

FROM THE CLASSICS TO TODAY: HOW MUCH HAVE VALUES CHANGED?

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The classic novels offer wonderful insight into some of the dominant cultural values of pre-modern China. They portray values indirectly through character and narrative rather than through explicit identification, and they usually tell us which values are preferred or honored by the society and which are condemned, without telling us how widespread a particular set of values was, or which sectors of society tended to hold which values. An alternative approach to studying cultural values is the social science method of survey research, which allows us to measure cultural values directly and to describe culture as a quantitative distribution of values across a population. Of course survey research cannot go back in history to measure the distribution of values in the past. But if we compare the values presented qualitatively in classical literature with those described quantitatively in modern survey research, we can get some sense of the extent to which values have stayed the same or have changed since pre-modern times.

Xunwu Chen has given an overall picture of traditional Chinese values based on his reading of classic novels and other texts. In one of his essays Prof. Chen writes:

The traditional Chinese values were developed for a harmonious, hegemonic, and cooperative society, not a diverse, conflicting society. They are meant to develop *collective* or *social* individuals (good father, husband, son, or mother, wife, daughter, etc.), not *individualistic* or *atomistic* persons. That the traditional Chinese society was authoritarian is well known. That it was so was due in no small measure to the emphasis exclusively on harmony, order, propriety, and collective solidarity. In the traditional ethical discourse, questions of individual rights, autonomy, and liberty were totally absent.¹

Passages from the classic novels serve to illustrate these points. For example, the heroes of *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* place priority on loyalty to the group instead of selfish interest. In the Peace Garden Oath, the three heroes Liu Bei, Guan Gong, and Zhang Fei swear, “We three, though of separate ancestry, join in brotherhood here, combining strength and purpose, to relieve the present crisis. We will perform our duty to the Emperor and protect the common folk of the land. We dare not hope to be together always but hereby vow to die the selfsame day...”² In

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¹ Xunwu Chen, “Conflict and constellation: The new trend of value development in China,” *The Journal of Value Inquiry* 31: 97–108, 1997, p. 100.

² Moss Roberts, trans., *Three Kingdoms* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1995), Vol. I, Ch. 1, p. 11.

another passage, Guan Gong rides without any troops one thousand miles to return to Liu Bei, crossing five gorges and slaying six famous generals.³

Another traditional value is conflict avoidance within the group. For example, Patience (Ping Er) in *The Story of the Stone* says, “It is the sign of a really thriving household that their big troubles turn into little ones and their little ones into nothing at all. To make a great song and dance over a trifle like this would be plain ridiculous.”⁴ In *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, General Cao Cao is praised by comparison with a rival general Yuan Shao: “Yuan Shao is ostensibly tolerant but outwardly envious and awards appointments mainly to his relatives. You are outwardly direct and inwardly understanding and employ men according to their ability. Yuan Shao is often misled by petty slander; you are impervious to gossip. Thus, you excel in discretion.”⁵

A passage from *Story of the Stone* illustrates the value of respect for authority. When Jia Yuanchun – having become an imperial consort - visits her parents on the Feast of Lanterns, the narrator tells that her senior relatives including even her grandmother had to drop to her knees as a sign of fealty; but then in respect for the senior relatives’ status, “As grandmother Jia and the rest dropped to their knees eunuchs rushed up and helped them to get up again.”⁶

This paper explores the extent to which the values portrayed in the classic literature have stayed the same and the extent to which they have changed, using social science methods rather than literary analytic methods. Besides asking how much has or has not changed in core Chinese values, the paper examines how the hold of certain values varies across social groups in today’s China. It asks how distinctively “Chinese” are Chinese values in the comparative perspective of other Asian societies. And it explores the impact of values on support for authoritarian and democratic regimes in Asia

Survey research is the technique of taking a sample of the population one wants to investigate, asking them questions, and counting the answers. The polling we read about in the newspapers is one form of survey research, which aims to track shifting opinions about contemporary political issues and people. But survey research is often used for other purposes, such as to look at work, family life, finances, and health, or at deeper, longer term attitudes, which is what this paper focuses on.

Compared to literary analysis, survey research has advantages and disadvantages. One disadvantage is that a survey cannot probe into the complexity of attitudes of each individual; the questionnaire forces the respondent either to agree or to disagree with a given statement, when the respondent may actually feel a little of both ways. On the positive side, a well-designed survey can accurately describe the distributional patterns within a society of the attitudes it has measured, can compare that pattern

³ *Three Kingdoms*, Vol. I, Ch. 27-28.

