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Cultural Hybridization in East Asia: Exploring an Alternative to the Global Democratization Thesis

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<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5pb0595n>

Author

Shin, Doh Chull

Publication Date

2014-05-01

CSD Center for the Study of Democracy

An Organized Research Unit
University of California, Irvine
www.democ.uci.edu

Since the fall of the Berlin Wall more than two decades ago, numerous public opinion surveys have been conducted to monitor and compare how ordinary citizenries react to the democratization taking place around them. The Afrobarometer, the Americas Barometer, the Arab Barometer, the Asian Barometer, the Eurasia Barometer, the Latino Barometer, the New Europe Barometer, and the World Values Surveys have regularly conducted such polls to examine and compare the dynamics and sources of citizen support for democracy across the various regions of the world (Heath et al. 2005; Mattes 2007; Shin 2007). These surveys have revealed that a large majority of the global mass publics prefers democracy to autocratic regimes. On the basis of this and other findings, an increasing number of scholars and policymakers have recently advocated a thesis of global democratization that holds that democracy has become a universal value and is emerging as the universally preferred political system (Diamond 2008; Inglehart and Welzel 2005; Inter-parliamentary Union 1998; Mattes 2010; Sen 1999).

Are these advocates of the global democratization thesis right in proclaiming that democracy is emerging as the universally preferred political system? This is the central question this paper seeks to explore but limited to the context of East Asia, a region known for democratic underdevelopment (Shin 2012, chap. 2). To this end, we first provide a critical review of how previous survey-based studies were conducted to estimate the relative preference of democracy as a political system. We then introduce hybridization as a new conceptual tool, required to ascertain the emerging patterns of political orientations among East Asians and to analyze the contours of cultural change taking place within the region.

Afterwards, we analyze the latest, third wave of the Asian Barometer surveys conducted in eleven East Asian countries to determine whether democracy is the most preferred system among each of the countries' citizenries. On the basis of this analysis, we evaluate the validity of the global democratization thesis and argue that it is premature, at best, to claim that democracy is emerging as the universally preferred system. Further, we argue that hybridization, unlike democratization, can serve as a concept capable of revealing and illuminating the true nature of cultural change taking place in post-authoritarian and authoritarian societies.

Previous Research on Mass Political Orientations

The past two decades have witnessed a major qualitative shift in the study of political cultures. With the proliferation of democratic political systems throughout the globe, how ordinary

citizenries view democracy has replaced the notion of civic culture as a central concern in research and theory on political culture (Booth and Seligson 2009; Bratton, Mattes, and Gyimah-Boadi, 2005; Camp 2000; Chu et al. 2008; Diamond and Plattner 2008; Rose, Mishler, and Haerpfer 1998). Previous survey-based studies on democratization have generated a wealth of information on the various roles citizenries play in the process of democratic transition and consolidation. These studies offer a number of valuable insights for understanding mass political orientations, but they suffer from a number of serious deficiencies, when culled for our purposes of measuring hybridization of citizen views.

Previous studies have generated a growing consensus that mass political orientations are crucial to the democratic transformation of authoritarian political systems and to the consolidation of nascent democratic systems. While any political system can become *institutionally* democratic with the installation of competitive elections and multiple political parties, these institutions alone do not make for a fully functioning democratic political system. As Rose and his associates (1998, 8) aptly point out, these institutions constitute nothing more than “the hardware” of representative democracy. To operate the institutional hardware, a democratic political system requires “software” that is congruent with the various hardware components (Almond and Verba 1963; Eckstein 1966). Because what ordinary citizens think about democracy and its institutions is a key component of such software, the conclusion has been that a stable and full democracy cannot be established unless an overwhelming majority of the mass citizenry embraces democracy as “the only game in town” (Linz and Stepan, 1996; see also Diamond 1999; Rose and Shin 2001).

Having established the importance of popular support for democracy, previous research has gone on to show that such support, especially in post-authoritarian and authoritarian societies, is a highly complex and dynamic phenomenon with multiple dimensions and layers (Dalton 1999; Klingemann 1999; Shin 2007). Citizen support for democracy is a multi-layered or multi-level phenomenon because citizens comprehend democracy both as a set of abstract political ideals or values and as the actual, practical workings of its institutions. Meanwhile, citizen support for democracy is a multi-dimensional phenomenon in that it involves both the acceptance of democratic decision-making and the rejection of authoritarianism.

While we agree there is a need to conceive of democratic support as multi-layered and multi-dimensional, we see a conceptual error in categorizing regime support as either democratic or authoritarian. According to Larry Diamond (2002), nearly two out of five political systems in the world are “hybrid” in the sense that they are neither fully democratic nor fully authoritarian. Many of these regimes have proven capable of remaining hybrid for a long time (Levitsky and Way 2010). Yet, they were never taken into account as a type of non-democratic system when measuring the relative preference of democracy to its alternatives.

In measuring citizen preference for democracy over non-democracies, therefore, previous studies limited the non-democratic alternatives to military and civilian dictatorship, technical meritocracy, and one-party states. As a result, virtually nothing is known about how ordinary citizenries, particularly those in authoritarian and new democracies, compare full democracy with hybrid systems that mix democratic regime characteristics—such as competitive elections—with the non-democratic characteristics—such as media censorship and suppression of civil rights. By recognizing hybrid systems as partially democratic, previous studies failed to consider those as a distinct type of the preferred systems. Undoubtedly, this failure led to an overestimation of the extent to which democracy is preferred to its alternatives.

Moreover, in determining which type of political system citizens preferred, previous survey-based studies focused exclusively on citizen reactions to regimes at the abstract level, where “democracy” and “authoritarianism” represent an idealistic structure of political institutions stipulated in the constitution. These studies made little effort to determine citizen preferences for the specific methods of governance, that is, the political processes by which institutions operate on a daily basis. As further substantiated below, the failure to consider citizen’s views of democracy-in-practice has led to an overestimation of citizen preferences for a democratic political system, while the failure to consider citizen attachment to the authoritarian methods of daily governance has led to the underestimation of citizen preferences for an authoritarian political system. These failures together, therefore, have resulted in an inaccurate account of the type of political system citizens truly prefer most in terms of both the abstract and the practical realms of the system.

Analytically, moreover, previous studies with few exceptions (McDonough, Barnes, and Lopez-Pina 1998; Shin and Wells 2005) were concerned exclusively with the extent to which pro-democratic regime orientations prevail over anti-authoritarian regime orientations. With such quantitative analyses of those orientations, we are not able to ascertain the *qualitatively different patterns* in which people embrace and reject democracy and its alternatives. In other words, those analyses are not capable of unraveling **how democratic orientations interact with authoritarian orientations in the minds of ordinary citizenries. Failing to capture the patterns of these interactions, previous research tended to hide more than reveal the shifting natures of cultural change taking place among the mass publics of post-authoritarian and authoritarian societies.**

In an attempt to overcome these deficiencies in the literature, this study first considers a hybrid system as a regime type distinct from democracy and authoritarianism. Next, this study analyzes orientations to hybridized systems alongside orientations to democratic and authoritarian systems to determine the most and least preferred system types among the East Asian population. Finally, by examining how citizens form hybridized preferences at both the abstract and practical level of regime support, this study ascertains the patterns of cultural hybridization unfolding in East Asia.

The Notion of Hybridization

Due to many decades of socialization to authoritarian rule, many citizenries of authoritarian and post-authoritarian societies remain undecided about whether a democracy or dictatorship would offer the most satisfying solutions to the problems facing their societies. As a result, many of these democratic novices end up embracing both democratic and authoritarian political propensities concurrently, instead of always choosing one over the other (Lagos 1997, 2001; Rose and Mishler 1994; Rose, Mishler, and Haerpfer 1998; Shin 1999). Consequently, as known in the literature on political socialization, most citizenries of these societies, who have little experience and limited sophistication about democratic politics, are likely to live the rest of their lives as neither fully democratic nor fully authoritarian in their political preferences.

In the minds of these citizenries, how do democracy and autocracy interact with each other? Do citizens perceive all important aspects of one system superior to those of the other? Or do they favor some aspects of both systems? If they favor some of both, which specific aspects of democratic and authoritarian systems do they embrace, and which do they reject? These

questions are crucial to unraveling the contours and dynamics of cultural change currently unfolding in many authoritarian and post-authoritarian societies. To date, little systematic effort has been made to address directly any of these questions with national and multinational public opinion surveys.

