

Congruence and Variation in Sources of Regime Support in East Asia

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Abstract

Using the latest third wave of the Asian Barometer Survey, we are able to identify the sources of regime support in East Asia within a comprehensive framework that takes into account both the ongoing theoretical debates over what sustains regime legitimacy and the particular contexts of the region. We found that regime support in East Asia has significant congruence and variation. On the one hand, political regimes in East Asia draw their political legitimacy from a common well. This is largely from their governance and government performance, notably government responsiveness, economic performance, and control of corruption. On the other hand, ideology and culture are also an important base for regime legitimacy in nondemocratic regimes. These regimes gain support from cultivating nationalism and national identity.

Keywords: Regime support, regime legitimacy, government performance, governance, political values, citizen politics, regime resilience.

Legitimacy, by definition, concerns how power may be used in ways that citizens consciously accept. All modern political regimes depend on the public's willing acquiescence and support for their survival and effective functioning. As Bruce Gilley has forcefully pointed out, regimes that lack legitimacy devote more resources to maintaining their rule and less to effective governance, which reduces support and makes them vulnerable to overthrow or collapse.¹ A measure of popular support can be found in states with many different kinds of

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¹ Bruce Gilley, *The Right to Rule: How States Win and Lose Legitimacy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).

regimes, some democratic and some not, a point often overlooked by theories that concentrate exclusively on democratization.²

Normative political theory typically expects democratic regimes to be more legitimate than authoritarian regimes because democracy is built on the consent of the ruled and universal suffrage. Empirically, however, ample survey data have shown that the public's diffuse support for a regime varies considerably across democracies, and that the observed level of regime legitimacy under nondemocratic regimes is sometimes substantially higher in emerging democracies.³ Some recent efforts to resolve these puzzling results have put forward three alternative explanations, all of which are of theoretical importance to democratic studies.

The first explanation suggests that regime legitimacy is created, maintained, and destroyed less at the input and more at the output side of a political system.⁴ Nondemocratic regimes, while denying democratic rights to their citizens, nevertheless might enjoy a higher level of political support than some democratic regimes, if they deliver economic well-being and good governance.⁵ Further, mechanisms of popular accountability and democratic representation do not immunize democracies from poor economic performance and bad governance.

The second explanation suggests that some democracies have a lower level of regime support than nondemocracies, which may be attributed to the presence of critical citizens nurtured under the polemic and contentious nature of democratic politics.⁶ In addition, it is conceivable for some nondemocratic regimes to enjoy a higher level of political support due to the nature of authoritarian politics. These regimes pre-empt viable political alternatives by suppressing political opposition and independent news media and by occupying all organized space.

The third explanation suggests that the observed level of regime legitimacy stems not just from the functioning of a political system but also from the prevailing political predispositions held by its citizenry. Some political regimes

² William Mishler and Richard Rose, "Learning and Re-learning Regime Support: The Dynamics of Post-Communist Regimes," *European Journal of Political Research* 41, no. 1 (2002): 5-36.

³ Pippa Norris, *Democratic Deficit: Critical Citizens Revisited* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Peter Kotzian, "Public Support for Liberal Democracy," *International Political Science Review* 32, no. 1 (2011): 23-41; and Zhengxu Wang, Russell J. Dalton, and Doh Chull Shin, "Political Trust, Political Performance, and Support for Democracy," in *Citizens, Democracy, and Markets around the Pacific Rim*, ed. Russell J. Dalton and Doh Chull Shin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 50-72.

⁴ Bo Rothstein, "Creating Political Legitimacy: Electoral Democracy versus Quality of Government," *American Behavioral Scientist* 53, no. 3 (2009): 311-330.

⁵ For example, Bruce Gilley, "The Determinants of State Legitimacy: Results for 72 Countries," *International Political Science Review* 27, no. 1 (2006): 47-71.

⁶ Russell J. Dalton, *Democratic Challenges, Democratic Choices: The Erosion of Political Support in Advanced Industrial Democracies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

may benefit in part from the default condition of being endowed with a large number of deferential and compliant citizens. In particular, people who are still under the influence of traditional Asian values—which privilege group interests over individual interests, political authority over individual freedom, and social responsibility over individual rights—might be intimidated by the chaos and conflict brought about by democratization, as they are accustomed to paternalist politics under authoritarianism. If the current regime is a direct descendant of a revolutionary regime, state legitimacy and regime legitimacy are often fused into one. The so-called revolutionary legacy anchored on nation-building or anti-imperialist struggle will have its lingering impact through political socialization. In this sense, political culture matters and legitimacy is in the eyes of the beholders.

