



A Comparative Survey of

***DEMOCRACY, GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT***

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Social and Cultural Supports for Plural Democracy in  
Eight Asian Nations: A Cross-National, Within-Nation  
Analysis

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# Asian Barometer

A Comparative Survey of Democracy, Governance and Development

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## **Social and Cultural Supports for Pluralist Democracy in Eight Asian Nations: A Cross-National, Within-Nation Analysis\***

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*Abstract: This paper examines relative impacts of cultural socialization and interactions with government on support for democracy, pluralist values, regime legitimacy, and institutional trust across eight Asian nations based upon surveys of populations in these countries. Results show that cultural socialization has more impact than Mishler and Rose observed in a study of Central Europe, but interactions with government also produce differences in attitudes. Inclusion of dummy variables indicates that identification of individual indicators allows substitutions of variables for country contexts.*

A long tradition in psychology, sociology, and political science links individuals' affective relationships to government with early-life socialization to cultural norms (Erikson, 1959; Easton and Dennis, 1969). Hart (1978) argues that socialization to cultural norms accounts for different levels of trust in politicians in Great Britain and the United States. More recently, Inglehart, et al. (1998) and Inglehart (1997) link political norms and attitudes to inter-generational social and value attitudes.

These latter works imply that such relationships can be identified on a cross-national basis. Eichenberg and Dalton (1993), for example, attribute effects of dummy variables to unique national cultures or traditions regarding European integration. In a later analysis, however, Palmer and Gabel (1995) argue for a more fully specified model in which dummy variables have fewer important effects in explaining national-level public support for European unification.

By contrast, many skeptics of cultural and socialization theories suggest that institutional characteristics and government performance are more likely causes of varying degrees of distrust in governments. Klingemann (1999) found that nations engaged in the process of democratization tend toward lower levels of political trust. Mishler and Rose (2001), in a 10-country analysis,

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showed that micro-level institutional factors, rather than culture or socialization are the keys to explaining political trust in Eastern and Central European nations.

This paper undertakes testing of these rival explanations, especially the claim that such relationships obtain across nations, in an Asian context. In attempting to generalize to individual behavior from aggregated data, any analysis encounters problems of ecological inference. The projects represented by various “barometers” represent an effort to penetrate this individual level as a perspective for examining governments and their associations with beliefs, attitudes, and cultural orientations within nations, but, in fact, also grounded in behavioral theories that transcend any one history, society, or culture.<sup>1</sup>

This study utilizes the data from eight nations that make up the data set on “Democratization and Value Change in East Asia.” These nations have sufficient data on questions expressing various forms of support for government as well as coding that lends itself to generation of indicators of a variety of societal cleavages. These data were obtained by probability sampling from eight national populations. From the roughly 12217 respondents, we were able to obtain over 8500 respondents on all indicators relevant to the study.

Traditional frameworks of comparative analysis are not always the most productive for understanding such factors. Despite the large Ns of national surveys (including the NES), examination of important dimensions of democratic development, such as support for democracy, trust in government, and subjective perceptions of governmental legitimacy, that enable democratic governments to sustain themselves and consolidate over time, is still shaped largely by idiographic studies that assume unique national histories, cultures, and ideologies. Social and economic supports for governments have been addressed at an aggregate level in comparative,

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<sup>1</sup> Countries used in this study include Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Mainland China, Mongolia, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Thailand. The data represent probability samples from nationwide surveys.

cross-national analysis, but Linz and Stepan suggest that support is rooted primarily in beliefs about government and procedures and the general acceptance of laws, procedures, and institutions created for the purpose of governing (2001, 95).

Having amassed quantities of data at the individual level, however, it is puzzling as to why they should be aggregated for comparison with other nations, given the substantial variation within societies that, to use an ANOVA analogy, is often greater than variance between nations. If within-nation variance is greater, analysis should be guided by Prezyworski and Teune's admonition from decades ago that the goal of comparative study should be to "substitute the names of variables for the names of social systems" (1971). If supports for government are rooted in individual variations, more than national ones, aggregating data from large surveys of national populations for purposes of comparing across nations discards opportunities for general theoretical knowledge as to why governments succeed or why citizens fail to support governments, controlling for specific national contexts.

Mishler and Rose purport to negotiate competing perspectives of both cultural traditions and institutional theories as explanations of trust in government using individual-level data. Their strategy is to incorporate both perspectives in an explanatory model and, given the indicators they employ, argue that institutional perspectives trump social and cultural factors in impacts on the level of trust individuals place in governments. Their analysis, however, posits several conclusions that may be peculiar to Eastern Europe. In this paper, among other purposes, we replicate their study across eight Asian nations and produce considerably different findings.

### **Trust in Government among Asian Nations**

The first difference we discover between the Mishler and Rose sample and our own is that, contrary to their study, we find high levels of trust in government institutions. Furthermore,

national variations in levels of trust across nations are not only highly significant, but national variations, alone, account for over 40 percent of the variance in institutional trust.

Table 1 compares evaluations of trust in institutions between the Eastern European and Asian cases. In every area, Asian nations have much more confidence in government than their counterparts in Eastern and Central Europe. Although Mishler and Rose explain the levels of trust in their sample persuasively as socialization to the legacy of authoritarian rule, several of the Asian nations also have histories of authoritarian dominance comparable to that of Eastern and Central Europe.

One finding in Table 1 presents a further anomaly. While trust in institutions is comparatively high, trust in other people is significantly lower. This does not mean, however, that individual trust does not produce institutional trust in the Asian context. To make such a generalization would involve the ecological fallacy. We are able, then, to test the finding of Mishler and Rose that individual trust has little significant impact on institutional trust in a regression analysis that includes individual trust as an explanatory variable in the Asian context.

**Table 1: Levels of Trust in Governmental Institutions and People in Asian versus Eastern European Nations (In Percent)<sup>2</sup>**

	Trusting (%)	
	<u>Asian Nations</u>	<u>Mishler and Rose</u>
<b>Parties</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Parliament</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Police</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Courts</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Press</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>TV</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Military</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Most People</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>49</b>

**Source: Mishler and Rose (2001) and data from the East Asian Barometer.**

<sup>2</sup> Mishler and Rose use a “neutral” category that we have omitted from the questionnaires. The Asian data are based solely on percentages of respondents indicating either a “great deal of trust” or “quite a lot of trust.”