In previous survey-based studies, democracy is assumed to be the best political system and suitable for any type of society (Dahl 1989; Diamond 2003; Rose, Mishler, and Haerpfer 1998).¹ Democracy is also assumed to survive and thrive when a large majority of the population prefers it to its alternatives (Diamond 1999; Linz and Stepan 1996). Therefore, how people dissociate themselves from the virtues of authoritarianism and embrace those of democracy has been a central concern of earlier studies. The *democratization* of political orientations, or development of democratic support, has therefore been employed as a central conceptual tool for the study of cultural change.

Being exclusively concerned with the extent to which mass citizenries have replaced authoritarian orientations with democratic ones, however, this concept limits the analysis to how much further democratization has to go before it will be complete and thus successful; it fails to consider that the mass citizenries are perhaps not looking for the complete replacement of authoritarian orientations with democratic ones. Thus, to offer a comprehensive and balanced picture of how culture is changing in these societies, we set forth as the central concept of our inquiry the *hybridization* of democratic and authoritarian orientations.

It should be noted that as this study looks at just one particular snapshot of time, that is 2010 and 2011, when the latest round of the Asia Barometer Surveys was administered, we do not aim to distinguish evolving hybrid orientations from set ones; in other words, we do not separate those who are still evolving toward full democratization and in their incomplete state still have some authoritarian views mixed into their regime preferences from those who are not evolving toward full democratization but are creating preferences in which hybridization will exist.

Before we go further, we must address what constitutes hybridization. In the world of biology and other life sciences, hybridization refers to the process of blending one variety with another variety to produce a new variety. In our study of the subjective world of political life, it refers to the process of mixing support for one type of political system with support for another type to produce a new type of mixed orientation. Specifically, a hybridized political orientation is a distinct view involving a mix of preferences; neither democracy nor autocracy is fully favored or fully rejected.

How do people hybridize their political orientations to come up with their preferred political system? Within regions and countries, are there different patterns of hybridization? To address these questions, we treat the hybridization of political orientations as a multi-dimensional and multi-layered phenomenon. It is multi-dimensional because it always involves democratic and non-democratic orientations. It is multi-layered because the kind of political system citizens report preferring might differ at the abstract and practical levels.

At the abstract level of regime structure, hybridization involves mixing desire and approval of democracy and authoritarianism. At the practical process level of daily governance, hybridization mixes favorable orientations toward democratic methods with those of authoritarian methods. Anytime citizens prefer a mix of orientations between the two levels of political system—neither fully accepting nor fully rejecting either democracy or authoritarianism at either level—we call it systemic hybridization.

Why do some people engage in the hybridization of their political orientations, while others don't? Why do some people engage in it more often than others? In an initial attempt to explore these questions, we examined the relationship between the frequency of hybridization and the type of political system in which people live. For this analysis, we divided eleven East Asian countries into four kinds of regimes: liberal democracy (Japan, Korea, and Taiwan), electoral democracy (Mongolia, Indonesia, and the Philippines), electoral authoritarianism (Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand), and one-party states (China and Vietnam). These four kinds of regimes fall into three more basic regime categories: democratic (liberal democracy), hybrid (electoral democracy and electoral authoritarianism), and authoritarian (one-party states). In the sections that follow, we present results of this and other analyses of the Asian Barometer Surveys (ABS hereafter) conducted in these eleven East Asian countries during 2010 and 2011.

Orientations to Political Regimes

What type of political system do East Asians prefer most? Is it democracy, an authoritarian system, or a hybrid system? To determine the preferred type of political system accurately, we first measured how favorably or unfavorably citizens reacted to both democracy and autocracy as regimes, i.e., we measured their reactions to the democracy and authoritarianism at the abstract level. Then we measured how favorably or unfavorably citizens reacted to both democratic and authoritarian government processes. Finally, we considered citizen support at both the regime and process levels together to identify citizens' preferred types of political system, whether a democracy, authoritarianism or a hybrid system.

We accomplished all of this by examining responses to four pairs of questions, each of which the ABS asked to tap support for democratic and authoritarian structures and procedures. We recoded and recombined those responses in a variety of ways described below to identify democratic, authoritarian, and hybrid orientations, and to capture the shifting nature of each country's political culture more accurately than what has been done in the existing literature.

Affinity for Democracy as a Regime

We begin our examination of the regime preferences of citizenries in East Asia by selecting a pair of questions from the ABS that allows us to estimate the general level of preference for a democratic regime. These questions probe, respectively, the desirability of democracy and the suitability of democracy. We consider pro-democratic responses to the questions individually and collectively to measure democratic attachment at the regime level.

The first question asked respondents to indicate on a 10-point scale the sort of regime they find the most desirable. A score of 1 indicates a desire for a "complete dictatorship," while a score of 10 indicates preference for a "complete democracy." The results in Table 1 indicate that an absolute majority of the people in each of the eleven East Asian countries expressed a desire for democracy by choosing a score of 6 or above.² From 61 percent in Japan to more than 97 percent in Mongolia expressed a desire for democracy. Evidently, most people in the entire region of East Asia (85%) prefer, at least in principle, to live in a democratic regime.

Table 1. Orientations to Democracy and Its Alternatives as a Regime

A. Orientations to Democracy

Country	Desire	Suitability	Overall Attachment			No Answer
			None	Partial	Full	
Japan	61.1%	71.9%	16.8%	25.3%	52.8%	5.1%
Korea	92.9	82.3	1.6	13.8	78.6	6.0
Taiwan	85.6	74.7	5.0	15.6	70.4	9.0
Indonesia	79.3	69.8	3.7	12.8	66.1	17.4
Mongolia	96.5	83.6	1.6	12.9	82.7	2.8
Philippines	80.8	62.3	10.2	31.6	55.2	3.0
Singapore	93.5	90.7	2.8	8.1	87.4	1.7
Malaysia	81.8	80.2	6.0	15.7	71.0	7.3
Thailand	89.9	80.8	1.0	13.0	75.9	10.1
China	76.9	64.5	1.3	14.4	57.2	27.1
Vietnam	91.3	83.3	1.0	9.2	81.2	8.6
(Pooled)	84.5	76.7	4.6	15.7	70.8	8.9

B. Orientations to Authoritarianism

Country	Civilian Dictatorship	Military Dictatorship	Overall Attachment			No Answer
			None	Partial	Full	
Japan	14.9%	3.4%	81.2%	14.3%	1.9%	2.6%
Korea	17.8	6.8	78.3	13.7	5.1	2.9
Taiwan	15.1	4.1	77.9	14.2	2.3	5.6
Indonesia	14.1	37.0	47.1	30.0	8.5	14.5
Mongolia	53.8	11.2	40.8	45.7	8.6	4.9
Philippines	34.7	24.3	53.3	31.6	13.4	1.7
Singapore	10.4	10.4	77.9	14.4	2.8	4.9
Malaysia	36.4	19.3	54.4	29.8	12.5	3.3
Thailand	22.5	20.2	57.7	25.3	7.7	9.3
China	27.7	20.0	50.4	20.6	12.2	16.8
Vietnam	14.8	14.6	50.1	15.5	5.0	29.4
(Pooled)	23.8	15.6	60.8	23.2	7.3	8.7

C. Relative Preference for a Democratic or Non-democratic Regime

Country	Regime Types			No Answer	Mean on a 5-pointscale
	Authoritarian	Hybrid	Democratic		
Japan	1.0%	46.8%	45.4%	6.8%	1.20
Korea	0.0	29.5	62.1	8.4	1.58
Taiwan	0.3	29.0	59.7	11.0	1.53
Indonesia	0.8	39.7	36.2	23.2	1.22
Mongolia	0.3	57.1	35.4	7.2	1.17
Philippines	1.7	64.0	30.2	4.1	0.87
Singapore	0.3	23.2	70.2	6.3	1.66
Malaysia	0.7	48.9	40.9	9.5	1.14
Thailand	0.1	36.8	46.5	16.6	1.40
China	0.3	34.3	33.0	32.4	1.26
Vietnam	0.1	24.8	40.8	34.3	1.51
(Pooled)	0.5	39.5	45.5	14.5	1.32