In this essay, using the latest third wave of the Asian Barometer Survey, we are able to identify the sources of regime support in East Asia within a comprehensive framework that takes into account both the ongoing theoretical debates over what sustains regime legitimacy and the particular contexts of the region. Our empirical analysis also subjects these alternative explanations to rigorous empirical tests. East Asia provides an important testing site, as it covers a wide range of political regimes from liberal democracies, electoral democracies, and electoral authoritarian regimes, to one-party authoritarian regimes. Using standardized linear regression, we illustrate that, indeed, there are common underlying factors accounting for regime support across the region, and, importantly, differences both in the levels and underlying factors in different regime types.

Why East Asia?

East Asia provides an important arena to assess whether different regime types are supported more than others, and why. Over the last decade, East Asia has experienced considerable regime transformation. Beginning in the mid-1980s, East Asia became part of the “third wave” of democratic transitions, as authoritarian regimes in Korea, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Thailand embraced more democratic forms of government. In the wake of the 1997 Asian financial crisis, Indonesia transitioned toward democratic rule, after thirty-two years of military power. The Asian financial crisis did not provoke the same level of change elsewhere in the region, however, as the more resilient electoral authoritarian system in Malaysia, for example, weathered calls for reform.

East Asia entered the twenty-first century with broadening democratic governance, yet the first decade would test many of the regimes. Political polarization, elite infighting, partisan gridlock, and corruption scandals debilitated governments. This decade saw the rise of authoritarian rule in East Asia, with the 2006 military coup and 2008 judicial coup in Thailand, electoral fraud in the Philippines in 2004, and the 2004 marred elections in Mongolia. China’s robust economic success, replicated in Vietnam, served to reinforce an

authoritarian Asian role model in these one-party systems, as the United States after 2001 lost its luster as a democratic example. Even while regimes such as Indonesia became more democratically consolidated, concerns about political freedoms and entrenched elite rule rose to the fore.

In the current decade, the authoritarian tide appears to be turning. The last few years have showcased greater contestation for power in Singapore and Malaysia. This was evident in Singapore's 2011 legislative and presidential elections, and with Malaysia's growing intense electoral competition. Democratic forces are gaining ground, both in the expansion of civil society and electorally. This is tied in part to rising inequality, generational changes, persistent concerns about governance—especially corruption—ineffective public engagement, and importantly, changing values. Even the traditional democratic regimes, Taiwan and Korea, weathered partisan gridlock through a series of elections. Japan was severely tested by a tragic tsunami in 2011. Nevertheless, democracy has persevered and arguably has strengthened. The Philippines and Thailand held free and fair elections in 2010 and 2011, respectively. These strides toward democracy also have occurred in more authoritarian outposts. Myanmar, which is not yet part of the Asian Values Survey, has been in the limelight recently with its recent moves toward democracy. Similarly, pressures for democratic change are occurring elsewhere in one-party systems. Exposures of scandals in China and Vietnam have led these governments to engage their electorates, although the scope of this engagement remains narrow. The Internet and social media have provided alternative forms of information and lowered transaction costs for political participation.

Although there have been openings and greater political liberalization, authoritarian forces remain entrenched. These take the form of hardliners in regimes such as those in Vietnam and Malaysia, and among conservative groups that are willing to fan nationalistic fervor and ethnic tensions to hold onto power. Curbs on free expression, political assembly, and religious freedom, among other human and civil rights violations, remain serious. These issues are moving from state actors to nonstate actors, broadening the challenges facing democratic regimes in the region. The 2011 attacks on religious freedom in Indonesia are illustrative. While there are signs of democratic expansion, serious obstacles remain. The ABS third-wave survey was conducted in this context, as both democratic and authoritarian regimes are being challenged and transformed in the region.

The twelve East Asian countries covered by the third-wave ABS survey spread over a full range of intermediate regimes. Based on the regime classification developed by Larry Diamond,⁷ the three Northeast Asian countries of Japan, Korea, and Taiwan are long-standing “liberal democracies,”

⁷ Larry Diamond, “Thinking about Hybrid Regimes,” *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 2, (2002): 21-35.

with significant records of competitive elections, civil liberties, and changes in government. By 2010, Thailand, the Philippines, and Indonesia could be classified as “electoral democracies,” with institutionalized free and fair elections; however, political and legal hindrance to political freedom remains significant. Malaysia, by 2010, could be classified as a competitive authoritarian regime, in which freedom, fairness, inclusiveness, and meaningfulness of elections are significantly compromised but also in which there is tolerance of significant parliamentary opposition. The more authoritarian systems of Singapore and Cambodia should be classified as noncompetitive (or hegemonic) authoritarian regimes, whose elections are dominated by the hegemonic party in power. Vietnam is a typical one-party authoritarian system, in which the space for political contestation is completely closed and the communist party continues to monopolize politics. This diversity allows us to compare factors underlying regime support across four distinctive regime types that account for the bulk of the political systems in the developing world today.

