



A Comparative Survey of

DEMOCRACY, GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

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The Stagnated Development of Liberal
Democratic Values

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The Stagnated Development of Liberal Democratic Values

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Introduction

For new democracies, Liberal democratic values (LDV) are critical for the process of democratic consolidation (Linz and Stepan, 1996). LDV incorporate the basic principles of democratic governance, in other words, they tell us by what principles people believe a democracy should be run (Thomassen, 2007). This chapter will focus on why the growth of LDV in East Asia has stagnated, and in some countries even reversed by comparing key findings from the ABS three Waves with relevant data from 13 countries. Our measure of LDV is a seven-item battery. None of the items in this battery mentions the “d” word (democracy). Instead, they tap into respondents’ value orientations toward four fundamental organizing principles of liberal democracy: popular accountability, political liberalism, political pluralism, and separation of power. Indicators designed around these core LDV measure respondents’ support for specific values without assuming that they have the same cognitive understanding about the meaning of the word “democracy” (Schedler and Sarsfield, 2007).

The chapter looks at all seven measures and compares them to find out where and how attitudes are consistent and where they are not by employing the four-level classification of regime types defined earlier. We then focus on LDV, to explore how it works as a dependent variable. LDV is in turn influenced by institutional change

as well as by processes of modernization and by citizens' political participation.

Incomplete Democracy

Before we present some empirical data comparing East Asia countries, we need to familiarize our readers with the region's geo-political setting in which East Asian young democracies have found them. First, over the last three decades the region has in a significant way defied the global trend of concurrent movement toward democracy. The bulk of the region has been and still is governed by various forms of authoritarian and semi-democratic regimes. In 2013, measured by standards of political rights and civil liberties developed by Freedom House, among the eighteen sovereign states and autonomous territories in the region, only five are ranked "free". Among the five, only four (South Korea, Taiwan, Mongolia and Indonesia) became democratized within the time span typically referred to as the third wave. Two other East Asian third-wave democracies, Thailand and the Philippines, have suffered serious backsliding and were downgraded by Freedom House to "partially free". This means that while the region had defied the global trend of third-wave democratization but it is not immune from the worrisome and more recent trend of global democratic recession.

Furthermore, with the shift of the center of regional economic gravity from Japan to China, East Asia has become one of the few regions in the world where characteristics of political system pose no barrier to trade and investment (or even migration) and perhaps the only region in the world where newly democratized countries become economically integrated with and dependent on non-democratic countries.

Next, few of the region's former authoritarian regimes were thoroughly discredited. In people's recent memory, the old regimes had delivered social stability

and miraculous economic growth and were seemingly less susceptible to money politics. Also during the authoritarian years, most of East Asia's emerging democracies had experienced limited pluralism, allowing some forms of electoral contestation as well as the existence of an opposition. As a result, citizens in many East Asian new democracies did not experience as dramatic an increase in the area of political rights and freedom during the transition as did citizens in many other third-wave democracies.

In terms of regime performance, many of East Asia's new democracies have been struggling with overwhelming governance challenges -- political strife, bureaucratic paralysis, recurring political scandals, financial crises and sluggish economic growth. At the same time, the region's more resilient authoritarian and semi-authoritarian regimes, such as Singapore, Malaysia, China and Vietnam, are seemingly capable of coping with complex economies, diverse interests, economic globalization and more recently financial crises. These historical and contemporary benchmarks tend to generate unreasonably high expectations for the performance of democratic regimes.

Last but not least, the region's traditional culture, according to some cultural relativists such as Lucian Pye and Samuel Huntington, might pose obstacle to the acquisition of democratic values. The so-called "Asian values", which privilege group interests over individual interests, political authority over individual freedom, and social responsibility over individual rights, is sharply different from Western civilization and intrinsically incompatible with the organizing principles of liberal democracy (Pye 1985; Huntington 1996).

In a nutshell, while many East Asian democracies are endowed with some favorable socio-economic conditions -- such as a sizable middle class, well-educated population and highly internationalized economy -- that are in principle conducive to

the growth of democratic legitimacy, the region's overall geo-political configuration, political history and culture could put a strong drag on the development of a robust democratic culture.

Measuring LDV

Mishler and Pollack borrow Wildavsky's concept of cultural hierarchy to produce a framework for researching political culture. They argue that the study of political culture can be classified into three different types. The first belongs to the tradition of anthropology, and involves the study of thick culture. This approach is based on the fundamental orientations of political culture, and study various identity issues, including national identity, religious identity, ethnic identity, party identity, and ideological identity. A different approach from the psychological tradition is thin culture. This approach is based on social and political attitudes, including interpersonal trust, trust in the political system, and evaluation of government performance. The final type is somewhere between the preceding two approaches, and focused on value systems, including collectivism vs. individualism, democratic values vs. authoritarianism, and social order vs. individual freedom. Mishler and Pollack stress that these three approaches to research on political culture lie on a continuous scale, and there is no incommensurability between the three levels (Mishler and Pollack, 2003).

How do we measure LDV? Mishler and Rose (2005) identify three approaches: popular support for democracy, popular evaluation of democratic performance, and popular democratic ideals and beliefs. One of the important methodological innovations that the ABS brings to the field is the inclusion of a LDV scale. A seven-item scale was designed to probe further into the substance and depth of

popular commitment to democracy. They tap into respondents' value orientations toward fundamental organizing principles of liberal democracy, i.e., political equality, popular accountability, political liberalism, political pluralism, and separation of power. It is also an indirect measure of democratic legitimacy, which is superior to direct measure for many reasons (Schedler and Sarsfield, 2007). Unlike direct measure which calculates expressed support for democracy (SD) without asking what the citizen thinks democracy is, the indirect measure looks at the substance of political beliefs held by citizens as a way of assessing support for democracy.

Originally, the scale consists of the following eight items: For popular accountability we asked, "Government leaders are like the head of a family; we should all follow their decisions," and "If we have political leaders who are morally upright, we can let them decide everything.. For freedom, we asked "The government should decide whether certain ideas should be allowed to be discussed in society." For pluralism, we asked, "Harmony of the community will be disrupted if people organize lots of groups," and "If people have too many different ways of thinking, society will be chaotic." For horizontal accountability, we asked "when judges decide important cases, they should accept the view of the executive branch, and "If the government is constantly checked [i.e. monitored and supervised] by the legislature, it cannot possibly accomplish great things." Approval to the first item and disapproval to the last six items are taken as liberal democratic orientation. However, in most countries an overwhelming majority of citizenry accepted the principle of "political equality" and thus the first item has yielded a very lop-sided distribution and with very small variance. Based on the findings of confirmatory factor analysis, we decided to drop the first item in constructing a single-dimension LDV scale.

The batteries for measuring LDV orientation have been consistently applied in three ABS, yielding a longitudinal database for the first time. In the following section,

we undertake a systematic assessment of the extent of normative commitment to democracy among the citizens in thirteen East Asian countries and territories by using data made available by the Asian Barometer Survey (ABS) three Wave from 2001 to 2012.