⁴ David Hawkes, trans., *The Story of the Stone: A Chinese Novel by Cao Xueqin in Five Volumes, Vol. 3, “The Warning Voice”* (London: Penguin, 1980), p. 184.

⁵ *Three Kingdoms*, Vol. I, Ch. 18, pp. 305-306.

⁶ Hawkes, trans., *Story of the Stone, Vol. I, “The Golden Days”* (London: Penguin, 1973), p. 356.

across societies; and can correlate attitudes with other variables that the researcher has collected to see who thinks what, and potentially to tease out the causes of attitudinal change

While literary analysis thinks of culture as a shared set of assumptions and concepts through which people in a society carry out debates over norms and values – a shared ground of discourse – survey research defines culture as a distribution within a population of beliefs, values, norms, and attitudes. The survey technique inherently resists the essentialization of cultures – the attribution to a given culture of one monolithic set of values. It treats the culture of a given community or nation as diverse and contested, because it measures the attitudes of each respondent separately and it finds different levels of agreement among a population on different value propositions

This paper reports on findings from the Asian Barometer Surveys (ABS). The ABS conducts surveys periodically in political systems in East and Southeast Asia (all referred to as “countries” in this essay for convenience, although Hong Kong is part of China and the status of Taiwan is contested). The ABS surveyed eight countries in the first wave in 2001-2003, 13 countries in waves 2 and 3, and 14 countries in the fourth wave in 2014-2016; it is in the process of implementing a fifth wave. The ABS is headquartered in Taipei, at the Institute of Political Science at Academia Sinica (IPSAS). In each member country a local team carries out the survey, in most cases with its own local funding, using a common core questionnaire. The survey focuses on attitudes toward democracy. In order to track change over time, the questionnaire is largely the same from wave to wave, except for some minor adjustments and added questions.⁷

One of the batteries in the ABS core questionnaire seeks to measure “Traditional Social Values” (TSV). As shown in Table 1, this battery asks about a number of the same values that are reflected in the great pre-modern novels.⁸ The first set of three questions refers to avoiding direct conflict with others. The second three questions ask about subordinating the individual to the interests of the group (family, group, nation). The third set of three questions asks about deference to authority (parents, family, teacher).⁹ (The concepts overlap, as they are part of a single battery.) The question items were formulated on the basis of a wide range of literature that argues that conflict avoidance, groupism and deference to authority are values widely held in traditional societies, including in pre-modern China.¹⁰

⁷ <http://www.asianbarometer.org/>.

⁸ In framing the TSV questions the ABS wanted to avoid referring to explicitly political objects like the regime or the leaders. Explicitly political questions were saved for the Liberal Democratic Values battery, discussed below.

⁹ The division into three groups is based both on the face meaning of the questions and on factor analysis, which confirms statistically that each set of three items taps into a distinct underlying value.

¹⁰ For example, Alex Inkeles and David H. Smith, *Becoming Modern: Individual Change in Six Developing Countries*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974); Christian Welzel, *Freedom Rising: Human Empowerment and the Quest for Emancipation*. (N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

The table portrays a China that is poised between traditional and modern attitudes, with traditional attitudes still strong, but weakening. Averaging across questions, 64% of respondents adhere to traditional values. But the strength of the three sets of values is not the same. Conflict avoidance is the strongest with an average percentage of 84.4% of respondents agreeing with those statements. Groupism comes next at 63.7%. Deference to authority is the weakest at 44.3%. And within each cluster we note certain values that have deteriorated faster than the others. Three value statements in particular command less than 50% adherence: the weakest is deference to parents; also below 50% are conflict avoidance with co-workers and deference to one's teacher.

