possible origins, and provide more systematic empirical evidence from East Asia for pertinent comparative research, this paper uses a new survey battery from the ABS III to explore the situation of democratic conceptions, as well as their possible origins, in eleven East Asian societies with varying political systems. After introducing the new survey battery and examining its measurement validity, this paper demonstrates the cross-society and within-country variance in East Asians' understandings of democracy. Then, with the help of multiple regressions, this paper presents some preliminary evidence on the possible origins of democratic conceptions in the surveyed East Asian societies.

### **Democratic Conceptions in East Asia: New Survey Evidence from the ABS III**

To effectively unpack the D-word and examine the distinct meanings that people associate with democracy, as well as their implications for other critical political attitudes and behavior, students of comparative public opinion have adopted different strategies. One group of scholars

scrutinizes respondents' answers to a widely used open-ended survey question, i.e., "What does democracy mean to you?", to identify different meanings attached to the D-word (Canache Forthcoming; Dalton et al. 2007; Shi and Lu 2010) While, another group of scholars relies on respondents' choices out of pre-selected attributes as the most essential characteristics of democracy to gauge their democratic conceptions (Bratton and Mattes 2001; Carnaghan 2011; Miller et al. 1997; Shi 2009). Both strategies have their own advantages and disadvantages: to minimize the bias caused by questionnaire design, the open-ended question provides sufficient flexibility and freedom for respondents and collects all possible responses; but it is very difficult to implement and the findings are heavily conditional upon the coding schemes used for analysis. Close-ended survey instruments with pre-selected answer categories ease the implementation, reduce the subjective bias in data analysis, and facilitate cross-regional comparative research; however, the pre-selected answer categories significantly shape and constrain respondents' possible answers.

In ABS III, a newly designed close-ended survey battery with four questions is used to measure distinct democratic conceptions. There are two key features of this new battery that make it more attractive than previously used instruments. First, building upon the results of analyzing previous ABS data on popular understandings of democracy collected through the open-ended question, ABS III identifies four regularly and repeatedly emphasized components in popular democratic conceptions: 1) norms and procedures, 2) freedom and liberty, 3) social equity, and 4) good government. Focusing on these four key themes helps streamline the design of appropriate survey instruments, reduce the subjective bias in coding and post-survey analysis, and also allow sufficient flexibility of data analysis in theoretically meaningful ways. Second, for each component, ABS III provides four corresponding indicators from distinct perspectives.

Using multiple indicators, thus, further reduces the possible impacts of question design on respondents' answers.

In the survey, the following leading statement was presented to all respondents:

“Many things may be desirable, but not all of them are essential characteristics of democracy. If you have to choose only one from each four sets of statements that I am going to read, which one would you choose as the most essential characteristic of a democracy?”

After this, respondents were presented with the first group of four statements for choice, tapping 1) norms and procedures, 2) freedom and liberty, 3) social equity, and 4) good government respectively. Then the second, third and fourth groups of statements were presented in sequence. Furthermore, to minimize the possible order effect, ABS III rotates the order of the four components in the four groups. Detailed question wording and weighted frequencies from the eleven East Asian societies are pretend in Table 1.

[Table 1 about here]

First of all, except in Vietnam, where there is a serious situation of missing values, i.e., more than 50% in all four measures, this new battery is not cognitively challenging for most respondents in the surveyed East Asian societies. Second, when the four components are juxtaposed for selection, “social equity” and “good government” appear much more popular than “norms and procedures” and “freedom and liberty” among the citizens of the eleven East Asian societies, to be recognized as essential characteristics of democracy. This prevailing inclination toward defining democracy in terms of social equity or good government among the East Asians actually resonates with a critical differentiation between procedure-based vs. substance-based understandings of democracy, proposed by pertinent research on Latin American, African, and East European societies (Bratton and Mattes 2001; Canache Forthcoming; Carnaghan 2011; Dalton et al. 2007; Miller et al. 1997; Rose et al. 1998).



On the contrary, the four indicators of norms and procedures (choosing leaders via free election, legislature checking the government, party politics, and the rule of law), as well as the four indicators of freedom and liberty (freedom of speech, freedom of association, free media, and political rights of participation), directly tap the gist of liberal democracy, which emphasizes the indispensability of institutions and procedures for running a society, making decisions, ensuring the dignity and some unalienable rights of individuals. Though this conception of democracy does not speak directly to possible outputs of the political system, there is a hidden assumption that some decent life can be secured for most people once such institutions and procedures are established and followed. Moreover, besides the instrumental value of democracy as a means toward good governance, this procedure-based democratic conception also emphasizes the intrinsic value of freedom and liberty, which per se should be protected and defended through well-established institutions. Once this procedure-based understanding of democracy is embraced, even those living in an authoritarian society with stunning socioeconomic performance are unlikely to view the practice of democracy in the society positively, simply due to the lack of some institutionalized protection of people's dignity and basic rights. Similarly, even confronted with some short-term turbulence or even down-turn in their society's socioeconomic performance, the citizens of a democracy who have internalized the procedure-based democratic conception may still applaud the practice of democracy in the society, as long as the key institutions and procedures are well-maintained and their basic rights are effectively protected against possible infringement.

Thus, to facilitate further meaningful comparative studies and simplify our readers' interpretation of the frequency table, I follow this framework and collapse the nominal variable with four categories into a binary variable with two categories: procedure-based vs. substance-

based democratic conceptions. And the weighted percentages of the citizens in each surveyed society, who prioritize norms and procedures or freedom and liberty as essential characteristics of democracy, are illustrated in Figure 2a-2d.

[Figure 2a-2d about here]

Generally, except for the first measure as displayed in Figure 2a, the democratic conception that emphasizes norms, procedures, freedom, or liberty does not effectively win the hearts and minds of the majority of the surveyed East Asians. And surprisingly, in liberal democracies like Japan, South Korean, and Taiwan, depending on the specific measures used, the percentage of their citizens who have embraced the procedure-based understanding of democracy may go as low as less than 25%. Moreover, these liberal democracies do not necessarily outperform their neighbors in this regard: Philippines and Mongolia are persistently the leading runners in all four measures. And except for Vietnam (with a serious problem of missing values), authoritarian societies included in the survey, i.e., Singapore, mainland China, and Malaysia, depending on the specific measures used, actually boast a larger percentage of citizens who prioritize norms, procedures, freedom or liberty as essential features of democracy than their democratic neighbors like Thailand and Indonesia.

To systematically and rigorously examine the validity of this new battery and minimize the possible influence of measurement errors in subsequent analyses, I adopt the Item Response Theory (IRT) modeling technique to statistically test the measurement validity of the four measures. The IRT model is similar to the conventional confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), except that it can deal with ordinal and nominal indicators that violate the statistical assumptions needed for the conventional CFA (Embretson and Reise 2000; Reise et al. 1993). Using the IRT models, I can tell whether the four binary indicators do tap a latent construct that measures

people's propensity in understanding democracy differently. Since I code the procedure-based democratic conception as 1 for each indicator, this latent propensity, if statistically validated, should fall on a continuous spectrum that ranges from the lower end of a pure substance-based democratic conception that solely emphasizes social equity or good government to the higher end of a pure procedure-based understanding of democracy that exclusively focuses on norms, procedures, freedom, or liberty. And the results of the IRT models for all eleven East Asian societies are presented in Table 2.

[Table 2 about here]

There are four statistics of the IRT models that can tell how effective the four indicators are in capturing the surveyed East Asians' understanding of democracy that falls on the substance-procedure spectrum: Chi-square, CFI, TLI, and RMSEA. An insignificant Chi-square statistic suggests that the one-factor IRT model successfully fits the latent structure of the raw data. Even with a significant Chi-square statistic, which is likely to be the case for large samples, a high value of CFI and TLI (usually larger than 0.9) and a small value of RMSEA (usually less than 0.08) also suggest a good fit of the one-factor IRT model (Bentler 2000; Browne and Cudeck 1993; Hu and Bentler 1999).

As displayed in Table 2, except in mainland China and Vietnam, the one-factor IRT model with four binary indicators shows an insignificant Chi-square statistic in each of the remaining nine societies, regardless of their political context. And the standardized factor loadings for the four binary indicators are statistically significant at the conventional level, except for the only insignificant factor loading for the first measure in Philippines. In mainland China, despite the significant Chi-square statistic, the large CFI and TLI values, as well as the small RMSEA value, confirm the validity of one-factor IRT model. Vietnam is the only society showing unsatisfying

performance of the one-factor IRT model, probably due to the large number of missing values. Basically, the new survey battery does a fairly satisfying job in measuring varying democratic conceptions among the surveyed East Asians; and the four measures do work effectively, in a statistical sense, in tapping the East Asians' latent propensity in holding different democratic conceptions, which falls on a continuous spectrum ranging from a pure substance-based conception to a pure procedure-based conception.

To minimize the possible influence of measurement errors in subsequent analyses, I extract the latent propensity score for each surveyed respondent using the aforementioned one-factor IRT model. To secure the same benchmark for effective comparison, I use all observations, excluding those from Vietnam, together to run a pooled one-factor IRT model.<sup>1</sup> In this way, the East Asians who prioritize norms, procedures, freedom or liberty as essential characteristics of democracy in all four measures are given the same highest score; while, those who exclusively emphasize social equity or good government in all four measures are given the same lowest score. And the distribution of the IRT scores of democratic conception for each of the ten surveyed societies is presented in Figure 3.

[Figure 3 about here]

The two bolded lines in Figure 3 indicate the minimum and maximum values of the IRT scores respectively. Since pooling all observations together enforces the same anchor-point, the minimum and maximum values are the same for all ten societies. The dotted line stands for the hypothetical population mean if the respondents' IRT scores of democratic conception follow a symmetric distribution between the minimum and maximum values. The round dots stand for the

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<sup>1</sup> I also run another one-factor IRT model with the observations from Vietnam. The key findings are the same. There is much more significant variance driven by the missing values from Vietnam. Related information is attached to the appendix for reference.

estimated population mean for each of the ten East Asian societies based on the sample information. And the associated upper and lower caps indicate the 25% and 75% percentiles of the distribution of the IRT scores in each society.