The stagnated development of LDV in East Asia

We divide the thirteen East Asian countries and territories into different regime types. The first category is liberal democracy, and includes Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. The second category is electoral democracy, and includes Mongolia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand. The third category is electoral authoritarianism, and includes Malaysia, Singapore, and Hong Kong. The final category is one-party authoritarianism, and includes Cambodia, Vietnam, and mainland China.

As Table 1 shows, there are significant differences both between regime type and individual country. First, in the three liberal democracies, an average of around 50% of citizens support LDV. This is the highest rate for the four regime types, and is also showing an upward trend. In addition, the scores for Japan were somewhat higher than for South Korea, while the lowest scores in the three liberal democracies were found in Taiwan. Looking at the seven different measures of LDV, Japan scored higher on vertical accountability and political liberalism, and lower on political pluralism. However, in South Korea, separation of power registered the highest score, while the score for popular accountability was lower than expected, revealing a tendency to support the “moral state” (letting capable people lead the country). Finally, Taiwan showed a similar pattern to Japan, scoring higher on vertical accountability and political liberalism, and lower on political pluralism.

In the four electoral democracies, only 30-40% of citizens gave positive answers to items on LDV. Although this was the third highest of the four regime types, positive evaluations have stagnated and in some cases declined slightly. The highest levels of positive evaluation were found in Indonesia, followed by the Philippines, Thailand, and finally Mongolia. Of the seven LDV indicators, Mongolia showed high levels of support for separation of power, and relatively low levels of support on political liberalism. Indonesia also showed high levels of support for separation of power, but relatively low levels of support for vertical accountability. The Philippines showed high levels of support for vertical accountability, but relatively low levels of support for separation of power. Thailand scored highly on separation of power, but posted relatively low scores on political liberalism and political pluralism.

In the three electoral authoritarian regimes, the proportion of citizens adhering to LDV was between 30-50%, the second highest level of the four regime types. However, scores on these indicators have shown significant change, with many indicators showing regression, particularly in Hong Kong. Of the seven LDV indicators, Malaysia showed high levels of support for separation of power, and relatively low levels of support on political liberalism and political pluralism. Singapore showed a similar pattern, with relatively high levels of adherence to separation of power, and much lower adherence to political liberalism. In Hong Kong, we find very significant regression on all indicators.

In the three one-party authoritarian regimes, an average of 20-30% of citizens has positive attitudes to LDV, the lowest of the four regime types. The highest scores were found in mainland China, followed by Cambodia and finally Vietnam. LDV indicators have remained steady or even increased marginally, especially in mainland China.

[Table 1 about here]

From the above analysis, it is clear that the development of LDV is closely related to regime type and economic development. Therefore, in the following section, we further analyze the relationship between political and economic development, as well as age, level of education, and income, and LDV.

Economic Development, Regime Type and LDV

How do we explain changes in LDV in East Asian societies? This is a very challenging problem.¹ Many scholars explain cultural change from the perspective of either structural economic changes or institutional change. The former recognizes the importance of economic development, and especially the modernization process, in the promotion of universal education. Beginning in the 1960s, a large number of studies revealed the effect of education on political knowledge, as well as political attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Higher levels of education enable citizens to come into contact with more information, increasing their understanding of politics. Enhanced political knowledge and ability to reason ultimately has a transformative effect on political views (Mayer, 2011; Henderson and Chatfield, 2011). Therefore, people with higher levels of education are expected to put greater emphasis on individual rights and responsibilities, and show greater acceptance of liberal democracy. At the same time, more educated people show greater political tolerance and have access to a greater range of political knowledge, enhancing the development of LDV (Gibson, 2003; Kuenzi, 2005; Rowen, 2007).

¹Culturalists view culture as a continuous process of socialization, creating certain collective beliefs and values and providing the basis for norms governing political behavior (Eckstein, 1988: 1203).

Modernization theory also emphasizes the importance of age. According to the cohort effect or generation replacement theory, values can change between generations. Generational difference theory argues that people who grew up in the same social, political, or economic context will have different value systems to those who grew up in a different context. This is the result of a socialization process, and is most apparent in young adults. Moreover, once a belief or value system has been formed, it is not easy to change. Therefore, belief or value systems are transformed as the older generation gradually disappears and the value systems of the new generation take the place of those of the older generation. For example, Inglehart studies the effect of generational difference on changes in democratic legitimacy. He believes that value systems in advanced countries have moved from a previous emphasis on materialism to a new focus on post-material values centered on quality of life concerns. Inglehart uses data from the Eurobarometer and World Values Survey to demonstrate greater post-materialist tendencies among the younger generation, as well as greater pro-democracy inclinations (Inglehart, 1971, 1990, 1997).

On the other hand, institutional theory argues that institutional change can cause a series of changes in political behavior, attitudes, and culture (Jackman and Miller, 1996a; 1996b). Democratization creates new political opportunity structures and new channels for participation, leading to changes in political values. Elites will adjust their strategies in response to new institutional and social structures, which ultimately leads to changes in the mass political culture, producing a process of self-adjustment (Rustow, 1970: 344-5; Przeworski, 1986: 50-3; Di Palma, 1990: 144-52). Curtis (1998: 222) has noted that in traditional East Asian societies, democratic culture was very weak. Nonetheless, the promotion of democratization in East Asia has produced a stable democratic culture in some countries. Plattner (1999: 130-3) believes that democracy is an extension of liberal thought. Although, the liberal tradition of many

of third wave democracies is very weak, following democratization, liberalism has gradually taken root, while anti-liberal cultural traditions have slowly faded.

For in-depth statistical analysis, this paper assesses the internal consistency of democratic values. For the seven LDV indicators, a positive orientation is coded as 1, other responses are coded as 0. We then add the scores together to produce to produce an 8-point scale ordinal variable (ranging from 0 to 7).

Figure 1-1, 1-2 and 1-3 show the relationship between economic development and LDV. The three waves of the ABS show a clear positive correlation between economic development and LDV. That is, the higher the degree of economic development of the country, the greater the level of LDV. However, it is interesting to note that the correlation coefficient between economic development and LDV is declining. The correlation coefficient has fallen from .76 to 0.70, and finally to .63. Will the future political development of East Asia continue to be an example of modernization theory? This is a very important question.

[Fig. 1-1, 1-2 and 1-3 about here]

Figure 2-1, 2-2 and 2-3 show the relationship between democratic development and LDV. To measure democratic development, this paper uses Freedom House indicators. We find a high positive correlation between the level of democratic development and LDV. That is, the higher the degree of democratic development of the country, the greater the level of LDV. However, it is interesting to note that the correlation coefficient between democratic development and LDV is increasing. The correlation coefficient has increased from .63 to .66 and finally .79, showing an almost perfect linear relationship. From the above statistical description, we found that in the more democratic countries in East Asia, LDV are gradually increasing,

while in other countries they are stagnating or even in decline. This may be a warning sign for East Asia's future political development.

[Fig. 2-1, 2-2 and 2-3 about here]

At the individual level, Figure 2-1, 2-2 and 2-3 show that intergenerational differences are not present in all East Asian countries. Intergenerational differences in LDV are most apparent in Hong Kong, followed by Taiwan, South Korea and mainland China. In other East Asian countries, there are no obvious differences between generations.

