



A Comparative Survey of

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in Some East Asian Countries

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Asian Barometer

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Draft

Democratic Support among Youth in Some East Asian Countries

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Introduction

Support for democracy and political freedom, including youth-led movements of democratic activists, in particular university students, have emerged in many countries, and Asia is no exception. Democratic activists in places such as Korea, Taiwan, Mongolia, Indonesia, and even mainland China have come disproportionately from the youth in the last two or three decades. More recently, in the Middle East, activists opposing authoritarianism have also been disproportionately young (Ser and Zhengxu 2007). Wherever democracy emerges, we typically read mass media accounts claiming that youth are an important force.

From the perspective of political socialization, the comparative level of support by the young compared to their seniors can become a psychological model for the strengthening of democracy in the future in many countries. This can happen because citizens with a solid commitment and experience with democracy when they are young may well shape the next generation. When generational change occurs, the next generation will have an even stronger commitment than its predecessors. With every subsequent change, democracy becomes more consolidated.

It should be stressed that this can only happen if the commitment to democracy is not a matter of life cycle, in which the pro-democracy young become less democratic as they themselves age, but of generational change. In life-cycle change, the society as a whole remains the same. Conversely, if the commitment to democracy reflects a generational commitment then when the young generation reaches maturity it will maintain its level of democratic support. This will make democracy stronger as time passes, as these youth become adults.

So for political science research, the question is, does the commitment or support of the youth for democracy in Asia as so widely reported in the media reflect a generational shift, particularly in connection with socio-economic change affecting that generation, or is it a characteristic of the life-cycle?

In the case of East Asia, a number of studies show that the difference in level of support for democracy from generation to generation is not very large (Mujani and Liddle 2012; Ser and Zhengxu 2007). So it may be that positive attitudes toward democracy are not the product of early socialization but of later learning. We are after all living in a time when the wave of democratization is sweeping almost the whole world, affecting all ages and all generations.

There is a more elementary question, however: is it true that the young have a commitment or level of support for democracy greater than that of adults? Viewed from the perspective of political socialization, the answer to this question is crucial in practical terms for the prospects of democracy in Asia. The emergence of positive attitudes toward democracy among the youth, it is hoped, will also encourage positive attitudes

toward democracy when those youth become adults. This development should in turn make democracy stronger in any particular country.

Against the conventional wisdom that youth tend to be stronger supporters of democracy, there are a number of studies that claim otherwise (Ser and Zhengxu 2007). At the very least, this problem has not been resolved conclusively.

This paper attempts to compare youth and adult support for democracy in a number of East Asian countries. Public opinion data from several East Asian countries surveyed by the Asian Barometer 3 (ABS-3) represent an important source of evidence to answer these questions.

Measures and Index

In this paper, democratic support is defined both as the citizen's attitude toward democracy as a political system type compared to non-democracy and his or her attitude toward the values of liberal democracy as against authoritarian political values. The first we call democratic preference and the second liberal democratic values.

The measures of democratic preference are worded in the questionnaires as follows:¹

1. Here is a scale of 1 to 10 measuring the extent to which people think democracy is suitable for our country. If "1" means that democracy is completely unsuitable for [name of country] today and "10" means that it is completely suitable, where would you place our country today?
2. Which of the following statements comes closest to your own opinion? 1) Democracy is always preferable to any other kind of government, 2) Under some circumstances, an authoritarian government can be preferable to a democratic one, 3) For people like me, it does not matter whether we have a democratic or a non-democratic regime.
3. "Which of the following statements comes closer to your own view? 1) Democracy is capable of solving the problems of our society, 2) Democracy cannot solve our society's problems

¹ The format of answers to all of these questions is not the same. We make them uniform so that the recoding of all items is consistent. Responses to item 1 were recoded into two categories: 1-5 = unsuitable, 6-10 = suitable. Responses to item 2 were recoded: 1 = democracy is always preferable, 0 = others. Items 3-9 were also recoded into two categories, where 1 is a positive attitude to democracy and 0 is a negative attitude. Responses to the items constitute an index of several components of democratic support, i.e. democratic preference, democratic preference over other national issues, and detachment to non-democracy.