Statistically speaking, if the estimated population mean is larger than the hypothetical mean in a society, there are relatively a larger number of citizens who have embraced the procedure-based understanding of democracy. If the estimated population mean is less than the hypothetical mean, there are relatively more citizens in a society who have internalized the substance-based democratic conception. And the further away the estimated population mean is from the hypothetical mean, the more skewed the distribution is toward either the minimum or maximum value. Meanwhile, the gap between the upper and lower caps of the estimated mean can be interpreted as a proxy of the population variance in a society: the larger the gap, the more significant the variance in people's democratic conceptions.

There are three key messages in Figure 3. First, except in Philippines, substance-based democratic conception dominates the popular understanding of democracy in the remaining East Asian societies. Even in Philippines, the estimated population mean is not statistically larger than the hypothetical mean. Thus, it is safe to conclude that social equity or good government primarily defines how people in the ten East Asian societies understand democracy: most of them do not see norms, procedures, freedom, or liberty as essential characteristics of democracy. On the contrary, for these people, high-quality outputs, i.e., sound socioeconomic performance or clean politics, are much more important in telling the democratic nature of a political system.

Second, despite their much longer live experiences of liberal democracy, a large percentage of citizens of Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea actually prioritize social equity or good government as essential characteristic of democracy. The estimated population mean in Japan is

the lowest among the ten East Asian societies, even lower than that in Singapore and mainland China. The estimated population mean in Taiwan is higher than that in Singapore, but marginally lower than that in mainland China. South Korea boasts the highest estimated population mean among the three liberal democracies; however, its population mean is still lower than that in Malaysia, Mongolia, and Philippines. It seems that live experiences with liberal democracy do not necessarily orient people's understanding of democracy toward the procedure-based conception. But the reality is much more complicated and I come back to this with more details in the later section on the origins of democratic conception.

Third, the within-society variance in people's democratic conceptions is much larger than the cross-society variance. Most saliently, the difference between the estimated population mean of Japan and that of Philippines is even less than the distance between Japan's population mean and its own 75% percentile. To rigorously evaluate the composition of the variance in the East Asians' democratic conceptions, a zero-order hierarchical model is run to estimate the inter-class correlation coefficient (ICC) of the IRT scores of democratic conception among the ten societies. The ICC can tell the percentage of the across-society component in the total variance;<sup>2</sup> and the estimated ICC is 5.10%. In other words, around 95% of the variance in the East Asians' understandings of democracy should be attributed to domestic factors; while, only about 5% of the total variance could be attributed to cross-society differences.

In a summary, the new survey battery on democratic conception in ABS III performs satisfactorily in different political contexts and effectively captures the surveyed East Asians' varying understandings of democracy. Following a prominent theoretical differentiation between procedure-based and substance-based democratic conceptions in contemporary literature, I

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<sup>2</sup> The result is attached to the appendix for reference.

rigorously test the measurement validity of the new battery using the IRT modeling technique. All statistical indicators confirm the validity of this new battery (once collapsed into four binary indicators) of tapping people's latent propensity in embracing distinct democratic conceptions. And this latent propensity falls on a continuous spectrum, as theoretically expected, ranging from one end of a procedure-based understanding of democracy that exclusively identifies norms, procedures, freedom, or liberty as essential characteristics of democracy to the other end of a substance-based democratic conception that primarily prioritizes social equity or good government as defining features of democracy. Further examination on the distributional features of the IRT scores of democratic conception reveals that, the substance-based democratic conception has won the hearts and minds of the majority of the surveyed East Asians, even those who have accumulated sufficient live experiences of liberal democracy in Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea. Meanwhile, most of the variance in the East Asians' democratic conceptions should be attributed to domestic factors.

### **Political Context and Possible Origins of Democratic Conceptions in East Asia**

As previously discussed, the substance-based understanding of democracy is centered around some instrumental value of democracy, like social equity and good government; while, the procedure-based democratic conception moves beyond the practical benefits that could be possibly achieved through democratic politics, and emphasizes the intrinsic value of norms, procedures, freedom, or liberty as indispensable components of a decent way of life. Thus, to explore some possible origins of democratic conceptions in East Asia, I primarily focus on the instrumental and intrinsic values that the surveyed East Asians might have associated with democracy, as well as how such factors exert their influence in distinct political contexts.

*Instrumental value of democracy:* One general conclusion from the public opinion literature is that people's attitude toward a system or institution is significantly shaped by what this system or institution can deliver (e.g., Anderson 2006; Easton 1965; Powell and Whitten 1993), i.e., its outputs. And this instrumental rationality also applies to people's democratic conception. As a way of organizing a government to rule a society, democracy is also expected to deliver, i.e., to ensure good governance. Though empirically, there is mixing evidence on the impacts of democracy on economic growth (Doucouliagos and Ulubasoglu 2008; Persson and Tabellini 2008), public goods provision (Deacon 2009; Hamman et al. 2011; Tsai 2007), etc., democracy is still believed to be the most effective system (or the least ineffective system if we follow Sir Churchill's logic) in constraining the possible abuse of political power and channeling it toward the public interest. Even in authoritarian societies, like mainland China, Vietnam, and Singapore, both politicians and average citizens usually attribute the origins of governance problems like corruption or government officials' nonfeasance to insufficient supervision or lack of accountability; and, thus, "democracy" is usually the panacea prescribed to address such problems, though adjectives like "with Chinese characteristics" or "compatible with Asian values" might be added.

To examine how such instrumental concerns affect the East Asians' democratic conceptions, I choose three indicators from the ABS III core questionnaire, with particular emphasis on the behavior of government leaders and officials: 1) "Do officials who commit crimes go unpunished?"; 2) "How often do you think government leaders break the law or abuse their power?"; and 3) "How well do you think the government responds to what people want?" Compared to some conventional measures of a government's socioeconomic performance, these three indicators speak directly to the effectiveness of a political system in supervising



government officials, constraining the possible abuse of political power, and creating accountability. And the much more direct and straightforward link between these indicators and a society's political system should ease people's cognitive reasoning when making evaluations and make them more appropriate for examining the instrumental value of democracy. The respondents' answers are plotted in Figure 4a-4c, together with each society's respective mean IRT score of democratic conception.

[Figure 4a-4c about here]

Generally speaking, the authoritarian societies in East Asia seem to have done a quite good job in supervising government officials (Singapore and mainland China), constraining political leaders' possible abuse of power (Singapore), and effectively responding to people's needs (Singapore, mainland China, and Malaysia). For instance, according to their respective citizens' evaluations, the three authoritarian governments outperform those in Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea, the three liberal democracies in East Asia, in responding to their people's needs. It is likely that the authoritarian leaders may have paid extra attention to their performance, due to lack of institution-based legitimacy (Nathan 2003). In other words, they have to please their people, in exchange for political support, by relying much more on effective response to their people's needs.

Nevertheless, there is no clear pattern revealed in Figure 4, regarding the possible relationship between democratic conception and governance quality at the societal level. In societies dominated by the substance-based understanding of democracy, like Japan, Thailand, and Taiwan, a large percentage of their citizens are not satisfied with the behavior of government officials and the responsiveness of their government. While, in societies with roughly equal influence of both substance-based and procedure-based democratic conceptions, like Mongolia

and Philippines, still a large percentage of their citizens are not satisfied with the behavior of government officials and the responsiveness of their government. However, this puzzling pattern might have been driven by the moderating effect of the political context in which the surveyed citizens are embedded.

In liberal democracies like Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea, democracy as a set of institutions and procedures has been well-established and gradually reinforced over the past decades. And the protection of basic rights, freedom, and liberty has also become an integrated component of people's daily lives. Thus, most citizens might have taken such institutions and procedures for granted. Comparatively speaking, the space for significant institutional change or innovation is limited; and, replacing democracy with any feasible alternative is out of the question most of the time for most of their citizens. Thus, when their citizens perceive problems in governance, they are more likely to emphasize a better enforcement of existing institutions and procedures and, thus, pay more attention to concrete outputs of their political system. Accordingly, this could have shifted their understanding of democracy more toward the substance-based conception. On the contrary, in new democracies or authoritarian societies, democracy is either not consolidated yet or still a hypothetical political alternative. Comparatively speaking, there is still much more that can be done with institutions and procedures in new democracies, not to say authoritarian societies. Thus, when their citizens perceive problems in governance, it is quite natural for them point the finger at existing flawed institutions or deficient procedures, and demand further improvement or even replacement.

Accordingly, their understanding of democracy might have been shifted toward the procedure-based conception.<sup>3</sup> Hence, following two hypotheses are tested in this paper:

*H1: In consolidated democracies, poor governance makes people more inclined to understand democracy following the substance-based conception.*

*H2: In new democracies or authoritarian societies, poor governance makes people more inclined to understand democracy following the procedure-based conception.*

*Intrinsic value of democracy:* The almost unshakable status of democracy as the only game in today's political discourse is based on something much more than its instrumental value, i.e., ensuring social equity or good government. Democracy is also created with the aim of securing and protecting people's dignity and "certain endowed unalienable rights" like life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness. Liberal democracy is designed and established with the fundamental assumption that people are created equal and, thus, they should be treated as equal and with respect. Such normative connotations of democracy have significantly contributed to its moral superiority in contemporary political discourse. Thus, democracy per se, rather than simply being an effective means to good governance, is cherished by many people for its intrinsic value. It is not a coincidence that many authoritarian leaders do acknowledge democracy as a universal value; and, instead of denouncing democracy, they are actively debating what kind of democracy is good for their society and stretching the concept to cover their authoritarian nature.

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<sup>3</sup> A key implication of the aforementioned arguments is that the procedure-based vs. substance-based democratic conception has distinct consequences in societies with varying experiences of democracy. In consolidated democracies, the substance-based understanding of democracy does not indicate significant negative assessment of the democratic system. People in liberal democracies have taken those fundamental democratic institutions and procedures for granted. And what their conceptions of democracy indicate is simply the relative significance of government performance. Nevertheless, in new democracies or authoritarian societies, such conceptions could have totally different but even more significant implications for the future of democracy. Due to space limitations, this paper only focuses on the possible origins of democratic conception.