[Fig. 3-1, 3-2 and 3-3 about here]

Figure 3-1, 3-2 and 3-3 show that the level of education has a significant effect on LDV in a majority of the surveyed countries, especially Hong Kong, Taiwan, mainland China, Japan, and Indonesia. However, in other countries, the effect of education on LDV is not large.

[Fig. 3-1, 3-2 and 3-3 about here]

Figure 4-1, 4-2 and 4-3 show that income levels have a significant effect on LDV in a majority of the surveyed countries, including Hong Kong, Taiwan, mainland China, Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia. However, when compared to the Southeast Asian countries, the effect of income in Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea is less obvious. Furthermore, Vietnam and Mongolia are exceptions to the general pattern.

[Fig. 4-1, 4-2 and 4-3 about here]

Conclusion

Eckstein (1988) identifies three types of cultural change. The first is pattern-maintaining change, whereby cultural systems adjust to the changed environment following major structural and institutional transition. This type of adjustment allows a continuation of the original cultural model. The second is cultural flexibility, by which originally rigid cultural rules become more flexible in order to adapt to major environmental change. The third is cultural discontinuity, which occurs when environmental change is too large for pattern-maintaining change or cultural flexibility. In this case, a process of resocialization occurs, leading to the formation of a new cultural system. Change in LDV in East Asian countries has primarily taken the form of pattern-maintaining change, retaining compatibility with the traditional values of East Asian society; for instance, equal rights, and popular sovereignty are generally more acceptable in this cultural context. However, individuals are less willing to internalize concepts that conflict with traditional cultural values, such as the political pluralism, and balance of power. This is because human value systems are multi-layered; deeply held values are more stable and difficult to change, while more superficially-held values may be influenced by individual experiences and environmental changes. Girvin's (1989: 34-6) analysis shows that when political culture or value systems face unavoidable pressure for change, they adapt by first changing micro-level culture, before changing meso-level culture. Macro-level culture formed through group values and symbols is less likely to be challenged by society

and therefore has a high degree of continuity.

In addition, beginning in the 1980s, researchers working on political socialization began to focus on the effect of contextual factors(modernization) and institutional change on political socialization (Jennings, 2007) . In particular, at the end of the 1980s countries in the former Soviet bloc began undergoing rapid changes, attracting attention from scholars interested in how institutional change can bring about a shift in political culture (McFaul and Stoner-Weiss, 2004). Modernization and institutional change led to a shift in political culture as a result of the new political structures and channels for participation arising from the democratic transition. Overall, we find that institutional theory is able to explain the development of LDV better than modernization theory. However, individual level of education and income, which are closely related to economic development, also have a strong effect on LDV.

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Table 1 Liberal Democracy Values in East Asia: Percentage Analysis

(Percent of respondents)	Liberal Democracy			Electoral Democracy						Electoral Authoritarianism				One-party Authoritarianism																				
	JP	KR	TW	MN	ID	PH	TH	MY	SG	HK	KH	VN	CN ^a																					
	2002	2007	2011	2001	2006	2011	2001	2006	2010	2002	2006	2010	2008	2011	2006	2010	2001	2007	2012	2007	2012	2007	2010	2002	2008	2011								
Government leaders are like the head of a family; we should all follow their decisions	77.2	70.1	83.0	52.9	60.5	59.7	60.3	71.1	75.4	33.6	26.3	41.9	22.8	23.9	47.5	43.9	59.7	41.5	39.8	51.8	34.6	30.2	41.6	39.4	62.6	62.8	54.8	29.9	29.3	19.0	28.2	34.2	13.8	31.0
The government should decide whether certain ideas should be allowed to be discussed in society	55.6	72.2	81.3	60.1	58.5	55.8	60.2	71.5	72.2	22.3	14.5	22.3	46.4	36.5	39.7	40.5	45.9	46.9	44.3	27.8	26.1	27.4	25.6	35.4	58.9	50.4	49.4	8.1	15.3	9.8	7.1	26.0	25.8	37.7
Harmony of the community will be disrupted if people organize lots of groups	34.0	44.9	54.4	64.7	54.5	59.0	34.0	37.3	43.5	30.7	16.2	26.9	50.6	39.9	46.2	41.9	43.4	16.1	12.6	33.2	27.6	24.9	47.3	37.3	46.7	43.9	36.6	46.9	44.9	44.2	20.4	18.8	16.3	25.6
When judges decide important cases, they should accept the view of the executive branch	62.2	60.5	72.1	69.0	72.2	67.1	53.7	56.9	60.2	71.0	42.8	55.3	55.6	42.7	38.7	32.1	31.7	40.1	27.8	60.5	40.3	44.3	49.1	36.2	46.7	52.7	46.1	27.5	31.7	20.2	18.6	30.9	30.3	36.9

If the government is constantly checked by the legislature, it cannot possibly accomplish great things	50.2	54.0	57.9	53.8	57.3	62.3	24.7	34.2	38.8	38.8	36.1	43.7	55.9	48.3	49.9	43.7	34.3	47.4	38.3	49.7	40.7	45.3	45.9	50.5	46.8	43.2	34.1	33.6	46.7	52.1	33.8	34.2	21.0	31.6
If we have political leaders who are morally upright, we can let them decide everything	59.2	56.4	56.1	37.2	34.2	40.7	57.2	63.1	73.8	29.7	17.7	23.4	52.2	49.0	46.9	40.1	41.6	25.0	26.3	21.6	47.8	55.4	40.8	37.5	54.1	57.1	53.5	4.1	13.0	30.5	24.2	41.8	44.5	50.5
If people have too many different ways of thinking, society will be chaotic.	36.8	40.8	42.0	52.8	51.8	56.8	23.5	30.5	32.6	19.3	23.2	34.1	41.8	39.0	43.4	36.2	30.8	23.5	17.9	21.6	26.7	29.2	31.7	40.0	42.0	36.3	26.9	35.9	33.4	44.9	25.4	30.8	26.4	39.0
Average percent LDV	53.6	57.0	63.8	55.8	55.6	57.3	44.8	52.1	56.6	35.1	25.3	35.4	46.5	39.9	44.6	39.8	41.1	34.4	29.6	38.0	34.8	36.7	40.3	39.5	51.1	49.5	43.1	26.6	30.6	31.5	22.5	31.0	25.4	36.0
Disagree all of above ^b	11.2	13.3	15.8	6.7	9.1	11.6	4.0	0.7	10.0	1.0	0.4	1.1	2.9	3.2	7.2	2.9	1.8	1.6	1.4	0.7	1.7	1.7	3.7	4.3	14.6	10.2	8.7	0.1	1.3	0.8	0.3	1.2	0.5	4.2
Disagree none of above ^c	0.9	1.8	1.1	1.9	2.7	3.2	1.4	0.3	1.8	9.6	15.3	10.0	3.5	7.8	10.7	8.4	9.4	14.3	11.5	5.0	11.7	10.4	10.3	16.6	5.4	5.1	6.2	6.2	15.3	6.0	5.1	5.0	6.6	10.0

Note: ^a .CN:CHINA; HK:HONG KONG; TW:TAIWAN; KR:KOREA; MN:MONGOLIA; TH:THAILAND; PH:PHILIPPINES; JP:JAPAN; ID: INDONESIA; SG: SINGAPORE; VN: VIETNAM; KH: CAMBODIA; MY:MALAYSIA.