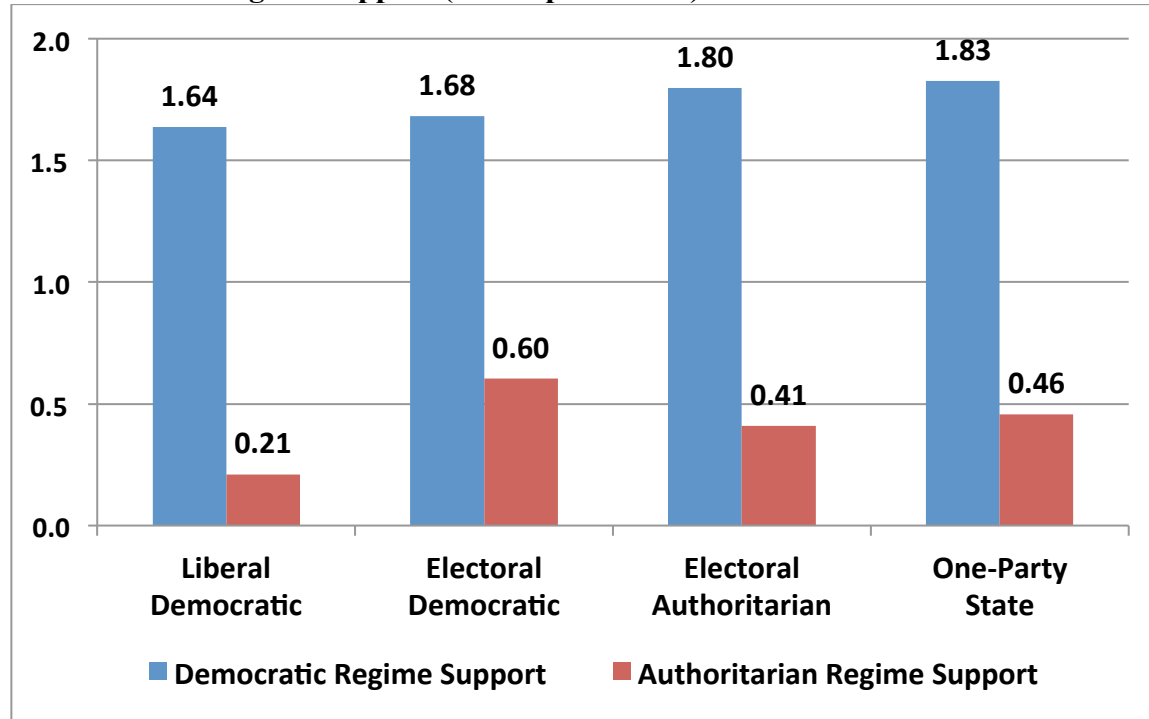
The second ABS question asked respondents to rate the suitability of democracy on a similar 10-point scale. A score of 1 on this scale indicates “completely unsuitable,” while a score of 10 indicates “completely suitable.” A smaller majority in every country except Japan indicated that they considered democracy suitable by choosing a rating of 6 or above on this scale. In Malaysia and Singapore, there is little difference between the two ratings of democratic regime affinity. In all of the other countries, nearly 10 percent or more of those who expressed the personal desire to live in a democracy perceived it to be unsuitable for their own country. In striking contrast, more than 10 percent of the Japanese reported not wanting to live in a democracy while perceiving it to be suitable for their country. In East Asia as a whole, citizenries’ perceptions of democracy’s suitability are somewhat lower than their desire for democracy (77% vs. 85%).

In addition to evaluating these items individually, we combined affirmative responses to these questions into a 3-point index to measure the overall level of support for a democratic regime. On this index, a score of 0 means no attachment, a score of 2 means full attachment, and a score of 1 indicates partial attachment to democracy as a regime. The second panel of Table 1 reports the proportions expressing no, partial, and full attachment to democracy at the regime level.

All eleven East Asian countries are alike in that those who are *fully attached* to democracy as a regime constitute a majority. These countries are also alike in that those who are *fully unattached* to it constitute the smallest group. When all of these countries are considered together, the *fully attached* constitute a majority of 71 percent of the East Asian population, while the *fully unattached* form a very small minority of 5 percent. Yet the percentages vary considerably across the countries. The *fully attached* vary by more than 30 percentage points from 53 percent in Japan to 87 percent in Singapore. The *fully unattached* vary from a low of 1 percent in Thailand and Vietnam to a high of 17 percent in Japan. It is surprising that Japan, East Asia’s oldest democracy, is the East Asian country with the smallest proportion of the *fully attached* and the largest proportion of the *fully unattached*.

How does the mean level of democratic regime support vary across East Asia’s four different kinds of regimes: liberal democracy, electoral democracy, electoral authoritarianism, and one-party state? For each of these types, Figure 1 exhibits each country’s mean score on a 3-point scale tapping attachment to democracy. The most notable feature of the figure concerns the nature of the relationship between attachment to democracy among East Asians and their country’s level of democratization. The lower the level of democratization in the country, the higher the level of citizen support for democracy as a regime, and vice versa. Support for democracy at the abstract regime level is highest for one-party states (China and Vietnam), the least democratized regime type, with a score of 1.83 on the 3-point index. One-party states are followed by electoral authoritarian states (Thailand, Singapore, and Malaysia), electoral democracies (Mongolia, Indonesia, and the Philippines), and liberal democracies (Japan, Korea, and Taiwan). Why do East Asians of less democratized countries favor democracy as a regime to a greater extent than their peers of more democratized countries?

Figure 1. Resident Types of Political Systems and Mean Levels of Democratic and Authoritarian Regime Support (on a 3-point scale)



One plausible reason is that democracy means different things in different countries and different things to different people even within the same country. To the many citizenries throughout the non-democratic world, democracy is likely to represent a political ideal yet to be achieved, while to those who live in a democracy, it means political practices, either successful or unsuccessful (Shin 2012, chap. 7). Put another way, once democracy is experienced, in people’s minds, it is no longer just an ideal end but also the means used to achieve that end. Regardless of whether this is the cause for the phenomenon of greater democratization leading to less democratic regime support in East Asia, this finding challenges the democratic learning theory, which links the experience of democratic rule to greater support for democracy (Mishler and Rose 2002; McClosky and Zaller 1984; see Anderson and Dodd 2005; Fuchs, Guidorossi, and Svensson 1995; Peffley and Rohschneider 2003; Rohschneider 1999; Weil 1994).

Attachment to Non-Democratic Regimes

When East Asians report viewing democracy as both desirable and suitable as a regime, do they also report viewing authoritarianism as undesirable and unsuitable? If not, to what extent do they remain attached to authoritarian regimes? To address these questions, the ABS asked respondents whether they would favor a return to an authoritarian regime (either a one-man civilian dictatorship or a military dictatorship). For each and all of the countries, Table 1 shows the percentages attached to each authoritarian regime and the percentages of those *fully unattached*, *partially attached*, and *fully attached* to authoritarianism at the abstract level.

Table 1 shows that in all countries except Mongolia, those favoring a return to each of these individual dictatorships constitute minorities. Only in Mongolia, which registered the

second highest level of full support (83%) for democracy does a majority (55%) express affinity for the civilian dictatorship which had been their experience for decades. It appears that many Mongolians remain attached to civilian dictatorship while expressing an affinity for democracy. In the Philippines and Malaysia also, a substantial minority of more than one-third remain attached to a one-man dictatorship, despite the fact that 55 and 71 percent of their respective populations express full support for a democratic regime.

Table 1 also shows that East Asian countries are divided considerably in their levels of support for the different authoritarian rules. While civilian dictatorship garners substantial favor in Mongolia (55%), the Philippines (35%), and Malaysia (33%) it receives little favor in Singapore (11%), Japan (15%), and Taiwan (16%). Meanwhile, military dictatorship collects substantial support in China (23%), the Philippines (24%), and Indonesia (40%), but has negligible support in Japan (3%), Taiwan (4%), and Korea (7%). Of the eleven countries, Indonesia is the only country where military dictatorship is more popular than civilian dictatorship (40% vs. 16%). Considering all of the countries together reveals that civilian dictatorship is far more popular than military dictatorship in East Asia (25% vs. 17%).