4. "If you had to choose between democracy and economic development, which would you say is more important? 1) Economic development is definitely more important, 2) Economic development is somewhat more important, 3) Democracy is somewhat more important, 4) Democracy is definitely more important."

5. "Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Would you say strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree? "Democracy may have its problems, but it is still the best form of government."

There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives? For each statement, would you say you strongly approve, approve, disapprove, or strongly disapprove?

6. "We should get rid of parliament and elections and have a strong leader decide things."

7. "Only one political party should be allowed to stand for election and hold office."

8. "The army (military) should come in to govern the country."

9. "We should get rid of elections and parliaments and have experts make decisions on behalf of the people."

Complete wording of the democratic value items is as follows:²

I have here other statements. For each statement, would you say you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree?

1. Government leaders are like the head of a family, we should all follow their decisions;

2. The government should decide whether certain ideas should be allowed to be discussed in society;

3. Harmony of the community will be disrupted if people organize lots of groups;

4. When judges decide important cases, they should accept the view of the executive branch.

² The response to each item is a 1-4 point scale: strongly agree to strongly disagree. Table ... shows the proportion of negative responses to the statement (disagree or strongly disagree) which indicates commitment to democratic values. Other responses indicate low or no commitment to democratic values and no response (don't know, don't understand). The reliability statistic of the items is .723. A 1-4 point scale of democratic value index is constructed from the items.

5. If people have too many different ways of thinking, society will be chaotic.

Democratic Preference

In general citizens of the East Asian countries we have examined prefer democracy to other regimes. Nonetheless, when specifically asked to choose, they prefer economic development to democracy and income equality to political freedom (Table 1). In our data, this pattern characterizes not only non-democracies but also consolidated and electoral democracies. Regardless of their existing regime, democratic or non-democratic, people in these countries prefer democracy to other regimes. Indeed, democratic preference in some non-democracies like Vietnam, Mainland China, Singapore, and Malaysia, is even stronger than in some democracies studied, i.e. the Philippines, Indonesia, and Mongolia.

In addition, preference for economic development rather than democracy, and for income equality rather than political freedom, occurs not only in non-democracies but also in consolidated democracies, i.e. Japan, Korea, and Taiwan (Table 1). This makes democratic support across the countries not very consistent.

Table 1. Democratic Support in Some East Asian Countries

Country	Statistics	Preference (0-1)	Over economy (0-1)	Detachment (0-1)	Overall democratic preference (0-1)	Overall democratic values (1-4)
Japan	Mean	.7815	.3417	.9137	.7628	2.7475
	N	1667	1693	1823	1595	1699
	Std. Deviation	.26988	.38058	.19660	.21150	.44797
Korea	Mean	.8107	.2549	.8860	.7484	2.5800
	N	1005	969	1164	851	1108
	Std. Deviation	.23255	.34994	.23457	.19157	.44571
Taiwan	Mean	.7236	.1765	.9034	.6932	2.5504
	N	1385	1422	1491	1301	1419
	Std. Deviation	.27136	.31965	.21237	.19642	.34382
Indonesia	Mean	.8062	.0879	.7622	.6823	2.3374
	N	1143	1331	1315	1036	1227
	Std. Deviation	.24100	.21011	.29697	.18608	.34214
Mongolia	Mean	.7576	.2851	.6999	.6647	2.1386
	N	1116	1112	1145	1040	1123
	Std. Deviation	.26607	.36453	.30194	.22571	.54302
Philippines	Mean	.6325	.3168	.6931	.5927	2.2790
	N	1132	1138	1174	1090	1154
	Std. Deviation	.27110	.34845	.33371	.19667	.54691
Thailand	Mean	.8610	.3026	.7911	.7504	2.2746