The Asian data seem to contradict findings posited by Mishler and Rose in two respects. Their study concludes with a macro-cultural theory assertion that experience with authoritarian values breeds political mistrust, so that, from an institutional perspective, initial political trust in new democracies will be low. Most of the Asian nations examined in our study have traditions of authoritarian rule, yet the trust of citizens in their institutions is quite high by comparison. The difference may arise from the fact that Eastern European nations were treated as occupied territories by a foreign power, whereas, authoritarian government in most Asian nations of this study was indigenous and related to traditional cultural and social values within those nations.

The very low level of trust in “others” among Asian respondents is a bit more puzzling. In the Thai case, however, children’s traditional literature advocates caution and even distrust of other people. Contrary to the view of Asian cultures as encouraging solidarity with others, many aspects of Thai culture, including Buddhism, actually support a high degree of individualism and autonomy not generally recognized in the debate over Asian values.

This paper builds upon the same theoretical and methodological base established by Mishler and Rose. We extend the analysis, however, by focusing on the issue of support for democracy and sources of that support, only one of which is institutional trust. The results thus transcend issues of institutional trust and reach to patterns of broader democratic consolidation.

### **Hypotheses to be Tested**

Mishler and Rose negotiate the relative impacts of social and cultural explanations of trust in government institutions versus institutionalism as a source of trust in government by positing four hypotheses. In our re-examination of their conclusions, we adopt similar hypotheses, but use dummy variables for countries (no aggregate data from Freedom House and the Transparency

Index – both of which represent constants within nations anyway) as well as some additional indicators of culture and socialization that vary across individuals within the nations of the study.

Mishler and Rose offer the following hypotheses to explain trust in institutions:

*Hypothesis 1 (National Culture):* Trust in political institutions varies between countries rather than among individuals according to historically rooted national experiences embedded in interpersonal trust.

*Hypothesis 2 (Individual socialization):* Trust in institutions varies within and across countries according to individuals' trust in others as shaped by their places in the social structure.

*Hypothesis 3 (Government performance):* Trust in institutions varies across rather than within countries in proportion to the success of government policies and the character of political institutions.

*Hypothesis 4 (Individual evaluations):* Trust in institutions varies within and across countries in accordance with both individual attitudes and values and the social and economic positions individuals occupy.

We simply duplicate the theoretical perspective offered in these hypotheses, but apply them also to support for democracy, with one exception. The exception is that we include institutional trust as an explanatory variable and expect it to be a significant determinant of individual-level support for democracy.

Typically, analysis of cross-national data relies on national “dummy” variables to account for unspecified idiosyncratic effects. We follow the lead of Prezeworski and Teune in the attempt to substitute variable names for national social systems from the project on “Democratization and Value Change in East Asia.” The findings hint that variations among nations in support for governments are often more a function of variables that transcend national boundaries and of similarities in these respective cultures associated with these variables, regardless of country, than they are of peculiarities of national cultures or other social or economic configurations represented as geographic entities.



## **Data Analysis**

### *Support for Democracy*

Contrary to Mishler and Rose, “dummy-variable” analysis of variation across nations indicates highly significant differences in support for democracy across the eight nations (Table 2, Equation 1). In addition, over 20 percent of the variance in support for democracy is explained by differences among nations alone. (Korea is the omitted category.) The dummy-variable analysis also indicates that Korea and Taiwan fall below the other nations in support for democracy, while Thailand and the PRC show the greatest affinity for democratic government.

One irony is that belief in democracy is quite strong across Asian nations, even in mainland China. We infer from this finding that affinity for democracy is independent of specific structures of government to some degree. Furthermore, including China among the nations examined in this study indicates what may be fertile ground for democratic development should political institutions move in the direction of democratic practices, as, some argue, they do in the PRC.

These results require some interpretation of the dummy-variable coefficients. Because dummy variables do not lend themselves to an interpretation that the regression coefficient represents a change in the dependent variable for each unit of change in the independent variable, a proper interpretation is that the coefficient represents the difference in a specific dummy from the association of the omitted category with the dependent variable. In Table 2, Equation 1, the coefficients show significant differences between each country and Korea. All differences are significant below  $p < .01$ , indicating that the other seven countries have significantly different levels of trust in government from Korea. Nevertheless, it is possible to infer relative levels of support for democracy among the nations from the coefficients relative to Korea.

When variables representing basic socialization are added to the equation, there is significant improvement in the goodness of fit, the equation now explaining over one-fourth of the

variance among respondents in the study (Table 2, Equation 2). Age differences, however, prove to be inconsequential. An important finding that confirms other research is that higher socioeconomic status indicators are all negatively associated with support for democracy. The evidence appears consistent that the middle-class is not the “engine of democracy” posited in earlier studies of democratic development.

When “cultural” indicators associated with later socialization are included in the equation, some of the indicators of socioeconomic status are compromised - specifically education and income (Table 2, Equation 3). The strongest addition is urban residence (or urban culture) in adding to the explanatory power of the equation. What is important is the finding that urban dwellers are significantly less supportive of democracy than their non-urban counterparts. In addition, modernistic values (compared to more traditionalist views) also depress democratic support. Finally, the data indicate that a general trust in other people produces considerable support for democracy.

According to Mishler and Rose, interactions with government are significantly more important than cultural factors in producing trust in government. We test the same hypothesis for impacts of such interactions on support for democracy. The results are mixed (Table 2, Equation 4). In evaluations of the economy, respondents appear to be more future-oriented than they are to current economic status or that of the past. Expectations of an improving economy, both nationally and personally, translate into support for democracy. These latter do not necessarily represent experiences or interactions with government, rather, perhaps, a general culturally determined outlook on life.