To estimate the overall levels of attachment to authoritarianism at the abstract regime level, we combined responses that expressed affinity for non-democracy into a 3-point index scale. Scores of 0 and 2 mean, respectively, *no* and *full attachment*, while a score of 1 indicates *partial attachment*. In three—China (12%), the Philippines (13%), and Malaysia (13%)—of the eleven East Asian countries, more than 10 percent expressed *full attachment* to authoritarian regimes. In all other countries, the *fully attached* constitute a small minority of less than 10 percent of the population. Of these countries, Japan (2%), Taiwan (2%), and Singapore (3%) have the smallest proportions of authoritarian supporters. In East Asia as a whole, such supporters form a small minority of 7 percent.

In every country, those who express *no attachment* to authoritarian regimes are most numerous, but their proportions vary a great deal across the countries. In Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore, a large majority of more than 75 percent are *fully detached* from the idea of those regimes. In Mongolia, Indonesia, and Vietnam, the *fully detached* constitute 50 percent or less of their respective populations. Between these two groups of countries, there is a great deal of difference in the levels of full detachment from authoritarianism, a difference of up to 40 percentage points. Comparing these two groups of countries suggests that full detachment from authoritarianism has more to do with a country's level of socioeconomic development than its experience with democratic rule.

Figure 1 compares the overall level of attachment to authoritarian regimes across four types of political systems. Contrary to what is expected from democratic learning theory, there is no consistently negative relationship between authoritarian regime attachment and democratic political experience among the populations of East Asia. While the level of authoritarian regime affinity is lowest among the most democratic countries—the three liberal democracies (0.21)—it is not highest among the least democratic countries—the two one-party states (0.46). Electoral democracies (0.60) register a significantly higher level of authoritarian regime affinity than either of their two less democratic peers, electoral authoritarian regimes (0.41) and one-party states (0.46). In terms of full detachment from authoritarianism, electoral authoritarian regimes lead electoral democracies by 15 percentage points (63% vs. 47%). From these findings, it is evident that the depth and length of democratic political experience do not necessarily weaken affinity for authoritarianism nor strengthen affinity for democracy.

Net Regime Preferences

Having considered citizen support for democracy and authoritarianism at the abstract regime level, we can now ask if citizens prefer democracy, authoritarianism, or some mixed type of regime. If they do prefer democracy, to what extent do they prefer democracy to its alternatives? To address these questions, we considered democratic and authoritarian regime preferences together on a 5-point index constructed by subtracting the scores of the 3-point authoritarian regime preferences index from those of the 3-point democratic regime preferences index).

On this 5-point net regime preference index, the two extreme scores of -2 and +2 indicate, respectively, complete support for authoritarian and democratic regimes. The other three scores (-1, 0, and +1) indicate different mixes of democratic and authoritarian regime preferences. Therefore, we collapsed these scores into the broad category of hybrid regime preference. To summarize and highlight cross-national differences, we calculated the percentages falling into each of the three different categories of regime preferences, *democratic*, *hybrid*, and *authoritarian*. For each country, Table 1 reports the percentage of citizens who express a preference for authoritarian, democratic, and hybrid regimes. It also reports their mean scores on the 5-point summary index (with higher scores indicating a stronger preference for democracy).

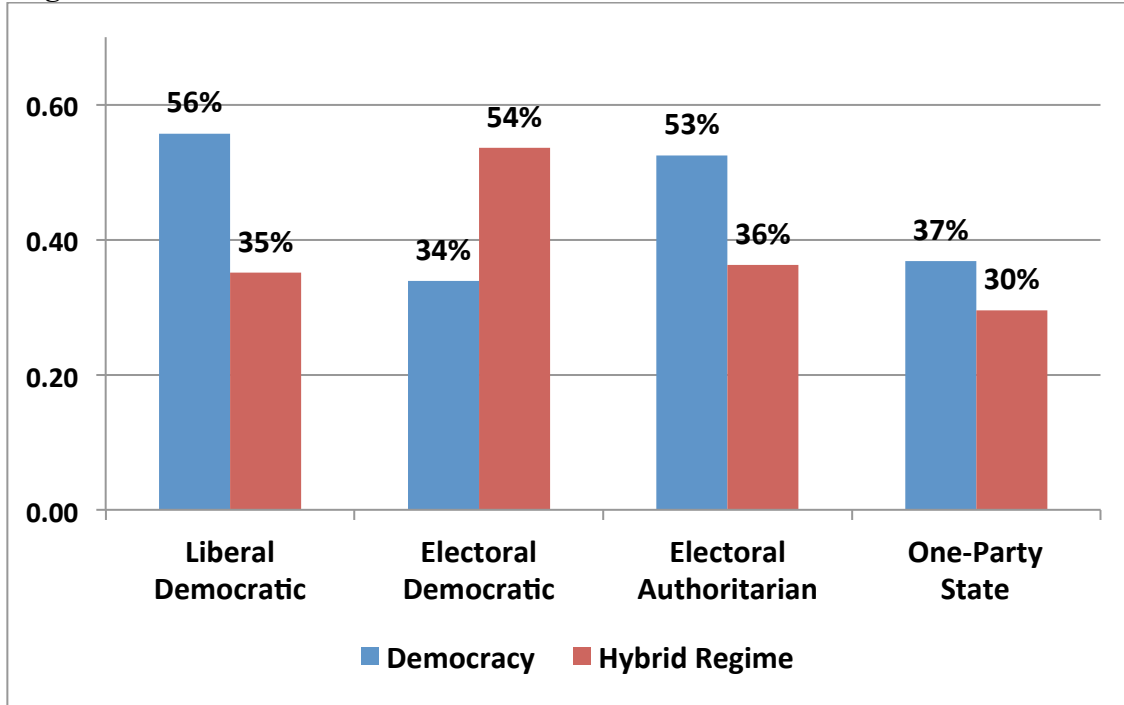
The positive mean scores reported in the table indicate that the citizenries in all eleven East Asian countries prefer democracy to its alternatives. Yet the magnitude of these net democratic regime preferences varies considerably across the countries. Singapore (1.7), Korea (1.6), Taiwan (1.5), and Vietnam (1.5) average higher than 1.5, a score significantly higher than the midpoint (1.0) of the positive end of the scale. The Philippines (0.9) is the only country averaging lower than the positive midpoint. The other five countries are located in the middle of the most and least positive distribution of net democratic regime preferences with scores higher than 1.0 but lower than 1.5.

All East Asian countries are alike in that only a very small minority of less than 2 percent of their populations prefers an authoritarian regime to a democratic or hybrid regime. In what percentage of their populations prefers a democratic to hybrid regime, however, the countries differ considerably. More surprisingly, those with hybrid regime preferences form a majority in two countries, Mongolia and the Philippines, while those with a preference for a democratic regime form a majority in three countries, Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore. In six countries—Japan, China, Mongolia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Malaysia—hybridized regime preferences are more popular than preferences for a democratic regime. In five other countries—Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Singapore, and Vietnam—a democratic preference is more popular than a hybrid preference. In East Asia as a whole, those who prefer a democratic regime outnumber those who prefer a hybrid regime by a small margin of 6 percentage points (46% vs. 40%).

In which type of political system are citizens most likely to have democratic preferences? In which type of political system are citizen preferences most likely to represent a hybrid? Figure 2 shows that *democratic regime preferences* are most popular in a liberal democracy and are least so in an electoral democracy. Hybrid regime preferences, on the other hand, are most popular in electoral authoritarianism and least popular in a one-party state. Democratic regime supporters are most numerous in the most democratic countries, but they are not least numerous in the least democratic or most repressive political systems. This indicates that the popularity of democracy among East Asians does not have much to do with the democratic nature of the

regime in which they live. But the hybrid nature of their regime affects their preference for a hybrid regime.

Figure 2. Resident Types of Political System and Preferences for Democratic and Hybrid Regimes



Orientations to Political Processes

Now that we have examined East Asians' orientations to democracy and authoritarianism at the abstract level of regime structure, we can turn to the practical level of government processes and ask what methods of governing East Asians prefer most and least. Do large majorities of East Asian citizens prefer to resolve political issues and manage governmental businesses democratically? Or do they prefer to mix democratic methods with authoritarian ones? To address these questions, we selected two pairs of items, one pair focusing on the procedural norms of democratic governance and the other on the authoritarian practices of governance.