Table 1. Regime Classification in East Asia

Regime Classification	Countries
Liberal Democracy	Japan, Taiwan, Korea
Electoral Democracy	Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, and Mongolia
Electoral Authoritarian	Cambodia, Malaysia, and Singapore
One-Party Regimes	China and Vietnam

Methodology, Variables, and Hypotheses

We adopted a standardized linear regression model that allows for comparison within and among countries. We examined three issues: (1) the levels of regime support, (2) common underlying factors explaining regime support, and (3) differences in the underlying factors accounting for regime support among regime types and across countries.

Diffuse support for political authorities refers to the consistent and less conditional feeling toward the general political system.⁸ It can be viewed as a belief that one can count on the system to provide satisfying outcomes, or it can be defined as the legitimacy of political regimes. Thus, special attention has been paid to differentiating the “system of government” from the specific government in office and its performance and governance. Also, this concept does not focus on the public’s trust of specific institutions, but serves as an

⁸ Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture* (Boston: Little Brown, 1965), 63, and David Easton, “A Re-assessment of the Concept of Political Support,” *British Journal of Political Science* 5, no.4 (1975): 444.

umbrella term for support for the system as a whole. Based on the discussion above, we incorporated six questions from the ABS questionnaire into our research, which measure citizens' general trust in government officials, their perception of the long-term capability of the system of government, their unconditional support for and pride in the regime, and their overall satisfaction with the political system (detailed in appendix A of the Introduction to this *TJD* issue).⁹ Since the responses to the six questions are all measured on a scale of 1 to 4, in order to derive the measurement of diffuse regime support, we added the respondents' replies to each question and then divided the score by the number of questions they answered.

In identifying the causal variables for our standardized linear regression, we drew broadly from current debates over the underlying factors that shape regime legitimacy. These varied explanations are grouped into five rubrics—government performance, governance, political values, citizen politics, and demographic variables, outlined below in table 2. The questions corresponding to these variables are detailed in appendix A of the Introduction.

Rubric 1: Governmental Performance

Especially in Asia, regime legitimacy has been interwoven with the output of governments. Whether this involves the perceptions of government's responsiveness or its economic performance, focus centers on what governments deliver.¹⁰ Here, we included not only the evaluation of economic performance, but also of government responsiveness, access to public services, and protection of human safety. Traditionally, economic performance has been given considerable weight, as bread and butter issues such as growth of the economy, jobs, and inflation have been identified as extremely important for regime support. Economic crisis and mismanagement have been shown to destabilize regimes, with the example of Indonesia in 1998 as illustrative. The close tie of Asian regimes to economic performance among the developmental states of the 1960s-1980s, has made the economy prominent.¹¹ Closely associated with the economy are the provision of public services and the management of human safety, or the control of crime. Finally, regimes were evaluated on the ability of their governments to be responsive to citizens' needs.¹² Given the prominence of government capability to deliver in Asia, we

⁹ The six items are Q136 and Q80-Q84 in appendix A of the Introduction to this *TJD* issue.

¹⁰ Bruce Gilley, "Political Legitimacy in Malaysia: Regime Performance in the Asian Context," in *Legitimacy: Ambiguities of Political Success or Failure in East and Southeast Asia*, ed. Lynn White (Singapore: World Scientific, 2005), 29-66.

¹¹ Carlyle A. Thayer, "Southeast Asia: Challenges to Unity and Regime Legitimacy," *Southeast Asian Affairs* (1999): 3-19.

¹² Yu-tzung Chang, Yun-han Chu, and Chong-min Park, "Authoritarian Nostalgia in Asia," *Journal of Democracy* 18, no. 3 (July 2007): 66-80.

Table 2. Explanations of Regime Support

Rubric	Variable	Variable	Variable	Variable	Variable	Variable	Variable
Government Performance	Economic Performance	Perceived Government Responsiveness	Access to Public Services	Human Safety			
Governance	Corruption	Freedom	Horizontal Accountability	Vertical Accountability	Political Competition	Equality	Rule of Law
Political Values	Authoritarian Values	Social Traditionalism	Nationalism	Xenophobia			
Citizen Politics	Political Interest	Electoral Participation	Nonelectoral Participation				
Demographic Variables	Age	Education	Gender				

expected these factors to be significant explanations of regime support.