Table 1. Traditional Social Values in Today's China			
The sake of the family, the individual should put his personal interests second	84.5	Conflict Avoidance	84.4
Even if there is some disagreement with others, one should avoid the conflict	86.8		
In a group, we should avoid open quarrel to preserve the harmony of the group	82.0		
A person should not insist on his own opinion if his co-workers disagree with him	45.7	Groupism	63.7
In a group, we should sacrifice our individual interest for the sake of the group's collective interest	70.1		
For the sake of national interest, individual interest could be sacrificed	75.2		
Being a student, one should not question the authority of one's teacher	47.1	Deference to Authority	44.3
When a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law come into conflict, even if the mother-in-law is in the wrong, the husband should still persuade his wife to obey his mother	51.4		
Even if parents' demands are unreasonable, children still should do what they ask	34.4		
Average	64.1		
ABS Wave 3 (2011) plus Wave 4 (2014-2016), n=7541			

The likely reason for the pattern we see in the data is that China has undergone a rapid process of modernization in the last thirty or so years. Even though the country underwent invasion, civil war, and revolution in the twentieth century, it remained a largely peasant society until the late 1980s and early 1990s. With China's double-digit annual economic growth in the 1990s and 2000s came a surge in industrialization, the movement of vast populations to the cities, and a big expansion of higher education. Modernization theory argues that social changes like these cause changes in lifestyles and attitudes. Urban young people no longer form extended families with their parents as in the old days but now live in nuclear families. Higher education is less of a special privilege, so students are not as deferential to their teachers. People no longer stay in the same workplace for a lifetime, so their relations

with coworkers are not as close as before.¹¹ Therefore, younger, more urban, more educated people should hold less traditional views than older, more rural, less educated people.

Table 2 suggests that this is indeed the case. The table correlates adherence to the TSV scale with other social and attitudinal characteristics of the respondents. It turns out to be true that older people, rural people, and people with less education are more likely to adhere to traditional values. Men are slightly more inclined to traditional values than women.¹²

male	0.035**
age	0.267***
urban	-0.143***
religiosity2	0.037**
edu_level	-0.261***
SOC_CAPITAL	0.003
SOCTRUST_GENERAL	0.110***
MEDIATRUST2	0.162***
ECONPERF_FAM	0.071***
GOV_EFFECTIVENESS	0.189***
GOVERNANCE_FAIRNESS	0.343***
NATIONAL_Pride	0.233***
Significance levels *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001	

This table also shows that traditional social values have an impact on other attitudes that people hold. Social values tend to be carried over into the political sphere. If

¹¹ For more on recent social change, see Andrew J. Nathan, “The Puzzle of the Chinese Middle Class.” *Journal of Democracy* (April 2016), pp. 5-19.

¹² “Urban” measures whether the subject’s place of residence is urban or rural. Religiosity2 codes whether the subject describes himself as very, moderately, or lightly religious or not religious at all. Social capital is a factor scale of how many people the subject has contact with during an average week, how many people he thinks will help him and how many people he would help. Social trust general is the mean of answers to questions on whether you can trust most people, trust people to be fair, most people are trustworthy. Media trust 2 is a factor score of trust in newspapers and trust in TV. Econperf_fam is the mean of whether your family is better off today than five years ago and whether it will be better off five years from now than it is now. Governance effectiveness is the mean assessment of the government’s ability to control corruption and provide rule of law, and people’s ability to hold government accountable in between elections. Governance fairness is a measure based on six questions about government’s fairness. National pride is a mean of how proud the subject is to be a citizen and how willing he is to move to another country.

people are deferential to social authorities like parents and teachers, are willing to identify with the social group, and prefer to avoid social conflict, then they are more likely also to defer to political authorities, identify with the political unit, and avoid political conflict. The table shows that those with more traditional values are more likely to trust other people in society; to assess their family's economic situation as having improved; to view the government as effective and fair; and to express pride in being Chinese.¹³

Table 3. How Unique is China: Traditional Social Values in Chinese-Influenced Societies							
	China	Singapore	Japan	Hong Kong	Korea	Taiwan	Vietnam
For the sake of the family, the individual should put his personal interests second	84.5	83.4	79.1	79.3	83.4	84.7	88.8
In a group, we should sacrifice our individual interest for the sake of the group's collective interest	70.1	73.2	51.1	45.9	58.3	72.4	87.9
For the sake of national interest, individual interest could be sacrificed	75.2	63.8	21.0	34.9	51.1	49.0	80.4
Even if parents' demands are unreasonable, children still should do what they ask	34.4	40.6	24.9	25.5	46.3	29.4	71.6
When a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law come into conflict, even if the mother-in-law is in the wrong, the husband should still persuade his wife to obey his mother	51.4	35.1	14.0	24.7	40.1	33.7	89.0
Being a student, one should not question the authority of one's teacher	47.1	50.6	36.1	38.4	38.9	37.7	89.7
In a group, we should avoid open quarrel to preserve the harmony of the group	82.0	81.1	79.8	70.7	62.6	81.6	67.0
Even if there is some disagreement with others, one should avoid the conflict	86.8	78.8	55.3	73.4	65.6	79.8	39.6
A person should not insist on his own opinion if his co-workers disagree with him	45.7	69.5	60.0	53.0	62.0	63.9	34.6
Average	64.1	64.0	46.8	49.5	56.5	59.1	72.1

