



A Comparative Survey of  
*DEMOCRACY, GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT*

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A Comparative Analysis of the Social Divide  
and Regime Support

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# **Asian Barometer**

A Comparative Survey of Democracy, Governance and Development

## **Working Paper Series**

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## **Social Divide and Regime Legitimacy in Asian Democracies**

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## **I. Introduction**

Democracy is a design to resolve social difference through the mechanism of party politics, in which all kinds of interest can be represented by different political agents and their conflicts can be mitigated effectively by political alignment and realignment in electoral campaigns that decide who governs. A free and fair election that regularly determines the change of power in political leadership is therefore vital to the maintenance of regime legitimacy, for the reason that citizens are capable to hold the incumbent government accountable, positively or negatively, and these voices eventually all factor into the electoral result that rewards the politicians who perform satisfactorily and punishes those who perform unsatisfactorily in voter's mind. Of course, such kind of political evaluation could be very subjective, and different people might have totally different criteria as well as factual recognition, but by and large the voter's collective evaluation will converge with the objective assessment of government performance. If electoral outcomes and power rotations in a democratic regime can genuinely match with voter's mind in views of political accountability, then the political discontent associated with the incumbent government for the most part could be relieved and the spotlight of public attention will be directed to the new government and its performance. By the similar reason, the incumbent government could be likely to renew its power if the voter's collective evaluation leans toward the positive end and is willing to give political support for another term. In the above scenario, political accountability plays a central role to maintain a proper level of regime legitimacy through positive or negative feedbacks of electoral results in accord to the general political evaluation among the mass public.

Social divide, which exists in all human societies in certain forms with varying magnitude, should not be detrimental to the regime legitimacy of a democracy provided that party politics can properly function to include and represent all variety of interests and the change or unchange of the political power is determined through the principle of political accountability. In fact, it is normal that individual voters could have cognitive or evaluative bias that favors a particular party or candidate he feels close psychologically. However, the public assessment to a great extent will reflect the general perception of a political party or candidate, which is less likely to be affected by personal bias of the few but instead shows the result of collective evaluation towards its objective political performance. This is why political accountability can contribute to the maintenance of regime legitimacy, even at the presence of all kinds of social divide that could tear a democratic system apart if the interest conflict of different social forces cannot be properly articulated and included

in the process of electoral campaign and political competition.

The above discussion proposed two kinds of political accountability in positive and negative sense, respectively. Positive political accountability refers to the continual endorsement of the incumbent to remain in office for its satisfactory performance in democratic governance. Negative political accountability denotes a change of the governing power to the challengers because of unsatisfactory governance and voters intend to hold the incumbent responsible for this result. For both cases regime legitimacy is sustained since voters can find the specific target to reward or punish for desirable or disappointing political outcome through a democratic mechanism. The failure of political accountability, however, happens when the satisfactory incumbent loses the re-election or the poor-performance incumbent continues its hold of the governing power. The former fails in a positive sense of political accountability that voters are over-critical to remove a good powerholder, but the latter in contrast fails in a negative sense that those who need to be held politically responsible are not voted out of office. In both situations, political discontent is likely to grow in a fast pace and could accumulate and develop into a denial of regime legitimacy for the unfulfillment of the upmost democratic function, which is political accountability.

In this paper, we intend to investigate three important questions with respect to regime legitimacy, particularly focusing on its relationship to party politics and social divide in Asian democracies. We will seek to explain (1) what aspect of political accountability Asians care most associated with their support to the political regime? (2) how various micro and macro factors work together to explain regime legitimacy in Asian contexts? (3) could we apply the same explanation to account for regime legitimacy across different regime types? We apply the third-wave Asian Barometer Survey that covers eight democracies and five non-democracies to explore the above three research questions.<sup>1</sup>

## **II. Macro Explanations of Regime Legitimacy in Asia**

The aforementioned explanation of political accountability on regime legitimacy is established on the psychological rationale at the individual level. However, given the subjectivity of evaluation criteria and factual cognition, it is less clear how this psychological perspective can explain the country-level variation of regime legitimacy. In the following discussion, we first present our empirical findings based on Asian

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<sup>1</sup> The eight democracies include Japan, South Korea, Mongolia, Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand, Indonesia, and Malaysia. The five non-democracies include Hong Kong, China, Singapore, Vietnam, and Cambodia. The criterion to make this distinction in regime type is whether the political system offers a substantial opportunity for the opposition to contend the governing power with a free and fair election. In this sense, the Thai case qualifies a democracy but Singapore and Cambodia don't.

Barometer Survey and then propose three plausible hypotheses at the macro level for further analysis in the latter sections.

There is a battery (q80-q84) in the latest Asian Barometer Survey designed to capture the concept of regime legitimacy. While these items are suppose to tap into the level of support for the political system, each of them has its own meaning and we can distinguish one from the other. Among them, we choose a specific item that measures the respondent’s attitude on how much change our system of government should make in comparison to other systems in the world (q84), which is closest to the concept of diffuse regime support. For the rest of the others, they lean toward the concept of efficacy (q80), identity (q81), affection (q82), and allegiance (q83), respectively.<sup>2</sup> If we only distinguish positive from negative responses, then the percentage of regime legitimacy from the lowest to the highest for all the 13 Asian countries can be found in Table 1.