	N	1158	955	1356	835	1225
	Std. Deviation	.21249	.38654	.28710	.18639	.46899
Malaysia	Mean	.8528	.2179	.7217	.7191	2.1344
	N	1104	1083	1157	1033	1135
	Std. Deviation	.22724	.32398	.31911	.19707	.48462
Singapore	Mean	.7483	.2209	.8750	.7252	2.3430
	N	861	781	936	710	920
	Std. Deviation	.27038	.33426	.23006	.18161	.47827
Vietnam	Mean	.9330	.3533	.5569	.8159	1.9965
	N	731	661	820	471	579
	Std. Deviation	.14378	.39363	.20478	.15152	.48606
Mainland China	Mean	.7910	.3521		.7100	2.3114
	N	2341	2401		1922	2681
	Std. Deviation	.25260	.38515		.20462	.38532
Total	Mean	.7857	.2693	.7951	.7096	2.3660
	N	13643	13546	12381	11884	14270
	Std. Deviation	.25756	.35940	.28438	.20474	.48817

Do these patterns prevail across generations? Do they characterize young people as well as adults? Is the assumption correct that youth, when compared to adults, are likely to more strongly support democracy?

In general the association between age groups and overall democratic support in the East Asian countries studies is not statistically significant (Table 2). The difference in generations, whether youth are defined as below 30 or as below 25 years of age, does not matter to overall democratic support. Youth and adults in these countries in general support democracy at about the same levels. The assumption that the youth support democracy more strongly than their seniors as a general proposition does not appear in these data.³

Having stated this basic finding, it should be added that there are a number of cases indicating patterns of significant relationships between age and overall democratic support. But the patterns vary. The cases of Japan, Philippines, Thailand and Malaysia show that citizens 30 or over years of age are stronger supporters of democracy than those under 30 years of age. This relationship is not maintained, however, if the young are defined as below 25 years of age. For this group, the relationship is not significant in the cases of Japan, Thailand, and Philippines. We only see consistency in the case of Malaysia, where adults tend to be stronger supporters of democracy than youth, whether adult is defined as 25 and over or 30 and over.

³ The Ser and Zhengxu (2007) finding that youth are stronger democrats is limited to some dimensions rather than characterizing overall democratic support or preference.

Conversely, in the case of Taiwan, the youth are stronger in their support for democracy than adults (Table 2). This pattern remains consistent whether youth are defined as those under 30 or under 25. Taiwan is the one case studied that confirms the previous assumption that democracy is more strongly supported by youths than adults.

More specifically, a difference in significance can be seen in the relationship between age groups and several components of democratic support. Preference for democracy is substantially stronger among youths compared to adults in the cases of Taiwan, Singapore, and mainland China. This relationship is reasonably consistent in the cases of Taiwan and Singapore. But it is not significant in the case of mainland China, if youth are defined as younger than age 25.

A different pattern is visible in the cases of Malaysia and Japan. Fewer young people in Malaysia prefer democracy. This pattern is consistent when young people are defined as under 30 or under 25. This consistency is not apparent, however, in the case of Japan. Fewer young Japanese prefer democracy when youth is defined as under 30. When young is defined as under 25, the relationship loses significance.

When democratic support is understood as preference for democracy over other national priorities, several cases show a significant relationship with age group. In Taiwan, Korea, Indonesia, and Philippines, the young tend more than the old to value democracy over economic development, or political freedom compared to income equality. Japan, on the other hand, tends in the other direction, though the findings are not consistent. Young people in Japan tend to prefer economic development over democracy and income equality over political freedom. At the same time, the relationship between age and other national priorities in Mongolia, mainland China, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore is not significant.

The relationship between age group and support for democracy is also important in a number of cases when democratic support is understood as detachment from non-democracy. This is apparent in the cases of Japan, Thailand, Philippines, Korea, Taiwan, Malaysia, and Mongolia. Except for Taiwan, the young are less detached than the old from non-democracy. This relationship is inconsistent depending upon the age cut-off point.