Much more significant is the perception of and experience with government corruption, definitely experiences with government in a contemporary context.<sup>3</sup> Even more than personal experiences with corruption, perceptions of corruption at the local government level are highly significant in decreasing support for democracy (Table 2, Equation 4). An even stronger relationship exists between trust in institutions of government and support for democratic government. In fact, institutional trust becomes the most important substantive variable in the equation. The ability to trust government thus constitutes a substantial influence on support for democracy. Sense of deference or legitimacy of government also plays a role, although not nearly as much as trust in government institutions.

#### *Support for “Pluralist” Democracy*

Pluralist democracy is distinguishable from majoritarian democracy in focusing on expression of and protection for minorities. It is characterized by a strong affinity for the rule of law and guards against dissenting views being overwhelmed by majoritarian processes. In these respects, pluralist democracy differs significantly from majority rule forms of democracy.

This study focuses on several indicators that we have designated as representing pluralist orientations to democracy (Appendix 1). They are face valid and factor on a single natural factor. What is most significant is that the indicator of pluralist democracy is significantly associated with support for democracy in a negative direction ( $r = -.088$ ;  $p < .000$ ). Sources of support for the ideals of pluralistic democratic government are examined here by using the same model as in Table 2. One exception is that support for majoritarian democracy is included in the equation as a way of examining the relationship controlling for a variety of exogenous (or even extraneous) factors.

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<sup>3</sup> The indicator refers only to local government corruption, as the question was not asked in the PRC survey.

One of the most intriguing aspects of Table 3 is that the sources of support for pluralist democracy work in almost opposite directions from those of general support for democracy. For example, Korea scored one of the lowest nations in support for democracy, but is higher than all the other nations in support of pluralist democracy. Nations high in general democratic support (PRC and Thailand, for example) are among the lowest in affinity for pluralism (Table 3). In addition, demographic indicators (age, education, and gender) show modest, but significant, support for alternatives to majoritarianism; indicators of socioeconomic status (education and income), however, are non-significant in the overall picture. As in Table 2, urbanism or urban political culture is associated negatively with pluralist democracy, but modernism in cultural orientation becomes very important in *supporting* a concept of democracy that is more nuanced and complex, a different sign from the equation of support for democracy. Trust in other people becomes inconsequential in this latter context.

Indicators of interactions with government economic performance have no significant impacts on orientations toward pluralist democracy. Ironically, experiences of government corruption have no more than modest impacts and institutional trust is absent as a significant factor. By far, the most significant factor determining the equation (beyond the dummy variables) is support for democracy itself. Contrary to the bivariate association, support for democracy becomes a major determinant of support for pluralist democracy when other variables are controlled.

Clearly, support for democracy and support for pluralist forms of democracy constitute somewhat different interests in the minds of Asian respondents. Although elements of trust in people and government appear to create greater support for democracy, neither form of trust is very relevant to support for democratic pluralism. Perhaps majoritarian democracy requires a modicum of trust of people and institutions in one's society. On the other hand, democratic

pluralism is designed specifically to curb propensities of majorities to rule. It is precisely a lack of trust that would tip the balance toward a pluralist model, away from a majoritarian one.

### *Government Legitimacy*

Two variables that contribute significantly to support for democracy are of special interest for purposes of this study (Table 2, Equation 4). The first is an index representing a sense of government legitimacy represented by the sum of scores on four questions indicating respondents' deference to government. (See Appendix 1) Z-scores were calculated before the responses were summed and averaged to create the index. A second important consideration is an index of trust in government and its institutions that will be treated later. This latter index is formed in the same way from seven questions representing the respondents' trust in a variety of institutions.<sup>4</sup> (See Appendix 1)

The picture of sources of government legitimacy is also quite different (Table 4) from that of support for democracy. The questions we have chosen to represent this dimension, orthogonal to the measure of institutional trust, have quite different origins in both socio-cultural socialization and interactions with government.

The first item that bears mention is the fact that the dummy-variable analysis shows virtually no differences among Hong Kong, Korea, and Taiwan in sense of government legitimacy among respondents (Korea is the omitted category). Even more intriguing, however, is the fact that Japan shows significantly less sense of legitimacy than the other seven nations. Ironically, the nations with the longest experience of democracy tend to show lower sense of government legitimacy than those only recently emerging from more authoritarian rule (Table 4, Equation 1).

Equation 2 in Table 4 shows significant variations from the pattern in Table 2. As in Table 2, gender is of little consequence, but age becomes a significant factor, with older respondents

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<sup>4</sup> The questions on governmental trust and those on deference to government or legitimacy load on orthogonal factors.

indicating higher levels of government legitimacy than younger citizens. As in Table 2, indicators of socioeconomic status are negatively related to government legitimacy (with the exception of a weak association with subjective social status), but traditionalism becomes even more important in that more modernistic cultural orientations are negatively associated with sense of government legitimacy.

The marked differences in the models, however, come from the fact that the roles of interactions with government are less significant than in determining support for democracy. Evaluations of the economy from a variety of perspectives, for example, become non-significant except for a single rating of contemporary economic conditions. Attitudes toward government corruption have less impact on sense of government legitimacy than they do on support for democracy.

Finally, it turns out that the sense of institutional trust becomes also one of the most significant explanations of government legitimacy. Because institutional trust and regime legitimacy both have significant impacts on support for democracy, the result indicates that a better specification of the model requires simultaneous equation estimation, rather than the conventional single equation model. It also supports the results of Mishler and Rose, who resort to a two-stage least-squares model for analyzing the Eastern European data on institutional trust. Clearly, the next step in this study will be an estimation of a more complex model in which trust in government institutions becomes an endogenous determinant of government legitimacy and support for democracy.

### *Trust in Government*

Both tables above indicate that institutional trust comprises a major factor in accounting for support for democracy and regime legitimacy. The data indicate that on an aggregated indicator of “institutional trust” (See Appendix 1), China, Thailand, and Hong Kong show higher levels of

institutional trust (in that order); the Philippines have slightly lower trust levels; and Korea, Japan, and Taiwan fall well below all other nations in the ability of citizens to trust government institutions. Ironically, in parallel to regime legitimacy, citizens in nations with longer experiences of democratic government, Japan, Korea, and the Philippines, appear to have lower levels of institutional trust.

