

**AUTHORITY ORIENTATIONS AND DEMOCRATIC ATTITUDES IN EAST ASIA:
A TEST OF THE "ASIAN VALUES" HYPOTHESIS**

**RUSSELL J. DALTON
AND
NHU-NGOC T. ONG**

Center for the Study of Democracy
3151 Social Science Plaza
University of California
Irvine, CA 92697-5100

September 2003

A previous version of this paper was presented at the 2003 annual meetings of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL and at the conference "How People View Democracy: Public Opinion in New Democracies," at the Center for Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law, Stanford University. The first author would like to thank the POSCO Fellowship program at the East-West Center in Hawaii for their support of this project, especially Dr. Choong Nam Kim. Our thanks to Thomas Bernstein, Yun-han Chu, Dorothy Solinger, Doh Chull Shin, and the panelists at the MPSA meetings for their suggestions on this paper.

Abstract

Our research focuses on a central question for the nations of East Asia: how is the political culture of the region related to its democratic development? Political culture theory argues that the social authority relations in a society often influence the political regime choice of a nation. Consequently, much of the literature on East Asia emphasizes the importance of family, hierarchy, community, and traditional social authority relations as a consequence of Confucian cultural traditions, and asks whether these values are compatible with positive orientations toward democracy.

Drawing upon the newest wave of the World Values Survey (WVS), this article analyzes public opinion in China, Indonesia, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam, as well as the established Pacific Rim democracies of Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States. We begin by assessing orientations toward authority among these publics. Then we link these sentiments to support for democracy. The results contradict the core tenets of the Asian values literature, and offer a more positive view of the prospects for modernization in the region. In addition, the weak relationship between authority orientations and democratic attitudes raises questions about the congruence thesis that is a basic premise of political culture theory.

Authority Orientations and Democratic Attitudes in East Asia: A Test of the "Asian Values" Hypothesis

East Asia spans a gamut of political regime types, from well-developed democracies like Japan, to a military regime in Burma to the communist states of China and Vietnam. For much of East Asia, however, democracy is still a new concept. Japan became democratic by imposition. Taiwan and South Korea made impressive political gains during the third wave of democratization in the late 1980s. Indonesia's democratic breakthrough came in 1998, and Thailand has made steady progress toward democracy during the 1990s. But the prospects for democracy in Singapore, Laos Malaysia, and Burma are not optimistic; China and Vietnam still experience authoritarian rule by the monopoly of the Communist Party

Also in East Asia, the relationship between economic development and democracy apparently does not function as Seymour M. Lipset (1959) and other have proposed. The five tigers of East Asian economic development--Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan--have a mixed record of political development. The oft-cited case is Singapore, with high standards of living that purport a fully industrialized, developed economy, but political development is consciously resisted. And it remains unclear whether the recent high rates of economic growth in China and Vietnam will translate into political modernization as well.

The paradox occurs because economic development does not apparently generate clear support for democratic structures; the economy can apparently grow without immediate political consequences. One explanation championed by the Singaporean patriarch Lee Kuan Yew is the so-called "Asian values" arising from Confucian teachings. He pointed to the authority orientations particular to Confucian culture, and different from those of the West, as explanations for a unique developmental pattern in East Asia (Lee 1994; Emmerson 1995). On the one hand, these values might be conducive for economic success by encouraging efficiency and a motivated working force. On the other hand, the same respect for authority is seen as impeding the development of democratic political structures.

This proposition has been met with much criticism and debate. For democracy activists, the concept of “Asian values” is seen as a roadblock to democratization in East Asia. Political elites may call upon Asian values in an effort to construct a false sense of unity in support of current non-democratic regimes. Other scholars ask whether such cultural traditions exist, and whether they are really inconsistent with democratic development (e.g., Rozman 1991; Diamond 1988; Friedman 1994; Kim 1994).

Many analysts and political elites have debated this topic on philosophical grounds, but cross-national empirical findings on what citizens in East Asia actually believe are largely lacking. Therefore, the current research subjects the “Asian values” thesis to an empirical test and examines some of its underlying assumptions. Drawing upon new data from the 2000-02 World Values Survey, we first describe orientations toward authority in various social settings. Then we consider whether these orientations significantly affect support for democracy among East Asians. The findings give the publics of East Asia a voice in this debate on the content and consequences of Asian values and Confucian traditions, and provide evidence on the cultural conditions relevant to democratization in East Asia.

The Asian Values Debate

The “Asian values” debate can be understood as the contention between different political cultures in the sense of Huntington’s clash of civilizations (1996). Since the collapse of the Soviet bloc, democracy has become the dominant ideological option (Fukuyama 1992). Against this dominating ideology, Third World countries are searching for their own position in the political space left open by the evaporation of the Communist bloc. More than ever, cultural identities are becoming prevalent in balancing out the tendency to universalize concepts such as “democracy” and “human rights” that are predominantly viewed as products of the liberal West. The Huntington thesis claims that many East Asian countries will resist the West’s effort to export democracy and universal human rights, and instead establish authoritarian regimes that produce societal order and a healthy economy.

Most conspicuous was former Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew's advocacy of an authoritarian regime,

The expansion of the right of the individual to behave or misbehave as he pleases has come at the expense of orderly society. In the East the main object is to have a well-ordered society so that everybody can have maximum enjoyment of his freedoms. This freedom can only exist in an ordered state and not in a natural state of contention and anarchy. (1994; also see Emmerson 1995)

The basic argument for a distinct style of political relations in East Asia is based on the ideal-type description of Asian versus Western society. According to "Asian values" proponents, because of Confucian traditions, East Asian societies are duty-based and community-oriented, characteristics that promote harmony and consensus, while Western societies are rights-based and individualistic, which is congruent with the conflictual elements of democratic competition. Moreover, similar descriptions of the Confucian cultural heritage are a well-established theme in the political culture literature on the region. Lucian Pye (1985) argued that these social values produce an allegiance to authority that appears inconsistent with democratic norms. Robert Scalapino (1989) similarly stressed the limited potential for democratic development in East Asia because of cultural traditions that emphasized communalism with limited toleration for opposition groups. Fukuyama (1995a: 27) saw Confucian social orientations as undercutting the social capital and interpersonal trust that is widely linked to democratic politics. Perhaps the strongest statement comes from Yung-Myung Kim (1997:1125) who states, "Confucian ideas are antithetical to Anglo-American democracy".¹

In contrast, other scholars have questioned the premises underlying the Asian values hypothesis. For instance, Larry Diamond's (1988: 14-18) review of the political culture of the region emphasized the variability of cultural traditions, and the richness of these cultures enables them to be selectively interpreted to encourage or discourage democracy. Friedman (1994) is even more direct in stressing the cultural diversity of East Asia, and the ability of democratic norms to take root in many different types of cultural traditions. Another viewpoint holds that Asian values may help an individual expand social

networks, and accumulate social capital—which are normally seen as beneficial to democracy. Asian values also promote social harmony, which may even be complementary to democracy in correcting its problems (Fukuyama 1995b).

