

# JGSS

## Journal of Global Strategic Studies

---

Vol. 01 No. 01 June 2021

International War: Decline, Consequences, and “Pax Americana”

*John Mueller*

Explaining Democratic Deconsolidation:  
Evidence from Asian Democracies

*Saiful Mujani & R. William Liddle*

Assessing the United States' Grand Strategy:  
Estimating Patterns of the United States' Foreign Policy on Southeast Asia under  
the Biden Presidency

*Leonard C. Sebastian and Sigit S. Nugroho*

Imagining Sweeter Australia-Indonesia Relations

*John Blaxland*

Nahdlatul Ulama and Its Commitment Towards Moderate Political Norms:  
A Comparison Between the Abdurrahman Wahid and Jokowi Era

*Alexander R. Arifianto*

Indonesia's Foreign Policy in Creating Security  
Stability in Indo-Pacific Region

*Mariane Olivia Delanova & Yanyan Moehamad Yani*

Master's Programs in International Relations  
Faculty of Social and Political Science  
Jenderal Achmad Yani University

# EXPLAINING DEMOCRATIC DECONSOLIDATION: EVIDENCE FROM ASIAN DEMOCRACIES

Saiful Mujani & R. William Liddle

*Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah, Indonesia*

saiful.mujani@uinjkt.ac.id

*The Ohio State University, U.S.A*

liddle.2@osu.edu

## Abstract

Are Asian democracies deconsolidating, in line with world-wide trends? This article examines four consolidated democracies in Asia: Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, plus Indonesia, whose own consolidation has been problematic. Using public opinion data, we evaluate two competing models—civic culture and political economy—to test whether there is a decline in democratic support. We report that the political economy model is more persuasive. Declines in democratic support are associated more consistently with democratic performance and education. Because education levels are tending to rise, and political socialization continues into adulthood, we conclude that there should be little fear that Asian democracies will deconsolidate.

**Keywords:** Democratic deconsolidation, civic culture, political economy, Asia

---

## Introduction

“The whole spectrum of regimes in the world is moving in the wrong direction. Liberal democracies ... are under pressure of becoming less liberal, less tolerant. Countries that are democracies but maybe not liberal ones ... are at very serious risk of sliding back into authoritarian rule. And countries that have been authoritarian are becoming more authoritarian” (Diamond 2017).

“Citizens of democracies are less and less content with their institutions; they are more and more willing to jettison institutions and norms that have traditionally been regarded as central components of democracy; and they are increasingly attracted to alternative regime forms” (Foa and Mounk 2016, 16).

These two quotations reflect a general conclusion about recent democratic decline, a regression that has occurred in many consolidated democracies. Mass support for democratic institutions has weakened. This sweeping conclusion is alarming, particularly to those who believe that democracy is the best system of government. These trends also stand in contrast to earlier claims that democracy represents “the end of history” (Fukuyama 1992).

Democratic deconsolidation reflects the attitudinal decline in support for democracy as a system and the increase in support for authoritarianism. It is not attributable to negative evaluations of government performance under democratic systems, which previous studies have termed the attitudes of a “critical citizenry.” This critical stance is not a threat to democracy, but is instead a sign of a healthy democracy (Norris 1999; Mujani, Liddle, and Ambardi 2018). Other analysts have challenged the basic thesis of decline in support for democracy, arguing that decline is not a universal phenomenon. Consistent with this claim, there have indeed been many fluctuations in support for democracy over time (Inglehart 2016).

The most important aspect of democratic deconsolidation discussed above by Foa and Mounk (2016) is inter-generational. In their view, the future of democracy is threatened, as can be seen in patterns of support for democracy by generations. The millennial generation, compared with its predecessor (or with more senior citizens), is argued to have a predilection towards support for authoritarianism, not democracy. These studies also show that the millennial generation is less engaged in politics, an important indicator because in a democracy political engagement is considered crucial to make the system function well and thus sustain high levels of attitudinal support.

Generations are considered an important unit of analysis because each generation is the product of a unique form of political socialization. The political attitudes of a generation, including toward democracy, are formed

when they are young, which will influence their future political attitudes. If the millennial generation holds negative attitudes toward democracy now, they will continue to hold these attitudes in the future.