**Table 1. Compared with other systems in the world, would you say our system of government works fine as it is or needs minor change?**

Country	Percentage	Type	Gini Index	Reverse FH score	WBGI
Philippines	36.8%	D	44.8	5	-0.32
Mongolia	38.3%	D	36.5	6.5	-0.14
Japan	48.4%	C	37.6	6.5	1.15
Korea	49.1%	C	31.1	6.5	0.70
Taiwan	57.8%	B	34.2	6.5	0.94
Indonesia	60.7%	B	36.8	5.5	-0.38
Malaysia	70.7%	A	46.2	4	0.37
Thailand	84.6%	A	53.6	4	-0.25
Democracy Avg.	55.8%				
Cambodia	68.0%	E	37.9	2.5	-0.70
China	70.8%	E	47.4	1.5	-0.52
Hong Kong	76.8%	E	53.7	4.5	1.40
Vietnam	82.9%	E	37.6	6	-0.51
Singapore	95.5%	E	47.8	4	1.58
Non-Democracy Avg.	78.8%				
Correlation with Regime Legitimacy			0.56	-0.64	0.15

Data source: ABS III

<sup>2</sup> The rest four items of regime legitimacy in ABS III survey include questions about (1)efficacy: over the long run, our system of government is capable of solving the problems our country faces. (q80) (2)identity: thinking in general, I am proud of our system of government.(q81) (3)affection: a system like ours, even if it runs into problems, deserves the people's support.(q82) (4)allegiance: I would rather live under our system of government than any other that I can think of. (q83).

We specifically separate the eight democracies from the five non-democracies for the presentation purpose in Table 1. If we rank eight democracies in ascending order, the percentage of regime support varies from the lowest Philippines (36.8%) to the highest Thailand (84.6%), and in-between the six countries rank as the following: Mongolia (38.3%), Japan (48.4%), Korea (49.1%), Taiwan (57.8%), Indonesia (60.7%), Malaysia (70.7%). By the similar way, regime legitimacy in five non-democracies is ranked by Cambodia (68.0%), China (70.8%), Hong Kong (76.8%), Vietnam (82.9%), and Singapore (95.5%).

At the first glance, we note some striking patterns and categorize them into five groups with a comparable level of regime legitimacy. Group A comprises Thailand and Malaysia, the top-two countries in terms of regime support. The defining feature of Group A countries is the overlap of the major social cleavage with the main dividing line of party system. In Thailand, the rural-urban divide signifies the contrast between pro-Thaksin red-shirt army versus pro-elite yellow-shirt army. In Malaysia, the ethnic-authoritarian division between Chinese plus Malay opposition versus the Malay incumbent also overlaps with the fierce political competition between People Alliance (Pakatan Rakyat) and National Front (Barisan Nasional). In both societies, the major cleavage coincides with the major political division, and thus the social divide to a great extent has already been fully represented in the political process, which makes political accountability more likely to substantiate.

Group B is composed of Indonesia and Taiwan, and both of which share a similar one-party authoritarian past and their party politics develops along with the competition between two political camps which succeed the authoritarian opposition and the authoritarian incumbent, respectively. However, each of the two camps pursues a catch-all developing strategy that contends the support from all social sectors. In this context, the social divide is represented in a cross-cutting fashion of party politics, and divergent interests can be reconciled and even incorporated into both political camps. Under this situation, ascription of political accountability is not always easy because both of the authoritarian opposition and incumbent intend to represent all social sectors that transcend a particular basis of mass support, despite the fact that some parties might get more support from some layers of people and others don't. Regime legitimacy thus tends to be a little bit lower for its less clear-cut identification about political responsibility.

Group C represents those countries where the social divide is mild at best and their democratic system has been secured and consolidated for a substantial period of time. Such cases in Asia includes Japan and South Korea, and the characteristic of this group that then the link between party competition and social cleavage has been

largely weakened given its relatively homogenous society. The system, however, is not being able to generate large number of political zealots along a dividing line that reflects certain cleavages. The level of regime support is further lower because party competition in this group of countries is not rooted in any entrenched or primordial divide that prevents people having social interaction with others. It is even more difficult for people to come up with a firm judgment about who should be held responsible from the cleavage point of view.

Group D is the last group we identify in Asian democracies, where party politics is nearly irrelevant to social divides and thus only limited interests can be represented in the formal political process, such as in Mongolia and Philippines. Under this political context, the vast majority of people's interests might be neglected and only those powerful player and their associated and representative interests would come forward to dominate the political stage. The lack of regime legitimacy in these countries is a result of severe underrepresentation of class interest in the institutional channel of political process. Political accountability is thus an unlikely goal to achieve since little voice can be heard from those underprivileged people.

The rest of the cases all belong to the category of non-democracy and they all seem to enjoy a high level of regime legitimacy. However, those figures might be spurious given the fact the idea of political accountability does not exist at least in the form of a competitive democratic election. In fact, the high-level of regime support is likely a result of strong political and social control instead of something associated with political accountability. While there might be some common factors that can simultaneously explains regime support in democracies as well as in non-democracies, we have to bear in mind that regime type is definitely an important systemic variable to account regime legitimacy across different Asian countries.