Social modernization in East Asia, moreover, may transform social and political norms (Tatsuo 1999). With modernization comes urbanization, the breaking up of traditional social networks, and the spreading of competitive mentality, some of the factors contributing to the growth of individualism in Asia. Flanagan and Lee (2000; 1991), for example, used an earlier wave of the World Values Survey to demonstrate that social modernization variables were strongly related to support for more libertarian (less authoritarian) values in Japan and Korea. Thus, modernization may erode the very values and life styles that create the norms encapsulated in "Asian values".

In addition, national conditions and histories vary widely across East Asia, which raises questions of whether there is a single East Asian culture. Although most of the region is linked to Confucian cultural traditions, this is certainly not universal. Indonesians are overwhelmingly Islamic, and Philipinos are disproportionately Catholic. And even Pye (1985) acknowledged that adherence to Confucianism varies greatly across the nations linked to this tradition. Thus, it is problematic to talk of a single East Asia political culture that reaches from Japan to Singapore.

The dialectical conversation between the East and the West often stops at this point, recognizing both views but offering virtually no explanatory power for either side of the debate. We suggest that it might be useful to re-cast the debate in the framework of Harry Eckstein's congruence theory. In essence, congruence theory holds that political systems tend to be based on authority patterns that are congruent with the authority patterns of other units of society (Eckstein 1998). For instance, the hierarchic and paternalistic authority structures of the German family and society life in Weimar and the Wilhelmine Empire were more congruent with the political norms of the Kaiserreich than democracy under the Weimar Republic (Verba 1965). Putnam's (1993) analysis of political development in Italy is another reflection of congruence theory: political structures reflect the norms of social relations in the society that

they govern. Inglehart's (1997; 2000) analyses linking self-actualizing values and democratic development is another example of congruence theory.

Many of these same arguments are made for the impact of family relations in East Asia: the respect for authority, deference, and seniority orientation of Confucian traditions seem to be in conflict with classic Western models of a democratic politics, and are more congruent with more authoritarian political structures (Emmerson 1995; Rozman 1991; Pye 1985; Scalapino 1989).

Anecdotal accounts have attributed the stability of East Asian authoritarian regimes to congruent authoritarian patterns in non-governmental units such as families, schools, and the workplace (Pye 1985). Earlier qualitative studies did not, however, fully consider the dynamics of social changes in modern Asia, and tended to simply equate Asian culture to Confucianism. This attribution furthers the individualistic-communitarian tension between the West and the East at the expense of recognizing the diversity in Asian thoughts. Systematic cross-national empirical case studies of public opinion in East Asian nations are just beginning to engage this question (e.g., Flanagan and Lee 2000; Shin 1999).

Thus we have a two-step research goal. First, we use the World Values Survey to assess the support for hierarchical, authority relations in family and other social relations. Indeed, what has been strikingly absent from elite debates about the political culture in Asia is empirical evidence on how the citizens themselves describe their orientations toward authority. Then, we consider whether these orientations are linked to the public's support for democracy. These analyses thus address both the Asian values debate, and provide broader evidence on congruence theory as applied to the East Asian experience.

The World Values Survey

This research is based upon seven East Asian nations and four Western democratic countries that participated in either the 1995-98 or 2000-02 waves of the World Values Survey (WVS).² Currently in its fourth wave, the WVS includes nearly 70 nations, representing approximately 80% of the world's population. The current subset includes data from China, Indonesia, Japan, Singapore, South Korea,

Taiwan, and Vietnam as the East Asian set. Scholars such as Lucian Pye (1985) classify most of these countries as having significant Confucian influences; thus, it is reasonable to expect evidence of strong attachment to the concept of “Asian values” in most of these nations. Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States are established Western democracies that provide a necessary benchmark for comparing political culture in East Asia to the Western condition.

The follow table shows the number of respondents by country in each wave of the WVS. Not all nations are included in both waves of the WVS, and when available the data from both waves are merged in the analyses that follow.

Wave	China	INS	JPN	SING	SKO	TWN	VN	Aust	CAN	NZ	USA
1995	1500	--	1054	--	1249	1452	--	2048	--	1201	1542
2000	1000	1004	1362	1512	--	--	1000	--	1931	--	1200

The WVS questionnaire taps a wide range of human values that are related to the theme of social and political modernization. For the purpose of this research, we focus on authority orientations first, and then citizen attitudes toward democracy.

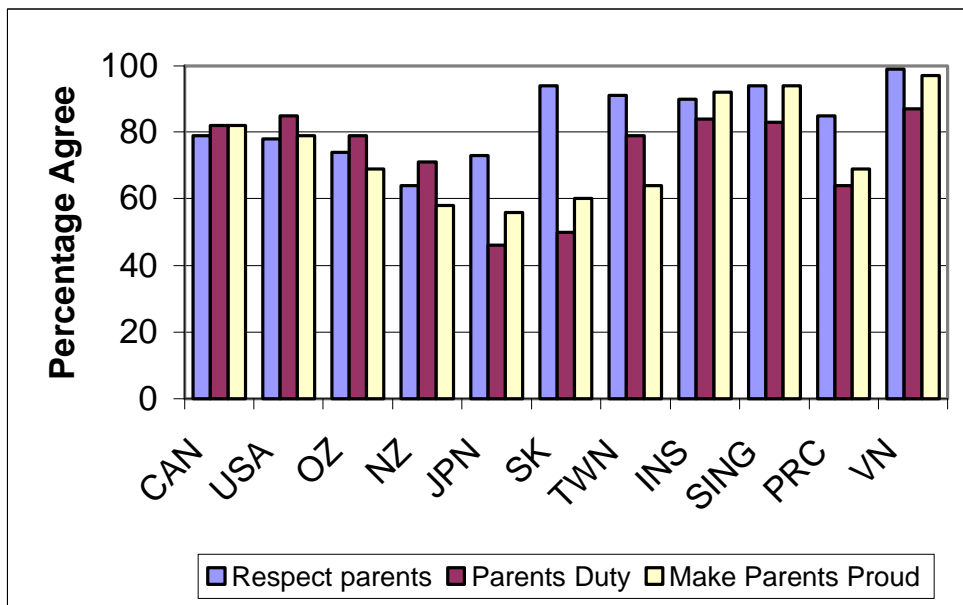
Orientations toward Authority

There is a long tradition of empirical research on attitudes toward authority within Western societies that often begins with questions about the compatibility of these orientations and democratic commitments (Adorno et al. 1950; Milgram 1974). One of the theoretical interests of the World Values Survey was to tap such orientations (e.g., Nevitte 1996), so we are fortunate that a variety of different questions ask about authority in different life domains.