^b all items are the positive values.

^c all items are the negative values.

Sources: Asian Barometer Survey, Wave I, I and III.

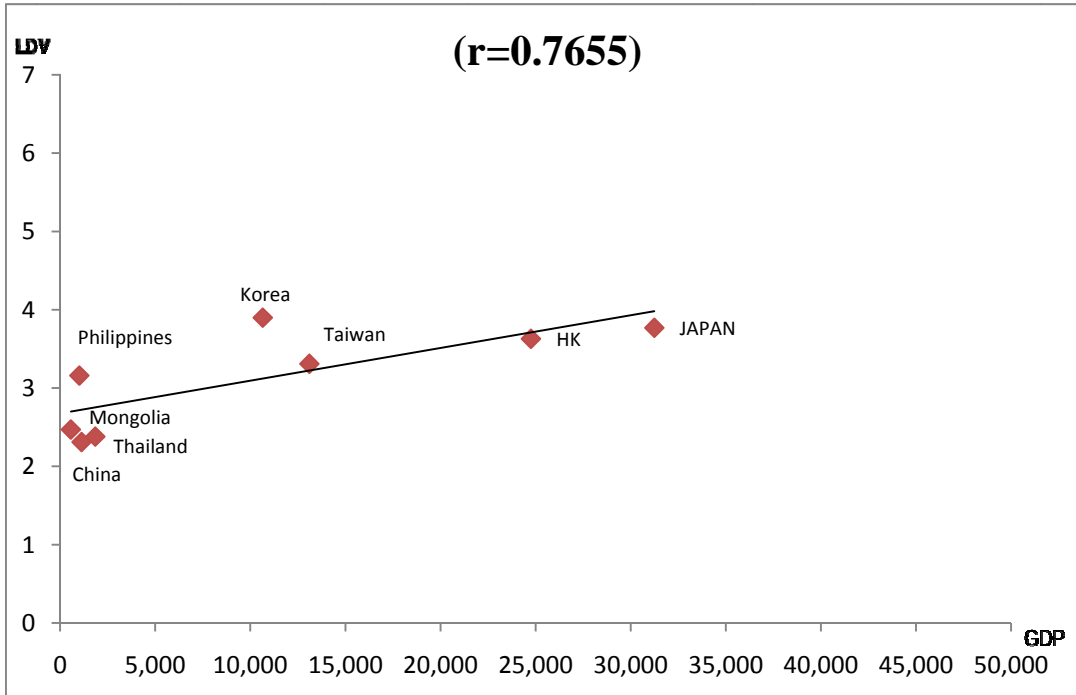


Figure 1-1 GDP and Liberal Democracy Values

Sources: Asian Barometer Survey, Wave I.

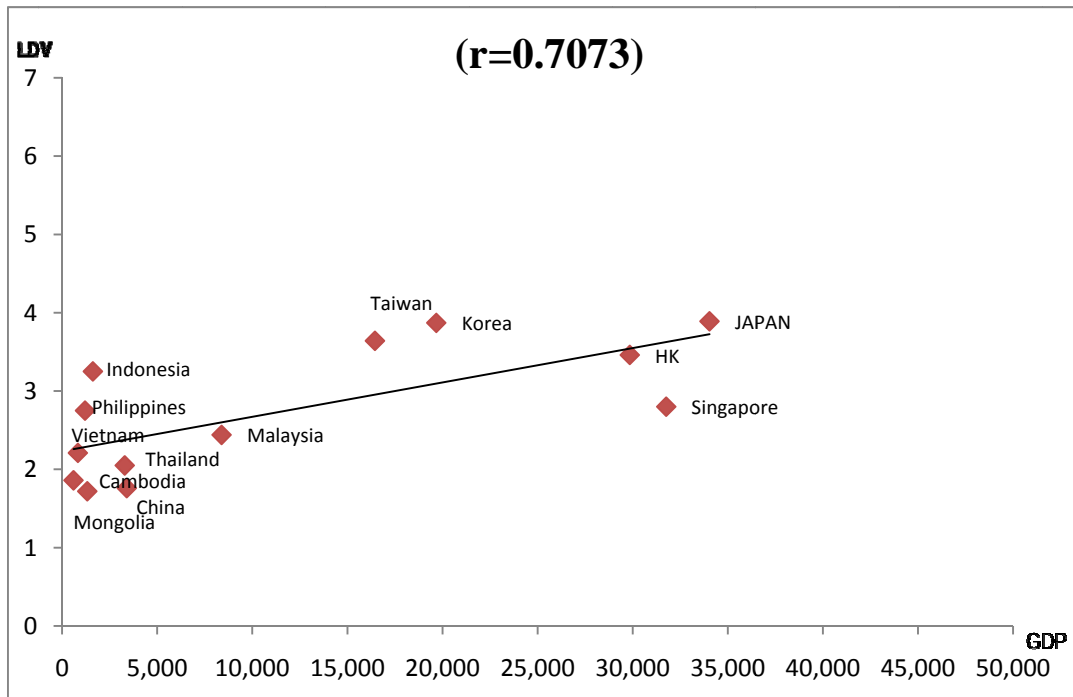


Figure 1-2 GDP and Liberal Democracy Values

Sources: Asian Barometer Survey, Wave II.

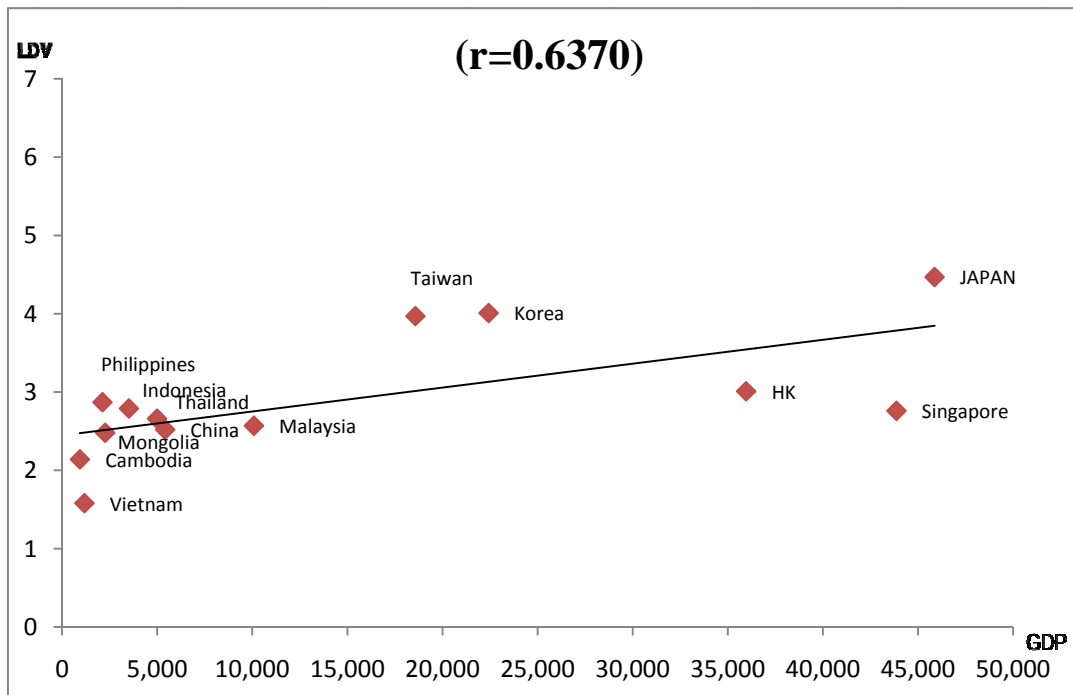


Figure 1-3 GDP and Liberal Democracy Values

Sources: Asian Barometer Survey, Wave III.