Table 2. Youth and Adult Democratic Preference in Some East Asian Countries (Anova Analysis)

	Age category	Preference (0-1)	Over other national priorities (0-1)	Detachment (0-1)	All (0-1)
Consolidated democracies					
Japan	Youth < 30	.7161	.2813	.8792	.7097

	Adult ≥ 30	.7875	.3475	.9168	.7686
	F score	9.024**	3.978*	5.008*	10.846**
	Youth ≤ 24	.7143	.7258	.2612	.7143
	Adult > 24	.7648	.7836	.3450	.7648
	F score	3.346	2.745	3.126	3.346
Korea	Youth < 30	.8060	.3168	.8576	.7507
	Adult ≥ 30	.8117	.2426	.8916	.7479
	F score	.084	6.067*	3.374	.028
	Youth ≤ 24	.7955	.3353	.8382	.7381
	Adult > 24	.8122	.2472	.8907	.7498
	F Score	.414	4.937*	4.715*	.246
Taiwan	Youth < 30	.7635	.2117	.9254	.7292
	Adult ≥ 30	.7136	.1681	.8982	.6826
	F score	7.534**	4.117*	3.800*	12.429***
	Youth ≤ 24	.7820	.2231	.9197	.7440
	Adult > 24	.7175	.1718	.9018	.6878
	F score	6.822**	3.041	.887	9.308**
Electoral democracies					
Indonesia	Youth < 30	.7843	.1133	.7669	.6728
	Adult ≥ 30	.8142	.0795	.7606	.6859
	F score	3.458	6.459*	.110	1.023
	Youth ≤ 24	.7743	.1351	.7462	.6586
	Adult > 24	.8108	.0820	.7644	.6859
	F score	2.893	8.461**	.510	2.539
Mongolia	Youth < 30	.7617	.3006	.6948	.6760
	Adult ≥ 30	.7558	.2781	.7021	.6595
	F score	.116	.909	.142	1.193
	Youth ≤ 24	.7516	.2747	.6487	.6471
	Adult > 24	.7586	.2868	.7086	.6677

		F score	.096	.154	5.634*	1.096
Philippines	Youth < 30	.6124	.3386	.6590	.5737	
	Adult ≥30	.6426	.3058	.7100	.6024	
	F score	3.118	2.244	6.124*	5.226*	
	Youth ≤ 24	.6365	.3600	.6327	.5841	
	Adult > 24	.6317	.3076	.7059	.5945	
	F score	.051	3.741*	8.231**	.444	
Thailand	Youth < 30	.8406	.2537	.7547	.6944	
	Adult ≥30	.8657	.3098	.7997	.7612	
	F score	1.931	2.462	4.100*	13.030***	
	Youth ≤ 24	.8462	.3529	.7544	.7076	
	Adult > 24	.8631	.2988	.7956	.7543	
	F score	.395	.950	1.490	2.590	
Non-democracies						
Malaysia	Youth < 30	.8212	.2096	.6949	.6728	
	Adult ≥30	.8663	.2214	.7329	.7324	
	F score	9.167**	.300	3.422	11.491**	
	Youth ≤ 24	.8086	.2446	.6750	.6772	
	Adult > 24	.8621	.2124	.7314	.7280	
	F score	8.862**	1.527	5.155*	10.025**	
Singapore	Youth < 30	.8029	.2207	.8766	.7455	
	Adult ≥30	.7293	.2210	.8745	.7173	
	F score	12.391***	.000	.015	3.424	
	Youth ≤ 24	.8173	.2400	.8716	.7492	
	Adult > 24	.7388	.2181	.8755	.7215	
	F score	7.775**	.375	.028	1.909	
Vietnam	Youth < 30	.9382	.3500	.5556	.8091	
	Adult ≥30	.9314	.3542	.5573	.8180	

	F score	.297	.013	.011	.289
	Youth ≤ 24	.9478	.3308	.5600	.8195
	Adult > 24	.9315	.3557	.5566	.8158
	F score	.781	.235	.019	.024
Mainland China	Youth < 30	.7564	.3713	Na	.7146
	Adult ≥ 30	.8025	.3457	Na	.7084
	F score	14.673***	2.003	Na	.349
	Youth ≤ 24	.7675	.3750	Na	.7298
	Adult > 24	.7948	.3485	Na	.7065
	F score	3.892	1.357	Na	3.245

*** $P < .001$, ** $P < .01$, * $P < .05$

Commitment to Liberal Democratic Values

Is the general phenomenon that young people are more likely than adults to prefer democracy to other regimes also visible when democratic support is understood as commitment to liberal democratic values?