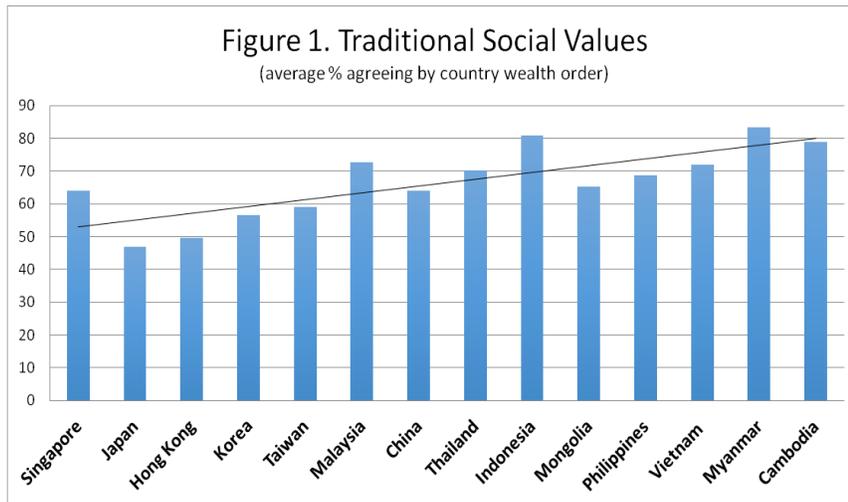
Respondents with higher TSV are also more likely to trust the media. But in the case of media trust, the relationship may run both ways. The Chinese government actively

¹³ We assess TSV as a cause and the other attitudes as effects because traditional social values are instilled earlier in life and change less readily than the other attitudes we are measuring here.

promotes traditional values through official media and education campaigns on “harmonious society” and the study of Confucianism. So not only do traditionalists trust the media more, but those who trust the media more are more strongly influenced by government propaganda that reinforces their traditional values and that also reinforces their positive views on economic performance, governance, and national pride.

Is the impact of modernization on traditional values the same everywhere, or is there something special about the way it affects values in China? We have not had the opportunity to ask the TSV battery around the world, but we have fielded the same battery in all 14 countries in the Asian Barometer Surveys. Tables 3 and 4 compare the level of belief in traditional social values in China to the levels in other Asian countries. Table 3 compares China to the countries closest to it, three of which are predominantly ethnically Chinese, while the others have been strongly influenced by Chinese culture. Table 4 compares China to societies where ethnic Chinese are in the minority, where Confucianism and the Chinese writing system had little effect, and where the predominant religions are Buddhism, Islam, or Christianity.

As a general pattern, wealthier countries have lower levels of average TSV than poorer countries. Thus, the average TSV in Japan is 47% and in Myanmar it is 78%. This general pattern is shown in Figure 1.



Even so, traditionalism stands above 50% in all but two of the countries in our study. Although we do not have comparable data from other regions of the world, the table generates a strong hypothesis that traditional attitudes in Asia may be more resistant to the dissolving effect of economic development than in some other regions. Another way to say this is that traditional cultural values remain highly valued in this region; Asian populations place a high value on their traditional ways of life.