Democratic Processes

Democratic political systems operate according to a variety of procedural norms that outline acceptable leadership practices. Unlike their authoritarian counterparts, for example, democratically elected leaders have to follow constitutionally established rules and other procedures including the rule of law, the separation of powers, and the system of checks and balances between different branches of the government. To measure citizens' support for those norms, we considered, both individually and collectively, pro-democratic responses to a pair of ABS questions. Table 2 reports the percentages of these responses.

Table 2. Orientations to Democracy and Its Alternatives as a Process of Governance**A. Orientations to Democracy as a Process**

Country	Rule of Law	Checks And Balances	Overall Attachment			No Answer
			None	Partial	Full	
Japan	67.8%	57.9%	11.6%	39.0%	41.6%	7.8%
Korea	71.3	62.3	13.1	32.9	48.9	5.1
Taiwan	68.5	38.8	17.0	44.2	30.0	8.8
Indonesia	53.5	48.3	17.6	29.3	34.2	18.9
Mongolia	61.0	43.7	17.7	41.9	29.6	10.8
Philippines	65.2	34.2	24.0	49.0	24.4	2.6
Singapore	47.6	50.5	29.1	31.1	32.0	7.8
Malaysia	53.2	45.3	26.7	37.1	29.6	6.6
Thailand	37.2	49.7	25.6	33.0	24.3	17.1
China	58.3	31.8	19.4	30.3	24.7	25.5
Vietnam	39.8	33.8	13.3	17.5	21.9	47.3
(Pooled)	56.7	45.1	19.6	35.0	31.0	14.4

B. Orientations to Authoritarianism as a Process

Country	Judicial Dependency	Media Censorship	Overall Attachment			No Answer
			None	Partial	Full	
Japan	21.8%	13.9%	64.9%	20.2%	7.0%	7.9%
Korea	28.4	40.1	43.7	33.1	16.8	6.4
Taiwan	32.5	22.9	47.4	33.2	10.1	9.3
Indonesia	41.3	49.0	23.5	28.6	28.6	19.3
Mongolia	40.2	75.4	14.3	47.7	32.1	5.9
Philippines	65.4	52.9	17.7	40.7	38.2	3.4
Singapore	58.7	63.4	17.4	34.2	42.6	5.8
Malaysia	52.2	69.3	15.8	39.0	40.2	5.0
Thailand	26.3	61.8	19.8	44.0	19.4	16.7
China	48.3	51.0	21.8	26.8	32.7	18.7
Vietnam	37.0	67.5	1.7	18.5	32.7	47.1
(Pooled)	41.1	51.6	26.2	33.3	27.3	13.2

C. Relative Preference for the Democratic or Non-democratic Method of Governance

Country	Process Types			No Answer	Mean on a 5-point scale
	Authoritarian	Hybrid	Democratic		
Japan	1.4%	55.2%	32.4%	11.0%	0.96
Korea	5.4	58.3	28.3	8.0	0.67
Taiwan	2.9	65.6	18.7	12.8	0.56
Indonesia	10.8	51.7	14.7	22.8	0.15
Mongolia	7.8	72.7	6.3	13.2	-0.04
Philippines	12.9	76.1	6.7	4.3	-0.21
Singapore	21.2	59.0	10.2	9.6	-0.23
Malaysia	16.6	67.3	8.0	8.1	-0.23
Thailand	9.8	60.5	6.9	22.8	0.00
China	12.8	47.0	11.0	29.3	-0.02
Vietnam	8.3	37.0	0.8	53.9	-0.41
(Pooled)	10.0	59.1	13.1	17.8	0.14

The first survey item asked respondents how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the statement, “When the country is facing a difficult situation, it is okay for the government to disregard the law in order to deal with the situation.” In three countries—Thailand (37%), Singapore (48%), and Vietnam (40%)—minorities endorsed the rule of law by disagreeing with the statement. In eight other countries, supporters of this democratic norm constitute majorities ranging from 53 in Malaysia to 71 percent in Korea.

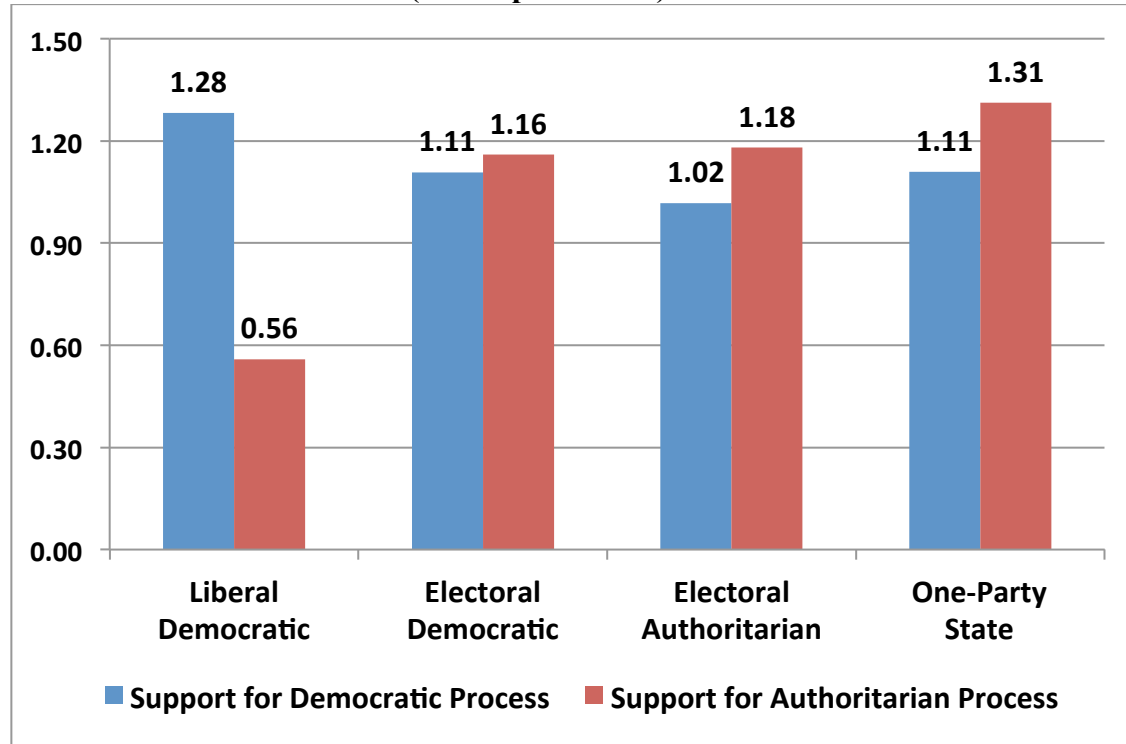
The second question dealt with the procedural norm of checks and balances between the executive and legislative branches. The ABS asked respondents how strongly they would agree or disagree with the statement, “If the government is constantly checked by the legislature, it cannot possibly accomplish great things.” Again, in only three countries, Japan (58%), Korea (62%), and Singapore (51%) did a majority endorse the democratic norm by disagreeing with the statement. In the eight other countries, minorities ranging from 31 percent in China to 49 percent in Thailand endorsed the norm of checks and balances.

Indeed, the percentages affirming the two norms of democratic governance vary considerably across the eleven countries. A careful comparison of these percentages reveals three different patterns of supporting democratic norms. The most positive of these patterns is evident in Japan and Korea, two of the region’s three liberal democracies, where a majority endorsed each of the two norms. The most negative pattern, in which a minority endorsed each democratic norm, is shown in Thailand and Vietnam. The seven other countries, including liberal democratic Taiwan, fall into a third, middle-of-the-road pattern in which only one norm receives majority support. These findings clearly indicate that levels of democratic procedural support vary a great deal more than those of democratic regime support.