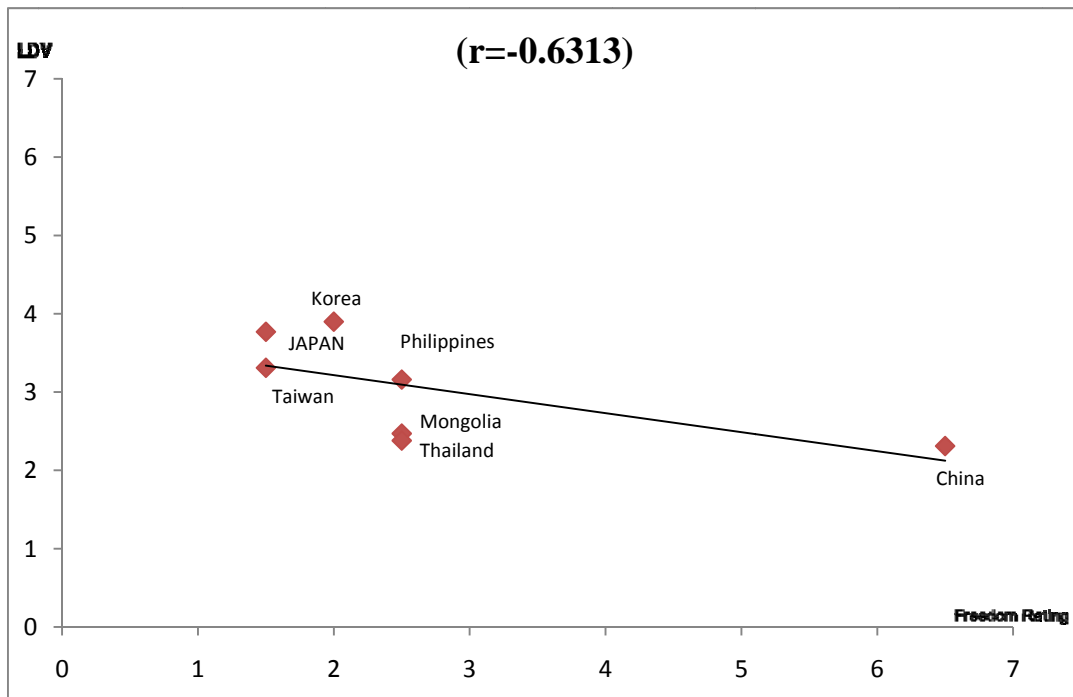


Figure 2-1 Freedom Rating and Liberal Democracy Values

Sources: Asian Barometer Survey, Wave I.

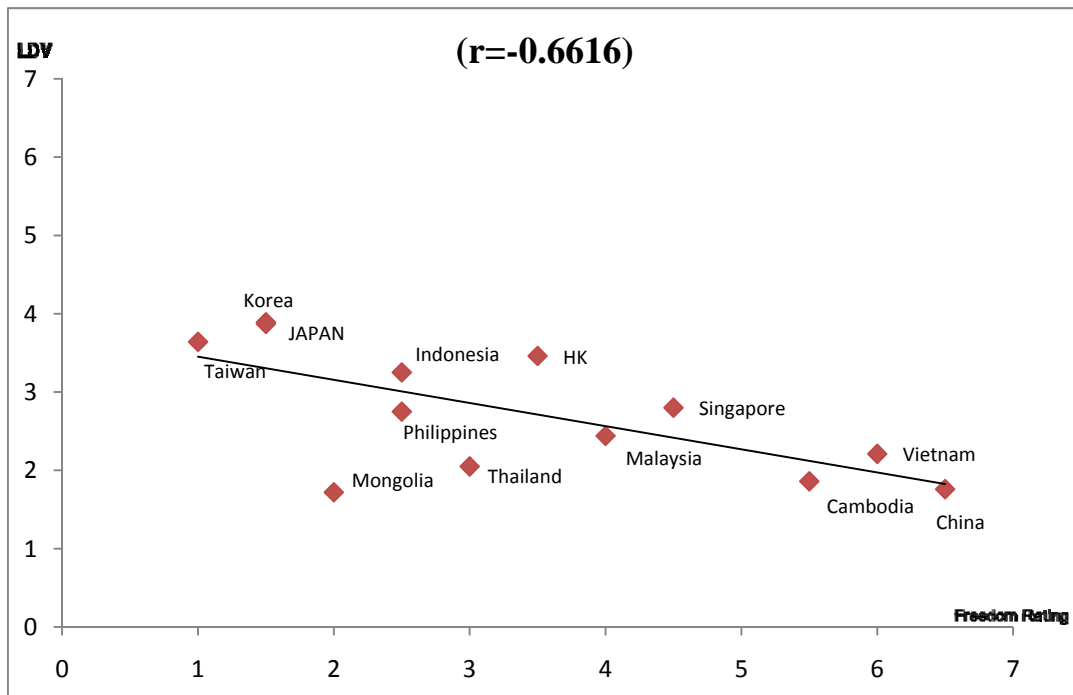


Figure 2-2 Freedom Rating and Liberal Democracy Values

Sources: Asian Barometer Survey, Wave II.