When demographic variables representing conditions of life for respondents are added to the equation, the explanatory power of the equation increases, but the demographics do not appear to replace country dummy variables (Table 5). Equation 2 does imply, however, that variations in age and gender have little impact on institutional trust. Socio-economic status has a significant, negative association, however, indicating that trust in government is stronger among lower status citizens.

When the three variables representing later socialization are added to the equation, the results begin to take on more theoretical significance. Trust in others, participation in urban culture, and “modernist” cultural orientations supercede the demographics as explanations of institutional trust. In addition, differences in institutional trust between the Philippines and Korea are eliminated, proving that when early socialization is taken into account, initial differences among some nations disappear. This means that what appear as observed idiographic characteristics once again actually represent characteristics of socialization related to urban-rural cultures, the conflict between traditionalism versus modernism, and the inculcation of trusting attitudes toward others within the national populations.

These findings point to important substantive implications that transcend the epistemological ones. The data strongly support findings in studies of Thailand that people in urban locations tend to be less supportive of government than those from rural, more traditional backgrounds. At least two Thai scholars have argued that Thailand is a “tale of two

democracies” – that of sophisticated, urban elites (with origins or current status in the metropole) and that of rural population with often isolated, parochial interests that view political activity, especially elections, as opportunities for personal or community benefit (Laothamatas, 1996; Pongphaichit and Baker, 2001). In terms of orientations to government, the elite view holds that:

Voting in farming areas is not guided by political principles, policy issues, or what is perceived to be in the national interest, all of which is (regarded as) the only legitimate rationale for citizens casting their ballots in a democratic election. The ideal candidates for rural voters are those who visit them often, address their immediate grievances effectively, and bring numerous public works to their communities. (Laothamatas, 1996, 202).

The ability of rural constituencies to acquire substantial power in parliament under conditions of democratic government leads to doubts among the middle class, the mass media, and even academics as to the efficacy of the democratic process. For these groups, “democracy turns out to be the rule of the corrupt and incompetent” (Laothamatas, 1996, 208). This creates a significant dilemma for urban elites. Although the middle class opposes authoritarian rule, in principle, they hold government by rural constituencies in contempt, regarding them as “parochial in outlook, boorish in manner, and too uneducated to be competent lawmakers or cabinet members” (Laothamatas, 1996, 208).

The problem arises from the fact that urban, educated, cosmopolitan elites, who are skilled policy experts, are often held in equal contempt by villagers. They are often regarded as being alien to rural electorates in terms of taste, culture, and outlook, who “fail to stay close to the voters in both a physical and cultural sense” (Laothamatas, 1996, 208). Veiled contempt for rural-dwellers by sophisticated Bangkok elites poses no problems under authoritarian regimes. However,



once democratic elections tip the balance in favor of rural areas, significant gaps in perceptions of government develop.

The major threat posed by this cleavage lies in a relative lack of enthusiasm for government in the more influential urban areas. There is growing evidence that, while the urban middle class opposes authoritarian forms of government that restrict individual freedoms and exercise a heavy hand over commerce, the uncertainty of changes in government, even by democratic processes, can be viewed as destabilizing economic environments on which entrepreneurs depend. The possibility that government may be seized by politicians with “populist” agendas poses an even more direct threat to the interests of a class that stands significantly above the average voter in Thai elections. The traditional emphasis on the middle-class as an engine of democracy in Thailand appears to be declining in favor of a view that middle-class support for democracy exists primarily when it coincides with class interests in curbing the power of government. Some studies (Albritton and Prabudhanitisarn, 1997; Albritton, et al., 1995) indicate that these differences between urban and rural constituencies disappear when controlling for education. Secondary analysis of data gathered by Logerfo (1996) indicates that, even when controlling for education, significant differences between Bangkok and rural areas remain. More recent research (Albritton and Bureekul, 2001; Albritton and Bureekul, 2002) supports the latter view. In a previous study, with more extensive measurement of discrete attitudes, we were able to show that residents of Bangkok and rural areas differ significantly in support for democracy, criteria for choosing candidates in elections, and even tolerance of corruption.

What are the sources of this difference between urban and rural society that have an impact on attitudes toward trust in government? People living in rural areas live a significantly more precarious existence. Their livelihood is constantly threatened by nature and they are exposed to lack of personal security in a significantly more anarchic society. This leads to a greater

dependence upon social networks for “getting by” in life and, as in almost any society, rural dwellers are significantly more communal, as well as being interested in the welfare of their neighbors (which can be either positive or negative, from some perspectives). Urban dwellers live in an environment in which they are more autonomous, isolated, and individualistic, relishing the anonymity presented by urban life. For these urbanites, individual independence from society and government leads to a greater interest in protections from government interference that we often associate with what are generally described as “civil liberties.” These divergences between urban and rural populations appear to have significant impacts on how government is viewed by individuals living in these two contexts, rural dwellers opting for security and urban dwellers for freedom. Our expectation is that rural residents will, thus, have a greater trust in and dependency upon government as a mitigating factor in their uncertain environment.

The fundamental assumption of this study is that, whatever its content, the rural-urban cleavage is a significant factor in support for government in a variety of national contexts. In addition, we assume that some proportion of the variance in support for government across nations is a result of differential experiences of the urban culture and that these experiences may be mistaken for unique characteristics of nations and cultures, rather than more generalized, common factors that happen to coincide with national differences. These relationships appear to be sustained across the other Asian nations.

Other factors, of course, come into play. The indicator of “traditionalism-modernism” also captures some of the cultural-socialization dimension. (See Appendix 1) Other variables include demographic characteristics and responses to questions that replicate the Mishler-Rose variables as closely as possible. At this point of the analysis, we find support for Hypotheses 1 and 2 of Mishler and Rose in the Asian context. Although interpersonal trust supports a corresponding level

of trust in government, socialization to urban and modernist cultural values appears to produce significantly negative orientations in the ability of citizens to trust government.