Except for using these five categories to summarize a general picture of regime legitimacy in Asia, we do need to propose key macro predictors to explain the variation of country-level regime support. The prime factor that can distinguish the different nature of regime support in democracy and non-democracy is regime type, and here we operationalize by the indicator of level of democracy measured with reversed coding of Freedom House scores. The original score varies from 1 (most democratic) to 7 (least democratic) and we recode it in a reverse way which 1 represents the least democratic country and 7 the most. The second factor under investigation is income inequality, which is highly associated with the socioeconomic basis of class fissure. We adopt the most-commonly used indicator, Gini index, to tap into how serious the interest of those underprivileged is underrepresented in the political process, which signifies the degree of lacking political accountability and thus affects the overall regime legitimacy. The third factor we include is a direct



measure of government performance, which is quantified as the average of the six world-bank released governance indicators, including (1) Voice and Accountability (2) Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism (3) Government Effectiveness (4) Regulatory Quality (5) Rule of Law (6) Control of Corruption. All six indicators are highly correlated to each other (all above 0.7) and thus we evaluate as a composite average score.

Before we conduct more rigorous multivariate analysis in the latter section, we examine the bivariate relationship between the macro-predictors and regime support in 13 Asian countries. The result (see Table 1) shows regime type is the strongest predictor that negatively associates with regime support by  $r=-0.64$ , which is consistent with our previous discussion that regime support is higher in those non-democratic countries because of social and political control. Income inequality, however, exhibits a strong but perplexing relationship by  $r=0.56$ , suggesting that there is greater support for the regime as the economic inequality under which becomes more serious. This finding could be understood as the sign for the phenomenon of critical democrats given the fact that most countries enjoying low income inequality are usually those developed economies with capable and effective governments. People in this context tend to be over-critical since their political standard has been largely elevated through the long period of the democratization process. With regard to the third factor, government performance is found moderately related to the regime support in a positive direction. This fits our explanation well because it shows that people are rational in giving the regime support: better governance outcome will generate greater regime support and worse performance will reduce regime legitimacy.

For our analytical purpose, we will evaluate the three macro-factors in our integrated multilevel analysis, which incorporates micro-level predictors and demographic controls from various perspectives associated with psychological drives that could lead to greater or lesser regime support.

### **III. Micro-Level Explanations of Regime Legitimacy in Asia**

In this section, we want to find out which aspect of political system people care most and are likely to become their cause to give or withdrew support for the political regime under which they live. All these micro-factors represent respondent's subjective evaluation of the political system as well certain psychological proclivity. The hypothesis behind these micro-predictors is that people will be more supportive of the political regime if their evaluation reveals the system meeting the standard of political accountability. The detailed information of all the variable formation can be found in the Appendix.

The first group of variables is related to the overall assessment of democracy, including *Satisfaction of Democracy* and *Democratic Evaluation*. The former asks how well the respondents think of democracy working in their country, and the latter asks to what extent the respondents think a change in their political system necessary. Both variables tap into an overall assessment of the system in different angles by phrasing the questions in a positive and negative sense, respectively. One caveat needs notification in that both questions contain the “D-word” and their measures might overshadow other predictors given the fact that most people might think of their country democratic as long as they support it. For this reason, we will conduct another model specification without this variable and compare the change of the result in our country-specific analyses.

The second group is comprised of five variables and all of them tap into certain aspects of government performance, including *Real Choice*, *Overall Economy*, *Responsiveness*, *Competitiveness*, and *Institutional Trust*. *Real Choice* refers to the system capacity in which elections do offer different choices of candidates and political parties on the table. *Overall Economy* measures how well the overall economic condition currently, which is an important system parameter when people evaluate the regime. *Responsiveness* intends to capture the public’s view about how government is responsive to satisfy people’s need. *Competitiveness* taps into how people think of the system that could give a free and fair competition environment for all power contenders. This is the precondition of political accountability as a political concept to be meaningful. *Institutional Trust* is designed to measure how trustful people think of the varying political institutions that perform its function duly.

The third group of micro-predictors are related to psychological orientations, including *Proud*, *Traditionalism*, *Liberal Democratic Value*, and *Political Efficacy*. *Proud* refers to a sense of belonging at the national level, which brings the inherent affection towards the political identity and this feeling is very likely to spill over into the regime support. *Traditionalism* measures respondent’s value orientation by distinguishing their modernity attitudes. Previous literature in modernization theory has found strong empirical evidence that traditionalism is associated with parochial political attitudes that prevent people from shaping a sense of citizenship and its resultant public morality. Applying this finding, we can expect that traditionalism and regime support are inversely related because people need to develop a collective identity beyond their immediate and extensive family to give the system support. On the other hand, *Liberal Democratic Attitude* taps into people’s psychological orientation related to liberalism, such as tolerance, equality, respect of individual difference, etc. Previous findings showed that the liberal attitude tends to be associated with critical assessment of the political system, and therefore, we can

expect to see an inverse relationship that reflects such “critical citizenship” between liberal democratic value and regime support. At last, *Political Efficacy* denotes how much people think they can engage and make a contribution in the political process. All of the above micro-predictors are associated with the respondent’s view about the system-level feature of their political system.

For the control purpose, we add four basic demographic variables such as *Gender (Male)*, *Age*, *Education*, and *Urban Residence* into our model. We expect to see greater regime support among male, older, less-educated, and rural respondents because this profile exhibits the most conservative group in the political spectrum across many Western advanced democracies.