Rubric 2: Governance

Rather than look at what governments do, governance focuses on how they do it. Key components in governance include corruption, freedom, equality, political competition, rule of law, and horizontal and vertical accountability. Studies have shown that one of the most important factors shaping perceptions of regimes involves corruption.¹³ From the corruption charges leveled initially against the Kuomintang (KMT) and later against the former leader of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) in Taiwan, to the cries of cronyism in the Philippines and in Indonesia, corruption has been a focal point of government criticism. Below, we look at whether corruption matters to regime support. In light of its prominence in the region, we predicted that corruption would be an important underlying factor of regime support. Closely related to corruption is the protection of the rule of law, and whether those in government adhere to this practice.¹⁴ We also examined whether Asian publics support their regimes for attaining the goals of equality and freedom. How much does the provision of basic necessities for all and equal and fair treatment by government, for example, matter? Asian governments, especially before the Asian financial crisis, were lauded for achieving growth with equal treatment of citizens. It was similarly argued amid the Asian values debate of the 1990s that Asian publics valued the provision of housing and other basic human needs over civil liberties. We expected that both of these factors would also be significant for regime support, with political freedom more important in democratic regimes. Accountability across institutions in the government, with viable checks and balances—horizontal accountability—and between citizens and power holders in the forms of vertical accountability and political competition, are other governance markers. Overall, we expected many of these factors to be important in East Asia, although less so than government performance indicators.

Rubric 3: Political Values

The issue of values and culture is deeply rooted in the understanding of politics in East Asia and took the international stage in the 1990s “Asian values”

¹³ Mitchell Seligson, “The Impact of Corruption on Regime Legitimacy: A Comparative Study of Four Latin American Countries,” *Journal of Politics* 64, no. 2 (2002): 408-433, and Christopher J. Anderson and Yuliya V. Tverdova, “Corruption, Political Allegiances, and Attitudes toward Government in Contemporary Democracies,” *American Journal of Political Science* 47, no. 1 (2003): 91-109.

¹⁴ Zhengxu Wang, Russell J. Dalton, and Doh Chull Shin, “Political Trust, Political Performance, and Support for Democracy,” in *Citizens, Democracy, and Markets around the Pacific Rim*, ed. Russell J. Dalton and Doh Chull Shin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 50-72.

debate, in which it was contended that Asians have more authoritarian and socially conservative outlooks than Westerners. Explicitly, Asian values have been connected with regime support across regimes types in the East Asia region.¹⁵ As such, we examined two different dimensions of Asian values: social traditionalism, which captures traditional values toward social relations, and authoritarian values, which reflect the orientation toward authoritarian political order and structures. In the East Asian context, many nondemocratic regimes also draw their support from a political legacy of a nation-building project or anti-imperialist struggle.¹⁶ To tap into this pillar of regime legitimacy, we included two additional sets of values, nationalism and xenophobia. The former measures respondents' identification with their country, and the latter expresses popular aversion to foreign competition and cultural influence. Given the prominence of political culture in understanding support for democracy, we expected that political values variables would be as important as government performance.

Rubric 4: Citizen Politics

Not to be left out of the study are the actions and characteristics of different citizens themselves. Citizens engage their polity and each other differently, leading to differences in their support for a regime. We examined variation in political interest, electoral participation (voting and participation in a campaign), and nonelectoral participation (signing petitions, engagement in local issues or protests, and so on). It is reasonable to hypothesize that citizens who engage actively are more critical than others, that is, critical citizens exhibit a lower level of regime support than those who are more acquiescent.¹⁷

Rubric 5: Demographic Variables

Finally, the control variables in the multivariate analysis are the socio-economic criteria, namely age, education, and gender. Differences among generations and classes and between genders have long been highlighted in assessing support

¹⁵ Yun-han Chu and Yutzung Chang, "Culture Shift and Political Stability: Comparing Mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong," in *Chinese Political Culture, 1989-1999*, ed. Shipping Hua (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2001), 320-348.

¹⁶ Muthiah Alagappa, "The Anatomy of Legitimacy," in *Political Legitimacy in Southeast Asia: The Quest for Moral Authority*, ed. Muthiah Alagappa (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), 11-30, and Jungmin Seo, "Nationalism and the Problem of Political Legitimacy in China," in *Legitimacy: Ambiguities of Political Success or Failure in East and Southeast Asia*, ed. Lynn White (Singapore: World Scientific, 2005), 141-182.