To examine how democracy's normative connotations affect the East Asians' understandings of democracy, I pick one indicator from the ABS III core questionnaire: "If you had to choose between democracy and economic development, which would you say is more important?" This question offers two advantages that help measure the extent to which people cherish the intrinsic value of democracy. First, by intentionally juxtaposing democracy against economic growth, the question pushes people to assess democracy beyond its instrumental value (for which, generating economic growth is a key, if not the sole component). Thus, I can safely argue that those who choose democracy over economic growth are more attracted to its intrinsic value. Second, comparing economic growth against democracy, rather than specific institutions, procedures, or norms generates sufficient distance between this variable and the dependent variable, i.e., substance- procedure-based democratic conception, of this paper. Otherwise, the exercise would be meaningless, and even close to tautology. Of course, this measure is not flawless: given the salience of material resources and economic benefits in our daily lives and the ongoing economic challenges and crises around the world, a very high hurdle is raised here for the respondents to show their cherishment of the intrinsic value of democracy. Again, the respondents' answers to this question are presented in Figure 5, together with each society's mean IRT score of democratic conception.

[Figure 5 about here]

Despite its lowest mean IRT score of democratic conception – due to a large number of citizens embracing the substance-based understanding of democracy – Japan significantly outnumbered the other nine East Asian societies in terms of the percentage of citizens cherishing the intrinsic value of democracy; while, Indonesia, an unconsolidated democracy, is ranked the

lowest. The three authoritarian societies, i.e., Singapore, mainland China, and Malaysia, show average percentages in this regard, higher than that in Taiwan but lower than that in South Korea.

Again, there is no clear pattern regarding the possible relationship between democratic conception and the extent to which people cherish the intrinsic value of democracy at the societal level. Nevertheless, theoretically, given the close association between the intrinsic value of democracy and the norms, procedures, and institutions that are promoted to secure and protect people's basic and unalienable rights, liberty and freedom, I expect those who do cherish democracy more than just an effective means to achieve good governance are more likely to embrace the democratic conception that prioritizes norms, procedures, freedom, or liberty. Moreover, I do not expect this relationship to vary dramatically across societies with distinct political contexts. Thus, the following hypothesis is tested in this paper.

*H3: People who cherish the intrinsic value of democracy are more inclined to understanding democracy following the procedure-based conception.*

Other controls: To comprehensively examine the possible origins of democratic conception in East Asian societies, I also incorporate some critical factors that have been suggested by pertinent research. People's democratic features, including their age,<sup>4</sup> gender,<sup>5</sup> educational attainment,<sup>6</sup> and family income,<sup>7</sup> are included to count for the possible social stratification of democratic conception along these factors, due to the slow but continuous socialization and modernization processes (Diamond and Plattner 2008; Inglehart and Welzel 2010). To control

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<sup>4</sup> This is measured with respondents' real ages in years.

<sup>5</sup> Males are coded as 1.

<sup>6</sup> This is a 10-point ordinal scale, ranging from "No formal education" to "Post-graduate degree."

<sup>7</sup> This is a 4-point ordinal scale: "Does the total income of your household allow you to satisfactorily cover your needs?"

for respondents' socio-psychological and cognitive features, their self-reported interest in politics and internal political efficacy are also included.<sup>8</sup>

Respondents' exposure to different sources of information is also expected to be relevant for their democratic conception, given the salience of "cosmopolitan communication" in shaping people's attitudes and even values (Norris and Inglehart 2009). Their access to domestic relevant information is measured by their frequency of political news consumption,<sup>9</sup> while, their possible access to relevant foreign information is measured by two indicators: frequency of using the Internet and accessing foreign programs through TV, movies, radios, or DVDs.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, given the significant role of individualism in contemporary research on popular understandings of democracy (Flanagan et al. 2005; Shi 2009; Shin 2011), an IRT score of individualism based on three dichotomous indicators are also included.<sup>11</sup>

Statistically, OLS regressions are sufficient for this paper's empirical analysis, given the continuous nature of the IRT score of democratic conception. Moreover, in order to effectively capture the possible moderating effects of political contexts and facilitate the comparison, ten

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<sup>8</sup> Political interest is measured with a 4-point ordinal scale: "How interested would you say you are in politics?" Internal political efficacy is also measured with a 4-point ordinal scale: "Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what is going on."

<sup>9</sup> Exposure to domestic political news is measured with a 5-point ordinal scale: "How often do you follow news about politics and government?"

<sup>10</sup> Frequency of using the Internet is measured with a 6-point ordinal scale: "How often do you use the internet?" Respondents' accessing foreign programs is measured with a 6-point ordinal scale: "How often do you watch or listen to foreign programs (television, DVDs, movies, radio)?"

<sup>11</sup> The 4-point Likert-scale for the following three statements is collapsed into a binary scale, with 1 standing for the individualistic orientation: 1) "For the sake of the family, the individual should put his personal interest second." 2) "In a group, we should sacrifice our individual interest for the sake of the group's collective interest." 3) "For the sake of national interest, individual interest could be sacrificed." The latent continuous IRT score of individualism is used for analysis.

parallel OLS regressions are run with an identical model specification. And the results of ten OLS regression are presented in Table 3.

[Table 3 about here]

Overall, the individual level statistical analysis is satisfying, given the listed R-square statistics that hover around 10% for all ten surveyed East Asian societies. And the variables measuring the instrumental and intrinsic values of democracy do perform as theoretically expected.

In liberal democracies, like Japan and Taiwan, people who think government officials are often not punished for their committed crimes or complain about the government's non-responsiveness show a significant higher propensity in prioritizing social equity or good government as essential characteristics of democracy. It seems that, due to lack of an appealing political alternative with different institutional settings, the residents of liberal democracies see more hope in better enforcing existing institutions and procedures to supervise the government and its officials and address their governance problems. For them, the value of democracy should move beyond the already established institutionalized securing and protection of basic human rights; and democracy should deliver good governance to better realize its true value. Thus, these unsatisfied residents of liberal democracies are inclined to prioritize social equity or good government in their democratic conception.

On the contrary, in societies with limited (like Philippine and Thailand) or little experience (like Singapore, Malaysia, and mainland China) of democratic politics, people's negative assessment of government officials, leaders, or their government's responsiveness is significantly associated with a higher propensity in identifying norms, procedures, freedom, or liberty as defining features of democracy. It seems that for the people living in societies with limited or

little experience of democratic politics, a true liberal democracy with high quality democratic institutions and procedures does offer them a concrete political alternative that could effectively address all the problems they witness. Thus, they are inclined to push for further institutional building and improvement, or even a fundamental transformation of current institutions that do not perform effectively. Accordingly, these unsatisfied residents of new democracies or authoritarian societies are more inclined to emphasize norms, procedures, freedom, and liberty as defining features of democracy. H1 and H2 do get some confirmative evidence from the ABS III data.

To visualize the varying relationships between people's perceived governance problems and their democratic conceptions in distinct political contexts, I run some simulation for typical citizens (whose various features are fixed at the respective mean/median of the societies) in different societies and display the results in Figure 6-7.

[Figure 6-7 about here]

In Figure 6 and 7, the bold and two dotted lines stand for the mean IRT score of democratic conception in a society, as well as its 95% confidence intervals. The black dots with error bars stand for the predicted IRT scores of democratic conception for a typical citizen, as well as their associated 95% confidence intervals.

As clearly shown in Figure 6, in both Japan (Figure 6a) and Taiwan (Figure 6b), as their citizens' assessment of the frequency that government officials are not punished for their committed crimes increase from "Rarely" to "Always," their typical citizens' IRT scores of democratic conception drop significantly, indicating a higher propensity of embracing the substance-based understanding of democracy. In Japan, the predicted score deviates significantly from the population mean toward the minimum value; while, in Taiwan, the predicted score



moves from above the population mean to below the population mean. The picture is reversed in mainland China: as a typical Chinese citizen's belief in the frequency that government officials are unpunished for their committed crimes changes from "Rarely" to "Always," his/her predicted IRT score of democratic conception actually moves upward toward the maximum value, suggesting a higher propensity of accepting the procedure-based understanding of democracy.

Figure 7 tells a similar story. The predicted IRT scores of democratic conception of the typical citizens of Philippines (Figure 7a) and Malaysia (Figure 7b) increase significantly, moving across the 95% confidence intervals of their respective population mean from below, as their assessment of their governments' responsiveness deteriorates. Nevertheless, in Japan (Figure 7c), the relationship is simply reversed: the predicted IRT score of democratic conception plummets substantively, as the typical Japanese citizen's evaluation of the government's responsiveness becomes more negative.

Different from the impacts of democracy's instrumental value, as expected in H3, its intrinsic value generally leads those who cherish democracy per se to embrace the procedure-based democratic conception, regardless of their political contexts. In liberal democracies (South Korea and Taiwan), electoral democracies (Mongolia and Thailand), and even authoritarian societies (mainland China), there is persistent and significant evidence for this positive relationship between people's cherishing democracy's intrinsic value and their higher propensity in prioritizing norms, procedures, freedom or liberty as essential characteristics of democracy.

When it comes to other critical controls, there are no clear commonly shared patterns of stratification along demographic or information access features. Comparatively speaking, in authoritarian societies, people who are more interested in politics or have more confidence in their capability of understanding politics boast a higher propensity in holding the procedure-

based democratic conception. It is likely that, given authoritarian leaders' enthusiasm in stretching the D-word to cover their non-democratic nature and prolong their political survival and even indoctrinating their citizens with various manipulated interpretations of democracy, these politically more sophisticated individuals are better equipped to see through these tricks and, thus, emphasize norms, procedures, liberty, or freedom as essential characteristics of democracy.

### **Conclusions and Suggestions**

People have different understandings of democracy and such varying democratic conceptions have serious implications for people's political behavior and attitudes in both democracies and authoritarian societies. Despite existing research on popular understandings of democracy, our understanding of the varying democratic conceptions is still at a preliminary stage. More systematic empirical evidence and better refined theoretical frameworks are needed to further our knowledge in this field.

Building upon its previous survey evidence on democratic conceptions, the ABS III adopts a newly designed survey battery to reduce the possible measurement errors, as well as subjective coding bias, to gauge popular understandings of democracy in eleven East Asian societies. Using ABS III data, this paper scrutinizes the validity of this close-ended survey battery with multiple indicators in distinct political contexts, and preliminarily explores the possible origins of democratic conceptions in East Asia.

The results of IRT measurement models generally confirm the validity of this new survey battery: except in Vietnam, due to lots of missing values, this new battery has successfully passed various statistical tests in the remaining ten societies. It effectively taps people's uni-dimensional latent propensity in understanding democracy; and this propensity falls on a

continuous spectrum, ranging from the lower end of a substance-based democratic conception (which solely prioritizes social equity or good government as essential characteristics of democracy) to the higher end of a procedure-based democratic conception (which exclusively emphasizes norms, procedures, freedom, or liberty as defining features of democracy). Further examinations on the distributional features of the IRT scores of democratic conception reveal that, the substance-based democratic conception has won the hearts and minds of the majority of the surveyed East Asians, even those who have accumulated sufficient live experiences of liberal democracy in Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea. Moreover, most of the variance in the East Asians' democratic conceptions should be attributed to domestic factors.