To measure the overall level of support for democracy as a political process, we summed pro-democratic responses to these questions into a 3-point index. As above, scores of 0 and 2 indicate, respectively, *no attachment* and *full attachment* to the democratic processes; a score of 1, on the other hand, indicates *partial attachment*. For each country, Table 2 reports the percentages of the *fully unattached*, *partially attached*, and *fully attached*. The most striking result in the table is that in all eleven countries, including the three liberal democracies, only minorities express *full attachment* to the democratic process. In as many as four countries—China, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam—less than 25 percent fully supports democracy at the practical, procedural level; this figure amounts to just half of the full supporters of democracy at the abstract, regime level. Also, in all of the other countries, significantly smaller proportions of people support democracy as the method of governance rather than do as a regime.

Finally, we examined whether there is any relationship between the overall level of support for democratic procedures and citizens’ type of political system. Figure 3 reports the mean level of such support for each of the four system types. As the democratic learning theory would suggest, the support level is highest for countries of the liberal democratic type, which average a 1.3 on the 0-2 point index. But democratic support is not lowest for the least democratic type of one-party states. Instead, it is lowest in electoral authoritarian regimes, one of the two types of hybrid regimes. These findings, when considered together, suggest that there isn’t much connection between the type of political system citizens live under and their support for democracy.

Figure 3. Resident Types of Political System and Levels of Overall Support for Democratic and Authoritarian Processes (on a 3-point scale)



Authoritarian Process

In light of these relatively low levels of support for democracy as a process, we wondered to what extent East Asians remain attached to the procedures of authoritarian governance. To address this question, we again considered responses to two ABS items, each of which deals with a different practice of authoritarian rule. Pro-authoritarian responses to this set of questions estimate the levels of affinity for authoritarianism at the process level where policies are formulated and implemented on a daily basis.

One of the two questions asked individuals to evaluate the authoritarian practice of making the judicial branch dependent on the executive branch. The ABS asked respondents how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the statement, “When judges decide important cases, they should accept the view of the executive branch.” Again, only in three countries, the Philippines (65%), Malaysia (52), and Singapore (59%), did a majority endorse this practice of authoritarian governance by agreeing with the statement. In all other countries, minorities ranging from 22 percent in Japan to 48 percent in China endorsed it. In East Asia as a whole, opponents of this practice outnumber its supporters by 8 percentage points (49% vs. 41%).

Another common practice of authoritarian governance is press censorship, the governmental suppression of speech or other public communication. The second question asked respondents how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the statement, “The government should decide whether certain ideas should be allowed to be discussed in society.” In eight East Asian countries, the practice of governmental censorship is endorsed by a near majority or majority ranging from 49 percent in Indonesia to 75 percent in Mongolia. In the remaining three countries,

Japan (14%), Korea (40%), and Taiwan (23%), all of which are liberal democracies, a minority approved of this practice. In the entire region of East Asia, supporters of the authoritarian practice of press censorship outnumber its opponents by a margin of 11 percentage points (52% vs. 41%).

A careful comparison of these percentages affirming authoritarian practices reveals three distinct patterns of East Asian support for authoritarianism at the practical level. The most negative of these patterns is evident in Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Indonesia, four of the region's six democracies, where a minority endorses each of the two practices. The most positive pattern, in which a majority endorses each of the two, is shown in the Philippines, Singapore, and Malaysia. The five other countries, which include democracies and non-democracies, fall into a third, middle-of-the-road pattern in which only one norm garners majority support. These findings clearly indicate that, like what was found with democratic support, levels of authoritarian procedural support vary a great deal more than those of authoritarian regime support, although the qualitative nature of the variance differs between the two types of regime.

To measure the overall level of support for the authoritarian political process, we summed pro-authoritarian responses to the two questions into a 3-point index. As above, scores of 0 and 2 indicate, respectively, *no attachment* and *full attachment* to the processes; a score of 1, on the other hand, indicate partial attachment. For each country, Table 2 reports the percentages of the *fully unattached*, *partially attached*, and *fully attached*.

The most striking result in the table is that only in Japan is a majority *fully unattached* to the process of authoritarian governance; in all of the other countries, only minorities are *fully unattached* from the authoritarian process. In as many as eight of eleven countries, moreover, the *fully unattached* are outnumbered by the *fully attached*. Only in the three liberal democracies of Japan, Korea, and Taiwan do the *fully unattached* outnumber the *fully attached*. When all eleven countries are considered together, the *fully attached* are slightly more numerous than the *fully unattached*. More notable is that those *fully attached* to the process of authoritarian politics are four times more numerous than those *fully attached* to its regime structure (27% vs. 7%).

Finally, we examine the relationship between the overall level of support for the authoritarian process and the type of political system. Figure 3 reports the mean level of such support for each of the four system types. In line with democratic learning theory, the most democratic system of liberal democracies registers the lowest support level with 0.6, while the most undemocratic or authoritarian system of one-party states registers the highest level with 1.3 on the 3-point index. More notably, the more democratic each type of political system or the less authoritarian the type is, the less the support for authoritarianism at the process level. Unlike support for the democratic process, there is a consistently negative relationship between the system type and authoritarian procedural support.

Net Process Preferences

Having examined views of democratic and authoritarian practices individually, we can consider these two dimensions together to determine the particular sort of political processes East Asians most prefer. Do they prefer the democratic process to the authoritarian one for formulating and implementing public policies? If they do, to what extent do they prefer the former to the latter? To address these questions, we first constructed a 5-point index by subtracting the 3-point index measuring authoritarian process preferences from the 3-point index measuring democratic

process preferences. As we did with net regime preferences, we grouped the scores of this 5-point index into three categories: authoritarian, hybrid, and democratic.

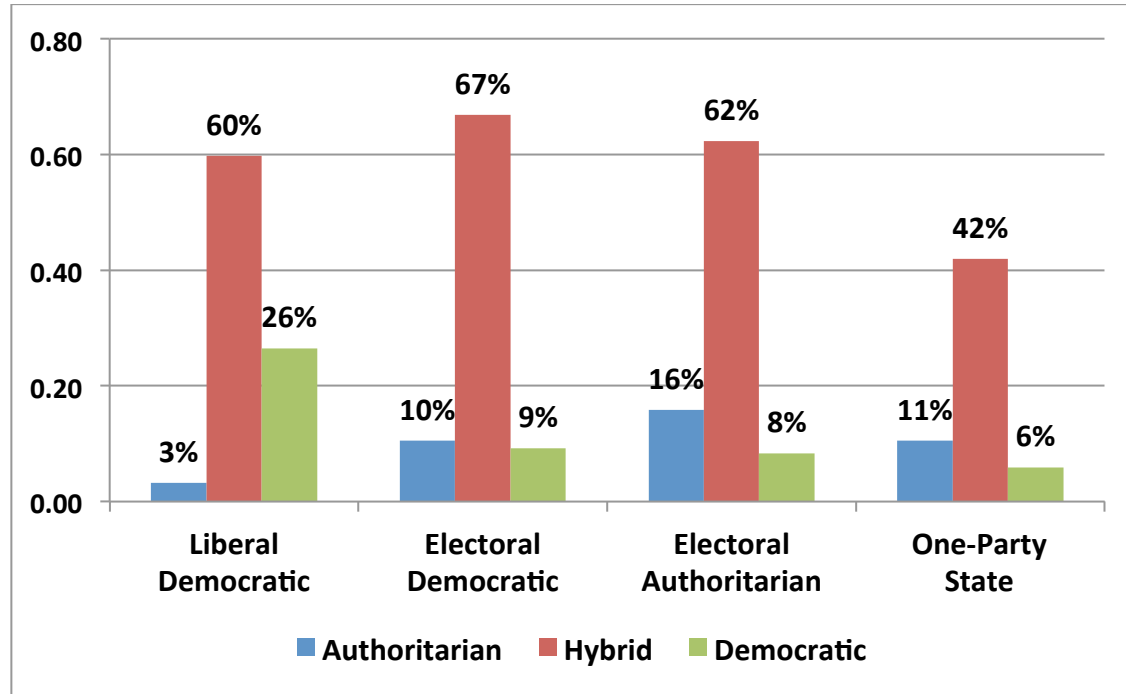
The two extreme scores of -2 and +2 on this index indicate, respectively, complete support for authoritarian processes and democratic processes. The other three scores (-1, 0, and +1) indicate different mixes of democratic and authoritarian process preferences. Therefore, we collapsed these three scores into the category of hybrid process preference. To summarize and highlight cross-national differences, we calculated the percentages falling into each of these three different categories. Table 2 reports for each country the percentage of citizens who express a preference for authoritarian, democratic, and hybrid processes. It also reports each country's mean score on the 5-point summary index (with higher scores indicating a stronger preference for democracy).