Before answering this question, we must recognize that commitment to liberal democratic values is generally not strong in several East Asian countries. There is less support for the opinions that “government leaders are not like the head of a family and therefore we should not follow their decisions,” that “the government should not decide whether certain ideas should be allowed to be discussed in society,” that “as judges decide important cases they should not accept the view of the executive branch,” or that “if people have too many different ways of thinking society will not be chaotic.”

Strong commitment to liberal democratic values is found in the consolidated democracies—Japan, Korea and Taiwan. In electoral democracies like Indonesia, Philippines, Mongolia, and Thailand, however, that commitment is weak. This is also true of non-democracies like Vietnam, mainland China, Singapore, and Malaysia (Table 1). Does this phenomenon occur across age groups, that is, does it equally affect young people and adults? Or, do the young have a stronger orientation toward liberal democratic values?

Table 3 shows that in general the difference between young and old in democratic values is not significant, and is even less significant compared to the relationship with democratic support discussed above. Only a few cases show a significant relationship

between age differences and commitment to liberal democratic values. Those are mainland China and Mongolia, and to a lesser extent Singapore and Vietnam.

In mainland China the young have a stronger commitment than adults to liberal democratic values. This phenomenon also occurs in Mongolia and to some extent in Singapore. In Vietnam the pattern is reversed. Adults there tend to have a stronger commitment to democratic values, even though this pattern is not consistent (Table 3).

In the consolidated democracies—Japan, Korea, and Taiwan—the commitment to democratic values is about the same regardless of age group. Citizens of those countries tend to prefer democratic to authoritarian values. A similar pattern is apparent in the electoral democracies—Indonesia, Philippines and Thailand. In these countries, both the young and old have the same weak commitment to liberal democratic values.

Table 3. Commitment to Liberal Democratic Values According to Age Groups in Some East Asian Countries (Varian Analysis)

	Youth (< 30)	Adult (≥30)	F score	Youth (≤ 24)	Adult (> 24)	F score
Consolidated democracies						
Japan	2.7145	2.7505	.861	2.7231	2.7485	.201
Korea	2.6042	2.5749	.678	2.6040	2.5776	.322
Taiwan	2.5369	2.5567	.543	2.5541	2.5500	.017
Electoral democracies						
Indonesia	2.3365	2.3377	.003	2.2910	2.3436	3.026
Mongolia	2.2118	2.1092	8.239**	2.2158	2.1253	3.920*
Philippines	2.2657	2.2848	.298	2.2520	2.2847	.591
Thailand	2.2539	2.2757	.284	2.2529	2.2471	.131
Non-democracies						
Malaysia	2.1247	2.1381	.172	2.0784	2.1460	3.142
Singapore	2.4125	2.3247	5.140*	2.3619	2.3406	.184
Vietnam	1.9193	2.0165	3.799*	1.9322	2.0038	1.151
Mainland China	2.4541	2.2707	109.180***	2.4628	2.2879	65.752***

Education and Internet

The lack of a meaningful age-related difference in orientation to liberal democratic values refutes the prior assumption that the young have a stronger commitment to liberal democratic values. Is this lack of a significant difference connected to similarities in socio-economic profiles, especially related to education and income? Both are widely regarded as important social foundations for democracy. Might this lack also be tied to similarities in exposure to globalization or to patterns of global connectivity in which democracy represents an inherent part of current globalization? In this study exposure to global connectivity is measured by the intensity of using internet.

Table 4 reveals interesting SES profiles. In terms of level of education, youth have a higher level of education than adults. In addition, youth use the internet far more frequently. This occurs in all of the countries we have studied (Table 4). Given this profile, it should be the case that youth have a stronger pro-democracy orientation. The logic is that education, income and global connectivity represent a major source for the growth of positive attitudes toward democracy. In our data, however, this seems not to be the case. Education and the internet do not make the young more positively disposed toward democratic values. Why does age not matter to democratic support?