Parallel OLS regressions for the ten East Asian societies demonstrate that the instrumental and intrinsic values of democracy are significantly in shaping the East Asians' views of democracy. In liberal democracies, bad governance pushes their citizens to emphasize more on social equity or good government as essential characteristics of democracy; while in electoral democracies or authoritarian societies, bad governance pushes their citizens to emphasize more on norms, procedures, liberty, or freedom as defining features of democracy. It seems that distinct political contexts and vary experiences with democratic politics have significantly moderated the relationship between governance quality and democratic conceptions in East Asia. In other words, the surveyed East Asians do treasure the instrumental value of democracy in delivering good governance; however, they might respond differently in how to more effectively realize its instrumental value. Consequently, this shifts their democratic conceptions in opposite ways. On the contrary, the intrinsic value of democracy generally leads the East Asians more inclined to embrace the procedure-based understanding of democracy, with more emphasis on norms, procedures, liberty, or freedom as defining features of democracy.

This significant role of political context in moderating the relationship between governance quality and democratic conceptions in the East Asian societies actually raises a critical question for contemporary literature on popular understandings of democracy. Though we can effectively adopt one coherent framework, like the new ABS battery, to conceptualize and measure various democratic conceptions, is it also possible to use only one framework to understand their implications and consequences in different societies? For instance, in Japan, the substance-based democratic conception does not necessarily suggest any rejection of the democratic system embodied in well-established institutions. In consolidated democracies, different democratic conceptions may simply reflect varying relative weights that people associate with the numerous cognitive components of democracy. However, the stakes involved in new democracies or authoritarian societies could be much higher. For example, in mainland China, the substance-based democratic conception may have serious implications for its possible regime change, given the CCP's propaganda and indoctrination in establishing a democracy with Chinese characteristics instead of a democracy that features, *inter alia*, checks and balances and party politics. In these societies, wherein the distributional implications of political institutions are still the center of domestic politics (Acemoglu and Robinson 2006; Boix 2003), different understandings of democracy may have life-and-death implications; and the substance-based democratic conception may indeed be a democracy stripped of its critical components like norms, procedures, freedom, or liberty that have endowed democracy with its intrinsic value and moral superiority. Thus, students of comparative public opinion should be sensitive to political contexts, in general, and to the varying implications of democratic conceptions in different societies, in particular.

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**Table 1: Frequency Distribution of the New Survey Battery on Democratic Conception in Eleven ABS III Societies**

	Liberal Democracy			Electoral Democracy				Electoral Authoritarian Regime		One-Party Authoritarian Regime	
	Japan	South Korea	Taiwan	Mongolia	Philippines	Thailand	Indonesia	Singapore	Malaysia	Mainland China	Vietnam
<i>Measure 1</i>											
Government narrows the gap between the rich and the poor. (social equity)	11.64%	26.57%	32.50%	17.97%	9.71%	27.04%	9.18%	22.25%	15.58%	30.57%	26.53%
People choose the government leaders in free and fair election. (norms and procedures)	18.92%	32.22%	26.32%	32.58%	49.89%	16.57%	33.80%	33.21%	46.75%	27.71%	13.27%
Government does not waste any public money. (good government)	45.65%	19.20%	17.77%	21.30%	14.03%	23.50%	16.01%	23.31%	14.12%	12.29%	4.11%
People are free to express their political views openly. (freedom and liberty)	21.35%	17.65%	19.40%	26.15%	26.03%	24.58%	26.09%	19.05%	19.98%	14.31%	4.11%
DK	2.45%	4.36%	4.02%	2.00%	0.34%	8.30%	14.93%	2.18%	3.57%	15.13%	51.97%
<i>Measure 2</i>											
The legislature has oversight over the government. (norms and procedures)	11.26%	10.43%	13.08%	23.79%	9.59%	13.29%	11.84%	11.00%	9.04%	15.39%	12.01%
Basic necessities, like food, clothes and shelter, are provided for all. (social equity)	34.10%	24.52%	34.44%	12.99%	46.83%	31.22%	22.89%	46.76%	28.66%	36.27%	19.14%
People are free to organize political groups. (freedom and liberty)	12.93%	12.37%	9.18%	23.80%	20.90%	4.58%	8.33%	9.77%	12.94%	4.49%	1.76%
Government provides people with quality public services. (good government)	36.72%	43.77%	38.72%	36.08%	22.28%	42.99%	42.39%	30.01%	45.29%	28.03%	13.35%
DK	4.98%	8.91%	4.58%	3.33%	0.40%	7.82%	14.55%	2.45%	4.07%	15.82%	53.74%
<i>Measure 3</i>											
Government ensures law and order. (good government)	30.53%	37.26%	31.56%	23.35%	19.00%	15.97%	18.51%	42.77%	28.56%	30.37%	23.09%
Media is free to criticize the things government does. (freedom and liberty)	9.85%	25.03%	6.57%	17.34%	36.50%	11.99%	12.00%	18.28%	13.06%	10.67%	2.60%
Government ensures job opportunities for all. (social equity)	37.98%	19.14%	40.08%	39.82%	35.07%	38.72%	36.90%	25.26%	33.62%	30.98%	19.48%
Multiple parties compete fairly in the election. (norms and procedures)	17.52%	12.46%	16.39%	17.57%	8.85%	22.55%	15.30%	12.22%	21.23%	11.76%	1.01%
DK	4.12%	6.10%	5.40%	1.91%	0.59%	10.78%	17.29%	1.47%	3.53%	16.23%	53.82%
<i>Measure 4</i>											
People have the freedom to take part in protests and demonstrations. (freedom and liberty)	6.68%	14.42%	14.64%	25.74%	26.63%	6.90%	10.42%	15.71%	8.90%	5.52%	3.02%
Politics is clean and free of corruption. (good government)	49.35%	43.58%	28.63%	39.13%	28.76%	36.86%	39.22%	45.14%	46.67%	28.80%	27.04%
The court protects the ordinary people from the abuse of government power. (norms and procedures)	16.79%	26.13%	29.50%	15.65%	20.75%	9.82%	17.08%	14.46%	24.02%	30.69%	2.69%
People receive state aid if they are unemployed. (social equity)	23.58%	10.11%	22.36%	17.02%	22.80%	36.62%	17.08%	21.68%	15.86%	19.10%	13.43%
DK	3.60%	5.48%	4.87%	2.45%	1.06%	9.80%	16.19%	3.02%	4.54%	15.89%	53.82%

Source: ABS III (N = 16969)

Weighted percentages in cells

**Table 2: IRT Measurement Models for Democratic Conception in Eleven ABS III Societies**

<i>Factor loadings</i>	Liberal Democracy			Electoral Democracy				Electoral Authoritarian Regime		One-Party Authoritarian Regime	
	Japan	South Korea	Taiwan	Mongolia	Philippines	Thailand	Indonesia	Singapore	Malaysia	Mainland China	Vietnam
M1	0.475*	0.571*	0.621*	0.434*	0.006	0.382*	0.319*	0.426*	0.349*	0.564*	0.464*
M2	0.606*	0.479*	0.749*	0.382*	0.306*	0.495*	0.836*	0.684*	0.621*	0.426*	0.292*
M3	0.418*	0.397*	0.716*	0.527*	0.544*	0.458*	0.540*	0.749*	0.601*	0.476*	0.673*
M4	0.566*	0.440*	0.501*	0.500*	0.654*	0.509*	0.240*	0.515*	0.149*	0.439*	0.790*
<i>Model fit statistics</i>											
Chi-square	(3.329, 2)	(0.698, 2)	(0.588, 2)	(1.551, 2)	(2.829, 2)	(11.370, 2)	(2.824, 2)	(0.909, 2)	(1.546, 2)	(7.102, 2) <sup>#</sup>	(10.86, 2) <sup>#</sup>
CFI	0.994	1.000	1.000	1.000	0.990	0.916	0.989	1.000	1.000	0.983	0.885
TLI	0.981	1.033	1.006	1.012	0.970	0.747	0.968	1.012	1.014	0.950	0.656
RMSA	0.019	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.019	0.057	0.017	0.000	0.000	0.029	0.086
Used Obs.	1850	1188	1557	1195	1198	1446	1389	989	1181	2966	597
N	1880	1207	1592	1210	1200	1512	1550	1000	1214	3413	1191

Source: ABS III (N = 16969)

\*  $p < 0.05$  for two-tailed t-statistics

<sup>#</sup>  $p < 0.05$  for Chi-square statistics

Standardized factor loadings with WLSMV estimators

Missing values are addressed by Mplus with the MAR assumption (only observations with missing values for all four indicators are dropped)