Education is a potentially more important factor than generational difference. Education generally has a positive effect on consolidation or support for democracy, as has been shown in many previous studies (Lipset 1959; Norris 1999, 2011). Only if education results in the decline of support for democracy will democracy's future be endangered, because levels of education have been increasing worldwide (UNDP).<sup>1</sup>

We examine this issue by exploring four Asian democracies: Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Indonesia. Using level of freedom measures that are regularly reported by Freedom House, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan are the three Asian democracies that have become the most consolidated to date (Freedom House 2020). Their democratic progress is about the same as previously established democracies in North America and Western Europe. These three cases are therefore highly relevant to the deconsolidation issue. Previous assessments of East Asian democracies have found consolidation particularly in the three countries (Park 2007; McAllister 2016). According to a more recent study, however, Asian democracy is backsliding (Croissant and Diamond 2020). The time is therefore ripe to examine the three democracies again with new data.

Indonesia, a new democracy, was once considered consolidated during the twenty-year period since the restoration of democracy (Liddle and Mujani 2013). Recently, however, Freedom House has concluded that freedom in Indonesia has declined, from Fully Free in 2006-2012, to Partly Free since then (Freedom House 2020; Aspinall et al 2020; Mietzner 2020). The Indonesian case adds new variation to this issue.

---

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.epdc.org/sites/default/files/documents/Global\\_Educational\\_Trends\\_1970-2025.pdf](https://www.epdc.org/sites/default/files/documents/Global_Educational_Trends_1970-2025.pdf),  
[http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdro\\_statistical\\_data\\_table2.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdro_statistical_data_table2.pdf)

Are their signs of deconsolidation in these four cases? And if so, how can we explain them? We will evaluate the claims of Foa and Mounk that levels of political interest and generational differences are the crucial factors. Other studies find that socioeconomic measures, such as education, strongly predict democratic consolidation (Przeworski et al 2000; Croissant 2007; Lipset 1959). Political economy is yet another explanation. In this model, support for a regime such as democracy depends on how the regime performs: if well, the people will support it; if poorly, they will not (Clark, Dutts, and Kronberg 1993). Do these measures travel to Asia?

### **Concepts, Measures, Method, and Data**

Foa and Mounk's deconsolidation argument and Inglehart's response use public opinion data from the World Value Survey (Foa and Mounk 2016; Inglehart 2016). Foa and Mounk focus on two mass-level indicators: support for democracy and support for authoritarianism. Support for democracy has declined and support for authoritarianism has increased. They label these trends democratic deconsolidation.

Public opinion survey data such as the World Value Survey and, in Asia, the Asian Barometer, are relevant to discuss deconsolidation because they regularly and intensively collect data about relevant attitudes. In the Asian Barometer surveys, support for democracy as an attitudinal concept has been measured with several indicators that are more complex and believed to be more accurate than the one or two indicators used by Foa and Mounk (2016). This article relies on the Asian Barometer, which has regularly collected data in Asian countries over the last 15 years.

The attitudinal measures of democratic consolidation in the Asian Barometer are about regime preference, preference for a strong leader, preference for one political party, democratic expectation, democratic suitability, problems of democracy, support for army-led government, support

for expert-led government, support for gender equality, and freedom of speech and ideas.<sup>2</sup> The survey method is probability sampling, which is believed to produce samples that represent national public opinion in each country.<sup>3</sup>

### Findings

Our first indicator of democratic support is stated regime preference.<sup>4</sup> In general, in the four Asian democracies, a majority of citizens support democracy (i.e., “democracy is always preferable to any kind of government”). From 2000-2019 support for democracy rose while support for alternatives declined. In the 2000s the opinion that democracy is always preferable was 57%, which increased to 65% in 2019, statistically significant at  $p < .001$ .<sup>5</sup>

Among the four countries, the highest support across time was among Indonesians (75%) and the lowest among Taiwanese (49%). If we examine the tendencies in each country, we can see significant variation. In Japan, support fluctuates but in general declines from 77% in the early 2000s to 64% in 2012, and increases again to 73% in 2016, significant at  $p < .001$ . Taiwan is similar.

Conversely, in Korea, democratic preference strengthened over the same period. In the early 2000s, democratic preference among Koreans was 49%, a figure which increased very significantly to 65% in 2015. Indonesia is similar. The percentage of Indonesians who prefer democracy increases from 74% in 2006 to 79% in 2019, statistically significant at  $p < .001$ .

Democratic support can also be measured by the rejection of support for strong leaders who are not chosen by the people and who are willing to suspend

---

<sup>2</sup> Wordings, scorings, and codings of all measures will be directly presented in the findings section.

<sup>3</sup> Concerning method and data, see Asian Barometer at <http://www.asianbarometer.org/survey/survey-methods>

<sup>4</sup> Which of the following statements comes closest to your 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 nondemocratic regime. In the descriptive analysis, responses of don't know, no answer, and don't understand are treated as missing values.