¹⁷ Pippa Norris, ed., *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Governance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), and Pippa Norris, *Democratic Deficit: Critical Citizens Revisited* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

for regimes. Conventional wisdom runs that people with less education are less resistant to the propaganda of authoritarian regimes and thus more receptive of their rule.¹⁸ Members of younger generations are usually more detached from the political system and less supportive of a regime than their elders. We explored the range of these indicators to learn whether they continue to matter, and how. We expected these indicators to be less important for regime support than government performance, governance, and political attitudes.

With this analytical framework in place, we were able to ask three important sets of questions. They include, first: What are the levels of regime support in East Asia, and do they vary across regime types? Second, what are the common factors that explain regime support across Asia and what do these common factors tell us about how Asians view their governments? Do cultural variables, for example, explain regime support to a greater extent than quality of governance or government performance? Or, does economic performance trump other factors? And third, do different underlying factors account for support from citizens in the different regime types in Asia? Do democratic regimes draw their legitimacy from a different set of factors than authoritarian regimes? These three factors—level of regime support, common underlying factors of regime support, and different factors for regime support—help us to understand regime legitimacy in East Asia.

Levels of Regime Support in East Asia

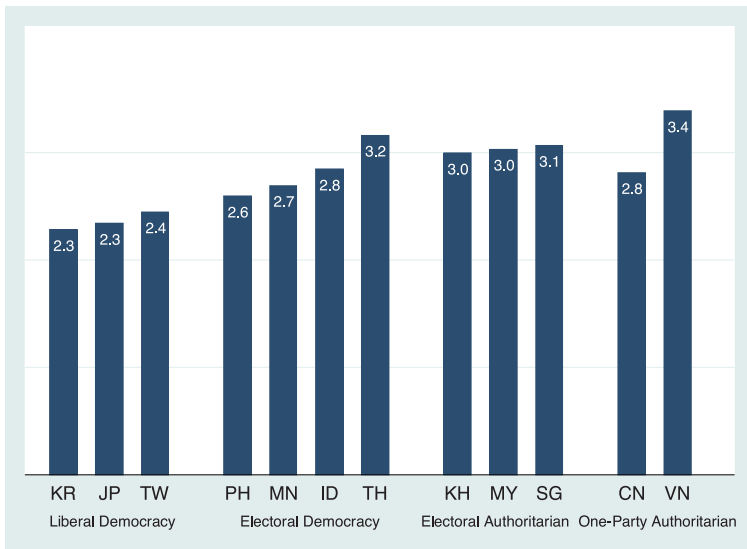
The ABS third-wave data suggest that all the regimes in East Asia receive considerable support from their citizens, with all of the countries surveyed receiving positive affirmation for their regimes. Figure 1 below shows that all of the regimes received a mean score of more than “2” (out of 4), indicating that citizens collectively support their regimes.

Yet, what is striking is that the more democratic systems received much lower regime support than the more authoritarian regimes. Figure 1 shows that Asian liberal democracy scores, averaging lower levels of regime support would point to less regime support; 2.3 is lower than the 3.1 average of one-party authoritarian systems. As regimes in Asia increase in authoritarianism, the levels of regime support generally increase as well.

On the surface, the immediate take-away from this finding is that East Asians support authoritarian rule. Moreover, the finding would suggest that democracies are more vulnerable to regime change, given their comparatively lower level of regime support. These impressions, however, require qualification. First, they fail to appreciate the nature of democratic regimes. With their broader political space for freedom of expression, democracies allow

¹⁸ Barbara Geddes and John Zaller, “Sources of Popular Support for Authoritarian Regimes,” *American Journal of Political Science* 33, no. 2 (May 1989): 319-347.

Figure 1. Level of Regime Support



for greater criticism. Furthermore, compared to nondemocracies, democracies generally have more critical citizens who are willing to speak out and to be more demanding of their system of government.

When considering levels of regime support in East Asia, a stronger interpretation of comparative regime support would be gained by looking at the differences among similar regimes and ranking them differently within these variations. Among the more authoritarian regimes—Vietnam, China, Singapore, and Malaysia—lower levels of regime support would point to less regime support, and raise questions about regime resilience. Among the four countries, China stands out as the anomaly, with considerably lower regime support than the other three authoritarian regimes. What is striking also is the similarity in the scores of Singapore and Malaysia; both electoral authoritarian systems are facing great demands for political liberalization. The logic of interpreting lower scores as less regime support is based on the fact that, in these more politically closed systems, expressions of dissent are indicators of opposition to the regime. To get a better sense of how to interpret these numbers and to evaluate their implications, it is necessary to look at the underlying factors explaining regime support in these countries.