**Table 3: OLS Results on Origins of Democratic Conception in Ten ABS III Societies**

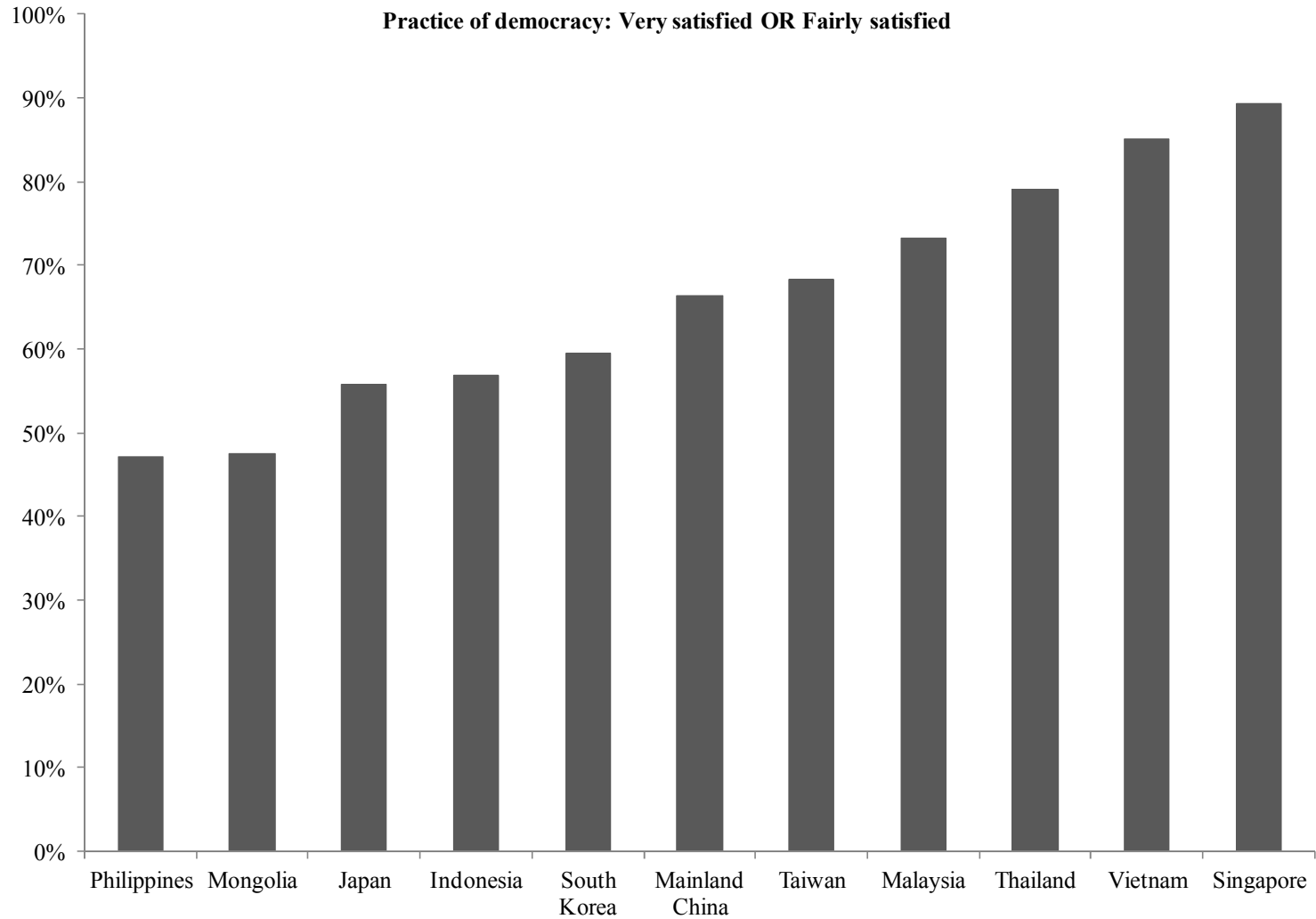
	Liberal Democracy			Electoral Democracy				Electoral Authoritarian Regime		One-Party Authoritarian Regime	
	Japan	South Korea	Taiwan	Mongolia	Philippines	Thailand	Indonesia	Singapore	Malaysia	Mainland China	Vietnam
<i>Demographic features</i>											
Age	0.001 (0.000)*	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	-0.001 (0.000)*	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.001 (0.000)*	-0.001 (0.000)*	
Male	0.020 (0.006)*	0.012 (0.007)	0.009 (0.006)	-0.001 (0.007)	0.001 (0.007)	0.011 (0.007)	-0.001 (0.009)	0.005 (0.009)	0.004 (0.006)	0.020 (0.004)*	
Education	0.005 (0.002)*	0.005 (0.002)*	0.001 (0.002)	0.003 (0.001)*	0.001 (0.002)	0.002 (0.002)	0.003 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.002)	0.003 (0.002)	0.001 (0.001)	
Family income	0.000 (0.004)	-0.001 (0.004)	0.009 (0.005)	0.012 (0.005)*	-0.008 (0.004)*	0.006 (0.004)	0.005 (0.005)	0.012 (0.007)	0.005 (0.004)	0.007 (0.003)*	
<i>Socio-psychological features</i>											
Political interest	0.006 (0.004)	-0.002 (0.004)	0.012 (0.004)*	0.001 (0.005)	-0.001 (0.004)	0.011 (0.005)*	0.004 (0.005)	-0.007 (0.006)	0.009 (0.004)*	0.007 (0.003)*	
Internal political efficacy	0.004 (0.003)	-0.001 (0.004)	0.017 (0.005)*	-0.001 (0.004)	-0.005 (0.003)	-0.001 (0.005)	0.018 (0.008)*	0.029 (0.006)*	0.007 (0.004)	0.013 (0.004)*	
<i>Information access</i>											
Exposure to political news	-0.001 (0.004)	0.001 (0.004)	0.001 (0.003)	0.002 (0.004)	0.005 (0.003)	0.013 (0.004)*	0.001 (0.004)	-0.009 (0.005)	0.005 (0.003)	-0.002 (0.002)	
Internet usage	0.004 (0.003)	0.000 (0.003)	0.004 (0.003)	-0.003 (0.003)	0.003 (0.004)	-0.005 (0.004)	-0.001 (0.006)	0.007 (0.004)	0.007 (0.003)*	-0.001 (0.002)	
Accessing foreign programs	0.002 (0.002)	0.000 (0.003)	-0.001 (0.002)	0.006 (0.003)*	0.000 (0.003)	0.000 (0.002)	0.003 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.004)	-0.002 (0.002)	0.005 (0.002)*	
<i>Governance issues</i>											
Officials unpunished for crimes	-0.008 (0.004)*	0.005 (0.004)	-0.011 (0.004)*	-0.002 (0.004)	0.000 (0.003)	0.006 (0.004)	-0.004 (0.005)	0.001 (0.007)	0.001 (0.004)	0.007 (0.003)*	
Leaders breaking law	0.002 (0.004)	0.003 (0.005)	0.002 (0.004)	0.004 (0.005)	0.003 (0.003)	0.008 (0.003)*	0.008 (0.007)	0.020 (0.008)*	0.004 (0.004)	-0.001 (0.004)	
Government's non-responsiveness	-0.016 (0.005)*	-0.007 (0.005)	0.008 (0.005)	-0.007 (0.006)	0.010 (0.004)*	0.006 (0.005)	0.003 (0.007)	0.011 (0.007)	0.015 (0.005)*	0.002 (0.003)	
<i>Normative orientations</i>											
Democracy over economic growth	0.010 (0.006)	0.026 (0.008)*	0.052 (0.009)*	0.017 (0.008)*	0.006 (0.008)	0.020 (0.008)*	-0.007 (0.011)	0.001 (0.012)	-0.002 (0.008)	0.023 (0.005)*	
Individualism	-0.000 (0.004)	-0.009 (0.004)*	0.001 (0.004)	0.004 (0.004)	0.004 (0.004)	-0.001 (0.005)	-0.001 (0.006)	0.006 (0.007)	-0.003 (0.004)	-0.005 (0.004)	
Intercept	-0.092 (0.035)*	-0.019 (0.037)	-0.122 (0.035)*	-0.006 (0.034)	0.002 (0.028)	-0.172 (0.032)*	-0.106 (0.049)*	-0.155 (0.045)*	-0.144 (0.026)*	-0.090 (0.023)*	
<i>Model fit statistics</i>											
R-squared	0.104	0.107	0.112	0.108	0.100	0.099	0.100	0.106	0.097	0.102	
Used Obs.	1656	1082	1373	1066	1120	1016	1123	678	1012	2363	
N	1880	1207	1592	1210	1200	1512	1550	1000	1214	3413	1191

Source: ABS III (N = 16969)

\* p < 0.05 for two-tailed t-statistics

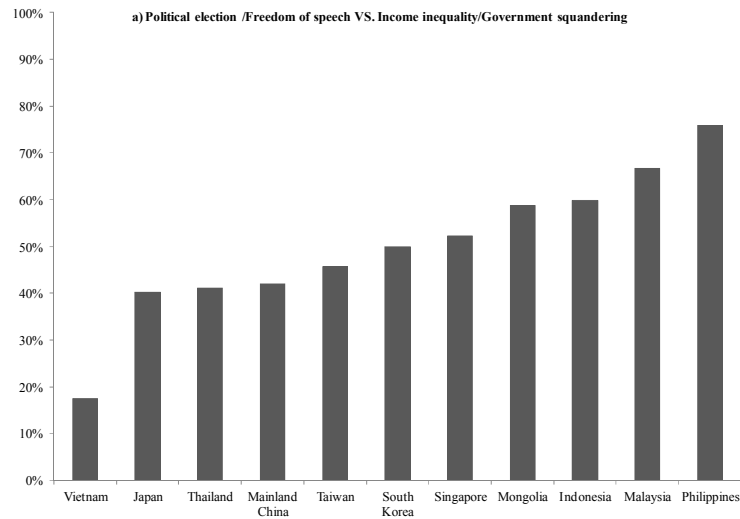
Sampling weight incorporated for estimation

Robust standard errors in parentheses

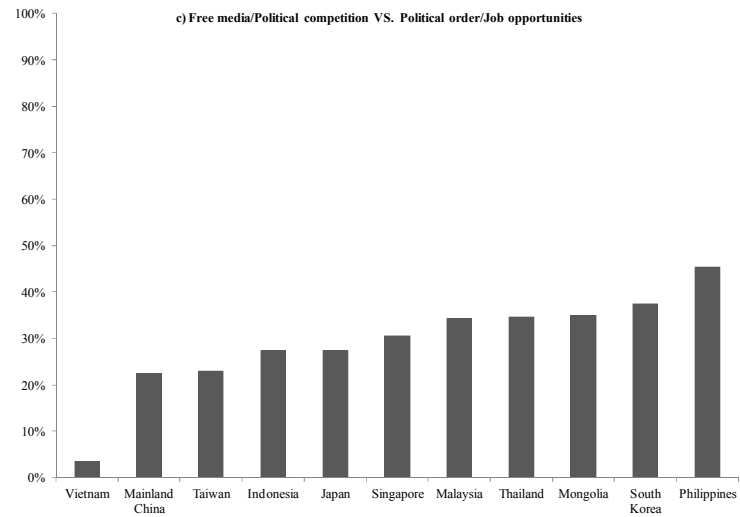


Source: ABS III (N = 16969)