<sup>5</sup> Analysis of variance (Anova) statistics are applied in all bivariate analysis in this article.

parliament.<sup>6</sup> In general people in the four democracies oppose a strong leader. They disagree with the notion that leaders should dispense with parliament and elections. However, support for a strong leader varies and fluctuates over time and country. In general, the strongest rejection is from the Japanese (mean score 3.303 on a 1-4 scale), and the weakest from Indonesians, although it is worth noting that Indonesians still reject the idea of strong leader (mean score 2.964). Nonetheless, in Japan, disagreement with the idea of a strong leader tended to decrease from 3.412 in 2003 to 3.337 in 2015, and in Indonesia from 3.012 in 2006 to 2.967 in 2019. The decreases are statistically significant at  $p < .001$ . In Korea the pattern is relatively stable, while in Taiwan disagreement increased from 2.963 in 2001 to 3.039 in 2014, statistically significant at  $p < .001$ .

If support for democracy is measured by the extent to which people reject a one-party system—which does away with party contestation, a democratic precondition—in general people in the four countries support democracy.<sup>7</sup> This support has increased over time in the four nations, from 3.117 in the early 2000s to 3.257 in the 2015s. The highest rejection of the one-party system among the four countries is Japan (mean score 3.368), the lowest Indonesia (mean score 2.994). In addition, in Japan rejection has intensified from 3.105 in 2003 to 3.478 in 2016, while in Korea and Taiwan it has fluctuated but also tended to strengthen. In Indonesia, on the contrary, it has weakened, from 3.079 in 2006 to 2.988 in 2019. This decline is statistically significant at  $p < .001$ .

Democratic support can also be seen in citizen perceptions as to “how suited democracy is to our country.”<sup>8</sup> In several surveys of the four Asian democracies, citizens consistently think that democracy is suitable for their countries. There is some fluctuation, but still within the range of positive support.

---

<sup>6</sup> We should get rid of parliament and elections and have a strong leader decide things: 1) strongly agree, 2) agree, 3) disagree, 4) strongly disagree.

<sup>7</sup> Only one political party should be allowed to stand for election and hold office: 1) strongly agree, 2) agree, 3) disagree, 4) strongly disagree.

<sup>8</sup> On a 1-10 scale where 1 = completely unsuitable, and 10 = completely suitable, do you think democracy is suitable for our country?

The highest suitability is in Indonesia (mean score 7.614 on a 1-10 scale), the lowest Taiwan (mean score 7.007). Viewed by country, the trends vary considerably. In Korea and Taiwan support has tended to strengthen, while in Indonesia it fluctuates more.

Democratic support can also be indicated by responses to the question whether democracy can resolve issues facing the country.<sup>9</sup> The series of surveys in the four democracies shows that in general citizens believe that democracy can resolve such issues. This confidence is highest in Indonesia (85%), lowest in Taiwan (62%), though both are within the positive range. This trend has also intensified in the last fifteen years, from 70% to 74%. The tendencies are all within the range of affirmative belief that democracy can solve problems. The most positive trends are in Taiwan and Korea, they fluctuate in Indonesia, and in Japan they have tended to decline.

In the Asian Barometer surveys, democratic support can also be seen in the extent to which citizens hope their country will continue to be a democracy in the future.<sup>10</sup> In the four countries surveyed, nearly all citizens want their countries to continue to be democracies. The highest are Indonesia (8.113 on a ten-point scale) and Taiwan (8.110), the lowest Japan (6.716), even though the latter is still within the positive range. Support for this view in the last fifteen years has fluctuated, but it is still within the range of respondents hoping that their country will remain a democracy. That fluctuation is visible in every country. There is a decline in Indonesia and Japan but, again, still on average in favor of maintaining a democracy. In Taiwan the hope has gotten stronger over time, while in Korea it has fluctuated or been stable.

The perception that democracy is the best form of government even though it has problems is also a good indicator of democratic support.<sup>11</sup> In the

---

<sup>9</sup> Wording: Which of the following statements comes closest to your own opinion? 1. Democracy cannot solve our society's problems. 2) Democracy is capable of solving the problems of our society.

<sup>10</sup> On a 1-10 scale, where 1 = not democratic at all, 10 = fully democratic, where would you expect our country to be in the future?