One set of questions focuses on family relations and orientations toward one's parents. The survey asked respondents whether one should always love and respect one's parents regardless of their faults, whether it is the parents' duty to do what is best for their children, and whether one of the main goals in life is to make one's parents proud.³ Figure 1 presents the responses to these questions across our

set of nations. If one treats the Western democracies as a control group, then respect for parents and allegiance toward one's parents are surprisingly strong among Western publics. For instance, 78% of Americans and 79% of Canadians say that one's parents should be respected regardless of their faults. Japanese sentiments are actually less deferential to parents than the Western average (73%). Respect for parents is somewhat stronger in other East Asian nations: 90% in Indonesia, 91% in Taiwan, 94% in Singapore and South Korea, and 99% in Vietnam. On the whole, one would conclude that respect for parental authority transcends these two cultural regions. The difference between the two regions averaged across these three parental questions is only a gap of 5 percentage points.

Figure 1. Support for Authority within the Family



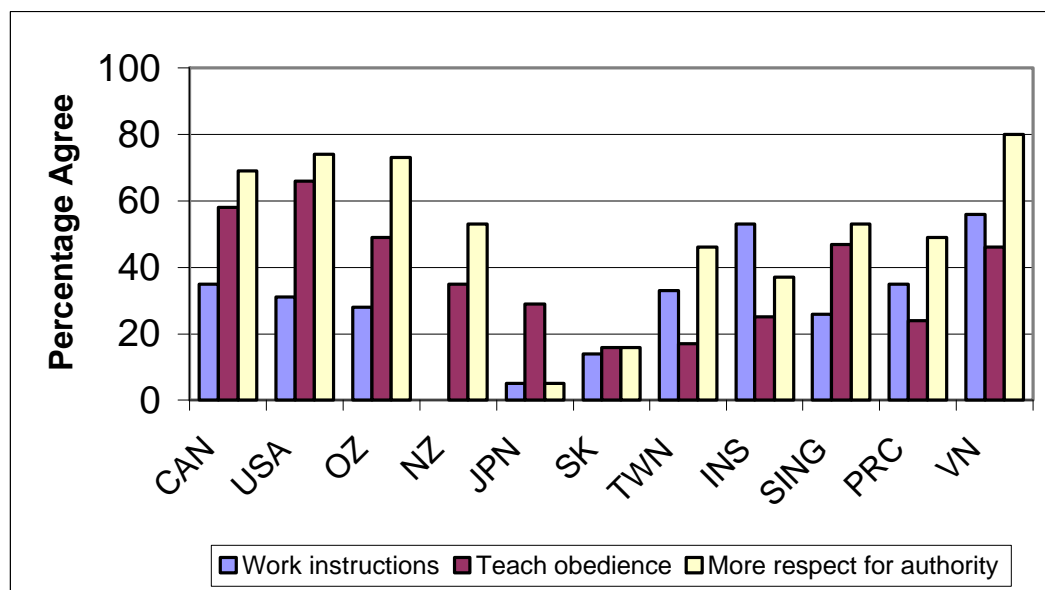
Source: 1995-98 and 2000-01 World Values Surveys.

Other questions examined orientations toward authority outside of the parental relationship: belief that child rearing should emphasize obedience, one should follow instructions of superiors at work even if one disagrees, and a desire for greater respect for authority in the society. Figure 2 displays the percentage giving positive responses toward authority on each of these items. When one moves outside

of the family, the overlap in sentiments across the East/West divide is even more apparent. For instance, 35% of Americans and 31% of Canadians mentioned obedience as a value that parents should instill in their children--and the average across the six East Asian nations is 33%.

The other items in Figure 2 also do not follow a clear East/West division. Agreement with the statement that one should follow a superior's instructions at work even if one disagrees averages slightly higher among the established Western democracies. None of the East Asian publics is more likely than Americans to say that one should follow instructions at work. In addition, beliefs that society should give greater respect to authority are generally much higher among the established Western democracies than in the East Asian nations. The infrequent calls for more respect for authority in Japan (7%), South Korea (16%) and Taiwan (46%) may be because people believe that authority already garners too much respect in these nations' traditional cultures--but we note that other questions fail to demonstrate such strong orientations toward authority in these same nations.

Figure 2. Respect for Authority in other Life Domains



Source: 1995-98 and 2000-01 World Values Surveys.

Beyond the individual questions, these separate items seem to tap a common dimension of respect for authority. Flanagan and Lee (2000) used factor analyses to identify a common clustering of many of

these same items in the 1995-98 WVS in Korea and Japan. Our confirmatory factor analyses also find a single dimension underlying these items.⁴ Thus, we created an additive index measuring support for authority with the six questions included in the World Values Survey.⁵ All three of the Western democracies with full data have more than half the public with high scores on this index (i.e., agreeing with four or more authority items out of six): United States, 71%, Canada 66%, and Australia 57%. In comparison, Indonesia (61%), Singapore (69%), and Vietnam (86%) have a majority with high scores, and only minorities hold these views in Japan (7%), South Korea (16%), the PRC (35%), and Taiwan (36%). The ironic interpretation of these data is to ask whether strong orientations toward social authority structures are a handicap to democratic political values within Western democracies.

Thus, this initial empirical evidence already yields one striking finding: acceptance of authority is not sharply different between this set of East Asian nations and a set of established Western democracies around the Pacific Rim. These findings run counter to most of the conventional wisdom about the cultural inheritance of East Asian societies and the observations of cultural and social traditions in the region. We "know" respect for authority is greater in these East Asian societies--yet these empirical results present a contradiction.

We have considered several possible methodological explanations for these results. For instance, it might be that the subset of Western nations selected for these analyses is atypical because of their common Anglo-American and historical heritage. But a comparison of our findings to the larger selection of European nations in the 1999 European Values Survey yields essentially similar results for most survey items (Halman 2002). Alternatively, there may be flaws in the translation or understanding of the survey questions--but the survey was translated into more than five distinct languages across East Asia, and Vietnam is the only East Asian nation that consistently scores higher in authority orientations than the Western democracies. This would imply that systematic translation biases occurred coincidentally in the other five nations.