Factors Underlying Regime Findings: Commonalities

We looked at the underlying factors across the different regime types. These are detailed below in table 3. The different levels of regime support beg the

question of the underlying factors accounting for this support. They are listed in the order of their explanatory power.

The most striking finding is the common factors that explain regime support across the different regime types. Table 3 highlights the features that all regimes have in common. These include authoritarian values, equality in treatment, anti-corruption practices, satisfaction with leadership (with party trust as a proxy in the one-party regimes that do not ask about leadership), economic performance, political competition, and rule of law.

Of these seven common factors underlying regime support, the factor that has the most explanatory power is equality. Across regime types, citizens expressed greater support when they believed that their respective regime was promoting equality. There are three different aspects associated with equality—provision of basic needs to all, fair treatment across income groups, and fair treatment across different ethnic groups. These three elements point to the central role of promoting basic needs and treating all citizens equally in commanding support for a political system. Not surprisingly, growing inequality in the region is a major pressure point on East Asian regimes. GINI coefficients in East Asia are high, especially in the more authoritarian systems (China 47, Singapore 48) and in Southeast Asia (Malaysia 46, Thailand 54, and the Philippines 44).

The second most important common factor is corruption, meaning the perception that the regime is not corrupt. Across the region, citizens who perceived that their regime had less corruption supported it more strongly than those who perceived corruption to be a problem. Corruption remains an important governance indicator for regime support in East Asia. It is interesting to note, however, that this persists across regime types, irrespective of the standing of different countries in their corruption performance by organizations such as Transparency International.

The third common factor is government responsiveness. Across regime types, perceived government responsiveness proved to be important for regime support, especially in liberal democratic countries such as Japan, Korea, and Taiwan, where regime support is relatively low. This fits Norris's critical citizen thesis.¹⁹ Given freedom of expression and association, citizens are allowed and even encouraged to voice their discontent with the government. Therefore, their perception of the extent to which government will solve their greatest concerns and their requests determines the level of their support for the regime. In less democratic countries, citizens' perception of the extent of government responsiveness remains significantly associated with their regime support. However, lack of freedom of speech might deter some citizens from voicing their dissent concerning the government. Compliance with authoritarian authority might further constrain other citizens' demands on government.

¹⁹ Norris, *Critical Citizens*, and id., *Democratic Deficit*.

Table 3. Common Factors Underlying Regime Support

		Liberal Democracy	Electoral Democracy	Electoral Authoritarian	One-Party	Overall
Government Performance	Economic Evaluation	0.0875*** [7]	0.0968*** [6]	0.1238*** [6]	0.0635*** [11]	0.1612*** [2]
	Government Responsiveness	0.1701*** [1]	0.1189*** [4]	0.134*** [3]	0.1218*** [4]	0.1408*** [3]
	Public Service	0.0175 [19]	0.0826*** [9]	0.0493*** [13]	0.0115 [18]	0.0123** [19]
	Human Safety	0.0284* [14]	0.0105 [17]	0.026** [15]	0.0423** [13]	0.0128** [18]
Quality of Governance	Anti-Corruption	0.1211*** [4]	0.1332*** [2]	0.1785*** [1]	0.1594*** [2]	0.1229*** [4]
	Political Competition	0.1103*** [5]	0.089*** [8]	0.1272*** [5]	0.0682*** [10]	0.0755*** [10]
	Vertical Accountability	0.0648*** [10]	-0.0079 [19]	-0.0331* [14]	0.018 [16]	0.0731*** [11]
	Horizontal Accountability	0.1075*** [6]	0.013*** [16]	0.1076 [9]	0.1129*** [6]	0.0147 [17]
	Equality	0.1514*** [2]	0.2227*** [1]	0.1718*** [2]	0.1113*** [7]	0.2093*** [1]
	Freedom	0.0193* [17]	0.0201* [15]	0.0698*** [11]	-0.003 [21]	0.0223*** [14]
	Rule of Law	0.0827 [8]	0.0334*** [13]	0.1172*** [7]	0.0761*** [9]	0.0851*** [9]
Political Values	Authoritarian vs. Democratic Values	0.077*** [9]	0.0649*** [10]	0.1273*** [4]	0.1212*** [5]	0.1047*** [6]
	Social Traditionalism	0.0169 [20]	0.1193*** [3]	0.1134*** [8]	0.1979*** [1]	0.114*** [5]
	Nationalism	-0.0405*** [11]	0.0085 [18]	-0.0087 [18]	0.0015* [17]	-0.0152** [16]
	Xenophobia	-0.0234** [15]	-0.1188*** [5]	0.0114 [17]	-0.1238*** [3]	-0.0992*** [7]
Political Engagement	Electoral Participation	0.0395*** [12]	0.0339*** [12]	-0.0059 [19]	0.008 [20]	0.023*** [13]
	Nonelectoral Participation	-0.0178 [18]	-0.0019 [20]	-0.0503*** [12]	0.0773*** [8]	-0.025 [21]
	Political Interest	-0.009 [21]	0.0542*** [11]	0.0043 [20]	0.0213 [15]	0.025*** [12]
Demographic Variables	Gender	-0.0287** [13]	-0.0019** [21]	-0.0019 [21]	-0.0101 [19]	0.0083* [20]
	Age	0.1214*** [3]	0.0326*** [14]	0.0238*** [16]	0.0583*** [12]	0.0193** [15]
	Education	-0.0208** [16]	-0.0928** [7]	-0.0777*** [10]	-0.0222 [14]	-0.0888*** [8]
N		4120	4388	2528	2627	13663