	China	Thailand	Indonesia	Mongolia	Philippines	Malaysia	Myanmar	Cambodia
For the sake of the family, individual should put his personal interests second	84.5	86.6	90.4	86.7	79.7	81.2	92.9	80.3
Even if there is some agreement with others, one should avoid the conflict	70.1	83.3	92.3	80.8	91.1	71.0	97.1	94.0
In a group, we should avoid open quarrel to preserve the harmony of the group	75.2	81.6	93.4	81.5	84.2	70.2	85.5	95.3
A person should not insist on his own opinion if co-workers disagree with	34.4	81.7	86.8	77.9	76.1	56.8	92.6	75.5
In a group, we should sacrifice our individual interest for the sake of the group's collective interest	51.4	87.7	78.3	61.8	68.9	59.4	77.0	66.0
For the sake of personal interest, individual interest could be sacrificed	47.1	85.1	73.5	76.0	64.4	62.0	83.6	73.8
Being a student, one should not question the authority of one's teacher	82.0	47.6	82.3	46.7	61.7	90.4	65.9	72.4
When a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law come into conflict, even if the mother-in-law is in the wrong, the husband should still persuade his wife to obey his mother	86.8	41.9	80.0	29.6	44.3	90.7	78.3	75.3
Even if parents' demands are unreasonable, children still should do what they ask	45.7	35.5	50.4	47.1	48.8	73.2	76.5	76.7
Average	64.1	70.1	80.8	65.3	68.8	72.8	83.2	78.8

Singapore is an exception to the relationship between wealth and non-traditional attitudes. It is the wealthiest country, highly urbanized, with a highly educated population, but it has an average TSV comparable to that of China (64%). This may be the result of government efforts to promote traditional values. Like the Chinese

government, the Singapore government has officially promoted Confucian values in their society.¹⁴ This seems to have had an effect in slowing the values-changing effects of modernization. Even so, it has not stopped those effects.

The two other countries where traditional social values are stronger than the overall trend line would predict are the predominantly Muslim countries of Malaysia and Indonesia. As in China and Singapore, this is not an accident. In both countries, dominant political forces have promoted Islam as part of the national identity. TSV are also little stronger than the trend line predicts in the predominantly Buddhist countries of Thailand and Myanmar where, again, the governments make use of Buddhist identity in their construction of national identities. So it seems that governments can promote deference and conflict avoidance by promoting a religious identity among their citizens.

Reading across the rows, the weakest values are almost the same throughout Asia as they are in China. While the average of the per-country levels of adherence to TSV across the region is 66.6%,¹⁵ the proposition that one should obey one's parents is agreed to by an average of only 45% of national populations; the proposition that a husband should ask his wife to yield to his mother commands only 46% agreement; and the proposition that a student should not question a teacher commands only 54% (these numbers are not shown in the tables). In general, then, it is the value of deference to authority that is eroding most rapidly across Asia, reaching very low levels in Japan, which is a competitive electoral system, and in Hong Kong, a region of China with a degree of local autonomy conditioned by an increasing degree of influence from Beijing, and where several active political movements have recently emerged seeking more local democracy and more independence from mainland China.

The pattern we saw in Table 2 generally holds across Asia (although not shown here). Educated urban dwellers are less traditional-minded; older people are more traditional-minded; the influence of sex is not strong, but in most countries, as in China, men are more traditional-minded than women. And, as in China, traditional attitudes generally contribute to increase social trust and to positive evaluations of government performance.

Thus the overall picture is consistent across the region. Long-standing social values change slowly. Traditional social values remain strong except in the most highly modernized societies of Japan and Hong Kong, and even there they command agreement from close to half of the population. Whether these are "Asian values," as some analysts claim, or more general traditional values found in many societies, is something we cannot answer from the Asian Barometer Surveys, although I tend to think they are the latter.

¹⁴ Beng Huat Chua, *Liberalism Disavowed: Communitarianism and State Capitalism in Singapore*. (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2017).

¹⁵ This number is the average of the national averages, rather than a pan-regional average. That is, I have not weighted the figures by size of national populations.