Alternatively, these East Asian nations have all experienced a considerable process of social modernization over the past generation, in which many of these traditional cultural traditions may have

become attenuated with increasing social and geographic mobility, and the move from rural to urban lifestyles (Flanagan and Lee 2000; 1991). This might apply especially to the non-family aspects of authority orientations, where opinions overlapped the most between East and West. While we expect that long-term trends, such as those dating back to the 1950s or 1960s, might display such trends—they are not apparent in those nations where the WVS has been asked over an extensive time period. Data from the early 1980s is available for Japan and Korea, and these display little change in authority orientations until the present.⁶

Another explanation is that the attitudinal parallels between Eastern and Western societies are real. Admittedly, the social traditions in many East Asian nations place the priority on parents and a sense of duty that is seen as exceptionally strong by Western observers and experts of the region (as noted in our literature review). But it is not necessary that social customs are the same as individual beliefs. Rituals of ancestor devotion can be as ceremonial as a Western Christian who goes to church each Sunday even while doubting core teachings of the church. Moreover, excessive ritual may cause counter-reactions, as apparently is seen in the Japanese rejection of the need for greater respect for authority.

Additional empirical evidence on this topic is limited, but it tends to support the cautious conclusions presented here. For example, Ahn and Kang (2003) included three items on individualist versus collective orientations. They concluded that “South Koreans are evenly divided between individualism and collective orientations” (2003: __). Similarly, initial results from the East Asian Barometer find that a majority of Koreans and Taiwanese disagree with statements such as “government leaders are like heads of a family, we should follow their decisions” and “if we have political leaders who are morally upright, we can let them decide” (Chu 2003). Flanagan and Lee’s (2000) analyses of earlier WVS in Japan and Korea also found these two publics were nearly evenly divided in terms of their libertarian versus authoritarian orientations. In short, the empirical evidence suggests that past characterizations of the pattern of authority relations held by people in East Asia are not broadly supported by the opinions that people actually express.

Support for Democracy

Our goal is to compare orientations toward authority in society to support for democracy in the political realm. Our set of nations is unusual in the range of political systems they include. Four of our nations are Western democracies where democratic values and an understanding of the democratic process are presumably well-established--Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States--and there is one established East Asian democracy, Japan. In addition, Taiwan and South Korea are newly consolidated democracies. Indonesia had a mixed record of not free or only partly free during most of the 1990s, and then made a democratic breakthrough in 1998. According to Freedom House (2003), Singapore became less democratic during the 1990s. Finally, the People's Republic of China and Vietnam are among the handful of remaining communist nations in the world today, where understanding and experience with democratic forms are severely restricted.

Given such a wide range of political regimes, the measurement of political values is an empirical challenge. We rely on a battery of items from the WVS that measures support for democracy somewhat indirectly, not by asking about democracy exclusively, but by assessing orientations toward non-democratic political regimes. The question asked agreement with the following items:

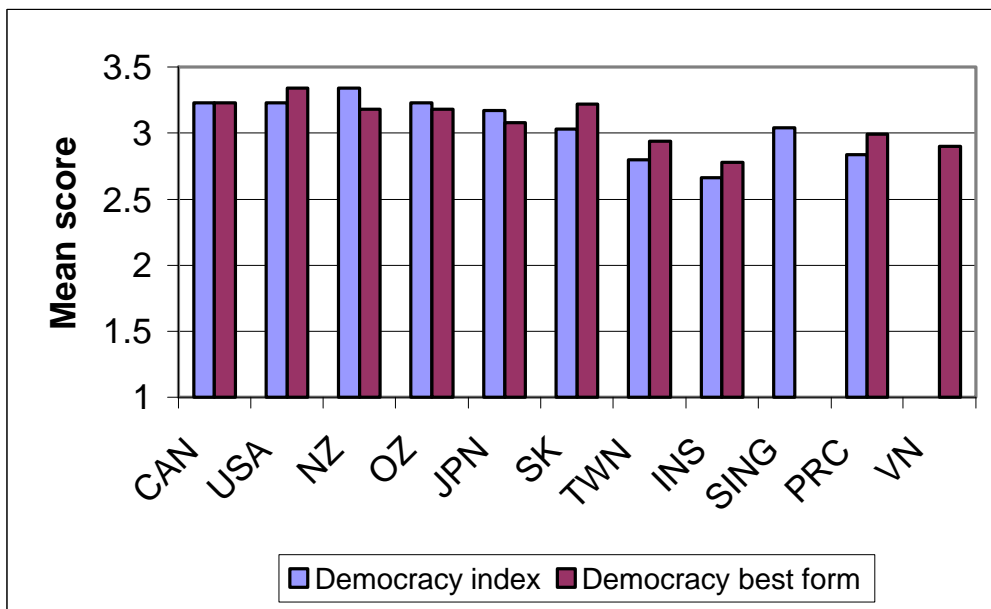
- 1) *Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections;*
- 2) *Having experts, not government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country;*
- 3) *Having the army rule; and*
- 4) *Having a democratic political system.*

Pro-democratic responses are defined as disagreeing with the first three items and agreeing with the fourth. Hans-Dieter Klingemann (1999) argues that this assessment of democratic norms primarily by assessing opinions toward non-democratic alternatives is more robust than only asking about support for democracy itself. These four items form a common factor, and thus they can be summed up (with reversed polarity for the fourth item on democracy) to create an index of support for democracy.⁷ Scores

range from 1.0, supporting non-democratic regime forms, to 4.0 as the highest level of pro-democratic sentiment.

Figure 3 presents the mean scores on this democratic regime index. Pro-democratic sentiments are more common in the advanced industrial democracies (mean = 3.24) than in the other nations in the figure (mean = 2.92). More striking, however, is the cross-national breadth of democratic aspirations! In each nation the mean score tends toward the democratic end of the continuum (that is, above the midpoint of 2.5). Democratic aspirations, or at least the preference for democracy over other sources of political authority, seem to be a common desire--even across the considerable range of regimes represented by the nations in the figure. This pattern has been consistently observed in the World Values Survey and is even more apparent in the fourth wave that includes a greater number and variety of non-democratic nations (Welzel et al. 2003; Klingemann 1999).

Figure 3. Democratic Orientations by Nation



Source: 1995-98 and 2000-01 World Values Surveys.

As another reference point (and because Vietnam does not include the democracy index items)

Figure 3 also presents opinions on another measuring support for democracy. The WVS asked about the

Churchillian principle that “democracy may have problems but it's better than any other form of government.”⁸ Large majorities in each nation agree that democracy is the best form of government, ranging from 71% in Indonesia to 90% among Americans.