<sup>11</sup> Democracy may have its own problems, but it is still the best system of government: 1) strongly agree, 2)



surveys, a majority of people in the four democracies agree. This attitude was in general stable in the last ten years.<sup>12</sup> Per case, there is a significant difference, to be sure. In Japan and Korea, the trends were stable. In Taiwan support decreased from 2.916 to 2.613 (on a 1-4 scale), while in Indonesia it increased from 2.991 to 3.518.

Citizen rejection of military government is another indicator of democratic support, or conversely, supporting army rule indicates rejection of democracy. In the four Asian democracies a majority of citizens reject the idea of a military takeover of the state.<sup>13</sup> The highest rejection of military government is in Japan (3.793 on a 1-4 scale), the lowest in Indonesia (2.678), though in the latter, the population still on balance rejects a military takeover. The tendency to reject military rule in the last fifteen years in the four nations has declined from 3.504 in the early 2000s to 3.363 in the last survey in 2019. At the same time, there is significant variation. In Korea and Taiwan the tendency to reject has grown, in Indonesia it fluctuates, and in Japan it has declined from 3.872 in the early 2000s to 3.790 in 2016.

Opposition to government by experts without elections and without parliament is another indicator of democratic strength. In the four Asian democracies, in general the citizenry reject the idea of government by experts, but there is variation over time.<sup>14</sup> The highest rejection is seen in Japan (3.500 on a 1-4 scale) and the lowest in Indonesia (2.916). The general tendency is decline, but within the range of rejection (Table 2). That rejection has decreased in Japan from 3.569 in 2003 to 3.498 in 2016 and has fluctuated more in Korea; it has strengthened in Taiwan from 3.028 in 2001 to 3.136 in 2014, and in Indonesia from 2.894 in 2012 to 2.954 in 2019.

---

agree, 3) disagree, 4) strongly disagree. Coding was reversed.

<sup>12</sup> This item was introduced only in the last two surveys (2011-2019).

<sup>13</sup> The army should come in to govern the country: 1) strongly agree, 2) agree, 3) disagree, 4) strongly disagree.

<sup>14</sup> We should get rid of elections and parliaments and have experts make decisions on behalf of the people: 1) strongly agree, 2) agree, 3) disagree, 4) strongly disagree.

The view that women do not need to involve themselves in politics as much as men is also an anti-democratic view. In the four Asian democracies support for gender equality is a proxy for democratic support.<sup>15</sup> The highest support is in Japan (3.525 on a 1-4 scale) and the lowest Indonesia (2.583), though still within the range of supporting gender equality on balance. Over time, the general tendency is stability. Looked at individually, there is a tendency for gender equality to decline in Japan (from 3.580 in 2011 to 3.468 in 2016), also in Korea (from 3.351 in 2011 to 3.255 in 2015), but to slightly increase in Taiwan (from 3.220 in 2011 to 3.265 in 2015) and to be stable in Indonesia.

Education is important for democratic health, but democracy does not discriminate on the basis of differences in level of education. The democratic principle is that the right to vote is the same for people with more and less education. Most citizens in the four countries agree with this principle, although there is variation over time and across countries.<sup>16</sup> Support for educational equality is highest in Japan (3.237 on a 1-4 scale) and lowest in Indonesia (2.892). In Japan support for this view declines from 3.277 in 2003 to 3.125 in 2016. In Korea it fluctuates, in Taiwan it strengthens from 3.091 in 2001 to 3.130 in 2015, and in Indonesia it is relatively stable.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Democratic Support (Indicators and Index)

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Regime preference (democratic preference)	20705	.00	1.00	.6199	.48541
Reject strong leader	21194	.00	1.00	.8410	.36568
Reject only one political party	21268	.00	1.00	.8797	.32535
Democratic suitability	21195	.00	1.00	.8207	.38365

<sup>15</sup> Women should not be involved in politics as much as men: 1) strongly agree, 2) agree, 3) disagree, 4) strongly disagree.

<sup>16</sup> People with little or no education should have as much say in politics as highly-educated people: 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) agree, 4) strongly agree.

Reject government	army	21406	.00	1.00	.8848	.31927
Democratic index	support	18980	.00	1.00	.8144	.20963

Democrats also value highly freedom of speech and reject government control of citizens' opinion expression. Most members of our four Asian democracies support freedom of speech.<sup>17</sup> The strongest are Japanese (3.154 on a 1-4 scale), the lowest Indonesians (2.461), even though, again, Indonesia is still in the range of supporting the free expression of ideas. In Japan and Taiwan it has strengthened, in Korea it is stable, but in Indonesia it has declined from 2.504 in 2006 to 2.382 in 2019.