We test the Mishler-Rose Hypothesis 3 by adding respondents' evaluation of government performance to the equation. These indicators consist of evaluations of the government's economic performance in both national and personal terms and an evaluation of governmental corruption by respondents. Equation 4 of Table 4 shows that, in general, these factors take precedence over all of the demographic factors explaining institutional trust.

Two aspects of these indicators are particularly intriguing. The first is that respondents' evaluations of national economic performance, past, present, and future, are more significant than evaluation of one's own or family situation. The second is that perceptions of corruption in local government are more important for explaining institutional trust than personal experiences of corruption. The latter finding suggests a need for research into information networks, such as media use, that assist citizens in creating attitudes independently of personal experiences. In fact, these perceptions, rather than the experiences of corruption become the strongest of all the negative factors contributing to citizen orientations toward institutional trust.

### **Analysis and Interpretation**

These findings above indicate that individual-level data (within-variance) contributes in highly significant ways to explaining support for democracy, support for pluralist democracy, regime legitimacy, and trust in government across several of the eight nations of the study. The models for each, however, differ in the causal dynamics underlying each of these measures. Urban location, measures of personal socio-economic status and optimism about one's personal or national economic future, all contribute to an explanation, even controlling for country contexts. What is noteworthy is that the measures of higher socio-economic status – income, education, and

subjective social status – all work against the ability of individuals to support democracy and to trust government institutions.

Of equal interest are the more personal, psychological factors – trust in other people, traditional orientations, and attitudes toward corruption. Sources of these attitudes deserve much deeper study and analysis. In the Thai case, we believe that a lack of trust in others is communicated by Thai culture, socialization from an early age. Tables 2 and 5 indicate clearly, however, that cultural factors are significant in sustaining both support for democracy and governmental trust across all nations examined in the study.

Several of the findings are especially worthy of note. First, it appears that if scholars are interested in idiosyncratic cultural and historical impacts, the area of investigation should focus on sources of trust and general optimism concerning the future. This line of investigation might lead to an uncovering of reasons why persons most removed from traditional values are least likely to trust political and social institutions.

Further analysis indicates that higher levels of education and urbanization are associated with higher levels of modernism, ergo lower levels of institutional trust.<sup>5</sup> As expected, urban location and higher levels of education are associated with lower levels of support for democracy (Table 2). This finding is counter-intuitive, especially in the face of widely held views that the urban middle class is the engine of support for democracy. The explanation we offer, here, is the one noted above from previous studies of Thailand – that the middle class is highly suspicious, if not fearful, of popular democratic governments, especially in the absence of pluralist institutions that protect them from what Madison once called “the excesses of democracy,” and, therefore, less likely to trust governmental institutions.

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<sup>5</sup> The equations reported in this study are very robust. In fact, the eight-nation analysis yields findings that are virtually identical to previous studies of Thailand alone.

This latter finding gives a tentative clue to the findings in Table 3 – the model of support for pluralist democracy is quite different, even opposite signed in several cases – from overall support for democracy. Modernism, for example proves to me a positive contributor to support for pluralistic government, while it is negatively associated with general support for democracy.

Clearly, the ability to trust other people contributes to overall support for democracy, as well as trust in social and political institutions. As one might expect, this is significantly related to the sense of optimism about the economic future, although the survival of both in the equation indicates that they have independent effects. The sense of optimism represented by these two indicators has its origins in more complex life experiences, particularly childhood socialization. The data may offer clues to this process, but such an analysis extends well beyond the scope of this paper.

This study identifies a variety of indicators for which national identities are surrogates. Much of the differences among nations are, in some respects, attributable to differences in respondents' location in urban versus rural culture, their movement away from "traditional" attitudes and patterns, their ability to trust other people, and their optimism about future economic status. When these variables are included in the model, differences among four of the eight nations in support for democracy virtually disappear.

We believe that this analysis holds significant promise for rethinking how we approach comparative politics. The explanations of support for democracy in this analysis support the view that what we observe as between-nation variation often masks individual-level variation, that what we see as national differences are really different distributions of individual-level characteristics. It is these latter characteristics that produce outcomes of interest. The ability to substitute names of variables for names of nations in this way permits development of general theories of politics (and,

of course, varying dimensions of democracy) that can be far more useful than comparisons of national aggregates. The development of such general theory is, after all, what we should be about.

Idiographic characteristics of nations that contribute to levels of support for democracy, regime legitimacy, and trust in institutions in some cases survive the effort to replace the national dummies with substantive variable interpretations. Even inclusion of variables indicating traditionalism versus modernism and trust in other people does not eliminate the fact that at least half of the nations differ significantly from each other on national characteristics of interest. Origins of these differences may be evident from a future analysis of the data, but, clearly, this is the area most requiring further investigation in the political culture arena.

The generalizations noted above also apply to respondents' support for pluralist democracy and sense of government legitimacy. The major difference from the other two variables of consideration is that interactions with government, as a form of socialization, are not as important as earlier social and cultural socialization. Trust in government institutions is second only to the traditionalism-modernism indicator in explaining sense of government legitimacy. The fact that variables determining institutional trust are similar, but that institutional trust along with the similar variables are significant determinants of support for democracy and government legitimacy (Table 2 and 4), indicate the endogeneity of institutional trust (Table 4). This pattern strongly suggests a need for modeling with simultaneous equations, making institutional trust endogenous in the equations determining institutional trust and government legitimacy – the next phase of this analysis.

In effect, we find support for all of the hypotheses suggested by Mishler and Rose to some degree. Conceptually, we treat experiences with the economy and interactions with government that generate perceptions of corruption as another form of socialization. Trust in government institutions appears to come primarily from this later socialization, while sense of government

legitimacy appears more subject to earlier experiences in a temporal and cultural chain. Contrary to Mishler and Rose, however, we find in some equations greater weight on cultural factors than on interactions with government.

As noted above, we also find highly significant differences between Eastern Europe and East Asia in terms of institutional trust. It would be intriguing to combine the data sets to ascertain whether variance between regions is greater than intra-regional variation. If the former is the case, an analysis would require identification of factors that distinguish between Eastern Europe and East Asia that would account for these regional differences or the addition of dummy variables to account for regions.