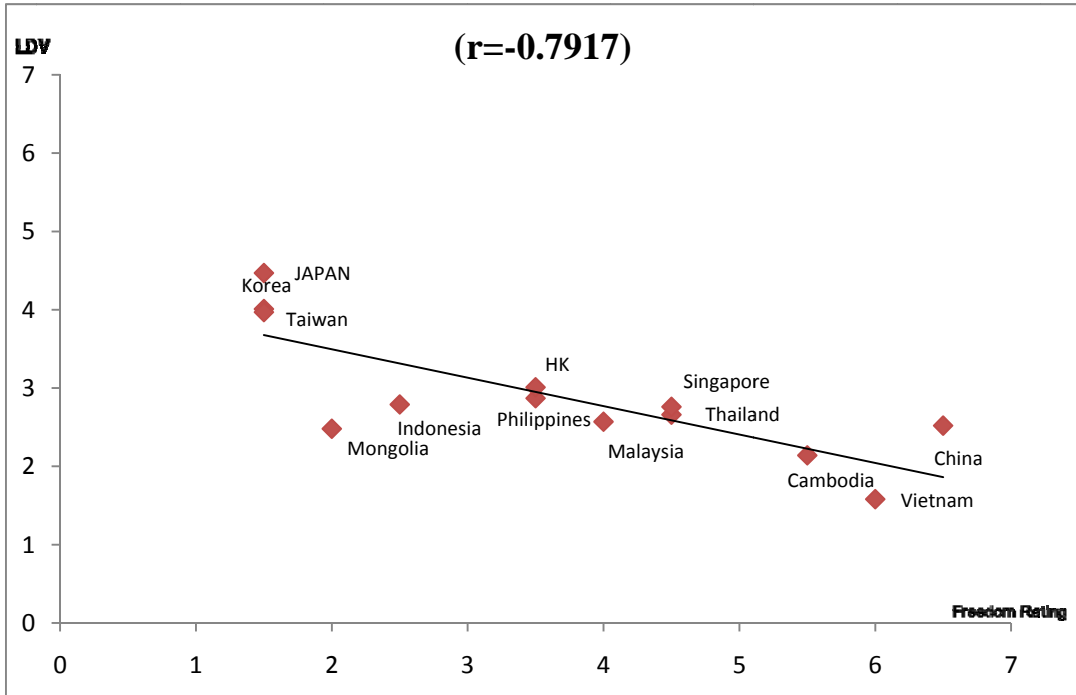


Figure 2-3 Freedom Rating and Liberal Democracy Values

Sources: Asian Barometer Survey, Wave III.

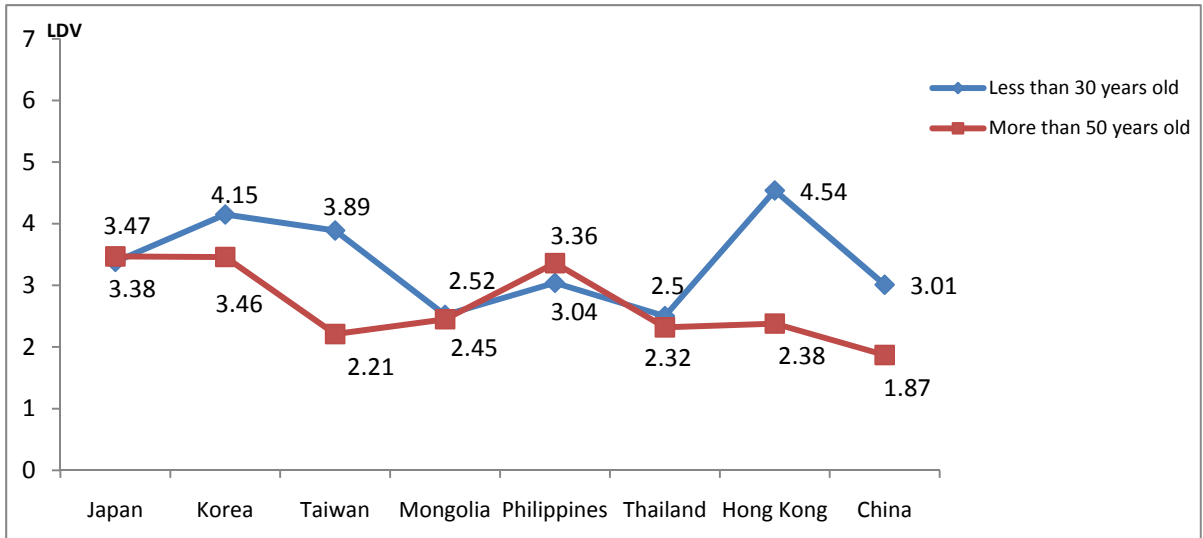


Figure 3-1 Age and Liberal Democratic Value

Sources: Asian Barometer Survey, Wave I.

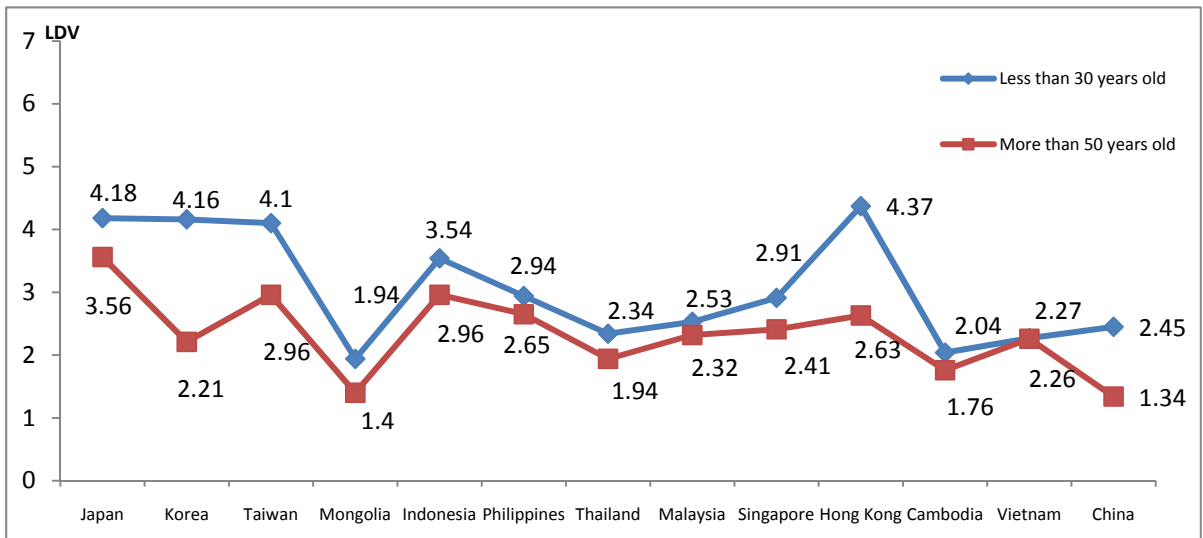


Figure 3-2 Age and Liberal Democratic Value

Sources: Asian Barometer Survey, Wave II.

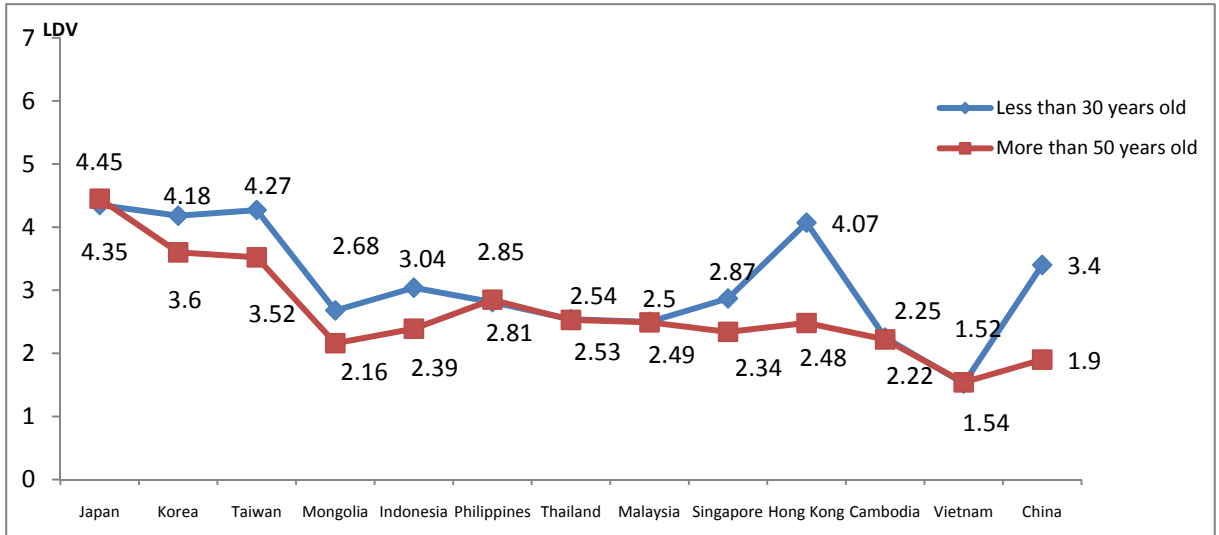


Figure 3-3 Age and Liberal Democratic Value

Sources: Asian Barometer Survey, Wave III.