Overall, in our four Asian countries the twelve indicators of democratic support that are thought to measure democratic consolidation are mostly positive. Nevertheless, there is significant variation over time and place. The lowest value indicator is regime preference (democratic preference) and the highest is rejection of army rule (Table 1).<sup>18</sup> For all the combined indicators and waves, democratic support is highest in Japan and lowest in Taiwan (Table 2).

As a factor, time fluctuates. When we compare the first wave (2002-2004) with the fourth (2014-2019), there is a general increase in support (Figure). By country, there is variation: Japan and Indonesia show declines, though still within the range of positive support. In Korea and Taiwan, democratic support strengthens (Figure).

<sup>17</sup> The government should decide whether certain ideas should be allowed to be discussed in society: Strongly agree, 2) agree, 3) disagree, 4) strongly disagree.

<sup>18</sup> The combined score to form an index of democratic support is based on the indicators in the four cases in the same wave. Indonesia joined Asian Barometer in Wave 2 (2006), so the trend that is observed in the index created includes 2006-2019. Not all indicators are in each wave. Five appear consistently: regime preference, strong leader, single party system, democratic suitability, and army government. It is therefore only these five indicators that are analyzed further to provide a general picture of democratic support. Because the scales that are used differ for those five items, comparability is achieved by using a dummy variable (1 = democratic support, 0 = otherwise). These five items actually form two dimensions in a factor analysis, but the inter-item correlation is not negative. In order to read it more simply we constructed an additive index of the five items to construct a single index of democratic support (0-1).

Table 2. Democratic Support by Country (Anova)

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Minimum	Maximum
Japan	4569	.8440	.20327	.00301	.8381	.8499	.00	1.00
Korea	4588	.8181	.20369	.00301	.8122	.8240	.00	1.00
Taiwan	5340	.7876	.21325	.00292	.7819	.7933	.00	1.00
Indonesia	4320	.8049	.21674	.00330	.7985	.8114	.00	1.00
Total	18817	.8127	.21040	.00153	.8097	.8157	.00	1.00

F/(df1,df2)/sig. = 62.732/(3,18813)/0.000

The country facts show that the trend toward democratic consolidation or deconsolidation varies. They must therefore be seen case by case and we cannot offer a single general conclusion. At the same time, there is an interesting phenomenon not previously observed in the literature: democratic support in Japan and Indonesia has softened, while in Korea and Taiwan it has strengthened. Japan is the oldest consolidated democracy in Asia; it was part of Huntington's so-called second wave of democracy (Huntington 1991). Since the end of its post-World War II occupation by the US, Japan has been an uninterrupted democracy.

Indonesia is the newest democracy, from its revolutionary nationalist inception in 1945. The first democratic election was held in 1955, but the government produced by that election lasted only about four years, ending in 1959 (Feith, 1962). From then until 1998 Indonesia was governed by two authoritarian regimes, the Guided Democracy of President Sukarno and the New Order of President Suharto, for a total of nearly forty years. A democratic regime was only reestablished in 1999, barely twenty years ago.

Democratic deconsolidation thus appears to be occurring both in countries that have long been consolidated and that have only recently democratized. What Japan is experiencing is perhaps similar to American,