As with orientations toward authority, the surprising finding is the lack of large differences in democratic regime orientations between citizens in East Asia and the Western democracies of the Pacific Rim. Given the wave of democratization that has transformed the world over the past decade, some analysts might argue that the endorsement of democracy among publics in the East Asia is not be surprising. But when large majorities of the Chinese and Vietnamese say that democracy is the best form of government, this suggests that the democratic ideal has more appeal than government officials in Beijing or Hanoi would presumably prefer.

Still, one must be cautious in interpreting these findings. In several of the national contexts in East Asia, the average citizen is unlikely to understanding the full benefits and limitations of the democratic system.⁹ It is not realistic to think that when Chinese respondents express support for democracy these sentiments carry the same meaning as when citizens are surveyed in an established Western democracy. But at the same time, a Chinese peasant certainly understands government by oligarchic leaders: What is especially striking is the broad disapproval of such a governing system in nations such as China and Singapore, where the oligarchic experience is still common.

Although caution is warranted, the patterns in the WVS have been verified by other comparative opinion surveys. For instance, the Pew Global Attitudes Survey done in summer 2002 found that majorities of the public in Vietnam (62%), Japan (62%), South Korea (58%) and Indonesia (52%) were favorable toward "democracy as it exists in the United States" (Pew 2002).¹⁰ The 2003 Pew Global Attitudes Survey (2003) included a smaller set of East Asian nations, but it also found that when asked to choose between a democratic government and a strong leader, nearly two-thirds of Koreans and Indonesians favored democracy. Other questions from the 2003 Pew Survey point to the breadth of support for a fair judiciary, religious freedom, and freedom of speech as important for their nation. The initial results from the new East Asian Barometers also find majorities in support of democratic principles

for most of the nations they surveyed (Chu 2003; Albritton and Bureekul 2003). Similarly, Chu and Chang (2001) find that democratic values of political equality, elite accountability, and pluralism are the modal opinions in Hong Kong and Taiwan, and even in the PRC these democratic norms are surprisingly common. Tianjin Shi (2000) describes relatively high levels of support for democratic values in China (also see Nathan and Shi 1999). Supporting evidence comes from Zweig's (2002) surveys in poor rural Chinese villages, where support for democratic principles was widespread. Doh Chull Shin (1999; 2000a) found that large majorities of the Korean public throughout the 1990s favored a democratic system for their nation, and most believed democracy was suitable for Korea (also Ahn and Kang 2003). And in comparison to data from Western Europe and other emerging democracies, Koreans also are relatively positive toward democracy (Shin 1999). Perhaps the most interesting new evidence comes from the East Asian Barometer project. In analyses of the data from Thailand, Albritton and Bureekul (2003) find strong support for democracy among the Thai population. And in an open-ended question about the meaning of democracy, they find that most Thais define democracy in terms that do not appear to differ substantially from their European and American counterparts, such as freedom and civil liberties, political equality, and individualism.¹¹

Thus in East Asia, questions measuring support for democracy may be more indicative of the breadth of democratic aspirations, and popular understanding of the full meaning of democracy may vary across nations. Still, we believe that these aspirations are meaningful in gauging the political culture of the region and most individuals express support for democracy over alternative regime forms.

Testing Congruence Theory

The culmination of our analysis is to examine the link between orientations toward authority relations in society and support for a democratic regime. If authority relations in the family, workplace and social life are a basis of political orientations, as congruence theory would imply, then we expect that acceptance of parental and hierarchic authority patterns would not be a fertile basis for democratic values.

To test this hypothesis, we begin with the bivariate relationships between our six measures of authority relations and the democratic orientations index (Table 1). In the advanced industrial democracies there is normally a modest, albeit a statistically significant, relationship between authority patterns and democratic values. For instance, those Americans who say that parents should always be respected are somewhat less likely to endorse democracy over authoritarian political structures ($r = -.10$). The same pattern appears for the "make parents proud" item for the advanced industrial democracies.

This pattern does not carry over to the East Asian nations in our study, however. Some nations display a positive relationship and some a negative relationship, and the overall average is close to a null relationship. A notable anomaly is Vietnam, where respect for authority often is positively related to support for democracy.

Table 1. Correlations between Authority Orientations and Support for Democratic Regime

	CAN	USA	NZ	OZ	West Avg	JPN	SK	TW	INS	Sing	PRC	VN	East Avg
Parental respect	-.15*	-.10*	-.13*	-.14*	-.13	-.03	-.00	-.09*	-.01	.02	-.07	-.04	-.04
Parental duty	-.05	.01	-.01	-.03	-.02	.05	-.08*	-.06	-.03	.00	-.02	.10*	-.01
Make parents proud	-.18*	-.08*	-.15*	-.12*	-.14	-.03	.02	-.10*	.04	-.02	-.02	.01	-.02
Teach child obedience	-.09*	-.09*	--	-.13*	-.10	-.02	-.06	-.06	.01	.02	--	-.03	-.03
Follow work instructions	-.04	.01	-.02	-.06	-.04	-.01	-.05	.01	-.09*	-.10*	-.03	.04	-.03
General respect for authority	-.05	-.02	-.09*	-.12*	-.07	-.19*	-.14*	-.11*	-.05	-.14*	-.08*	.23*	-.07
Authority index	-.15*	-.09*	-.14*	-.18*	-.14	-.04	-.10*	-.17*	-.08*	-.09	-.05	.12*	-.06

*Pearson's r significant at 0.05 level.

The same general pattern applies for the three other authority questions in the lower half of the table. Those who mentioned obedience as a trait parents should emphasize to their children are significantly less likely to endorse democratic values among the advanced industrial democracies. Among the nations of East Asia--including Japan--this relationship is essentially non-existent. The only item that shows a pattern of strong congruence in East Asia is the question on greater respect for authority--though we noted earlier that few respondents in the nations where this relationship is strongest actually subscribe to these beliefs (see Figure 2 above).

The final bit of evidence comes from the summated respect for authority scale in the last row of the table. Again, the general pattern is for stronger relationships within Western democracies (average $r = -.14$)--consistent with congruence theory (although these relationships are not strong). The average correlation is substantially weaker among the East Asian nations. Even if one excludes Vietnam because of its anomalous pattern, the average correlation is only $-.09$ in the other six Asian nations.