#### **IV. Research Design**

Our dependent variable is level of regime support measured by a four-ordered categorical scale, and thus we apply the method of ordinal logistic regression for individual-level multivariate analysis by Mplus 6. All the micro-predictors are specified as mentioned in the previous section and we expect their covariation patterns should match with the common hypothesis that better evaluation of political accountability causes the increase of regime support. Considering that the “D-word” variables might overwhelm other predictors, we decide to run the full model first, and then remove the “D-word” variables together with those predictors that only show trivial explanatory power. If meaningful patterns emerge after this model adjustment, we will focus the model without the “D-word” and see how different predictors are associated with regime legitimacy instead of being absorbed into a powerful all-inclusive measure with the “D-word” effect.

We are further interested in knowing how macro and micro predictors can explain regime legitimacy simultaneously in an integrated multilevel setting. To achieve this analytical purpose, we apply hierarchical linear modelling by HLM 6.08 to tease out the particular effect for a micro or macro predictor in explaining regime support. Our key purpose is to which whether these macro predictors are still significant under the multilevel analysis. If our previous bivariate findings are washed out, it indicates these findings could be driven by possible spurious relationships.

The key task of our aforementioned analyses is to find a general pattern of findings across different political contexts, but meanwhile, we also pay attention to distinguish important idiosyncrasy for a particular finding within specific countries. We do not intend to maximize the explained variance but instead reading out the causal commonality and difference of regime support in the diverse political and social settings. For reaching this goal, we do not present the pooled-data analysis and rather conduct a country-by-country examination of the results that report in the next

section.

## **V. Findings of the Individual-Level Regression**

Table 2 reports the result of the full model that includes all the four groups of micro-level predictors. As we expected, the explanatory power of the two “D-word” variables about democratic assessment is very strong and significant in nearly all of the countries, regardless of regime types. If people are more satisfactory about how democracy works or they think the country more democratic with less problems, they tend to give more support to the political regime. This indicates subjective evaluation of democracy does strong explain regime legitimacy, and we do need to compare the result with and without specifying the “D-word” variable to evaluate the wash-out effects on other micro-predictors.

There is one predictor in group two does not behave the way we expected. That is, whether people think the system capable to offer real political alternatives is not related to their support of political system. For the rest of the four predictors associated with governance evaluation, those who show higher rating tends to show greater supportive attitude toward the political regime. This covariation patterns corroborate with our central argument that political accountability plays an important role in accounting individual-level regime support.

The four psychological predictors of the third group exhibit very surprising results that all run counter against our prediction. None of the factors associated with national identity, traditional social value, liberal democratic orientation, and political efficacy systemically explains regime legitimacy. This suggests that whether people give support toward the political regime has nothing to do with pre-determined psychological inclination but rather very closely linked to the rational decision based on evaluation of actual system performance. Particularly for the predictor of political efficacy, we found significant but not expected findings in non-democratic countries, where people tend to be more supportive of the regime if they feel less efficacious about participating in politics.

At last, only the age factor is found significantly associated with regime support across majority of the counties in our analysis. Generally speaking, older people tend to give the political system more support. But the factors such as gender, education, urban residence do not influence regime legitimacy.

We decide to simply our model specification to drop the two “D-word” variables and the two psychological predictors, traditionalism and liberal democratic values. The purpose is test whether the explanatory power would change for those predictors of governance evaluation if the wash-out effect is present anymore. In the simplified model, we keep the affection variable *Proud* because by definition diffuse regime

support in some degree should be driven by patriotism, by which the national identity should be the nuclear element to evaluate. We also keep the *Efficacy* variable given its unexpected but interesting result.

Table 3 presents the regression result of the simplified model. The most salient difference is the significant reduction of the explained variation (R-squared). This suggests that the two variables of democratic evaluation do have wash-out effect and their explained variation is not completely picked up by remaining predictors. Except for the reducing R-squared, only minor changes can be concluded from the result of the new model: the affection variable *Proud* and the governance evaluation variable *Real Choice* does show some explanatory power in few of the countries under investigation. *Overall Economy*, *Responsiveness*, *Competitiveness*, and *Institutional Trust* are still the most powerful covariates to explain regime legitimacy in rationalistic sense. Political efficacy is not a significant predictor for regime legitimacy in democracies, but its relationship in non-democracies is quite salient and suggests that those who do think capable to influence the politics are actually not very much supportive of the existing political regime. This raises a very interesting question: does this negative relationship indicate those people with greater political efficacy could be the potential agents that push for greater political reform and the regime change? With respect to the background control variables, senior people do tend to have greater regime support like we found in the full model. But the urban factor, specifically in Mongolia, Japan, and Thailand all shows a tendency not to support the existing political regime. This might reflect the upsurge of political discontent against the incumbent as well as the system at the time when the survey was carried out (2010 for Thai ABS survey and 2011 for Japanese ABS survey). The LDP victory in Japan and the military coup in Thailand from the hindsight all signify the loss of regime legitimacy for the Japanese and Thai incumbent (DPJ and pro-Thaksin alliance) in the metropolitan areas.