Table 4. Education and Internet Use according to Age Group

Country	Age	Statistics	Education (1-12)	Internet (1-6)
Japan	≥ 30	Mean	6.93	3.4957
	< 30	Mean	7.69	5.3245
		F score	25.097***	96.629***
Korea	≥ 30	Mean	6.93	4.0944
	< 30	Mean	8.09	5.8050
		F score	56.896***	124.484***
Mainland China	≥ 30	Mean	4.48	1.8888
	< 30	Mean	6.47	4.1618
		F score	537.852***	859.042***
Mongolia	≥ 30	Mean	5.27	2.4614
	< 30	Mean	6.43	4.0269
		F score	46.407***	175.748***
Philippines	≥ 30	Mean	5.84	1.7339
	< 30	Mean	6.77	3.0986
		F score	45.185***	208.945***
Taiwan	≥ 30	Mean	6.42	3.5558
	<30	Mean	8.10	5.8351
		F score	146.665***	299.393***
Thailand	≥ 30	Mean	4.28	1.7671
	<30	Mean	6.70	3.3646

		F score	199.387***	152.641***
Indonesia	≥ 30	Mean	4.28	1.4087
	<30	Mean	5.54	2.5586
		F score	79.096***	169.980***
Singapore	≥ 30	Mean	5.70	4.2599
	<30	Mean	7.54	5.5860
		F score	575.992***	79.684***
Vietnam	≥ 30	Mean	5.62	2.2633
	<30	Mean	6.60	3.2269
		F score	51.760***	48.284***
Malaysia	≥ 30	Mean	5.27	2.5465
	<30	Mean	6.91	4.5823
		F score	135.060***	260.431***
		Std. Deviation	2.404	2.17847

Democratic Performance

One possible response to this question is that democratic support is meaningfully related to democratic performance or how a democracy works in a country.⁴ The idea that the age group dimension is likely to be critical for the way democracy works in a country tends to underscore democratic performance, and youth consequently do not support democracy as expected. The strength of their desire to support democracy is obstructed by how democracy is actually practiced in their lives. In other words, the democracy that they experience is not the democracy they have imagined. For that reason their level of support becomes about the same as that for adults, even though the latter have more limited resources for believing that democracy is the best system.

Table 5 below displays this pattern in a number of cases. The youth are less positive than their elders in evaluating democratic performance in Japan, Korea, Mongolia, Indonesia, Malaysia, and mainland China.⁵ Youth in those countries feel less satisfied with the implementation of democracy, with government that is regarded as less democratic, and with the implementation of recent elections that is felt to be less free and fair.

This less-than-positive opinion of the young toward democratic performance does not generally characterize the countries we have studied. In the cases of Taiwan,

⁴ The correlation between democratic support and democratic performance in all cases studied is .24 ($P = .01$).

⁵ Democratic performance is a four-point index constructed from four items: satisfaction with the way democracy works, the extent to which a country is democratic, freeness and fairness of the current election, and answers to the question where would you place our current government (very undemocratic to very democratic).

Philippines, Thailand, Singapore, and Vietnam, the age dimension does not matter to democratic performance. But not one case shows that the young are more positive than the old in evaluating democratic performance.

Table 5. Democratic Performance
According to Age Group

Country	Age	Mean	F score
Japan	≥ 30	2.7592	
	< 30	2.6352	9.641**
Korea	≥ 30	2.7999	
	< 30	2.7237	5.400*
Mainland China	≥ 30	2.8162	
	< 30	2.7204	29.699***
	F score		
Mongolia	≥ 30	2.5453	
	< 30	2.6138	5.317*
Philippines	≥ 30	2.5199	
	< 30	2.4854	1.091
	F score		
Taiwan	≥ 30	2.8736	
	< 30	2.8986	.658
Thailand	≥ 30	2.9244	
	< 30	2.8562	3.458
	F score		
Indonesia	≥ 30	2.8674	
	< 30	2.7653	12.524***
Singapore	≥ 30	3.0828	
	< 30	3.0283	3.402
	F score		
Vietnam	≥ 30	3.3609	
	< 30	3.3635	.006
Malaysia	≥ 30	3.0394	
	< 30	2.8811	19.804***
	F score		