These weak relationships are significant because they contradict the widely claimed--but seldom tested--thesis that Confucian traditions and resulting authority orientations in East Asia will undermine the development of democratic values. While it is true that deference toward authority has a negative impact within advanced industrial democracies, which is one reason this thesis developed in the political culture research literature, the same pattern is not apparent in East Asia. It may be that such a linkage exists, but it is more complex than the direct relationship hypothesized in prior research. Indeed, the absence of a systematic relationship in either developing or communist nations suggests that there are contrasting elements of Asian culture that may have counterbalancing effects, such as the emphasis on community and collective values (e.g., Fukuyama 1995b).

Multivariate Analyses

The bivariate correlations provide initial tests for the relationship between "Asian values" and political culture. But before concluding that orientations toward authority are without strong effects, we want to consider whether these relationships are affected by other factors that influence democratic values. For instance, the dramatic process of social modernization in East Asia may be shifting opinions, and this may appear in age or social status differences that are related to authority orientations. Alternatively, other established predictors of support for democracy, such as social trust, might have confounding influences on these relationships. And across such a wide range of regimes, the role of financial or policy satisfaction also might affect these relationships.

To test for such effects, we included the index of authority relations with a set of other variables in a multivariate model predicting support for a democratic regime (Table 2).¹² Education and political discussion were included to see if sophisticated and involved citizens were more supportive of democracy. A measure of financial satisfaction taps whether immediate economic performance is related to support for a democratic regime. Social trust is based on Putnam's (1993) analyses of the basis of democracy in the West. And we added age to see if there are generational patterns in these attitudes.

Table 2. Multivariate Analyses of Support for Democratic Regime

	CAN	USA	NZ	OZ	JPN	SK	TW	INS	Sing	PRC	VN
Authority Index	-.10	-.08	-.13	-.12	-.08	-.10	-.14	-.07	-.08	-.04	.11
Education	.14	.09	.08	.12	.12	.09	.07	-.03	.06	.05	.01
Age	.17	.18	.09	.12	.16	.06	.05	.01	.15	-.01	-.03
Financial satisfaction	-.01	.00	.11	.01	-.04	.04	-.05	-.02	-.02	-.03	.12
Social trust	.13	.08	.07	.14	.07	.01	.04	.06	.02	--	-.02
Discuss politics	.16	.15	.17	.18	.06	.07	.20	.06	.11	.08	.03
Multiple R	.30	.30	.29	.36	.21	.16	.28	.11	.19	.12	.18

Note: Table entries are standardized regression coefficients; pairwise deletion of missing data was used in these models.

In each nation except Vietnam, the impact of authority orientations runs in the expected direction. But in most nations the impact of authority orientations is quite modest, far short of the cultural determinism that is implied by the Asian values thesis. Among the Western nations, the impact of authority relations weakens slightly in the multivariate model, and is now outweighed by other predictors such as education, age, or political engagement. Among the East Asian nations, authority relations now exert a significant effect; the other predictors do not attenuate this relationship because they are only weakly related to support for democracy. Moreover, the Vietnam survey continues to show a pattern where authority patterns are positively related to support for a democratic regime (see Table 1 above).¹³

The Confucian constellation of China, Japan, Korea, Singapore and Vietnam thus does not speak in unison about the relationship, if any, between social authority orientations and democratic values. The weak relationships between authority patterns in the Asian family and support for democracy contradicts

the skeptical view that democracy may not be able to take root in Asia, particularly within countries strong in Confucian traditions. The democratic potential of these nations should be judged by other factors than the social relationship between parents and their children.

Conclusion

The findings from our research should, at the least, encourage a re-examination of the “Asian values” thesis, which claims that social authority relations are a significant impediment to democratization in Asia. The cultural explanation for the place of Asia and, more specifically, countries with a Confucian tradition, in current history seems to be much weaker when viewed from the perspective of the people themselves. For countries with a history of political authoritarianism, a habit of thinking that the culture impeded democratization was probably built into scholars’ perception of the region. This deterministic mode of thinking might have stemmed from the fallacious generalization from the elites to the mass. The people in authoritarian countries, however, do not necessarily hold beliefs consistent with what their leaders value. In fact, individual citizens of such countries do not have to conform to what their rulers say they should. This seems to be evident in the current research when the presumed adherence to “Asian values” does not filter down to the public across East Asia.

Our results also raise questions about treating all of East Asia as adhering to a single model of “Asian values.” The nations of the region differ widely in their economic condition and their political histories. East Asia spans the range from Vietnam to Japan, from South Korea to Singapore—these are much different nations, with different social and political traditions. The citizens also differ significantly in their support for different elements of what has been described as Confucian traditions toward family and authority. At least in terms of the authority orientations examined in this paper, there is not a single East Asian political culture. Diverse value patterns exist across the publics of these East Asian nations.

Moreover, the current findings raise important questions about one of the seminal theories in political culture theory as applied to East Asia. Tests of the “Asian values” hypothesis show only weak evidence of a link between authority relations within the family or the workplace and attitudes toward

democracy. The non-significant findings and small correlations are some of the preliminary evidence that there may not necessarily be congruence between social and political entities. Those who support a democratic regime do not have to defy traditional authority relations within the family or in the workplace. Therefore, prospects for modernization might not be incompatible with a certain family or workplace culture. In other words, orientations toward democratization within an individual's set of values and a nation's policy agenda, respectively, do not have to create dissonance and tension with the non-political, private spheres.

We do not see this research as disconfirming the impact of political culture on the political process. Rather, the results raise questions about one aspect of political culture research that claimed social authority relations had a direct and strong impact on political norms. Such a relationship may exist in some settings, as the stronger relationships for Western democracies suggests. But there are a variety of social models that political norms may draw upon, and it is not necessarily the case that orientations towards one parents provides the model for how individuals think about governments.

The results from our analyses suggest, perhaps, a different way to conceptualize congruence among the elements discussed. Instead of a linear or dichotomous idea that sets of values either stay put or change, it may be more realistic to view social and political values as complex and non-linear in their interactions. Individuals' orientations toward democracy may not share the same sphere or have a direct linear relationship with filial piety toward one's parents or the values one wants to cultivate in children. Or the relationship between pro-democratic beliefs and non-political attitudes may depend on the situational context. Testing the latter case may involve more specific questions dealing with social and political circumstances that are beyond the scope of the WVS.

Diverse values exist among citizens in East Asia. This observation may be one of the most optimistic and liberating views for democratic prospects that need to be further researched. Our initial findings provide some evidence toward the possibility of democratization without having to change the cultural traditions of the region. The speed of democratization will inevitably be faster than the slower pace of change in social relations or cultural traditions, but as long as no incongruence is perceived or the

political is kept separate from the non-political spheres of values, then experiencing a cultural evolution will not have to be painful.