## **VI. Findings of the Multilevel Modeling**

With the above individual-level findings, we are interested to know how macro and micro predictors play out to explain regime legitimacy in an integrated multilevel model. As Table 4 shows, we maintain the same specification for the individual-level model but simultaneously add three macro-level variables and allow random effects for the micro-level beta coefficients. We change replace different indicators for measuring governance because there are two WBGI indicators, (1) Accountability and Voice (2) Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism, slightly showing some different meaning from the other four. In our correlation analysis, the correlations of the rest four WBGI indicators are all above 0.9, but their correlations

to those two only about 0.7. In fact, the rest four indicators are much closer to the concept of state capability, and that indeed differs from political accountability or political stability substantially. For this reason, we use the composite average measure of all six WBGI indicators for Model I, and replace with Political Accountability as well as Political Stability for the Model II and III. We intend to see whether the result would change if different governance indicators are applied.

As can be seen in Table 4, all of the governance evaluation micro predictors are significant in explaining regime legitimacy as expected. The affection variable *Proud* also matters, but the *Efficacy* variable still shows a significant and negative relationship to the level of regime support, indicating those who have great motivation to participate in politics are usually those give less support toward the current regime. Regarding the demographic control variables, *Age* again show consistent positive effect on regime legitimacy. Male respondents, however, show less regime support if we replace the composite governance indicator with *Political Stability*. This indicates when the country is very stable and lack of political violence, males are more content with this condition and prefer to give greater support for the political regime. This distinguishes the effects of the general concept of governance from the specific aspect of governance functions, such as political stability.

We now focus on the contextual-level effect for the regime support. The most robust finding is that regime type does greatly explain regime support in reverse sense: regime support is much higher in those non-democratic countries and much lower in those highly democratic ones. For the rest of the two predictors, we found both of the composite WBGI and the *Political Stability* indicator play the function in our models: the increase of the governance performance does elevate regime support, but such a finding will vanish if we use the *Political Accountability* indicator to measure the governance performance. Parallel to the above findings, the *Gini* indicator does strong explanatory power when the composite governance indicator or the *Political Stability* indicator is in use, but not for the *Political Accountability* indicator.

How can we meaningfully explain the above finding? The *Gini* indicator in Model I shows negatively associates with regime legitimacy, suggesting that the worse socioeconomic condition does make the regime losing people's support. In fact the Gini indicator not only represents income inequality or more broadly the socioeconomic situation, but also a proxy measure how capable the government to ease its domestic tension of socioeconomic class cleavage, which is included as part of political accountability. So if we control the *Political Accountability* indicator at the same time in the contextual level, both variables are highly correlated and thus unique variation is large reduced and thus make the primarily significant contextual effect obscure.

If the above speculation is correct, we should apply Model I and Model III to conclude the result of our multilevel analysis. First, our HLM analysis found an expected negative relationship between the Gini index and regime support, which corrects the perplexing positive bivariate correlation reported in Section 2. Second, we found political accountability, no matter which indicators are used, covaries with regime legitimacy in a positive direction. Third, it appears that the democratic system by nature can tolerate divergent political views and even the opposition action, so long as these voice and behaviour are confined within the legal boundary. Therefore, the level of regime legitimacy is not supposed to linger at the high level. However, given the autocratic nature of political and social control, the measure of regime support in non-democracies could be biased upward due to the systemic disallowance. If this is the case, we need to distinguish the measure of regime support in democracies from non-democracies, for the reason that the same measure is not functionally equivalent in different regime types because of major systemic difference.

## **VII. By Ways of Conclusion**

We summarize the major findings as follows. First, regime legitimacy do have strong relationship with political accountability at both micro and macro levels. At the contextual level, regime legitimacy is higher in a country where the socioeconomic different can be largely in control and the government is effective to deliver all kinds of political goods. At the individual level, people will base on their evaluation of governance performance to rationally decide whether they will support or not support the political regime. Second, the psychological factors seem to have relatively weak explanatory power to account for regime legitimacy. As our model shows, the affection factor like national identity might have some explanatory power, but it is very marginal comparing to the governance variable. The efficacy variable, on the other hand, even shows inverse relationship with regime support that seems somewhat at odds with the conventional wisdom in political science textbook. Third, our analysis suggests that in-depth studies on individual countries, particularly about the interest articulation and representation of varying social forces and its dynamic relationship to the competition of party politics, deserves our careful investigation to develop rich theoretical explanations that could make more sense for the result of our empirical and statistical analyses.

## Appendix

Variables	Questionnaire	Scale after recoding	Operationalization
Regime Support	q84. Compared with other systems in the world, would you say our system of government works fine as it is, needs minor change, needs major change, or should be replaced?	4. It works fine, not need to change 3. Needs minor change 2. Needs major change 1. Should be replaced	Scale after recoding
Democratic Satisfaction	q89. On the whole, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way democracy works in [Country]?	4. Very satisfied 3. Fairly satisfied 2. Not very satisfied 1. Not at all satisfied	Scale after recoding
Democratic Evaluation	q90. In your opinion how much of a democracy is [Country Name] ?	4. A full democracy 3. A democracy, but with minor problems 2. A democracy, with major problems 1. Not a democracy	Scale after recoding
Real Choice	q111. How often do you think our elections offer the voters a real choice between different parties/candidates?	4. Always 3. Most of the time 2. Sometimes 1. Rarely	Scale after recoding
Overall Economy	q1. How would you rate the overall economic condition of our country today?	5. Very good 4. Good 3. So so (not good nor bad) 2. Bad 1. Very bad	Scale after recoding
Responsiveness	q97. How likely is it that the government will solve the most important problem you identified within the next five years? q113. How well do you think the government responds to what people want?	For q97 4. Very likely 3. Likely 2. Not very likely 1. Not at all likely  For q113 4. Very responsive 3. Largely responsive 2. Not very responsive 1. Not responsive at all	Average scores after recoding
Competitiveness	q37. On the whole, how free and fair would you say the last	For q37	Average scores after