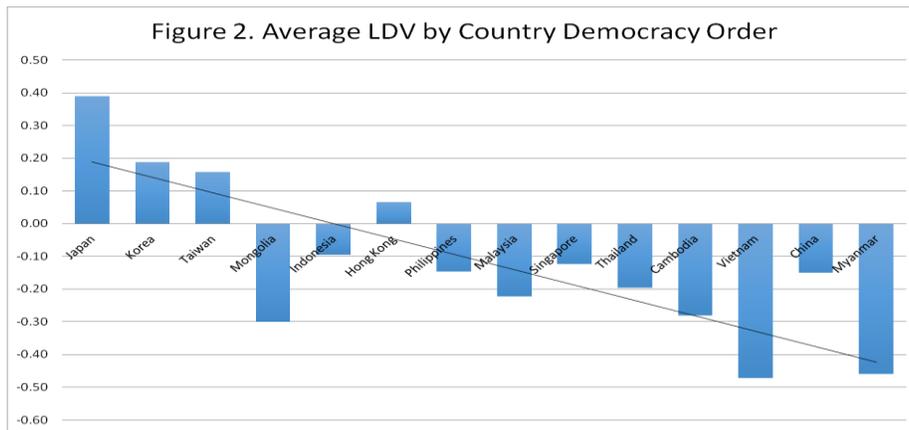
Table 5. Liberal Democratic Values (% disagreeing) by Country Democracy Order															
	JP	KR	TW	MNG	NDON	HK	PHIL	MAL	SING	THAI	CAMB	VN	CH	MY	Avg
Gov't leaders are like head of family; we should follow their decisions	82.1	61.6	77.3	42.4	23.6	65.1	56.0	32.5	40.1	51.6	34.8	30.4	31.6	27.2	46.9
The gov't should decide whether certain ideas should be allowed to be discussed in society	79.7	56.3	74.7	26.0	35.7	58.8	42.0	25.6	37.6	33.8	14.3	7.6	37.9	45.7	41.1
Harmony of community will be disrupted if people organize lots of groups	52.5	60.6	43.4	25.5	36.1	41.5	47.0	25.5	32.9	21.7	45.0	18.9	23.4	22.7	35.5
When judges decide important cases, they should accept the view of the executive branch	70.3	67.4	59.0	52.6	39.4	52.0	33.2	43.6	30.0	48.8	36.2	14.7	35.0	30.0	43.7
If the gov't is constantly checked by the legislature, it cannot possibly accomplish great things	57.9	59.1	38.7	44.9	46.4	42.0	37.1	44.8	47.8	44.6	45.1	29.8	31.0	19.0	42.0
If we have political leaders who are morally upright, we can let them decide everything	57.3	41.7	75.1	24.1	47.2	60.5	38.3	55.3	36.2	22.3	12.6	20.2	46.9	7.5	39.0
If people have too many different ways of thinking, society will be chaotic	44.1	57.0	33.2	31.5	34.3	33.2	32.0	27.5	32.0	16.7	34.5	23.1	35.4	17.3	32.3
Average	63.4	57.7	57.3	35.3	37.5	50.4	40.8	36.4	36.6	34.2	31.8	20.7	34.4	24.2	40.05

But in Asia, as elsewhere, values do change, as younger people get more educated and move to cities. The value of deference to authority seems to weaken faster and the value of avoiding conflict seems to weaken most slowly. What is happening in China is more or less typical of the region.

At the same time that *social* values change, *political* values have also faced challenges in the modern period. For a century or more, Asia, like other regions, has been the scene of a struggle over political systems and political values, ranging from monarchism to Marxism, fascism to liberal democracy. To see how political values are changing in China and in the region and how those changes are related to changes

in social values, we can turn to a battery of ABS that assesses respondents' support for Liberal Democratic Values (LDV).

Table 5 displays the percentage agreement in each country with seven statements that are intended to tap into core values of a liberal democratic system. The strategy in drafting this battery was to present statements that contravene liberal democratic values and count disagreement with these statements as a sign that the respondent adheres to LDV. Also note that in this table, the countries are arranged not in order of GDP per capita but from left to right in the order of their 2010 ratings by Freedom House.¹⁶



The relationship of LDV to the type of political system is what one might expect. As shown in Figure 2, in general, the more democratic a country's political culture is, the more democratic is its political system. One exception is Mongolia, where a dramatic political transition in 1990 brought in a democratic system to govern what had been a rural, poor, and authoritarian society, so that political change went faster than cultural change. Another, and opposite, exception is Hong Kong, where, although about half of the public is pro-democracy by our measure, Freedom House gives the territory a low score on political rights and freedoms due to the control exerted over its government by Beijing.

Returning to Table 5, on average, differences in the level of democratic culture across the region are large. At the highest, 63% of Japanese respondents agree with LDV, while the lowest number is 21% in Vietnam. China's level of adherence at 34% is below the average for the region. The specific propositions that make up the battery command different levels of support in different countries. The most rejected proposition overall is the idea that we should follow government leaders unquestioningly because are like heads of a family. This proposition is most strongly rejected in Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Korea,¹⁷ but by weak majorities or

¹⁶ <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2010>.

¹⁷ Korea in this paper refers to South Korea.

minorities elsewhere. The least rejected proposition is the idea that society will be chaotic if people have too many ways of thinking; this proposition is rejected by a majority only in Korea. There is not a single item that is rejected by a majority across the region; liberal democracy is not a hegemonic set of values in Asia.