Independent Effect of Youth

Bivariate statistics indicate that the age group differential matters to democratic support in several cases, that is, for the most part the young have a weaker association with democratic support than adults. Is this significance maintained after considering education and internet use, recalling that age group is very strongly related to education and internet use?

The multivariate analysis below (Table 6) shows that age group remains significant for democratic support regardless of education and internet use in several countries. Youth is more negatively associated than greater age with democratic support in the cases of Japan, Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines, and Malaysia. The case of Taiwan, where the bivariate statistics show a very significant and positive relationship between the two, has become not significant, after taking into account education and internet use. In other words, in Taiwan, the youth factor is not very independent from the influence of education in young people's evaluation of democracy.

As we have long understood, education is one of the strongest and most consistently strong factors in its influence on democratic support. This is true for nearly all of the countries we have studied. At the same time, the influence of the internet is not significant in nearly all of the cases, after the introduction of the educational factor.

Table 6. Multivariate Analysis of Democratic Support
(Regression Coefficient, B, and Standard Error)

	Japan	Korea	Taiwan	Indonesia	Mongolia	Philippines
Constant	.559*** (.026)	.712*** (.028)	.554*** (.022)	.605*** (.017)	.586*** (.021)	.557*** (.020)
Youth	-.060* (.024)	-.020 (.019)	.011 (.015)	-.030* (.014)	.001 (.017)	-.035* (.014)
Male	.025* (.011)	-.019 (.014)	.037*** (.011)	.006 (.012)	.037 (.014)	.001 (.012)
Education	.023*** (.004)	.001 (.005)	.011*** (.004)	.018*** (.003)	.009** (.003)	.003 (.003)
Income	.010* (.005)	.004 (.006)	.004 (.005)	-.001 (.005)	.001 (.007)	.006 (.007)
Internet	.001 (.003)	.007 (.005)	.006* (.004)	-.002 (.004)	.004 (.005)	.007 (.004)
N	1319	814	1231	1009	1017	1070
R ²	.058	.010	.045	.043	.020	.010

Table 6 ... continued

	Thailand	Malaysia	Singapore	Vietnam	China
Constant	.743*** (.018)	.649*** (.020)	.735*** (.025)	.824*** (.035)	.616*** (.019)
Youth	-.093*** (.021)	-.070*** (.015)	.035 (.019)	-.000 (.019)	-.028 (.015)
Male	.027* (.013)	-.011 (.012)	.002 (.015)	-.013 (.015)	.006 (.011)
Education	.007* (.004)	.012*** (.003)	-.002 (.004)	.002 (.004)	.014*** (.003)
Income	-.012 (.007)	.007 (.006)	-.014 (.007)	.004 (.006)	.008 (.004)
Internet	.002 (.004)	.002 (.004)	.009 (.005)	-.009 (.004)	.000 (.003)
N	776	1010	528	378	1326
R ²	.034	.036	.022	.015	.027

In the previous bivariate analysis, we saw that in general age group does not matter to liberal democratic values in the countries studied, except for China where youth are stronger than adults in their commitment to these values when youth are defined as those under 30. This pattern is also visible in the cases of Mongolia and Singapore even though not as clearly as in China. Is this association still significant after weighing education, income and internet use, recalling that until now we have believed that those factors strongly influence liberal democratic values?

Multivariate analysis shows that the relationship of the age factor is still significant in the case of China after controlling for education, income, and internet use. In other words, in China the youth are indeed relatively independent in forming their orientation toward liberal democratic values, that is, it is not because of higher levels of education, income, or internet use (Table 7).