## APPENDIX 1

### Definitions of Variables Used in the Analysis

*Support for Democracy:* Factor scores of responses to 6 questions loading on a single natural factor:

1. satisfaction with the way democracy works
2. wanting democracy now
3. preferring democracy to authoritarian government
4. suitability of democracy for the country
5. ability of democracy to solve country's problems
6. choice of democracy or economic development as most important

*Support for democratic Pluralism:* Average of Z-scores of responses to five questions, "strongly agree to strongly disagree:"

1. Harmony of the community will be disrupted if people organize lots of groups.
2. When judges decide important cases, they should accept the view of the executive branch.
3. If the government is constantly checked by the legislature, it cannot possibly accomplish great things.
4. The most important thing for a political leader is to accomplish his goals even if he has to ignore established procedure.
5. If a political leader really believes in his position, he should refuse to compromise regardless of how many people disagree.

*Modernism:* Average of Z-scores of responses to 8 questions:

1. obedience to parents even when they are unreasonable
2. hiring preferences for friends and relatives
3. give way in opinions if co-workers disagree
4. family needs take precedence over those of individual
5. elders should be consulted to resolve disputes
6. one should accommodate neighbor if conflict occurs
7. wealth and poverty, success and failure are determined by fate
8. a man will lose face if he works under supervision of a woman

*Trust Other People:* Response to question:

Which is closest to your view?:

1. One cannot be too careful in dealing with other people.
2. Most people can be trusted

*Optimism about Respondent's Economic Past, Present, and Future:* Response to questions on economic status:

5-point scale from "Much Worse – Much Better"

*Trust in institutions:* Average of Z-scores on four-point scale from "none" to "a great deal":

1. courts
2. national government
3. political parties
4. the Parliament
5. the military
6. the police
7. local government



*Government legitimacy*: Average of Z-scores on four-point scale – “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”:

1. Our form of government is still the best for us
2. Generally trust people in government to do what is right
3. Government leaders are like heads of families, we should follow their decisions
4. The government should decide what is permissible to discuss

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**Table 2: Impacts of Socialization and Interactions with Government on Respondents' Support for Democracy**

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Equation 1</u>	<u>Equation 2</u>	<u>Equation 3</u>	<u>Equation 4</u>
<i>Constant</i>	-.493	-.126	-.073	-.864*
<i>Country Dummies<sup>±</sup></i>				
<b>Japan</b>	<b>.544*</b> (.164)	<b>.575*</b> (.160)	<b>.559*</b> (.151)	<b>.551*</b> (.146)
<b>Hong Kong</b>	<b>.117*</b> (.027)	<b>.138*</b> (.031)	<b>.165*</b> (.037)	<b>.018</b> (.004)
<b>Mainland China</b>	<b>.908*</b> (.358)	<b>.894*</b> (.364)	<b>.844*</b> (.344)	<b>.447*</b> (.169)
<b>Mongolia</b>	<b>.587*</b> (.182)	<b>.600*</b> (.186)	<b>.558*</b> (.173)	<b>.399*</b> (.126)
<b>Philippines</b>	<b>.104*</b> (.035)	<b>.082</b> (.028)	<b>.086</b> (.030)	<b>-.004</b> (-.001)
<b>Taiwan</b>	<b>-.133*</b> (-.041)	<b>-.132*</b> (-.042)	<b>-.140*</b> (-.045)	<b>-.077</b> (-.023)
<b>Thailand</b>	<b>1.293*</b> (.462)	<b>1.241*</b> (.449)	<b>1.177*</b> (.426)	<b>.996*</b> (.376)
<i>Demographic</i>				
<i>Social Measures</i>				
<b>Age group</b>		<b>.001</b> (.003)	<b>.0006</b> (.002)	<b>.001</b> (.003)
<b>Education</b>		<b>-.020*</b> (-.050)	<b>-.011</b> (-.028)	<b>-.004</b> (-.009)
<b>Household Income</b>		<b>-.024*</b> (-.035)	<b>-.009</b> (-.013)	<b>-.005</b> (-.008)
<b>Subjective Social Status</b>		<b>-.067*</b> (-.055)	<b>-.058*</b> (-.048)	<b>-.028</b> (-.023)
<b>Gender (male)</b>		<b>.063*</b> (.032)	<b>.051*</b> (.025)	<b>.042</b> (.021)
<i>Cultural Socialization</i>				
<b>Urban Residence</b>			<b>-.170*</b> (-.081)	<b>-.115*</b> (-.055)
<b>Traditionalism-Modernism</b>			<b>-.056*</b> (-.029)	<b>.013</b> (.007)
<b>Trust Others</b>			<b>.071*</b> (.065)	<b>.039*</b> (.035)
<i>Interactions with Government</i>				
<b>Rate Economy Today</b>				<b>.000</b> (.000)
<b>Change in Economy</b>				<b>.035*</b> (.042)
<b>Economy in Five Years</b>				<b>.065*</b>