References

- Adorno, Theodore, et al. 1950. The Authoritarian Personality. New York: Harper.
- Albritton, Robert, and Thawilwadee Bureekul. 2003. "The Meaning of Democracy in a Developing Nation." Paper presented at the annual meetings of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, April 2-3.
- Ahn, Chung-Si, and Won-Taek Kang. 2003. South Korea's Political Culture at the Dawn of the New Millennium: Undoing or Reinventing a Developmental State? Discussion Paper No. 5, Institute of Oriental Culture, The University of Tokyo.
- Auh, Soo Young. 1997. Value Change, Life, and Politics: Korea, Japan, the United States, and Mexico in Comparison (in Korean). Seoul: Ewha Woman's University Press.
- Chu, Yun-han. 2003. Paper presented at the conference on "How People View Democracy: Public Opinion in New Democracies," at the Center for Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law, Stanford University, July 2003.
- Chu, Yun-han, and Yu-tzung Chang. 2001. "Culture shift and regime legitimacy: Comparing mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong." In Shiping Hua, ed. Chinese Political Culture, 1989-2000. Armonk, NY: ME Sharpe.
- Dalton, Russell and Doh Chull Shin. 2003. "Democratic Development in the Pacific Rim: Citizen Orientations toward Democracy."
- Diamond, Larry. 1988. "Introduction." In Larry Diamond, Juan Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset, eds. Democracy in Developing Countries: Asia. Boulder, CO: Lynne Reiner Press.
- Eckstein, Harry. 1998. "Congruence Theory Explained." In William Reisinger, et al. Can Democracy Take Root in Post-Soviet Russia?: Explorations in State-Society Relations. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Emmerson, Donald. 1995. "Singapore and the 'Asian Values' Debate." Journal of Democracy 6, 4 (October): 95-105.
- Flanagan, Scott, and Aie-Rie Lee. 1991. "Modernization and the emergence of the authoritarian libertarian value cleavage." Paper presented at the annual meeting at the Southern Political Science Association, Tampa, Florida.
- Flanagan, Scott, and Aie-Rie Lee. 2000. "Value change and democratic reform in Japan and Korea." Comparative Political Studies 33:626-659.
- Freedom House. 2003. Freedom in the World 2003: The Annual Survey of Political Rights and Civil Liberties. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Friedman, Edward. 1994. "Democratization: Generalizing the East Asian experience." In Edward Friedman, ed. The Politics of Democratization: Generalizing East Asian Experiences. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Fukuyama, Francis. 1992. The End of History. New York: The Free Press.
- Fukuyama, Francis. 1995a. Trust. New York: The Free Press.
- Fukuyama, Francis. 1995b. "Confucianism and democracy." Journal of Democracy.
- Halman, Loek. 2002. The European Values Study: A Third Wave. Tilburg: Tilburg University.
- Huntington, Samuel P. 1996. The Clash of Civilizations: Remaking of World Order. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Inglehart, Ronald. 1997. Modernization and Postmodernization. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Inglehart, Ronald. 2000. "Culture and democracy." In Lawrence E. Harrison and Samuel P. Huntington, eds., Culture Matters. New York: Basic Books.
- Kim Dae Jung. 1994. "Is culture destiny? The myth of Asia's anti-democratic values," Foreign Affairs (Nov./Dec).
- Kim, Yung-Myung. 1997. "Asian-style democracy: A critique from East Asia." Asian Survey 37.
- Klingemann, Hans-Dieter. 1999. "Mapping political support in the 1990s." In Pippa Norris, ed. Critical Citizens. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Lipset, Seymour M. 1959. "Some social requisites of democracy: Economic development and political legitimacy." American Political Science Review 53:69-105.
- Mahbubani, Kishore. 2002. Can Asians Think? Understanding the Divide between East and West. South Royalton, VT: Steerforth Press.
- Milgram, Stanley. 1974. Obedience to Authority: An Experimental View. New York: Harper & Row.
- Nathan, Andrew and Tianjin Shi. 1993. "Cultural requisites for democracy in China." Daedalus 122: 95-124.
- Neher, C. and R. Marlay. 1995. Democracy and Development in Southeast Asia: The Winds of Change. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Nevitte, Neil. 1996. The Decline of Deference: Canadian Value Change in Cross-national Perspective. Orchard Park, NY: Broadview Press.
- Pew Center. 2002. What the World Thinks in 2002: The Pew Global Attitudes Project. Washington, DC: Pew Center for People and the Press.
- Pew Center. 2003. Views of a Changing World 2003: War With Iraq Further Divides Global Publics. Washington, DC: Pew Center for People and the Press.
- Putnam, Robert. 1993. Making Democracy Work. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Pye, Lucian W. 1985. Asian Power and Politics. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Rohrschneider, Robert. 1999. Learning Democracy: Democratic and Economic Values in Unified Germany. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rose, Richard, Christian Haerpfer, and William Mishler. 2000. Testing the Churchill Hypothesis: Democracy and its Alternatives in Post-communist Societies. Cambridge, UK: Polity/ Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Rozman, Gilbert, ed. 1991. The East Asian Region: Confucian Heritage and Its Modern Adaptation. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Scalapino, Robert. 1989. The Politics of Development: Perspectives on Twentieth Century Asia. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Shi, Tianjian. 2000. "Cultural values and democracy in Mainland China." China Quarterly 62: 540-59
- Shi, Tianjian. 2001. "Cultural values and political trust: A comparison of Mainland China and Taiwan." Comparative Politics 33(4): 401-420.
- Shin, Doh Chull. 1999. Mass Politics and Culture in Democratizing Korea. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Shin, Doh Chull. 2000. The Dynamics of Democratization in Korea: The Korea Democracy Barometer. Honolulu, HI: East-West Center.
- Tatsuo, Inoue. 1999. "Liberal Democracy and Asian Orientalism." In Joanne R. Bauer and Daniel A. Bell, eds. The East Asian Challenge for Human Rights. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Thompson, Mark. 2001. "Whatever happened to 'Asian Values'?" Journal of Democracy 12: 154-165.
- Verba, Sidney. 1965. "Germany." In Lucian Pye, ed. Political Culture and Political Development. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Yew, Lee Kuan. 1994. "Culture is destiny, an interview with Fareed Zakaria." Foreign Affairs, 73(2):109-126.
- Welzel, Christian, Ronald Inglehart, and Hans-Dieter Klingemann. 2003. "The theory of human development: A cross-cultural analysis," European Journal of Political Research xx.
- Xu Huoyan. 1999. "Taiwan de xuanju yu shehui fen zhi jigou." In Yun-Han Chu et al. eds. Liang'an jiceng xuanju yu zhengzhi shehui bianqian. Taipei: Yuedan chuban gufen yousian gongsi.
- Zweig, David. 2002. Democratic Values, Political Structures and Alternative Politics in Greater China. Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace.