This is not true in the cases of Singapore and Mongolia. After considering socio-economic status and internet use, the effect of the age difference becomes insignificant statistically. This indicates that it is not the impact of differences in age groups that shapes orientation toward liberal democratic values in these two countries, but rather socio-economic status and internet use.

From these findings we can conclude that the effect of age group differences is significant, both positively and negatively, in several cases relatively independent of the factor of socio-economic status, except for democratic preference in Taiwan, where the youth effect becomes not significant after weighing socio-economic status and internet use. The independence of this youth effect indicates that the political attitudes of the

young can not be explained completely in terms of the levels of education and income that they have heretofore experienced.

Table 7. Multivariate Analysis of Liberal Democratic Values

	China	Singapore	Mongolia
Constant	2.033*** (.019)	2.036*** (.047)	1.894*** (.042)
Youth	.044**(.016)	.038 (.037)	.005 (.035)
Male	.007 (.011)	.054 (.029)	-.008 (.030)
Education	.024***(.003)	.007 (.007)	.029*** (.007)
Income	.031***(.005)	.049**(.015)	-.010 (.015)
Internet	.026***(.003)	.022*(.009)	.039*** (.010)
N	3413	1000	1210
R ²	.114	.047	.061

Conclusion

In many journalistic accounts, the young are associated with democratic movements everywhere in the world. From those accounts has emerged an assumption that young people are stronger than adults in levels of democratic support, which we have defined operationally from the Asian Barometer Survey 3 as democratic preference and commitment to liberal democratic values. Is this the case in East Asia?

We find that in general, youths and adults do not differ in levels of democratic support, either as measured by democratic preference or support for liberal democratic values. Youths and adults are about the same in their level of democratic preference. They prefer democracy to other regimes, and they are detached from non-democracy, but at the same time prefer economic development or income equality to democracy or political freedom. This occurs not only in non-democracies like China, Singapore, Vietnam and Malaysia, but as well in electoral democracies like Indonesia, Mongolia, Philippines and Thailand and also in the consolidated democracies we have examined—Japan, Korea and Taiwan.

Nonetheless there are a number of East Asian cases indicating that in fact the young express weaker democratic preferences than adults. This happens in Japan,

Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, and Malaysia. These weaker democratic preferences are not due to their being less educated or less connected globally through the internet, factors generally thought to have a strong impact on democratic preference, but rather are due to unique characteristics of the youth themselves in those particular countries. At least, in the formation of their less than positive opinions about democracy, they are acting independently from the factors of socio-economic status and internet exposure.

Democratic support defined by commitment to liberal democratic values is in general not strong in the East Asian countries studied here. Nonetheless there is a significant difference in this commitment between the consolidated democracies (Japan, Korea, and Taiwan) on the one hand and the electoral democracies (Indonesia, Mongolia, Philippines and Thailand) plus the non-democracies (China, Vietnam, Singapore, and Malaysia) on the other. In the consolidated democracies commitment to liberal democratic values is stronger.

Relatively strong commitment to liberal democratic values in the consolidated democracies is cross-generational. In other words, the youth are not stronger in their commitment than are their elders. This lack of importance of generational difference in shaping liberal democratic values can also be seen relatively clearly in the electoral democracies and non-democracies, except for China. In China, as expected, the young have a stronger commitment than adults to liberal democratic values regardless of their socio-economic status and intensity of using the internet.

If we think of age differences in terms of political socialization, the presence of a number of indicators of lack of democratic support among youth as compared to adults in East Asia should be a matter of concern to people with an interest in democratization. It goes without saying that in the natural course of events the young will replace the old. In the political socialization perspective, weak democratic support among the young has obvious implications for the weakness of democratic support in the future. Younger citizens as they become adults will bring with them a tendency toward negative attitudes to democracy.

More research is necessary to determine why young people tend to express less positive attitudes towards democracy. The problem and its solution cannot be reduced to improving the socio-economic status of the coming generations because education and income, even global connectivity via the internet, apparently do not obviate this negative tendency. It is possible that education will still provide at least part of the solution, but if so it will have to be a kind of education that directly promotes democratic values.