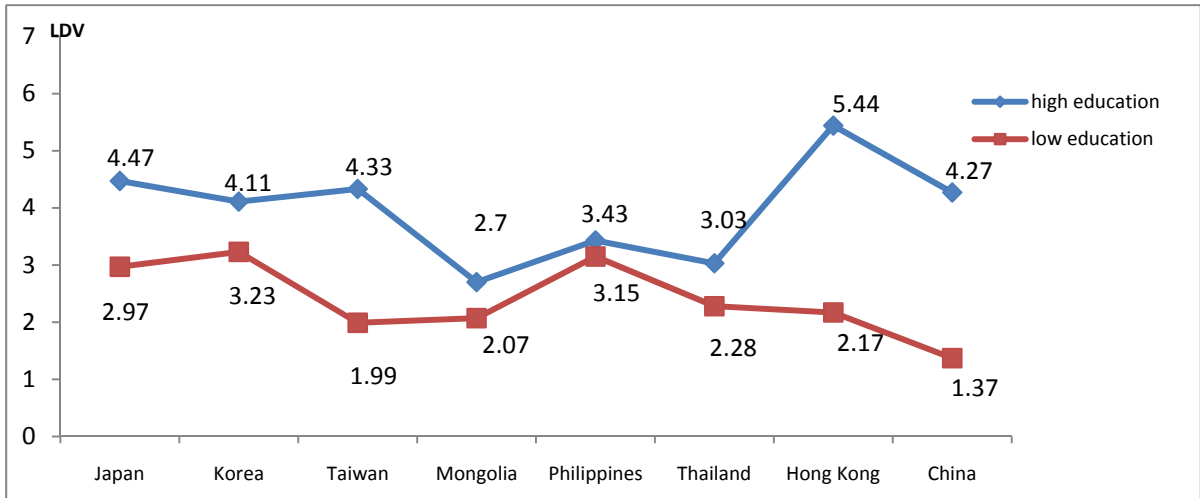


Figure 4-1 Education and Liberal Democratic Value

Sources: Asian Barometer Survey, Wave I.

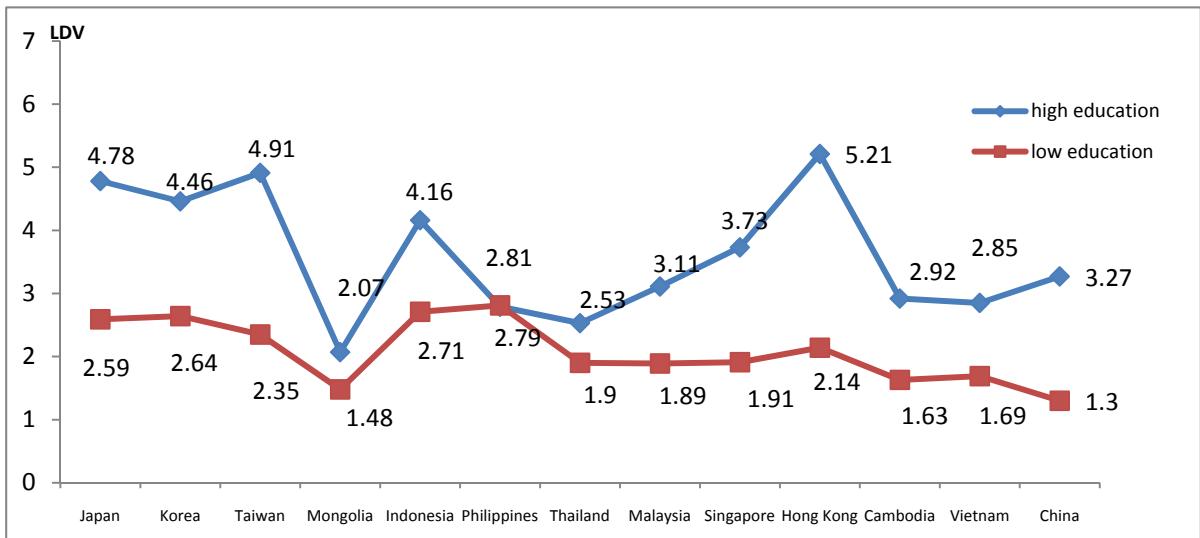


Figure 4-2 Education and Liberal Democratic Value

Sources: Asian Barometer Survey, Wave II.

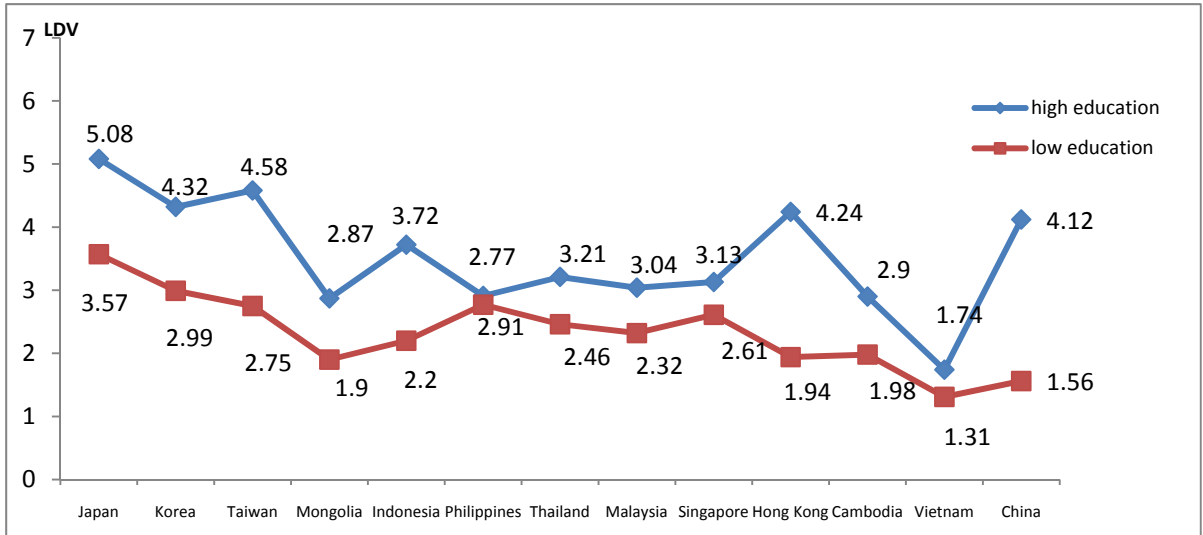


Figure 4-3 Education and Liberal Democratic Value

Sources: Asian Barometer Survey, Wave III.