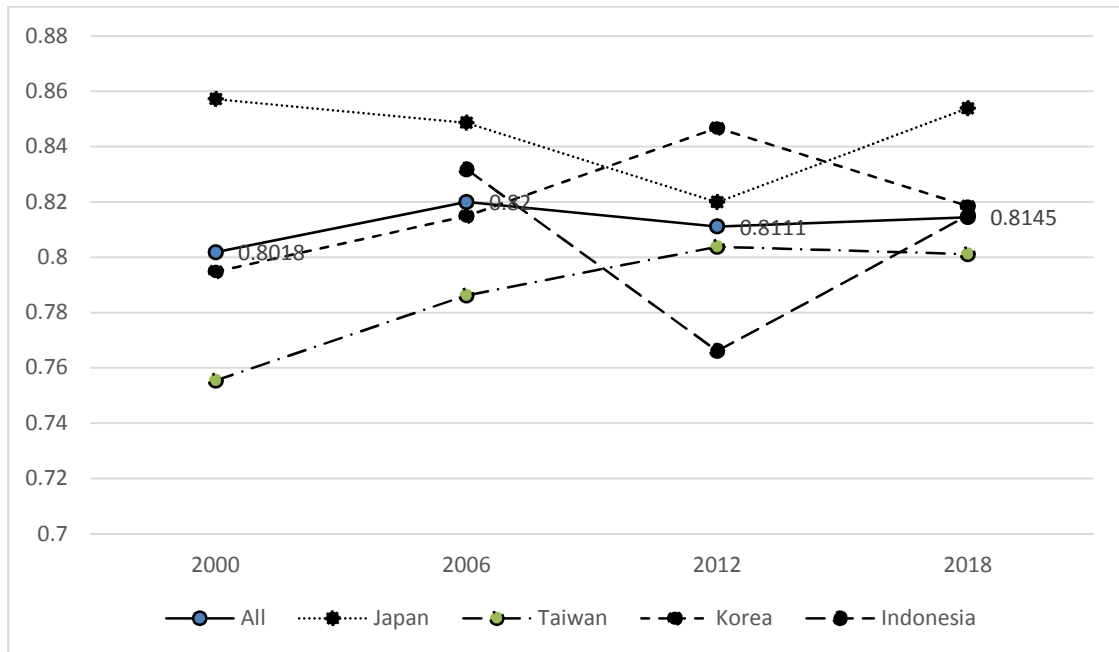
Western European, Australian, and New Zealand experiences, as argued by Foa and Mounk (2016). What Indonesia is experiencing is perhaps similar to other new democracies that have had difficulty consolidating. In Southeast Asia, these countries include the Philippines, Malaysia, and Thailand, though Indonesia is the one democracy in the region that was once regarded as Fully Free or consolidated by Freedom House, from 2006-2013. At the same time, the signs of deconsolidation are not visible in Korea and Taiwan, where democratic support has tended to increase.

How to explain these variations? Do generational differences and declines in political interest explain the variation as Foa and Mounk claim? Are they more impactful relative to education and democratic performance, which have been found by many studies to be strong predictors of democracy?

In the civic culture perspective, democracy can grow and perform well if it is supported by political engagement at the mass level, as shown by levels of political interest, voter turnout, and party identification. Some analysts have argued specifically that democratic deconsolidation is associated with the decline of these indicators of engagement and that this decline is generational. Younger generations tend to be more apathetic politically (Foa and Mounk, 2016: 10-11).

In other words, the decline in democratic support is a function of the decline in political engagement, and both of these are associated with generational change. Younger generations, and the millennial generation specifically, tend to be less engaged politically and might therefore be less supportive of democracy compared with more senior generations. From a static generational perspective, the future of democracy is threatened because members of the millennial generation who will fill the ranks of future voters are much weaker supporters of democracy.

Figure. Trend of Democratic Support by Country  
 (mean score on a 0-1 scale index)



Is this the case in our four Asian democracies? Do political interest and generation have an effect on democratic support after weighing other factors which in many studies have been found to strengthen it, especially democratic performance, economic condition, and several demographic factors, especially education?<sup>19</sup>

A multivariate analysis reveals the relative effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable, i.e., democratic support as a measure of democratic consolidation at the attitudinal level (Table 3).<sup>20</sup> In terms of political

<sup>19</sup> On the relationship between education and democracy see Lipset (1959) and Norris (2011), and between democratic performance and democratic support see Mujani and Liddle (2015).

<sup>20</sup> In this analysis, the dependent variable is a 0-1 index of democratic support constructed from 5 items (see Table 2). The independent variables are: 1) Millennial generation (40 years old or younger, coded 1, and other coded 0), 2) political interest (how interested would you say you are in politics? 1 = not at all interested... 4 = very interested), 3) democratic performance (on the whole, how satisfied or dissatisfied

interest, its effect on democratic support in the four cases is not consistent (Table 3). The strongest influence is found in Taiwan, then in Japan, though not as strong as in Taiwan. In Indonesia, political interest does have a strong influence, but a negative one, on democratic support. The Indonesian phenomenon is also apparent in South Korea (Table 2). Thus there is no general pattern that demonstrates the positive influence of political interest on democratic support.

Intriguingly, this suggests that the conception or understanding of political interest in our several countries may not be the same. The meaning of “interested in politics” and “support democracy” in the four Asian democracies may differ to the extent that the association, and the meaning of that association, among countries also differs considerably.