Endnotes

¹ One could also note, however, that the other aspects of Confucian traditions appear more compatible with democracy. The emphasis on harmony and the responsibility of leadership, for instance, are consistent with classic democratic theory. Similarly, the value of the community also may be beneficial in developing a democratic culture. Thus, Fukuyama (1995b: 8) also notes that “there are fewer points of incompatibility between Confucianism and democracy than many people in Asia and the West believe”.

² We would like to thank Ronald Inglehart for inviting us to participate in the 2000-02 World Values Survey and for facilitating our access to these East Asian surveys. We also gratefully acknowledge our collegial relationship Pham Minh Hac and Pham Thanh Nghi of the Institute for Human Studies in Hanoi in the collection of the WVS for Vietnam. Only the authors of this paper are responsible for the views expressed here.

³ The questionnaire with the specific wording of items is available at: <http://wvs.isr.umich.edu/>

⁴ The six items were entered into a principal components analysis, and the following table presents the first unrotated dimension in each nation. The "teach obedience" question was not asked in New Zealand. Like Flanagan and Lee (2000) the results suggest a single dimension underlies these items, although we should note that in some instances the limited variance on items restricted the correlations; this is most clearly apparent in the Vietnamese results.

	CAN	USA	Aust	NZ	JPN	SK	TW	INS	SING	PRC	VN
Respect parents	.63	.63	.67	.69	.50	.35	.56	.33	.46	.57	-.14
Parent duty	.31	.36	.34	.53	.46	.67	.61	.62	.64	.63	.40
Parents proud	.59	.49	.59	.65	.62	.12	.47	.35	.56	.14	.60
Teach obedience	.44	.43	.45	--	.32	.47	.46	.52	.38	.58	-.22
Follow instructions	.57	.38	.35	.30	.42	.16	.35	.49	.25	.36	.56
Respect authority	.54	.59	.61	.44	.48	.63	.23	.35	.45	.45	.60
Eigenvalue	1.65	1.45	1.61	1.47	1.35	1.24	1.31	1.26	1.35	1.41	1.26
Percent variance	27.6	24.2	26.8	29.4	22.5	20.6	21.7	20.9	22.4	23.4	20.9

⁵ The scale was computed as the simple sum of the approval of authority option on each of the six items. The scale thus runs from 0-6 in each nation, except in New Zealand where one item was not available.

⁶ Three items were included with comparable wording over the four waves of the World Values Survey in Japan and Korea: respect parents, teach obedience, and respect for authority. The average giving the authority response across these three items had not changed significantly over this two decade time span:

	1981	1990	1995	2000
Japan	28%	32	29	27
Korea	38	42	41	41

⁷ The following table presents the factor analysis results for the four items combined in the democratic orientations index. In almost every instance the same structure appears for these four items. The one clear exception is Indonesia where the army rule item loads as a pro-democracy measure, most likely because of the political conflicts that Indonesia was experiencing at the time of the survey.

	CAN	USA	Aust	NZ	JPN	SK	TW	INS	SING	PRC
Strong leaders	.77	.79	.76	.79	.76	.73	.74	.39	.77	.80
Expert rule	.68	.73	.64	.65	.59	.04	.32	.27	.78	.74
Army rule	.69	.72	.69	.64	.62	.73	.79	-.73	.57	.25
Democratic rule	-.44	-.44	-.65	-.61	-.45	-.64	-.53	-.82	.23	.03
Eigenvalue	1.84	1.87	1.89	1.82	1.51	1.48	1.55	1.46	1.58	1.25
Percent variance	46.1	46.7	47.3	45.5	37.8	36.9	38.7	35.4	39.5	31.2

⁸ This item was part of another battery of questions focusing on democracy itself. Respondents were asked about a variety of features that might be attributed to a democratic system: the economy runs badly in a democracy, democracies are indecisive and have too much quibbling, and democracy encourages disorder. We combined these items into a summary index that is used for the Vietnamese results in the following analyses since the Vietnamese survey did not include the previous democratic orientations index items. For additional analyses of these four items see Dalton and Shin (2003).

⁹ Surveys from Eastern Europe in the early 1990s detected similarly positive sentiments toward democracy, but mixed evidence on whether the public understood what democracy really required of elites and the citizenry (Rohrschneider 1999; Rose, Haerpfer and Mishler 2000).

¹⁰ One might criticize this choice of wording, but the question has the advantage that the reference to the United States offers a clear reference that this is not democratic socialism or other claims to democracy practiced in a different way. So a citizen of Beijing, for instance, does not think of the Politburo's version of Chinese democracy in answering this question.

¹¹ Albritton and Bureekul (2003) followed a battery of items about democracy with an open-ended question asking what the respondent's meant by the term democracy. Nearly half the respondents replied with examples that fit traditional notions of liberal democracy, and an additional third mentioned personal freedoms or civil liberties that are very consistent with traditional definitions of civil liberties. Also significant was what was not mentioned: "Most surprising was the low response rate in terms of traditional "Asian values" as commonly understood – good governance, social equality, or duties to society. Only one respondent mentioned "openness or government transparency," and no one mentioned "solving employment," "providing social welfare," or "finding someone a job". Additional cross-national evidence on this point should be available from the East Asian Barometers in other nations.

¹² The regression models in Table 2 are not strictly identical across all ten nations. In about half the nations we used the "age left school" variable as a measure of education; in the other half we used a country-specific ranking of educational levels. The authority relations index lacked one item in New Zealand, the social trust variable was not included in the Chinese survey, and an alternative democracy scale was used in Vietnam as noted in footnote 8. For these reasons, we present standardized regression coefficients in the table. Comparing results where possible with the unstandardized coefficients yielded essentially similar results.

¹³ Perhaps, the meaning of democracy for the Vietnamese people is different than other East Asian countries. Like China, Vietnam has been experimenting with grassroots democracy, where the people contribute to policy-making at the local level. In these exercises, however, Vietnamese authorities always emphasize the importance of democratic practice within boundaries, meaning that the people should be aware of factors who try to "take advantage" of democracy and promote ideas harmful to societal structure and harmony. Hence, the value patterns shown in the analysis may indeed reflect governmental constraints.