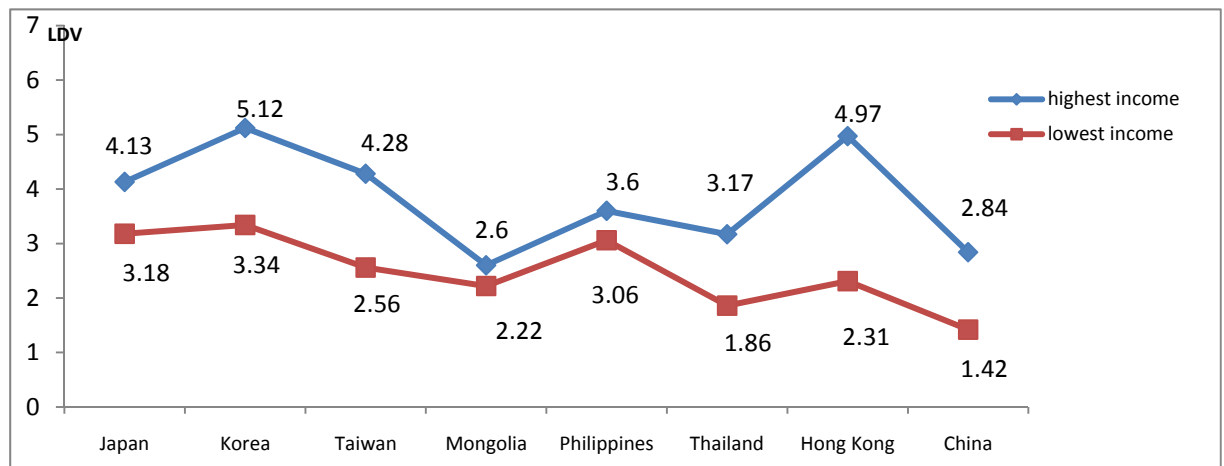


Figure 5-1 Income and Liberal Democratic Value

Sources: Asian Barometer Survey, Wave I.

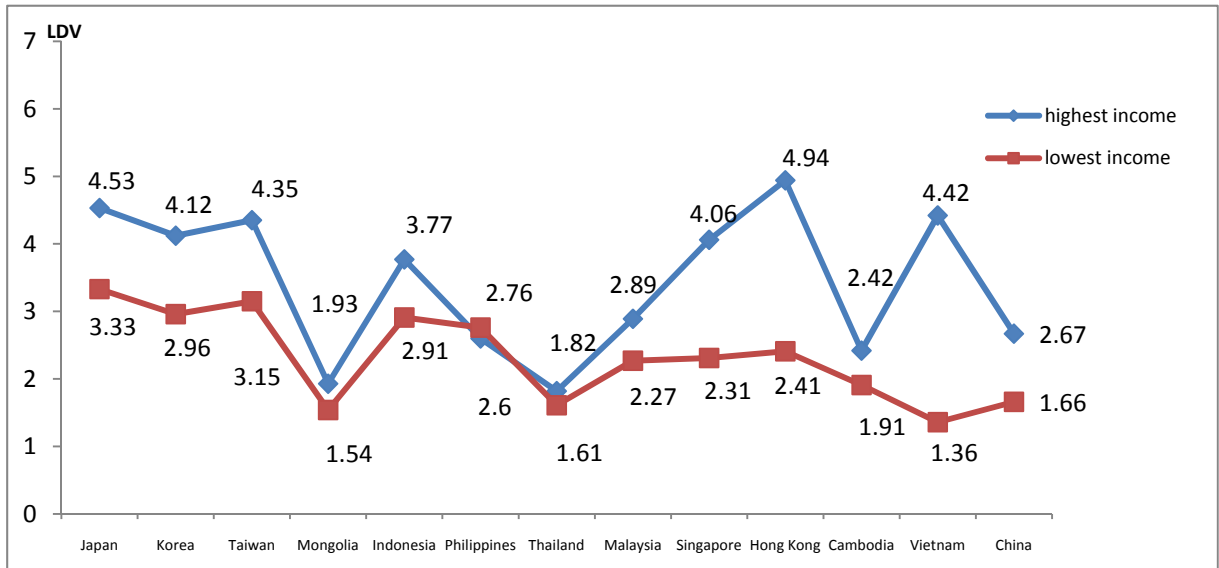


Figure 5-2 Income and Liberal Democratic Value

Sources: Asian Barometer Survey, Wave II.

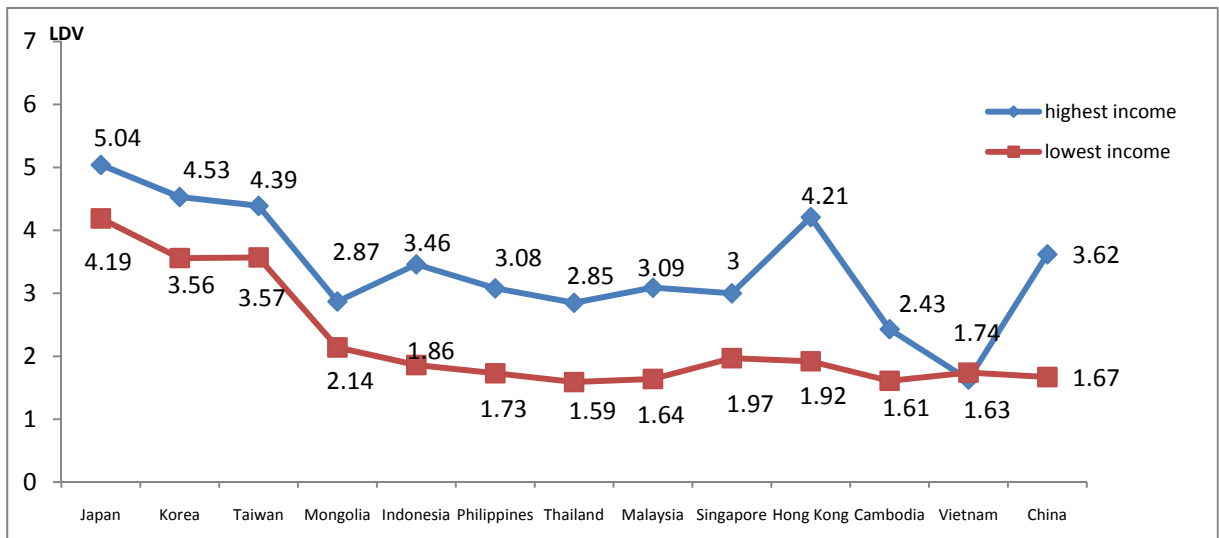


Figure 5-3 Income and Liberal Democratic Value

Sources: Asian Barometer Survey, Wave III.