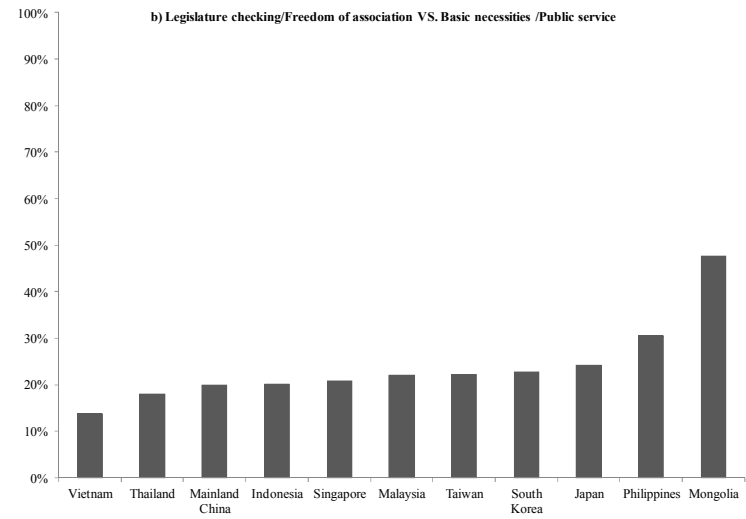
**Figure 1: Satisfaction with the Practice of Democracy**



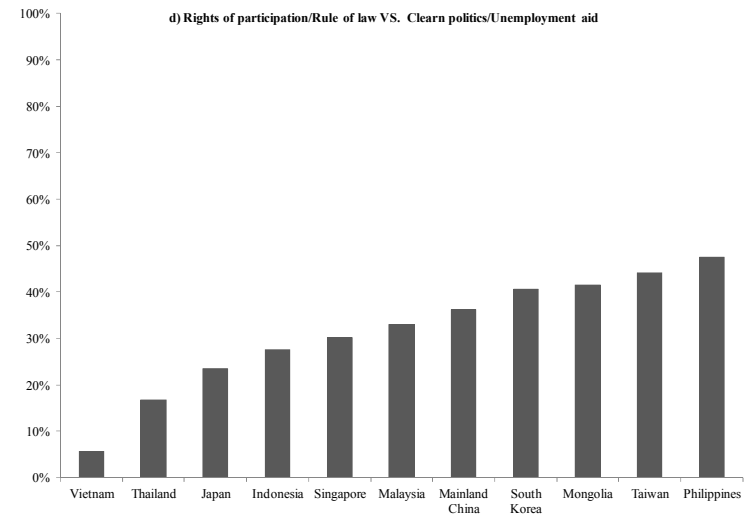
Source: ABS III (N = 16969)



Source: ABS III (N = 16969)

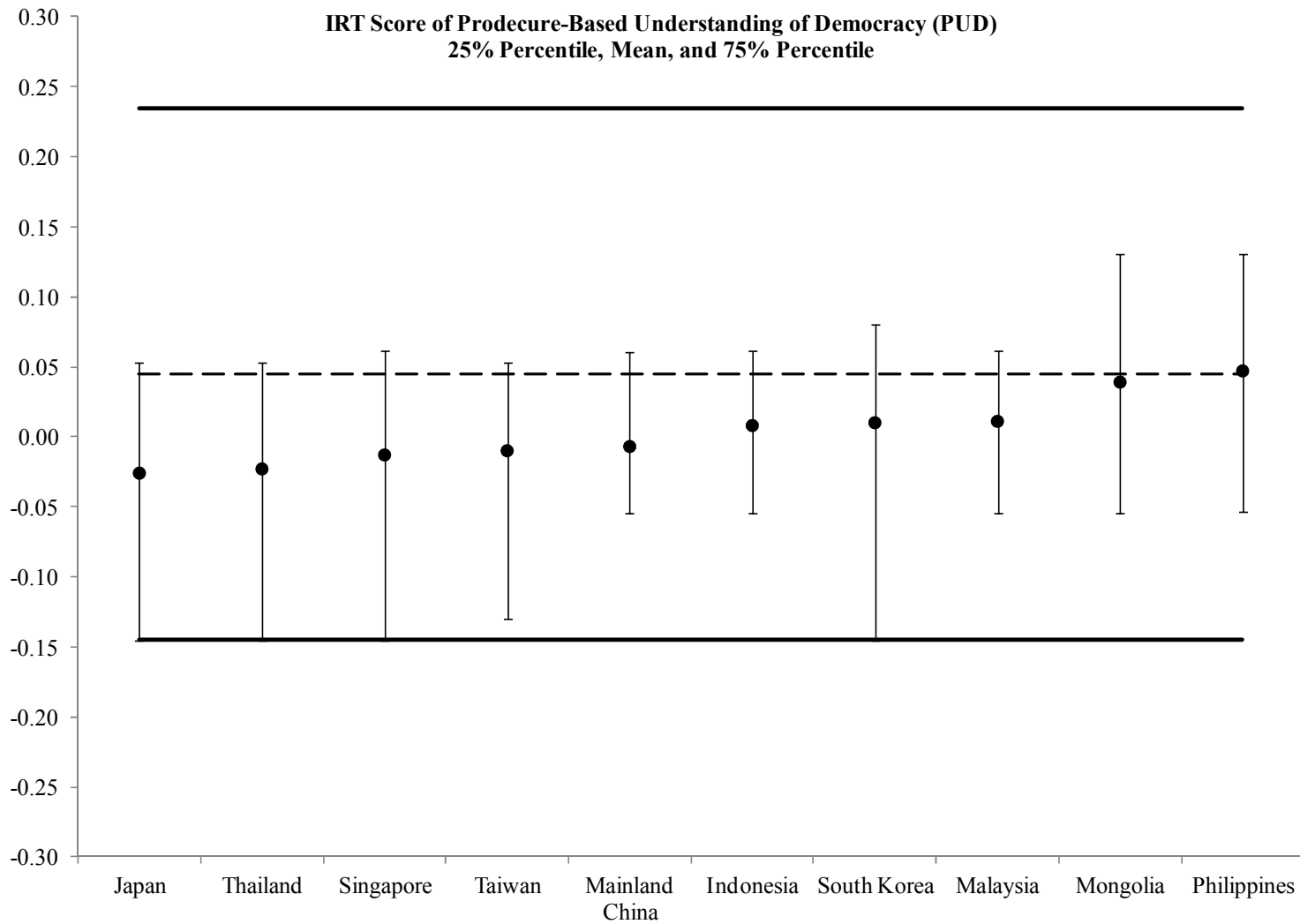


Source: ABS III (N = 16969)



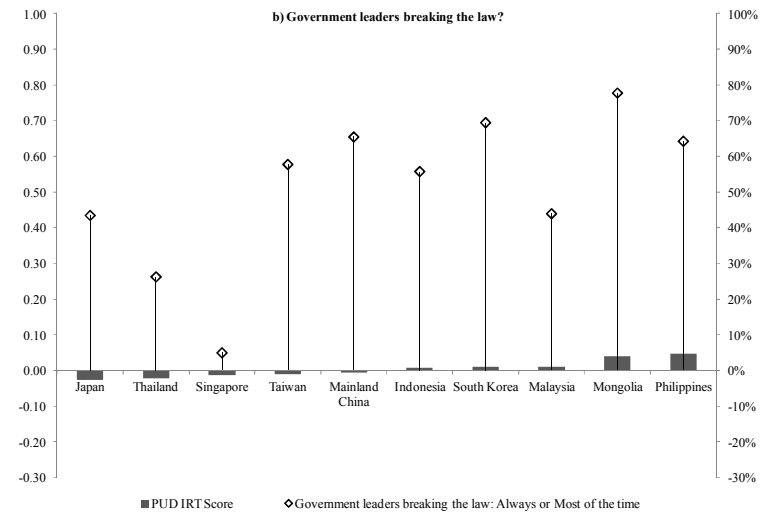
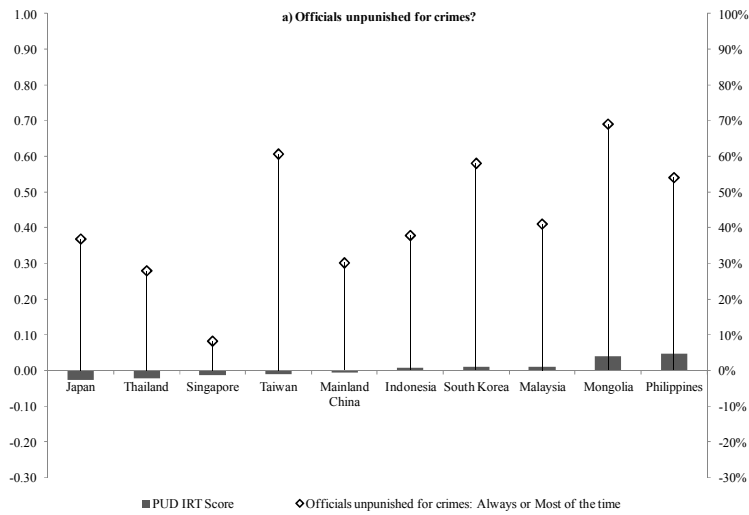
Source: ABS III (N = 16969)

**Figure 2: Procedure-Based Democratic Conception**

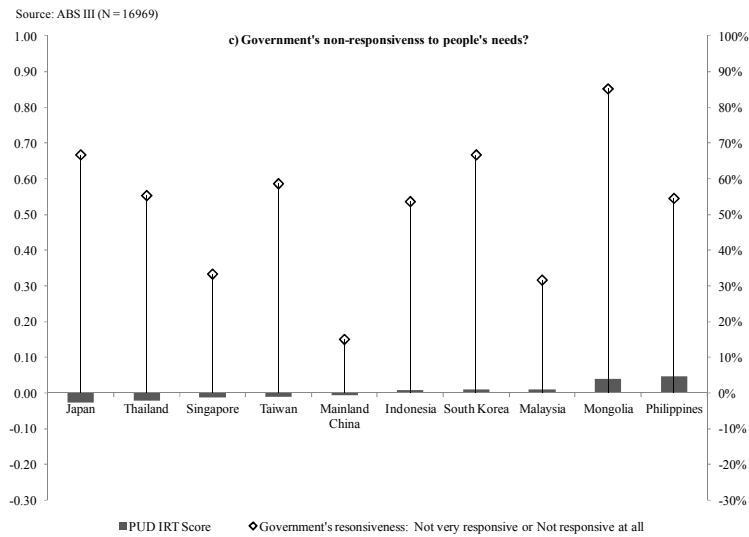


Source: ABS III (N = 16969)