Table 6. TSV LDV Correlation	
Japan	-0.236
Korea	-0.349
Taiwan	-0.319
Mongolia	-0.321
Indonesia	-0.154
Hong Kong	-0.486
Philippines	-0.276
Malaysia	-0.293
Singapore	-0.347
Thailand	-0.253
Cambodia	-0.345
Vietnam	-0.302
China	-0.465
Myanmar	-0.502
Notes: Waves 3 & 4 combined, weighted data. All coefficients significant at the .001 level	

Table 6 shows that TSV and LDV are negatively correlated everywhere. As people move away from traditional *social* values, they also tend to adopt liberal democratic *political* values. The table further shows that the strength of this negative correlation is stronger in the more authoritarian states than in the more democratic states. What this means is that in more democratic states, citizens are more able to hold both liberal democratic values and traditional social values at the same time, obviously reflecting the socializing influence of the political system on specifically political values even on those persons who hold traditional values in the social sphere.¹⁸ In more

¹⁸ Thus, Xunwu Chen is correct to say that traditional Chinese values are not “necessarily antagonistic to and incompatible with individual liberty, rights, and autonomy.” A citizen can adhere to both sets of values at the same time. Although the two sets of values are negatively correlated, they refer to different spheres of life. Moreover, as shown below, traditional social values can buttress support for a democratic regime if the citizen is living under that kind of regime. Chen, “Conflict and constellation,” p. 100.

authoritarian states, the government does not try to instill liberal democratic political values in people, and the traditional social values serve as a barrier to people's developing such values on their own.

male	0.036**
age	-0.289***
urban	0.197***
edu_level	0.360***
SOC_CAPITAL	0.065***
SOCTRUST_GENERAL	-0.034**
MEDIATRUST2	-0.155***
ECONPERF_FAM	-0.050***
GOVERNANCE EFFECTIVENESS	-0.217***
GOVERNANCE FAIRNESS	-0.376***
NATIONAL PRIDE	-0.212***

Table 7 looks at the people in China who are more favorable to liberal democratic values. They are the reverse of those who have stronger TSV, as we saw in Table 2. They are younger, more urban, and more educated. They have less social trust, less trust in media, and less favorable attitudes toward the government than respondents who reject liberal democratic values. In general, they are skeptical or critical. Looking at the same table for other countries (not shown here), we find that it is not only in authoritarian systems, but also in democratic systems like Japan, that people who adhere to LDV are more critical of government. Put another way, LDV values make citizens critical of government no matter whether they live under an authoritarian or a democratic regime.

One of the reasons we are interested in political culture is that we would like to know how political culture contributes to popular support for regimes. For this purpose, the ABS team created a measure of "diffuse regime support" (DRS), which is a concept similar to that of regime legitimacy.¹⁹ The DRS battery tries to set aside people's attitudes toward government incumbents, toward government policies, and toward the nation, and separate out their support for the type of political system – in effect, the country's written or unwritten constitution. It asks respondents whether they think the government is capable of solving the problems that face the country; whether the respondent is "proud of our system of government," whether the respondent believes that the "political system deserves people's support," and whether the respondent would "rather live under our system of government" than any other; the DRS score is a factor scale of the responses to these four questions.

¹⁹ David Easton, "A Re-Assessment of the Concept of Political Support," *British Journal of Political Science* 5:4 (October 1975), p. 444.

Table 8. Regression Coefficients for Diffuse Regime Support						
	China	Japan	Taiwan	Hong Kong	Singapore	Vietnam
TSV	0.342***	0.308***	0.101*	0.248**	0.109**	0.445***
LDV	-0.247***	-0.133***	-0.170***	-0.321***	-0.233***	-0.190***
MEDIATRUST2	0.058***	0.041*	0.048**	0.071**	0.062***	0.078***
GOVERNANCE EFFECTIVENESS	0.267***	0.570***	0.585***	0.372***	0.339***	0.554***
GOVERNANCE FAIRNESS	0.176***	0.318***	0.291***	0.469***	0.122**	0.136***
NATIONAL_Pride	0.158***	0.096**	0.200***	0.099**	0.253***	0.169***
Adjusted R squared	.313	.330	.319	.294	.278	.318
N	5677	2762	2950	1936	1603	1662
Out of	7541	2961	3249	2424	2039	2391
Missing %	24.72%	6.72%	9.20%	20.13%	21.38%	30.49%
NOTES: Data are weighted. *p=.05, **p=.01, ***p=.001.						
Other variables included in the regression: male, age, urban, edu_level, religiosity2, POL_EFFICACY, SOC_CAPITAL, SOCTRUST_GENERAL, ECONPERF_FAM						