	<p>national election was?</p> <p>q99. Political parties or candidates in our country have equal access to the mass media during the election period.</p> <p>q103. All citizens from different ethnic communities in Country X are treated equally by the government.</p>	<p>4. Completely free and fair 3. Free and fair, but with minor problems 2. Free and fair, with major problems 1. Not free or fair</p> <p>For q99 and q103 4. strongly agree 3. somewhat agree 2. somewhat disagree 1. strongly disagree</p>	recoding
Trust in Institution	<p>For each one, please tell me how much trust do you have in them?</p> <p>q8. The courts q9. The national government [in capital city] q10. Political parties [not any specific party] q11. Parliament q12. Civil service q13. The military(or armed forces) q14. The police</p>	<p>For q8, q9, q10, q11, q12, q13, and q14 4. A great deal of trust 3. Quite a lot of trust 2. Not very much trust 1. None at all</p>	Average scores after recoding
Political Efficacy	<p>q133. I think I have the ability to participate in politics. q134. Sometimes politics and government seems so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what is going on. q135. People like me don't have any influence over what the government does.</p>	<p>For q133 4. strongly agree 3. somewhat agree 2. somewhat disagree 1. strongly disagree</p> <p>For q134 and q135 4. strongly disagree 3. somewhat disagree 2. somewhat agree 1. strongly agree</p>	Average scores after recoding
Proud	<p>q154. How proud are you to be a citizen of (COUNTRY)?</p>	<p>4. Very proud 3. Somewhat proud 2. Not very proud 1. Not proud at all</p>	Scale after recoding
Traditionalism	<p>q49. Most people are trustworthy? q50. For the sake of the family, the individual should put his</p>	<p>For q50, q51, q52, q55, q56, q57, q58, q59, q60, q61, q62, q63</p>	Average scores after recoding

	<p>personal interests second.</p> <p>q51. In a group, we should sacrifice our individual interest for the sake of the group's collective interest.</p> <p>q52. For the sake of national interest, individual interest could be sacrificed.</p> <p>q53. When dealing with others, developing a long-term relationship is more important than securing one's immediate interest.</p> <p>q54. When dealing with others, one should not only focus on immediate interest but also plan for future.</p> <p>q55. Even if parents' demands are unreasonable, children still should do what they ask.</p> <p>q56. 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.</p> <p>q57. Being a student, one should not question the authority of their teacher.</p> <p>q58. In a group, we should avoid open quarrel to preserve the harmony of the group.</p> <p>q59. Even if there is some disagreement with others, one should avoid the conflict.</p> <p>q60. A person should not insist on his own opinion if his co-workers disagree with him.</p> <p>q61. Wealth and poverty, success and failure are all determined by fate.</p> <p>q62. If one could have only one child, it is more preferable to have a boy than a girl.</p> <p>q63. When dealing with others, one should not be preoccupied with temporary gains and losses.</p>	<p>4. strongly agree 3. somewhat agree 2. somewhat disagree 1. strongly disagree</p> <p>For q49, q53, q54 4. strongly disagree 3. somewhat disagree 2. somewhat agree 1. strongly agree</p>	
Liberal Democratic Value	<p>138. The government should consult religious authorities when interpreting the laws.</p> <p>139. Women should not be involved in politics as much as men.</p> <p>140. People with little or no education should have as much say in politics as highly-educated people.</p>	<p>For q140 4. strongly agree 3. somewhat agree 2. somewhat disagree 1. strongly disagree</p>	Average scores after recoding

	<p>141. Government leaders are like the head of a family; we should all follow their decisions.</p> <p>142. The government should decide whether certain ideas should be allowed to be discussed in society.</p> <p>143. Harmony of the community will be disrupted if people organize lots of groups.</p> <p>144. When judges decide important cases, they should accept the view of the executive branch.</p> <p>145. If the government is constantly checked [i.e. monitored and supervised] by the legislature, it cannot possibly accomplish great things.</p> <p>146. If we have political leaders who are morally upright, we can let them decide everything.</p> <p>147. If people have too many different ways of thinking, society will be chaotic.</p> <p>148. When the country is facing a difficult situation, it is ok for the government to disregard the law in order to deal with the situation.</p>	<p>For q138, q139, q141, q142, q143, q144, q145, q146, q147, and q148</p> <p>4. strongly disagree</p> <p>3. somewhat disagree</p> <p>2. somewhat agree</p> <p>1. strongly agree</p>	
Male	SE2 GENDER	1. male 0. female	Scale after recoding
Age	SE3. BIRTH YEAR	17-94	Scale after recoding
Education	SE5. What is your highest level of education?	1-10	Scale after recoding
Urban	Level3	1.urban 0.rural	Scale after recoding