**Figure 3: Population Distribution of the IRT Scores of Democratic Conception in Ten ABS III Societies**

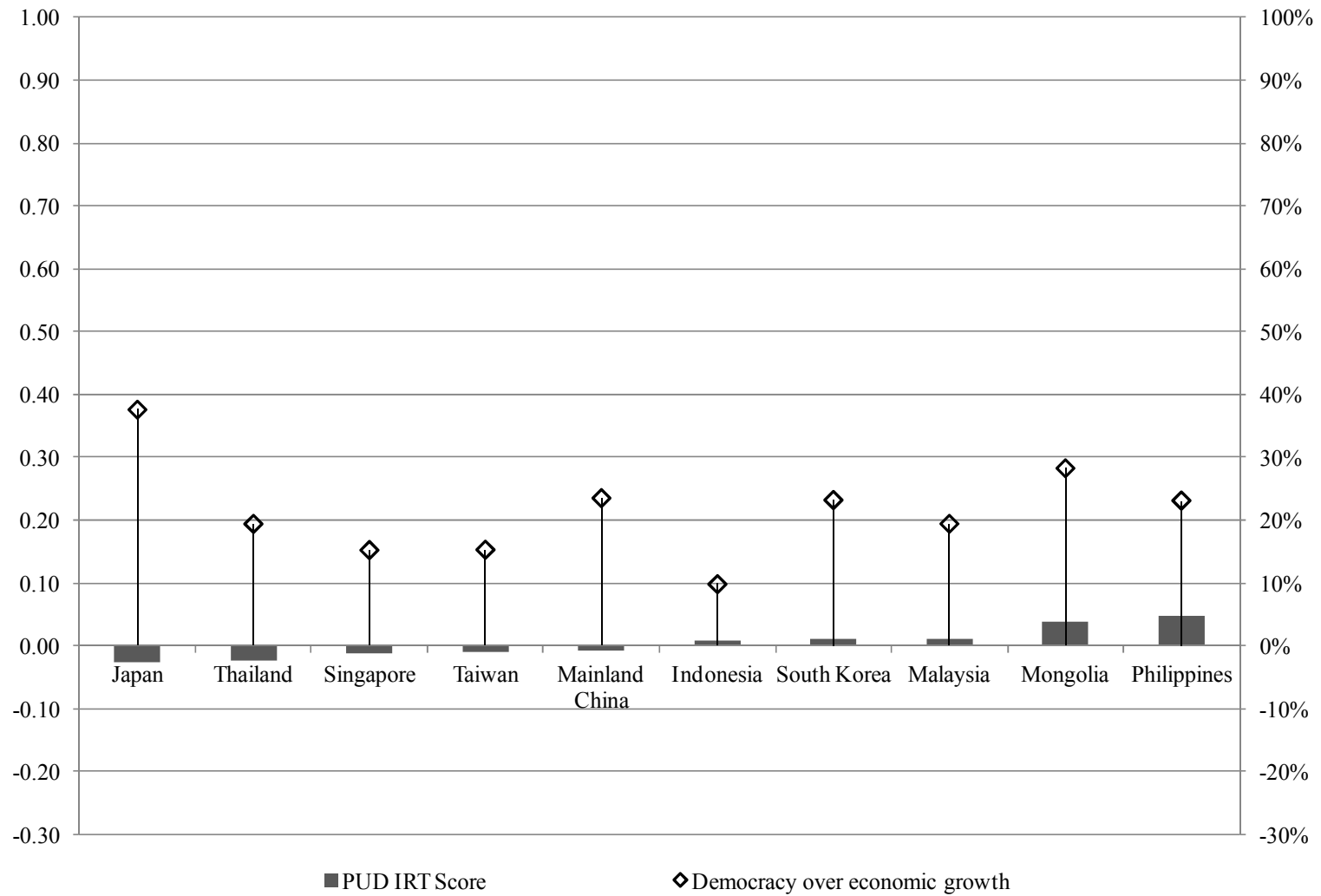


Source: ABS III (N = 16969)



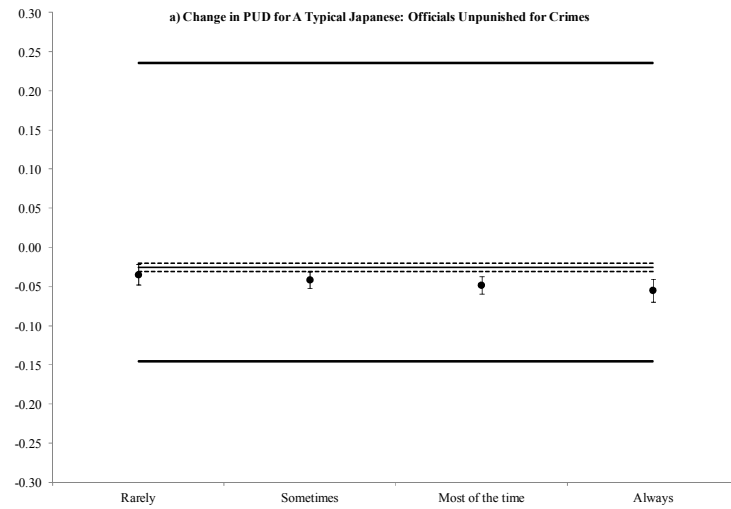
Source: ABS III (N = 16969)

**Figure 4: Democratic Conception and Governance Issues**

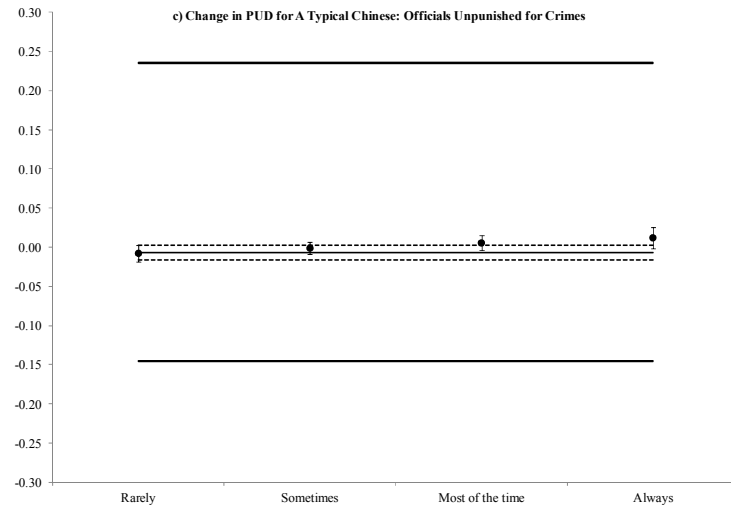


Source: ABS III (N = 16969)

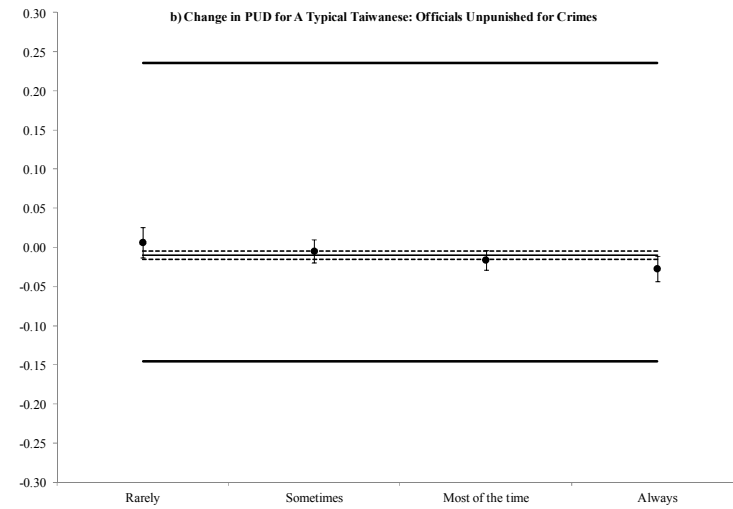
**Figure 5: Democratic Conception and the Intrinsic Value of Democracy**



Source: ABS III (N = 16969)

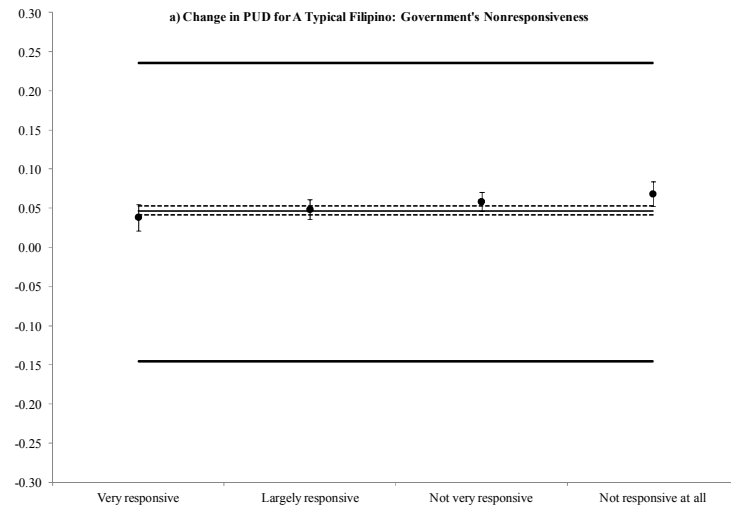


Source: ABS III (N = 16969)

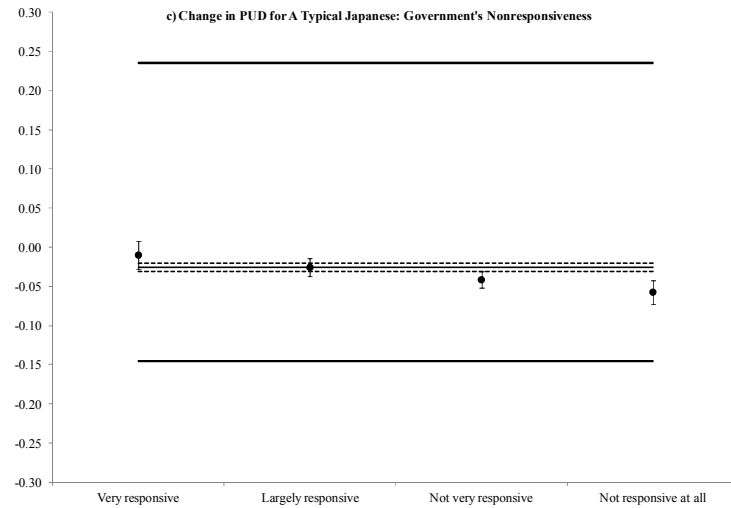


Source: ABS III (N = 16969)