Is the generational difference important? When all citizens and survey waves are combined, generation does have an influence: the millennial generation is negatively associated with support for democracy, compared to the generation prior to it (Table 3). This effect is consistent across waves and time. If examined by country, the negative effect is strongest in Japan, then Taiwan, then Indonesia. If examined by wave per country, the negative effect is seen as

---

are you with the way democracy works in the country? 1=Not at all satisfied ... 4 = Very satisfied), 4) Economic condition (a 1-5 scale index constructed from 4 items: 1) overall economic condition of our country today, 2) the change in the economic condition of our country over the last few years, 3) the economic situation of your family today, 4) current economic condition of your family compared to it was a few years ago. Each item is a 1-5 scale (1 = very bad, 5 = very good), 5) education: level of education: 1 = never go to school ... 10 = college graduate or higher.

most consistent and strongest in Japan. This is followed by Taiwan even though it is less strong or consistent. The same is true for Indonesia.

The four Asian democracies demonstrate that the generational effect toward democratic support varies, but is in general negative. Generation is important for most of the cases and is consistent over time, but it clearly does not apply to all cases. If compared with other factors, especially democratic performance and education, which in many other studies are very important for democratic support, the effects of political interest and generational difference are not as strong or as consistent as democratic performance and education.

In the four Asian democracies, democratic performance increases democratic support consistently over time (Table 3). In other words, more voters will support democracy if they assess positively democratic performance in their country regardless of generation. As long as democracy performs well, both young and old will support it.

Education, which until now has been believed to be an important factor in strengthening democracy, does indeed appear to have that effect in this analysis. Indeed, the positive effect of education on democratic support is much stronger and more consistent in the four democracies compared to the effect of generational differences and even more of political engagement. Regardless of generation and political engagement, even regardless of democratic performance, education strengthens democratic support consistently (Table 3).



Democratic support or democratic consolidation in the four Asian countries is strongly and positively influenced by education. Because education levels tend to rise over time we expect that democratic support will be stronger in the future. But generational differences also matter. Millennials only weakly support democracies, but is it true that their political attitudes will not change when they become seniors? Does political socialization end with their becoming mature citizens?

Table 3. Multivariate Analysis of Democratic Support  
 (Regression Coefficients and Std. Error)

	All	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Japan	Korea	Taiwan	Indonesia
Constant	.613*** (.013)	.566*** (.032)	.645*** (.028)	.592*** (.027)	.636*** (.026)	.573*** (.029)	.749*** (.030)	.485*** (.026)	.682*** (.028)
Millennial	-.030*** (.003)	-.021*** (.008)	-.020** (.007)	-.033*** (.006)	-.032*** (.006)	-.056*** (.00&)	-.010 (.007)	-.031*** (.006)	-.015* (.007)
Political interest	.002 (.002)	.015** (.004)	.014*** (.004)	-.021*** (.004)	.010** (.004)	.008* (.004)	-.008* (.004)	.015*** (.003)	-.013*** (.004)
Democratic performance	.039*** (.002)	.040*** (.005)	.040*** (.005)	.046*** (.004)	.025*** (.004)	.053*** (.004)	.018*** (.005)	.043 *** (.004)	.029*** (.005)
Economic conditions	-.002 (.002)	-.002 (.006)	-.012* (.005)	.004 (.005)	.001 (.005)	.004 (.005)	-.006 (.005)	.000 (.004)	-.009 (.005)
Education	.019*** (.001)	.014*** (.002)	.018*** (.002)	.020*** (.002)	.018*** (.002)	.016*** (.002)	.011*** (.002)	.024*** (.002)	.020*** (.001)
N	18,287	3,479	4,255	5,264	5,315	4,309	4,479	5,171	4,174
R-square	.053	.067	.069	.080	.042	.077	.012	.078	.058

\*\*\* $p < .001$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$

### Discussion and conclusion

Are democracies deconsolidating today, according to analyses based on opinion surveys? One assessment claims they are. In consolidated democracies, people's preference or support for democracy has decreased and their support

for authoritarianism has increased (Foa and Mounk 2016; Croissant and Diamond 2020). A second argues that democratic support versus authoritarian preference are always fluctuating over time and by country with no consistent trend (Inglehart 2016). Which is more realistic or better reflects the data?

In our four Asian democracies the second assessment is more realistic. Popular preference for democracy rather than authoritarianism in general has strengthened, but it does appear to fluctuate over time and over country. How can we explain this variation?

Foa and Mounk argue that the civic culture model helps explain the decline of democratic support in consolidated democracies. Specifically, they refer to political interest as a component of civic culture to predict democratic support. In their model, if political interest increases democratic preference will as well. Foa and Mounk found that political interest in consolidated democracies has decreased, and this decrease explains the decline of democratic support. In addition, they argue that generational difference explains democratic deconsolidation. The millennial generation is less likely to support democracy. Millennial rejection will therefore weaken democracies, as the millennials will continue to comprise a larger share of the population relative to their seniors.