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.001$

Numbers in the brackets represent the rank of standardized coefficients within the model.

These factors, more or less, disentangle regime support from the perception of government responsiveness in less democratic countries.

Economic performance is also a common factor underlying regime support in East Asia across regime types. In the context of the priority for economic development in East Asia, Asian values have prevailed and become one of the most important indicators for measuring government performance. However, while this factor emerges as significant in all East Asian countries, it is especially striking in the one-party authoritarian regimes of Vietnam and China, where considerable weight has been placed on the importance of economic growth to fostering political legitimacy. In these societies, the explanatory power of economic performance is lower. This might be due to the fact that there is strong consensus (i.e., not a great deal of variation in a statistical sense) among the populace over the evaluation of economic performance.

The two remaining common factors are political competition, or the perception among the people that they can choose their leadership, and rule of law. Not surprisingly, political competition is more important in the more democratic regimes than in the more authoritarian systems, as there is greater competitiveness in choosing leaders. Yet, the consistent role that political competition plays across East Asian countries in generating support for the regime points to the need for competition in elite selection in places such as China and Vietnam.

Regimes in East Asia derive their legitimacy from a common set of factors. Most of these involve governance, including how the regimes address issues of equality, corruption, political competition, and the rule of law. Yet, government performance matters, especially government responsiveness and economic performance. Political attitudes have less explanatory power, and where they do matter, they do so in a manner that counteracts the traditional Asian values argument that authoritarian values reinforce support for authoritarian regimes. Rather, authoritarian values in East Asian societies correspond to greater support for the incumbent regime. What is also striking among the common explanations are the factors that are missing. Citizen politics and demographic indicators are not consistent across the region. For example, there is no common generational support for regimes, nor is there a common thread with regard to political partisanship or participation. These factors emerge as important in understanding the differences in regime support among the different types of regimes.

Factors Underlying Regime Findings: Differences

The differences in the factors explaining regime support in Asia are equally fascinating. Here is where political values emerge to differentiate the relationships among citizens in different regimes. Table 3 reveals some of the key differences across the regimes. The findings suggest that individuals who hold onto strong traditional and conservative values about patriarchal authority

support their regimes strongly, especially in developing countries, including Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, China, and Vietnam. Through education and the socialization process, traditional values haunt East Asian people and encourage their compliance with political authority. Due to the fundamental family structure that embraces Asian traditions, family members are expected to comply with paternalistic leadership without question. Such a belief shapes support for developed authoritarian regimes. Contrarily, in developed liberal democracies such as Japan, Korea, and Taiwan, due to the effects of globalization, the influence of traditional values is insignificant.

We find a similar dynamic with regard to the role that xenophobia plays in less developed regimes. Xenophobia refers to deep-rooted hatred toward unfamiliar global impacts. It emerges as an important explanatory factor in developing electoral democracy, and is an even sharper differentiator of support in one-party authoritarian China and Vietnam. It does not emerge as important in Malaysia and Singapore, which eagerly attract foreign direct investment in order to foster and stimulate the domestic economy. In East Asian liberal democracies, significance at a 0.10 level shows that the rejection of global impact and of foreign trade exists and still has a negative impact on regime authority. Nevertheless, the rejection might not be as significant as other factors mentioned above. The pattern that stands out is that different types of regimes rely on different sets of values and forms of governance that are tied to their regimes. Traditionalism and globalism seem to be two contradictory forces with regard to regime authority. While the former plays a supportive role and helps to maintain regime resilience in developing countries, the latter challenges governmental authority in modern democracies.