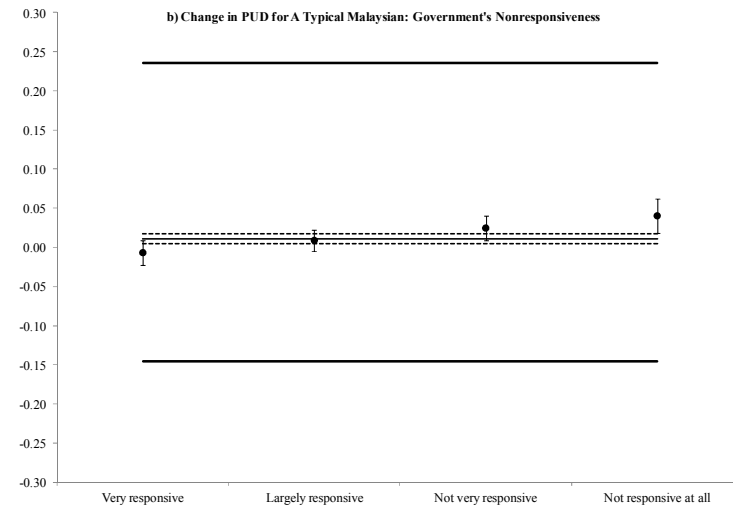
**Figure 6: Predicted Changes in Democratic Conception in Japan, Taiwan, and Mainland China**



Source: ABS III (N = 16969)



Source: ABS III (N = 16969)



Source: ABS III (N = 16969)

**Figure 7: Predicted Changes in Democratic Conception in Philippines, Malaysia, and Japan**



**Appendix:**

**Table A1: Zero-Order Hierarchical OLS Result on Democratic Conception in Ten ABS III Societies**

<i>Variance components</i>	
Individual level	0.0112*
Country level	0.0006*
<i>Inter-class correlation</i>	
ICC	5.10%

Source: ABS III (N = 15778)

\* p < 0.05

**Table A2: OLS Results on Origins of Democratic Conception in Eleven ABS III Societies**

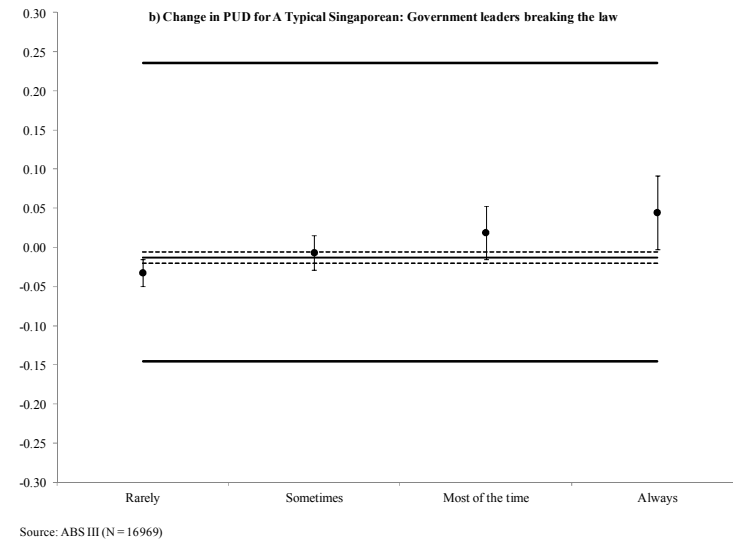
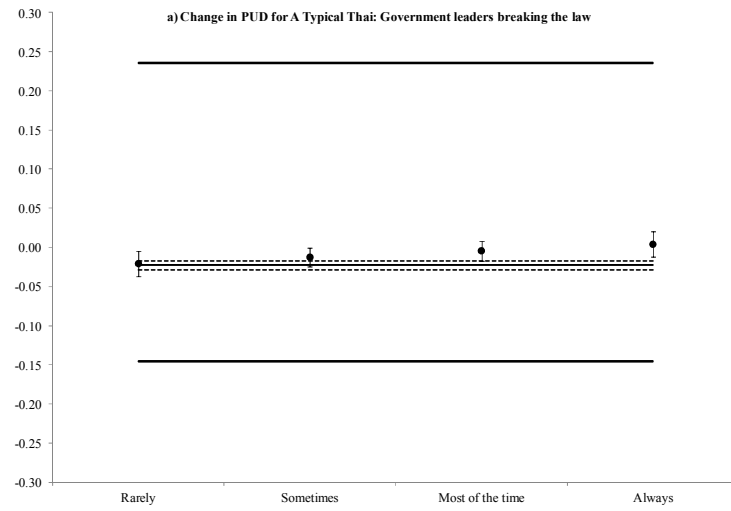
	Liberal Democracy			Electoral Democracy				Electoral Authoritarian Regime		One-Party Authoritarian Regime	
	Japan	South Korea	Taiwan	Mongolia	Philippines	Thailand	Indonesia	Singapore	Malaysia	Mainland China	Vietnam
<i>Demographic features</i>											
Age	0.002 (0.001)*	0.000 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.002 (0.001)*	0.001 (0.001)	0.000 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	0.000 (0.001)	0.002 (0.001)*	-0.001 (0.000)*	0.001 (0.001)
Male	0.051 (0.015)*	0.031 (0.018)	0.023 (0.016)	-0.005 (0.018)	0.002 (0.017)	0.028 (0.017)	-0.004 (0.024)	0.014 (0.022)	0.009 (0.016)	0.052 (0.011)*	-0.041 (0.028)
Education	0.013 (0.005)*	0.012 (0.006)*	0.004 (0.005)	0.008 (0.004)*	0.002 (0.004)	0.005 (0.005)	0.008 (0.005)	-0.005 (0.006)	0.008 (0.005)	0.001 (0.003)	0.030 (0.009)*
Family income	-0.000 (0.010)	-0.003 (0.011)	0.022 (0.012)	0.031 (0.013)*	-0.020 (0.011)	0.015 (0.011)	0.012 (0.013)	0.034 (0.017)*	0.011 (0.009)	0.018 (0.008)*	0.018 (0.020)
<i>Socio-psychological features</i>											
Political interest	0.014 (0.011)	-0.003 (0.012)	0.031 (0.011)*	0.003 (0.014)	-0.002 (0.010)	0.027 (0.013)*	0.010 (0.013)	-0.018 (0.016)	0.021 (0.010)*	0.019 (0.008)*	-0.010 (0.025)
Internal political efficacy	0.011 (0.009)	-0.002 (0.011)	0.042 (0.013)*	-0.001 (0.010)	-0.012 (0.008)	-0.003 (0.013)	0.045 (0.020)*	0.075 (0.016)*	0.019 (0.010)	0.034 (0.010)*	0.002 (0.015)
<i>Information access</i>											
Exposure to political news	-0.002 (0.010)	0.002 (0.010)	0.003 (0.007)	0.006 (0.011)	0.012 (0.008)	0.033 (0.010)*	0.002 (0.010)	-0.022 (0.013)	0.014 (0.008)	-0.005 (0.006)	0.050 (0.022)*
Internet usage	0.011 (0.007)	-0.000 (0.009)	0.010 (0.007)	-0.008 (0.009)	0.007 (0.010)	-0.014 (0.010)	-0.002 (0.015)	0.017 (0.011)	0.018 (0.007)*	-0.002 (0.005)	0.023 (0.015)
Accessing foreign programs	0.005 (0.005)	0.000 (0.007)	-0.003 (0.006)	0.015 (0.007)*	-0.001 (0.007)	-0.001 (0.005)	0.007 (0.006)	-0.005 (0.009)	-0.005 (0.006)	0.014 (0.004)*	-0.001 (0.010)
<i>Governance issues</i>											
Officials unpunished for crimes	-0.019 (0.009)*	0.012 (0.010)	-0.028 (0.011)*	-0.006 (0.012)	-0.001 (0.008)	0.014 (0.010)	-0.012 (0.013)	0.003 (0.018)	-0.000 (0.010)	0.017 (0.008)*	0.037 (0.020)
Leaders breaking law	0.006 (0.011)	0.009 (0.013)	0.005 (0.010)	0.011 (0.012)	0.009 (0.009)	0.020 (0.010)*	0.020 (0.018)	0.053 (0.021)*	0.012 (0.011)	-0.002 (0.009)	0.020 (0.021)
Government's non-responsiveness	-0.039 (0.013)*	-0.017 (0.013)	0.023 (0.012)	-0.017 (0.015)	0.027 (0.010)*	0.016 (0.012)	0.009 (0.017)	0.028 (0.018)	0.040 (0.012)*	0.007 (0.009)	-0.013 (0.023)
<i>Normative orientations</i>											
Democracy over economic growth	0.029 (0.015)*	0.066 (0.020)*	0.134 (0.023)*	0.043 (0.020)*	0.015 (0.020)	0.052 (0.020)*	-0.022 (0.029)	0.002 (0.032)	-0.005 (0.020)	0.057 (0.013)*	0.093 (0.038)*
Individualism	-0.000 (0.011)	-0.022 (0.012)	0.003 (0.011)	0.012 (0.011)	0.012 (0.009)	-0.002 (0.013)	-0.002 (0.016)	0.018 (0.017)	-0.008 (0.009)	-0.012 (0.010)	0.001 (0.028)
Intercept	-0.241 (0.089)*	-0.038 (0.097)	-0.308 (0.089)*	-0.016 (0.087)	0.006 (0.073)	-0.428 (0.082)*	-0.261 (0.125)*	-0.401 (0.115)*	-0.353 (0.068)*	-0.217 (0.060)*	-0.672 (0.115)*
<i>Model fit statistics</i>											
R-square	0.056	0.033	0.084	0.042	0.020	0.065	0.034	0.092	0.060	0.059	0.275
Used Obs.	1656	1082	1373	1066	1120	1016	1123	678	1012	2363	225
N	1880	1207	1592	1210	1200	1512	1550	1000	1214	3413	1191

Source: ABS III (N = 16969)

\* p < 0.05 for two-tailed t-statistics

Sampling weight incorporated for estimation

Robust standard errors in parentheses



**Figure A1: Predicted Changes in Democratic Conception in Thailand and Singapore**