**Table 3: Impacts of Socialization and Interactions with Government on Respondents' Support for Pluralist Characteristics of Democracy**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Equation 1</b>	<b>Equation 2</b>	<b>Equation 3</b>	<b>Equation 4</b>
<i>Constant</i>	.336	.040	.107	.228
<i>Country Dummies<sup>±</sup></i>				
<b>Japan</b>	<b>-.098*</b> (-.049)	<b>-.147*</b> (-.068)	<b>-.142*</b> (-.064)	<b>-.307*</b> (-.131)
<b>Hong Kong</b>	<b>-.217*</b> (-.089)	<b>-.215*</b> (-.088)	<b>-.213*</b> (-.086)	<b>-.222*</b> (-.076)
<b>Mainland China</b>	<b>-.446*</b> (-.279)	<b>-.445*</b> (-.291)	<b>-.437*</b> (-.287)	<b>-.298*</b> (-.169)
<b>Mongolia</b>	<b>-.603*</b> (-.316)	<b>-.621*</b> (-.327)	<b>-.469*</b> (-.248)	<b>-.362*</b> (-.188)
<b>Philippines</b>	<b>-.359*</b> (-.200)	<b>-.320*</b> (-.185)	<b>-.310*</b> (-.180)	<b>-.246*</b> (-.151)
<b>Taiwan</b>	<b>-.243*</b> (-.128)	<b>-.246*</b> (-.134)	<b>-.265*</b> (-.143)	<b>-.263*</b> (-.128)
<b>Thailand</b>	<b>-.561*</b> (-.345)	<b>-.495*</b> (-.310)	<b>-.435*</b> (-.273)	<b>-.392*</b> (-.249)
<i>Demographic</i>				
<i>Social Measures</i>				
<b>Age group</b>		<b>.000</b> (.004)	<b>.005</b> (.021)	<b>.007</b> (.028)
<b>Education</b>		<b>.024*</b> (.101)	<b>.014*</b> (.057)	<b>.008</b> (.032)
<b>Household Income</b>		<b>.030*</b> (.073)	<b>.017*</b> (.041)	<b>.005</b> (.012)
<b>Subjective Social Status</b>		<b>.014</b> (.020)	<b>.010</b> (.013)	<b>.001</b> (.002)
<b>Gender (male)</b>		<b>.027</b> (.023)	<b>.039*</b> (.033)	<b>.046*</b> (.037)
<i>Cultural Socialization</i>				
<b>Urban Residence</b>			<b>-.011</b> (-.009)	<b>-.026</b> (-.020)
<b>Traditionalism-Modernism</b>			<b>.289*</b> (.254)	<b>.181*</b> (.159)
<b>Trust Others</b>			<b>.015</b> (.023)	<b>.011</b> (.015)
<i>Interactions with Government</i>				
<b>Rate Economy Today</b>				<b>.000</b> (-.000)
<b>Change in Economy</b>				<b>.003</b> (.006)
<b>Economy in Five Years</b>				<b>-.010</b> (-.016)

<b>Personal Economy Today</b>	<b>.014</b>
	<b>(.019)</b>
<b>Change in Personal Economy</b>	<b>.007</b>
	<b>(.011)</b>
<b>Personal Economy in Five Years</b>	<b>-.009</b>
	<b>(-.014)</b>
<b>Perception of Corruption in Local Government</b>	<b>-.028*</b>
	<b>(-.037)</b>
<b>Personal Witness to Corruption</b>	<b>-.027</b>
	<b>(-.020)</b>
<b>Trust in Institutions</b>	<b>-.012</b>
	<b>(-.014)</b>
<b>Legitimacy of Government</b>	<b>.312*</b>
	<b>(.368)</b>
<b>Support for Democracy</b>	<b>.051*</b>
	<b>(.085)</b>

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**R-square=**                      **.121**    **.132**                      **.185**                      **.288**

**\* = p<.01**

**() = Standardized Regression Coefficients**

**+ = Korea omitted category**

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**Table 4: Impacts of Socialization and Interactions with Government on Respondents' Sense of Government Legitimacy**

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Equation 1</u>	<u>Equation 2</u>	<u>Equation 3</u>	<u>Equation 4</u>
<i>Constant</i>	-.280*	.085	.020	-.260*
<i>Country Dummies<sup>±</sup></i>				
<b>Japan</b>	<b>-.485*</b> (-.215)	<b>-.455*</b> (-.187)	<b>-.457*</b> (-.183)	<b>-.431*</b> (-.166)
<b>Hong Kong</b>	<b>.004</b> (.014)	<b>.017</b> (.006)	<b>.003</b> (.012)	<b>-.048</b> (-.015)
<b>Mainland China</b>	<b>.629*</b> (.384)	<b>.575*</b> (.368)	<b>.546*</b> (.352)	<b>.278*</b> (.160)
<b>Mongolia</b>	<b>.600*</b> (.247)	<b>.635*</b> (.268)	<b>.455*</b> (.194)	<b>.370*</b> (.163)
<b>Philippines</b>	<b>.343*</b> (.145)	<b>.303*</b> (.135)	<b>.303*</b> (.137)	<b>.228*</b> (.110)
<b>Taiwan</b>	<b>.034</b> (.015)	<b>.003</b> (.001)	<b>.017</b> (.008)	<b>.021</b> (.008)
<b>Thailand</b>	<b>.636*</b> (.298)	<b>.523*</b> (.255)	<b>.440*</b> (.216)	<b>.294*</b> (.152)
<i>Demographic</i>				
<i>Social Measures</i>				
<b>Age group</b>		<b>.014*</b> (.052)	<b>.009*</b> (.035)	<b>.011*</b> (.040)
<b>Education</b>		<b>-.039*</b> (-.143)	<b>-.020*</b> (-.073)	<b>-.012*</b> (-.043)
<b>Household Income</b>		<b>-.041*</b> (-.085)	<b>-.002*</b> (-.045)	<b>-.023*</b> (-.047)
<b>Subjective Social Status</b>		<b>-.030*</b> (-.037)	<b>-.022*</b> (-.027)	<b>-.009</b> (-.011)
<b>Gender (male)</b>		<b>.005</b> (.004)	<b>-.007</b> (-.005)	<b>-.009</b> (-.006)
<i>Cultural Socialization</i>				
<b>Urban Residence</b>			<b>-.065*</b> (-.045)	<b>-.047*</b> (-.032)
<b>Traditionalism-Modernism</b>			<b>-.361*</b> (-.259)	<b>-.318*</b> (-.232)
<b>Trust Others</b>			<b>.025*</b> (.033)	<b>-.005</b> (-.006)
<i>Interactions with Government</i>				
<b>Rate Economy Today</b>				<b>.029*</b> (.047)
<b>Change in Economy</b>				<b>-.003</b> (-.005)
<b>Economy in Five Years</b>				<b>.006</b> (.008)



<b>Personal Economy Today</b>	<b>-.001</b>
	<b>(-.001)</b>
<b>Change in Personal Economy</b>	<b>.002</b>
	<b>(.003)</b>
<b>Personal Economy in Five Years</b>	<b>.020</b>
	<b>(.026)</b>
<b>Perception of Corruption in Local Government</b>	<b>-.029*</b>
	<b>(-.033)</b>
<b>Personal Witness to Corruption</b>	<b>-.025*</b>
	<b>(-.016)</b>
<b>Trust in Government Institutions</b>	<b>.203*</b>
	<b>(.206)</b>