The mean scores reported in Table 2, unlike the ones tapping net regime preferences, are not all positive. More notably, negative scores outnumber positive ones by a ratio of 6 to 4. This indicates that in East Asia today, there are more countries that prefer the method of authoritarian governance to that of democratic governance. The six countries more in favor of authoritarian processes include China, Mongolia, the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, and Vietnam. The four countries in favor of democratic processes include Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Indonesia, all of which are democracies. In one country, Thailand, there is a mean score of 0, indicating neither of the two methods is favored more.

What proportion of the East Asian population favors one of the two methods of governance exclusively? What proportion favors a hybridization of the two methods? The pooled analysis reported in Table 2 reveals that hybridized preferences concerning the method of governance is most popular with 59 percent, followed by democratic preferences with 13 percent, and authoritarian preferences with 10 percent. Among East Asians, those with hybrid preferences for method of governance are over five times more numerous than those with democratic preferences and nearly six times more numerous than those with authoritarian preferences. These patterns of net process orientations contrast sharply with those of net regime orientations in which exclusively democratic regime orientations are more popular than hybrid regime orientations by a margin of 6 percentage points (46% vs. 40%).

In what type of political system are hybrid preferences for governmental processes most popular? In which types of political system are democratic and authoritarian preferences most popular? Figure 4 shows that preferences for the democratic method are most popular in the most democratic, liberal democratic systems and least popular in the least democratic one-party state systems. Likewise, preferences for a hybrid method are more popular in the two types of hybrid systems—electoral democracy and electoral authoritarianism—than in either democratic or one-party systems. Preferences for the authoritarian method, on the other hand, are not most popular in the one-party state system. Instead, authoritarian preferences are most popular in countries with an electoral authoritarian system, and these preferences are least popular in countries with a liberal democratic system. The most notable feature of Figure 2 is that democratic process support among East Asians is consistently lower when they live in a less democratic system. This is a piece of evidence supportive of democratic learning theory.

Figure 4. Resident Types of Political System and Preferences for Authoritarian, Hybrid, and Democratic Processes



Hybridization

Thus far, we have analyzed, on a separate basis, how citizenries in six East Asian countries react to democracy and authoritarianism not only as an abstract regime choice but also as a practical mode of governance. Results of these analyses have revealed that overall, the populations prefer democracy to either authoritarianism or hybridism at the abstract regime level. For the process of governance, however, the most popular preference type is a hybrid. To many East Asians, it is evident that support for democracy at the regime level is one thing, and support for it at the process level is another. It is also apparent that East Asians tend to prefer a political system mixing democratic regime preferences with hybrid process preferences.

Obviously, democracy means different things at different levels to East Asians. So does authoritarianism. Therefore, we need to consider both regime and process orientations together to ascertain how popular democratic, authoritarian, and hybrid preferences are among East Asians. To ascertain the popularity of these different preference types accurately, we first identified (1) *the uninformed*, who were not able to answer all four sets of questions tapping those orientations, (2) *democrats*, those who were fully in favor of democracy as a regime as well as a process, (3) *authoritarians*, those who were fully in favor of authoritarianism at the regime and process levels, and (4) *hybrids*, those who are neither fully authoritarian nor fully democratic at either or both of the levels but mix authoritarian and democratic preferences.

Table 3 shows that of these four patterns of orientations, *hybrids* are the most numerous with 68 percent. They are followed by *the uninformed* with 24 percent, *democrats* with 8 percent, and *authoritarians* with less than 1 percent. In all eleven East Asian countries, *authoritarians*

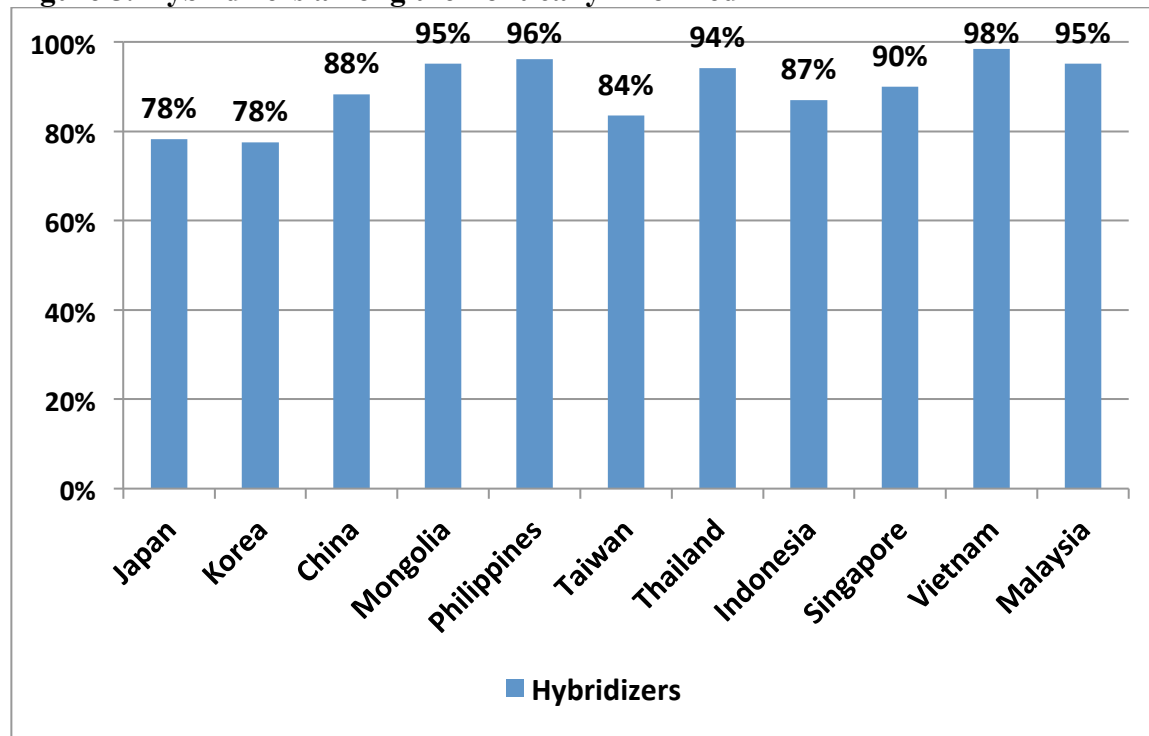
comprise less than 1 percent of their respective populations, while *democrats* comprise no more than 20 percent. In all but three liberal democracies, *democrats* make up less than 10 percent. In all but two countries (Japan and Korea), moreover, *democrats* are outnumbered by *the uninformed*. Undoubtedly, that the most popular type of preference among East Asians is neither completely authoritarian nor completely democratic; it is a hybrid that mixes the characteristics of authoritarian and democratic systems.

Table 3. Types of Political Orientations

Country	Types of Political Orientations			
	Authoritarian	Hybrid	Democratic	Uninformed
Japan	0.1%	67.3%	18.7%	13.9%
Korea	0.0	67.0	19.5	13.5
Taiwan	0.1	69.5	13.6	16.8
Indonesia	0.1	60.9	9.0	30.0
Mongolia	0.0	79.3	4.0	16.7
Philippines	0.7	89.8	2.9	6.6
Singapore	0.2	78.7	8.5	12.6
Malaysia	0.2	82.0	4.0	13.8
Thailand	0.0	65.4	4.0	30.6
China	0.1	51.3	6.7	41.9
Vietnam	0.1	36.9	0.5	62.5
(Pooled)	0.1	68.0	8.3	23.5

How deep and broad is the extent to which East Asians have such hybrid preferences to democracy, which is being reported in the literature as emerging as the universally preferred system. Nearly seven out of every ten East Asians (68%) and nearly nine out of ten politically informed East Asians (89%) refer to live in a hybrid system.³ In every country, more than 75 percent of *the politically informed* prefer a mixture of authoritarianism and democracy elements (see Figure 5). In six of the eleven countries, an overwhelming majority of over 90 percent do so. In short, hybridized preferences are not only very deep within each country but also very broad throughout the entire region.