This article has demonstrated that in the four Asian democracies there is no consistent relationship between political interest and democratic support. This component of the civic culture model does not consistently explain

democratic consolidation. The generational effect is also inconsistent. The negative impact of the millenials is visible in Japan, Taiwan, and Indonesia, but not in Korea. In addition, the claim that generation matters to regime support should take into account the extent to which attitudes toward democracy are stable over time rather than over life cycle because of the possible continuing impact of political socialization on future generations.

Political economy is an alternative model, according to which the public's assessment of a country's economic condition will affect how it evaluates regime performance, which will in turn explain regime support. If the economy is strong, then people will be satisfied with how democracy is working, which will increase their democratic support.

The four Asian democracies show that the political economic model more persuasively explains democratic support versus authoritarian preference compared to the civic culture model. A citizen who is satisfied with the way democracy has worked in his or her country very significantly supports democracy. At the same time, citizens who are not satisfied with democratic performance very significantly prefer authoritarianism.

This article has also demonstrated the significance of education in bolstering democratic support. The positive effect of education is significant and consistent across country and over time in the four democracies. The higher the level of education the higher the democratic support. This evidence confirms many previous studies, but was absent in Foa and Mount's analysis.

Because the trend toward more and higher education continues to be strong in the four countries as well, the effect on democratic support will continue to be positive. Democratic performance and education in the future will help contain the possibility of a weakening of that support in the four democracies, and perhaps elsewhere in the world as well.

### Bibliography

- Aspinall, E., D. Fossati, B. Muhtadi, and E. Warburton. (2020). "Elites, masses, and democratic decline in Indonesia." *Democratization* 27 (4): 05-18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2019.1680971>
- Clark, H., N. Dutts, and A. Kronberg. (1993). "The political economy of attitudes toward polity and society in Western European democracies." *Journal of Politics* 55: 998-1021. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2131945>
- Croissant, A. (2004). "From transition to defective democracy: Mapping Asian democratization." *Democratization* 11 (5): 156-178. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13510340412331304633>
- Croissant, A., and L. Diamond. (2020). "Introduction: Reflection on democratic backsliding in Asia." *GlobalAsia* 15 (1): 8-13.
- Diamond, L. (2017). "Decline in democracy spreads across the globe as authoritarian leaders rise." <https://www.npr.org/2017/08/03/541432445/decline-in-democracy-spreads-across-the-globe-as-authoritarian-leaders-rise>.
- Feith, H. (1962). *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Foa, R. S., and Y. Mounk. (2016). "The danger of deconsolidation: The democratic disconnect." *Journal of Democracy* 27 (3): 5-17. DOI: 10.1353/jod.2016.0049
- Fukuyama, F. (1992). *The End of History and the Last Man*. New York: Free Press.
- Huntington, S. P. (1991). *The Third Wave. Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. Oklahoma: Oklahoma University Press.
- Inglehart, R. (2016). "The danger of deconsolidation: How much should we worry?" *Journal of Democracy* 27: 18-23. Doi:10.1353/jod.2016.0053.
- Liddle, R.W. and S. Mujani. (2013). "Indonesian democracy: From transition to consolidation." In M. Kunkler and A. Stepan (eds.). *Islam and Democracy in Indonesia*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Lipset, S.M. (1959). "Some social requisites of democracy: Economic development and political legitimacy." *American Political Science Review* 53 (1): 69-105. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1951731>
- McAllister, I. (2016). "Democratic consolidation in Taiwan in comparative perspective." *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics* 1: 44-61. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F2057891115620683>

- Mietzner M. (2020). "Rival populisms and democratic crisis in Indonesia: Chauvinists, Islamists, and technocrats." *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 74 (2): 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357718.2020.1725426>
- Mujani, S., and R. W. Liddle. (2015). "Indonesia's democratic performance: A popular assessment." *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 16 (2): 210-226.
- Mujani, S., R. W. Liddle, and K. Ambardi. (2018). *Voting Behavior in Indonesia since Democratization: Critical Democrats*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Norris, P. (2011). *Democratic Deficit: Critical Citizens Revisited*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . (1999). "Conclusion: The growth of critical citizens and its consequences." In P. Norris. *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Government*." Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Park, C.M. (2007). "Democratic consolidation in east Asia." *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 8 (3): 305-326. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S146810990700268X>
- Przeworski, Adam, et al. (2000). *Democracy and Development*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

**MHi**  
MAGISTER HUBUNGAN INTERNASIONAL



<http://ejournal.fisip.unjani.ac.id/>