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<b>R-square=</b>	<b>.283</b>	<b>.304</b>	<b>.357</b>	<b>.375</b>
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\* = p<.01

() = Standardized Regression Coefficients

+ = Korea omitted category

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**Table 5: Impacts of Socialization and Interactions with Government on Respondents' Trust in Government Institutions**

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Equation 1</u>	<u>Equation 2</u>	<u>Equation 3</u>	<u>Equation 4</u>
<i>Constant</i>	-.519*	.0003	-.010	-1.307*
<i>Country Dummies</i> <sup>±</sup>				
<b>Japan</b>	<b>.110*</b> (.047)	<b>.110*</b> (.043)	<b>.107*</b> (.040)	<b>.180*</b> (.068)
<b>Hong Kong</b>	<b>.414*</b> (.138)	<b>.401*</b> (.132)	<b>.424*</b> (.138)	<b>.377*</b> (.116)
<b>Mainland China</b>	<b>1.258*</b> (.744)	<b>1.167*</b> (.709)	<b>1.127*</b> (.686)	<b>.870*</b> (.492)
<b>Mongolia</b>	<b>.321</b> (.127)	<b>.325*</b> (.129)	<b>.245*</b> (.098)	<b>.138*</b> (.059)
<b>Philippines</b>	<b>.243*</b> (.098)	<b>.190*</b> (.080)	<b>.220*</b> (.093)	<b>.121*</b> (.057)
<b>Taiwan</b>	<b>.158*</b> (.068)	<b>.126*</b> (.055)	<b>.130*</b> (.056)	<b>.195*</b> (.078)
<b>Thailand</b>	<b>.660*</b> (.295)	<b>.529*</b> (.242)	<b>.481*</b> (.221)	<b>.284*</b> (.144)
<i>Demographic</i>				
<i>Social Measures</i>				
<b>Age group</b>		<b>.001</b> (.003)	<b>-.002</b> (-.008)	<b>-.003</b> (-.011)
<b>Education</b>		<b>-.004*</b> (-.137)	<b>-.027*</b> (-.093)	<b>-.024*</b> (-.084)
<b>Household Income</b>		<b>-.030*</b> (-.059)	<b>-.001*</b> (-.027)	<b>-.022*</b> (-.043)
<b>Subjective Social Status</b>		<b>-.059*</b> (-.067)	<b>-.049*</b> (-.056)	<b>-.017</b> (-.019)
<b>Gender (male)</b>		<b>.025</b> (.017)	<b>-.013</b> (-.009)	<b>.020</b> (.014)
<i>Cultural Socialization</i>				
<b>Urban Residence</b>			<b>-.094*</b> (-.061)	<b>-.054*</b> (-.036)
<b>Traditionalism-Modernism</b>			<b>-.197*</b> (-.133)	<b>-.168*</b> (-.120)
<b>Trust Others</b>			<b>.084*</b> (.103)	<b>.058*</b> (.072)
<i>Interactions with Government</i>				
<b>Rate Economy Today</b>				<b>.064*</b> (.101)
<b>Change in Economy</b>				<b>.028*</b> (.047)
<b>Economy in Five Years</b>				<b>.089*</b> (.124)

<b>Personal Economy Today</b>	<b>.042*</b>
	<b>(.050)</b>
<b>Change in Personal Economy</b>	<b>-.013</b>
	<b>(-.018)</b>
<b>Personal Economy in Five Years</b>	<b>.034*</b>
	<b>(.042)</b>
<b>Perception of Corruption in Local Government</b>	<b>-.152*</b>
	<b>(-.167)</b>
<b>Personal Witness to Corruption</b>	<b>-.057*</b>
	<b>(-.035)</b>

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<b>R-square=</b>	<b>.408</b>	<b>.436</b>	<b>.462</b>	<b>.499</b>
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\* =  $p < .01$

() = Standardized Regression Coefficients

+ = Korea omitted category

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# Asian Barometer

## A Comparative Survey of Democracy, Governance and Development

The Asian Barometer Survey (ABS) grows out of the Comparative Survey of Democratization and Value Change in East Asia Project (also known as East Asia Barometer), which was launched in mid-2000 and funded by the Ministry of Education of Taiwan under the MOE-NSC Program for Promoting Academic Excellence of University. The headquarters of ABS is based in Taipei, and is jointly sponsored by the Department of Political Science at NTU and the Institute of Political Science of Academia Sinica. The East Asian component of the project is coordinated by Prof. Yun-han Chu, who also serves as the overall coordinator of the Asian Barometer. In organizing its first-wave survey (2001-2003), the East Asia Barometer (EABS) brought together eight country teams and more than thirty leading scholars from across the region and the United States. Since its founding, the EABS Project has been increasingly recognized as the region's first systematic and most careful comparative survey of attitudes and orientations toward political regime, democracy, governance, and economic reform.

In July 2001, the EABS joined with three partner projects -- New Europe Barometer, Latinobarometro and Afrobarometer -- in a path-breathing effort to launch Global Barometer Survey (GBS), a global consortium of comparative surveys across emerging democracies and transitional societies.

The EABS is now becoming a true pan-Asian survey research initiative. New collaborative teams from Indonesia, Singapore, Cambodia, and Vietnam are joining the EABS as the project enters its second phase (2004-2008). Also, the State of Democracy in South Asia Project, based at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (in New Delhi) and directed by Yogendra Yadav, is collaborating with the EABS for the creation of a more inclusive regional survey network under the new identity of the Asian Barometer Survey. This path-breaking regional initiative builds upon a substantial base of completed scholarly work in a number of Asian countries. Most of the participating national teams were established more than a decade ago, have acquired abundant experience and methodological know-how in administering nationwide surveys on citizen's political attitudes and behaviors, and have published a substantial number of works both in their native languages and in English.

*For more information, please visit our website: [www.asianbarometer.org](http://www.asianbarometer.org)*