Figure 5. Hybridizers among the Politically Informed



As most East Asians engage in the practice of hybridizing their political preferences, it is desirable to explore how differently or similarly they hybridize those orientations. To explore this question concerning the contours of cultural change taking place in East Asia, we first examined whether hybridization, for some respondents, takes place only at either the abstract regime level or practical governmental process level. Then we further examined whether some create a hybridization by mixing preferences at both levels or between them. This analysis resulted in three modes of hybridization: *procedural*, *structural*, and *systemic*. The *procedural* mode mixes the democratic and authoritarian methods or processes of governance. The *structural* mode mixes the abstract elements of democratic and authoritarian regimes. The *systemic* mode mixes different procedural and structural preferences or hybrid regime and process preferences.

How deeply do East Asians engage in hybridizing their political preferences? To explore this question concerning the depth of hybridization, we selected the politically informed of the East Asian population and calculated the proportions falling into each of the three modes of hybridization. Table 4 shows that of the *politically informed*, *systemic hybridizers*, who mix political preferences at the abstract and practical regime levels, are most numerous with 39 percent. They are followed by *procedural hybridizers* with 38 percent and *structural hybridizers* with 12 percent. In six of the eleven countries, moreover, systemic hybridizers are most numerous. The preponderance of these hybridizers in the region suggests that its political culture is more deeply in the vortex of hybridization than democratization.

Table 4. The Most and Least Prevalent Types of Hybridizers

Country	Types of Hybridizers			
	Non-hybrid	Procedural Hybrid	Structural Hybrid	Systemic Hybrid
Japan	21.9%	27.8%	16.0%	34.3%
Korea	22.5	40.5	10.3	26.7
Taiwan	16.4	50.1	6.8	26.7
Indonesia	13.0	31.6	15.6	39.9
Mongolia	4.8	33.0	9.2	52.9
Philippines	3.9	25.5	12.6	58.0
Singapore	10.0	48.9	7.6	33.6
Malaysia	4.9	35.3	16.8	43.0
Thailand	5.8	44.7	11.7	37.8
China	11.7	33.2	16.5	38.7
Vietnam	1.6	56.3	10.7	31.5
(Pooled)	11.1	37.9	12.1	39.0

What type of cultural change is sweeping throughout the entire region of East Asia? Is it a wave of democratization, as known in the literature on third-wave democracies? Or is it a wave of hybridization? To address these questions, we estimated and compared the breadth of democratization and hybridization in terms of fully democratic and fully hybridizing in choosing regime restructure and its process.⁴ In East Asia as a whole, the latter are nearly four times as many as the former (30% vs. 8%). In every East Asian country, moreover, *the fully hybridizing*, make up more than 25 percent of their respective politically informed population. In none of the eleven countries, in striking contrast, is more than 25 percent fully democratic in choosing the preferred political system. In seven countries, the *fully democratic* are less than 10 percent. In short, the democratization of authoritarian citizenries, as compared to the hybridization of those citizenries, has been confined to a much smaller segment of the East Asian population and far fewer countries in the region. In East Asia today, hybridization appears to be a far more powerful wave of cultural change than democratization

In Table 5, we explore the linkage between the types of political system in which East Asians currently live and their likelihood for reporting hybridized preferences. The overall proportion reporting such preferences is significantly lower among liberal democracies than any of the three other political systems. The proportion of *systemic hybridizers*, whose preferences are broadly hybridized, is also the lowest among liberal democracies. These hybridizers are most numerous among those who live in electoral democracies. *Procedural hybridizers* are, on the other hand, most numerous among citizenries of the two non-democratic systems, electoral authoritarianism and one-party. These findings, when considered together, suggest that institutional democratization affects cultural hybridization. While liberal democratic rule

discourages the practice of hybridization in general, authoritarian rule contributes to the hybridization of procedural orientations, and electoral democratic rule contributes to that of both procedural and structural hybridization.

Table 5. Resident Types of Political Systems and the Prevalence of Hybridizers

	Liberal Democratic	Electoral Democratic	Electoral Authoritarian	One-Party State	(Pooled)
Non-hybrid	20.3%	6.7%	7.0%	7.7%	11.0%
Procedural hybrid	39.4	29.8	42.9	42.2	37.9
Structural hybrid	11.1	12.3	12.0	14.2	12.1
Systemic hybrid	29.3	51.2	38.1	35.8	39.0

Conclusion

Citizenries of authoritarian and post-authoritarian societies have lived most or all of their lives under authoritarian rule. Having lived an authoritarian life for such a long period has made it difficult for many of these citizenries to reject authoritarianism fully or accept democracy fully. Consequently, their reactions to democracy and authoritarianism as abstract regimes and practical political processes often vary more in kind than in magnitude. Yet previous survey-based studies of regime change to date have been concerned exclusively with levels or magnitude of cultural democratization, which involve democratic support and authoritarian opposition among ordinary citizenries. Further, these studies have involved little effort toward ascertaining the various patterns in which ordinary citizenries hybridize the characteristics of democratic and authoritarian politics in defining their preferred political system. By analyzing these patterns with the latest, third wave of the Asian Barometers conducted in eleven countries in 2010 and 2011, this study sought to test the increasingly popular claim that democracy has become a universal value and is emerging as the universally preferred system.

The analyses of these patterns presented above offer a number of important findings. The most notable of these findings is that in all East Asian countries, majorities of their mass publics do not endorse democracy as the preferred political system. Even in the three liberal democracies, where democratic politics have been practiced for more than two decades, those who unconditionally embrace democracy as “the only game in town” do not even constitute small pluralities. In these and all of the other East Asian countries, overwhelming majorities of their citizenries remain concurrently attached to the virtues of authoritarian and democratic politics, or they are uninformed about those virtues. This finding challenges the thesis of global democratization that democracy is emerging as the universally preferred political system. It also challenges the widely held assumption among advocates and analysts of global democratization

that liberal democracy is “the end of history”—not only desirable but also suitable for any type of contemporary society.

In East Asia today, most people hold hybridized views, allowing them to define their preferred political system in terms of the characteristics of both authoritarianism and democracy. Considering Japan, Korea, and Taiwan, all longtime liberal democracies, reveals that hybridization exists in countries even after decades of experience with democratic rule, a finding contrary to what is implied in the thesis of global democratization. Thus it would seem that hybridization does not represent an incomplete or transitional form of cultural democratization. It is, therefore, highly desirable to analyze the hybridization, not democratization, of political preferences among the mass citizenries in order to comprehend the nature of political cultural change taking place in authoritarian and post-authoritarian societies more accurately than what is known in the existing literature on cultural democratization.

Why does the hybridization of political preferences occur in some countries more extensively than in other countries? Why does it occur more often among some segments of the same citizenries than in others? In an initial attempt to explore these questions of a theoretical nature, we explored whether there is any connection between the type of political system under which East Asians live and the patterns in which they hybridize their preferences for the type of regime and its process of governing. Results of this exploration suggest a possible connection between the two variables. Unraveling the exact nature of their connection and its dynamics fully, however, requires a further explication of “the hybrid” as a type of political system and as a category of citizen preferences and a theorization of how they influence each other and why they do so in the way they do (Kapchan and Strong 1999). In the context of East Asia, a region deeply ingrained in Confucian cultural legacies, it is also desirable to explore how those legacies affect the process of cultural hybridization (Bell 2006, 2012; Chan 2009; Tan 2003).

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Endnotes

¹ In recent years, a growing number of Confucian scholars have raised serious questions about the validity of this assumption and argued for a hybrid system of mixing Confucian meritocracy with democracy (Bell 2006, 2012; Tan 2003; Shin 2012).

² On this 10-point scale, it is quite possible that people choose a score of 5 or 6 to express preference for a hybrid system.

³ The politically informed are those who were able to answer all pairs of questions tapping regime and process preferences.

⁴ The fully democratic refers to those who are unqualified in preferring democracy to authoritarianism as a regime as well as a political process, while the fully hybridizing are those who mix democratic and authoritarian preferences at the regime and process levels.