A stark indication of how different factors shape regime support is the role of nationalism. In the one-party regimes of Vietnam and China, nationalism is positively correlated with regime support. In the liberal democracies of Japan, Korea, and Taiwan, nationalism is negatively correlated with regime support, in that citizens who are less nationalistic are more inclined to support liberal democracy. The one-party regimes rely heavily on nationalism for support, whether it is expressed in anti-Japan sentiments promoted by China or anti-China sentiments stoked in Vietnam. In East Asia's liberal democracies, there appears to be a rejection of nationalism, as democracy is seen to be a move away from the era of strong nationalism that was used to buttress the support of earlier authoritarian leaders.

Another interesting difference among regime types in Asia involves the issue of electoral participation. High participation in elections corresponds to higher regime support in both liberal and electoral democracies; however, nonelectoral participation, such as lobbying, attending demonstrations and protests, and signing petitions, is significantly and positively associated with regime support in one-party authoritarian states. The logic of electoral participation in these different types of regimes fits with the findings. Because elections are generally considered the only resource of democratic legitimacy,

citizens who support democracy turn out to vote in democracies. Citizens who come out in one-party states where there is limited choice, take other nonelectoral routes to demonstrate their support of the system, while those who stay home are not party members or among the party faithful. Electoral participation takes on a different dynamic in the electoral authoritarian systems of Malaysia and Singapore. While some citizens cast their ballots and show their support for their regime, others do so with the hope of changing the system. This can help us to understand the increased competitiveness and engagement in elections in these countries.

Age emerges as an important explanatory factor for understanding regime support in Asia. Older citizens are more likely to express greater support for the regime than younger voters. This pattern holds for all of the regimes, except those in electoral authoritarian countries, where age differences are not significant. This finding suggests that younger East Asians are less supportive of their incumbent regimes.

In assessing the differences in explanations for public support of regimes across regime types in East Asia, the findings reinforce the need to look more carefully at how specific regime types rely on different factors to buttress their support, whether it is electoral participation or nationalism.

Ruminations: Understanding Support for Regimes and Regime Resilience in East Asia

The findings of our standardized regression model demonstrate that support for regimes in East Asia has significant congruence and variation. Political regimes in East Asia draw their political legitimacy from a common well. This is largely from their governance and government performance, notably government responsiveness and economic performance. The tie between support for a regime and governance indicators such as equality and corruption places pressures on East Asian governments to respond more effectively in these areas. Corruption, which remains a serious problem in the region, is not being adequately addressed and has the potential to undermine regime support. A similar dynamic is eroding equality, forcing regimes to grapple with how to manage growing inequality in their societies. These challenges are common across regime types, but the failure to manage them points to possible regime change, as failure to address such problems places pressures on systems, especially those that are more closed. Economic performance is also a possible point of regime vulnerability, as the task of delivering continued economic success becomes ever more challenging in a turbulent global economy.

Further, our empirical findings register an important qualification to the prevailing view that attributes the resiliency of East Asian nondemocratic regimes primarily to their superior capability in delivering economic prosperity. More important than economic performance to support for the regime in these countries is whether the government is perceived by citizens

as responsive to their needs, effective in controlling corruption, and equitable in their treatment of people. Ideology and culture also are important bases for regime legitimacy under nondemocratic regimes. These regimes gain support from cultivating nationalism and national identity. Additionally, they benefit from being embedded in hospitable cultural soil where traditional social and political values are still prevalent. While popular political convictions matter to all political systems in the region, they matter more to nondemocratic than to democratic regimes.

While the numbers point to higher support for authoritarian regimes than for democratic ones, these numbers need to be interpreted through an understanding that citizens in democracies give their political systems lower markings because they are more critical. In fact, the criticism of democracy in East Asia, especially in the more liberal democracies, is a sign of democratic resilience. The levels of regime support suggest, at least on the surface, that there is only one regime that faces serious immediate challenges ahead, that of China. The level of support for this one-party authoritarian system is on par with that of the liberal democracies, but without the same level of political space for criticism. There appears to be potential tensions ahead for China, as the regime responds to comparatively low support for the regime.

In reviewing the differences in the base of regime support across regime types, it is not surprising to see a parallel between regime types and different sources of legitimacy. Nationalism continues to be important for one-party systems, social traditionalism for more authoritarian systems, and freedom for more democratic ones. It is likely that the different regimes in the region will continue to base their political legitimacy on these featured elements. Thus, it is likely that nationalism will continue to be a prominent feature in China, while threats to freedom in democracies likely will evoke opposition to their regimes. One interesting prominent feature for regime resilience long-term is the impact of the young, as they are less likely to support their regimes than older citizens. In the long-term, with perhaps the exception of electoral authoritarian systems, this fact raises the vulnerability of regimes in East Asia.