**Table 2. Ordinal Logistic Analysis of Regime Support, Model I**

<i>Explanatory Variables</i>	PHI	MON	JPN	KOR	TWN	IND	MAL	THA	CAM	CHN	HKG	VET	SGP
<b><i>D-word</i></b>													
Democratic Satisfaction	.506** (.082)	.191 (.105)	.379** (.094)	.762** (.137)	.175 (.116)	.437** (.140)	.334** (.120)	.847** (.106)	.524** (.126)	.282** (.087)	.265 (.182)	.224 (.199)	.690** (.205)
Democratic Evaluation	.120 (.102)	.459** (.112)	.751** (.099)	.598** (.159)	.628** (.106)	.346** (.134)	.626** (.126)	.379** (.110)	.537** (.111)	.378** (.080)	.847** (.161)	1.107** (.212)	.220 (.177)
<b><i>Governance Evaluation</i></b>													
Real Choice	-.098 (.070)	.102 (.066)	.206* (.096)	.083 (.083)	-.024 (.072)	-.090 (.098)	.057 (.060)	-.072 (.068)	.155* (.070)	— (.070)	.098 (.112)	— (.112)	.020 (.108)
Overall Economy	.069 (.067)	.510** (.101)	.250** (.082)	.165* (.086)	.250** (.065)	.179* (.090)	-.017 (.089)	.128 (.089)	.225** (.081)	.010 (.055)	.227* (.112)	.037 (.133)	-.268* (.112)
Responsiveness	.153 (.113)	.364** (.145)	.763** (.123)	.534** (.144)	.728** (.117)	.272 (.178)	.638** (.140)	.399** (.118)	.336** (.122)	.380** (.085)	.455** (.167)	.498** (.188)	.269 (.189)
Competitiveness	.332** (.117)	.206 (.128)	.246* (.126)	.175 (.147)	.213 (.140)	.524** (.203)	.267* (.124)	-.239 (.131)	.333* (.138)	.265** (.068)	.316 (.201)	.533** (.201)	.778** (.219)
Trust in Institution	.097 (.117)	.575** (.139)	.271 (.153)	.715** (.145)	.744** (.152)	-.117 (.187)	.319* (.141)	.305** (.118)	.486** (.145)	.541** (.115)	.184 (.268)	.457* (.207)	.024 (.171)
<b><i>Psychological Orientation</i></b>													
Proud	.133 (.096)	-.203 (.111)	.028 (.092)	.036 (.100)	.236* (.097)	.230 (.128)	.161 (.129)	.701** (.190)	-.187 (.119)	.235** (.066)	.070 (.124)	.276 (.216)	-.102 (.166)
Traditionalism	-.047 (.243)	.083 (.214)	.012 (.285)	.385 (.261)	-.432 (.292)	-.426 (.369)	.315 (.258)	-.336 (.235)	-.196 (.225)	.124 (.236)	.204 (.324)	.767** (.268)	-.018 (.375)
Liberal Democratic Value	-.165 (.173)	.312 (.163)	-.149 (.156)	-.352 (.204)	-.380 (.212)	-.321 (.302)	.009 (.192)	.334 (.175)	-.193 (.163)	-.086 (.153)	.238 (.290)	.093 (.210)	-2.008** (.299)
Political Efficacy	-.001 (.116)	-.191* (.094)	-.115 (.088)	-.084 (.124)	-.057 (.124)	-.158 (.235)	-.116 (.108)	-.295* (.128)	-.047 (.108)	-.312** (.102)	-.538** (.170)	.352** (.106)	-.386* (.159)
<b><i>Demographic Controls</i></b>													
Male	-.106 (.122)	.071 (.123)	-.254* (.113)	-.144 (.133)	-.085 (.114)	-.161 (.166)	-.207 (.121)	-.001 (.122)	-.190 (.128)	-.055 (.082)	.031 (.182)	-.055 (.157)	.084 (.156)
Age	-.003 (.004)	.017** (.005)	.014** (.004)	.009* (.006)	.013** (.005)	.005 (.006)	-.001 (.004)	.012** (.005)	.014** (.005)	.005 (.003)	.012* (.006)	.003 (.006)	.008 (.006)
Education	.000 (.031)	.015 (.025)	.038 (.038)	-.004** (.044)	-.012 (.040)	-.042 (.032)	-.063* (.032)	-.081** (.032)	-.015 (.033)	.039 (.022)	-.013 (.041)	-.051 (.047)	.019 (.036)
Urban	-.101 (.136)	-.229 (.133)	-.296* (.149)	-.308 (.226)	-.009 (.169)	.117 (.164)	.131 (.123)	-.859** (.161)	.042 (.163)	-.061 (.087)	— (.087)	-.339* (.174)	— (.174)
Pseudo R-squared	.117	.195	.289	.329	.299	.131	.290	.300	.311	.212	.300	.385	.355
N	1134	1100	1740	1052	1385	1191	1076	1196	1148	2481	769	773	837

Note: Entry is unstandardized beta coefficients. Level of Significance: \*p ≤ 0.05, \*\*p ≤ 0.01. For the sake of simplicity, we do not report the three threshold parameters. Program: Mplus 6.

**Table 3. Ordinal Logistic Analysis of Regime Support, Model II**

<i>Explanatory Variables</i>	PHI	MON	JPN	KOR	TWN	IND	MAL	THA	CAM	CHN	HKG	VET	SGP
<b><i>Governance Evaluation</i></b>													
Real Choice	-.083 (.068)	.145* (.065)	.311** (.094)	.146 (.082)	-.014 (.071)	-.035 (.097)	.079 (.059)	-.086 (.067)	.170* (.070)	— (.105)	.170 (.105)	— (.132)	.108 (.097)
Overall Economy	.105 (.065)	.552** (.099)	.319** (.081)	.192* (.086)	.274** (.063)	.222* (.093)	.025 (.087)	.213** (.082)	.373** (.086)	.105* (.051)	.246* (.107)	.131 (.132)	-.228* (.103)
Responsiveness	.302** (.108)	.456** (.139)	.937** (.122)	.754** (.139)	.855** (.115)	.431** (.173)	.885** (.131)	.549** (.109)	.580** (.121)	.465** (.080)	.701** (.162)	.966** (.165)	.736** (.159)
Competitiveness	.371** (.109)	.261* (.122)	.512** (.121)	.393** (.141)	.408** (.134)	.522** (.201)	.404** (.121)	-.190 (.124)	.527** (.136)	.358** (.065)	.592** (.179)	.611** (.193)	1.162** (.199)
Trust in Institution	.229* (.115)	.673** (.135)	.484** (.145)	.888** (.140)	.831** (.146)	.151 (.176)	.589** (.131)	.345** (.118)	.675** (.146)	.794** (.102)	-.010 (.227)	.905** (.194)	.182 (.162)
<b><i>Psychological Orientation</i></b>													
Proud	.207* (.098)	-.155 (.109)	.072 (.092)	.113 (.096)	.265** (.094)	.213 (.121)	.214 (.128)	.745** (.171)	-.134 (.116)	.242** (.064)	.154 (.119)	.357 (.202)	.130 (.154)
Political Efficacy	.006 (.113)	-.192* (.089)	-.089 (.086)	-.102 (.119)	-.084 (.121)	-.226 (.237)	-.062 (.104)	-.172 (.124)	-.024 (.104)	-.273** (.097)	-.553** (.168)	.367** (.103)	-.587** (.149)
<b><i>Demographic Controls</i></b>													
Male	-.108 (.120)	.064 (.122)	-.256* (.109)	-.112 (.130)	-.073 (.113)	-.109 (.162)	-.220 (.118)	.031 (.117)	-.173 (.127)	-.134 (.079)	-.031 (.175)	-.030 (.151)	.138 (.144)
Age	-.003 (.004)	.013** (.005)	.015** (.004)	.011* (.006)	.010* (.004)	.006 (.005)	.003 (.004)	.017** (.005)	.014** (.005)	.006* (.003)	.014* (.006)	-.001 (.005)	.009 (.006)
Education	.007 (.031)	.019 (.025)	.064 (.036)	-.037 (.043)	-.005 (.039)	-.020 (.031)	-.052 (.031)	-.049 (.029)	-.034 (.032)	.021 (.021)	-.016 (.039)	-.067 (.046)	.025 (.033)
Urban	-.082 (.132)	-.266* (.130)	-.305* (.138)	-.269 (.212)	-.021 (.171)	-.032 (.159)	.128 (.122)	-.971** (.148)	.007 (.162)	-.111 (.083)	— (.167)	-.291 (.167)	— (.167)
Pseudo R-squared	.059	.167	.220	.226	.248	.074	.236	.168	.256	.178	.215	.295	.231
N	1149	1112	1760	1069	1405	1257	1092	1242	1157	2666	827	797	895

Note: Entry is unstandardized beta coefficients. Level of Significance: \* $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* $p \leq 0.01$ . For the sake of simplicity, we do not report the three threshold parameters. Program: Mplus 6.

**Table 4. Results of Generalized Hierarchical Linear Modelling on Regime Support**

<i>Explanatory Variables</i>	I. Composite WBGI	II. Accountability and Voice	III. Political Stability
<i>Individual Level</i>			
Real Choice	.094(.037)*	.094(.038)*	.093(.037)*
Overall Economy	.195(.057)**	.193(.057)**	.195(.057)**
Responsiveness	.631(.057)**	.632(.057)**	.632(.057)**
Competitiveness	.425(.071)**	.424(.071)**	.421(.071)**
Trust in Institution	.509(.084)**	.509(.085)**	.509(.084)**
Political Efficacy	-.135(.055)*	-.135(.054)*	-.135(.055)*
Proud	.156(.062)*	.153(.063)*	.158(.064)*
Male	-.078(.039)	-.077(.040)	-.082(.037)*
Age	.008(.002)**	.008(.002)**	.008(.002)**
Education	-.015(.011)	-.015(.011)	-.015(.011)
Urban	-.148(.096)	-.136(.099)	-.139(.097)
Intercept for threshold 2	2.899(.031)**	2.899(.031)**	2.899(.031)**
Intercept for threshold 3	5.130(.044)**	5.130(.044)**	5.131(.044)**
<i>Country-Level</i>			
Intercept for the threshold 1	-2.232(.208) **	-2.233(.236) **	-2.254(.234)**
Level 2-Income Inequality (gini index)	-.046(.016) *	-.030(.019)	-.037(.013)*
Level 2-Democraticness (reversed FH score)	-.533(.076) **	-.468(.165) *	-.482(.062)**
Level 2-World Bank Governance Indicator (composite)	.556(.136) **		
Level 2-Accountability and Voice		.318(.324)	
Level 2-Political Stability			.578(.105)**

Dependent Variable: *Level of Regime Supprt*; Note: Entry is nonstandardized beta coefficients; Sample Size: 16132; Level of Significance: \* $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\* $p \leq 0.01$ .