Table 8 shows that cultural values have a lot to do with this pattern. The table displays the regression coefficients for selected variables in selected countries, to illustrate the point.²⁰ The adjusted r-squared shows that the overall regression model explains a considerable amount of the variation in diffuse regime support.²¹ It shows that media trust, perceived government performance, and national pride have a strong effect on DRS. But of most interest to us, the two cultural syndromes both have strong impacts, but their effects are opposite to one another. Everywhere, regardless of regime type, persons holding the traditional social values of conflict avoidance,

²⁰ There are a large number of missing cases in some countries. This is probably partly because some of the questions built into this regression model are abstract and hard to answer, and perhaps partly because respondents in some countries view the questions as controversial. Persons holding traditional values may be especially reluctant to answer them. The high number of missing cases means that our confidence in the precision of the findings is not as high as it would be with fewer missing cases.

²¹ The adjusted r-squared shows what percentage of variance in the dependent variable is explained by the model.

groupism, and deference to authority accord greater legitimacy to their regime. Everywhere, regardless of regime type, persons holding liberal democratic values are more critical of their country's regime has. (Other variables in the model do not consistently have an effect across all countries.)

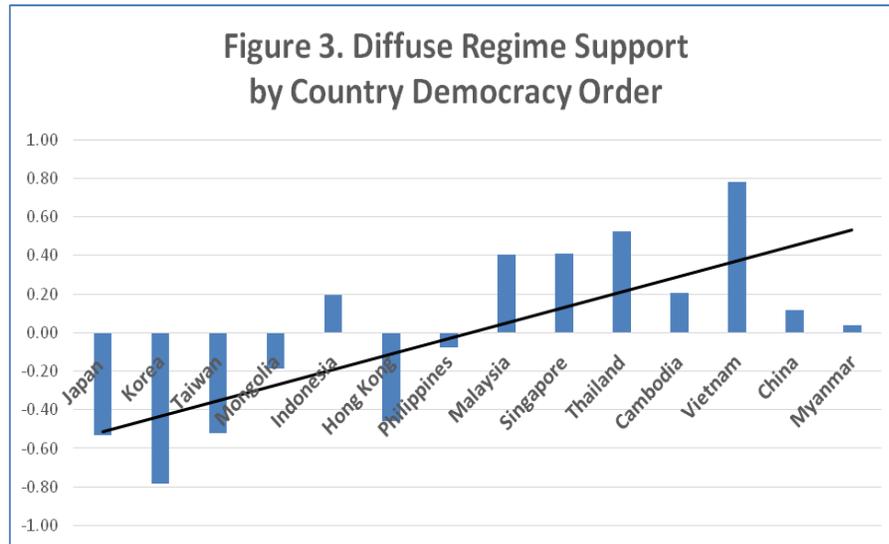


Figure 3 reveals a seemingly paradoxical pattern. The more democratic the regime, the weaker is diffuse regime support. Koreans appear to be especially dissatisfied with their country's political system, and Vietnamese especially satisfied. Chinese people are more satisfied than not, but in comparative perspective not especially supportive.

This finding suggests that the persistence of traditional attitudes may be one of the secrets to why the Chinese regime still enjoys wide support across the population even in the midst of rapid, disorienting social change, which might otherwise destabilize the regime. On the other hand, if it is true that modernization is having its predicted effect on values, then it must be the case that the Chinese government is gradually cutting into the cultural basis of its political support as it pushes forward with its modernizing project of making China a "moderately well-off society" by 2021, the hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party, and making it a "modern socialist country" by 2049, the hundredth anniversary of the establishment of the People's Republic of China.

As China modernizes, we can expect to see not only reduced deference to authority, but more dissatisfaction with the government and more bottom-up demand for liberalization. Such value change, however, does not mean that the Chinese regime will necessarily change on the same timeline as values change. Many other factors besides culture will influence political developments in China, including how fast the growth of the economy slows, whether the political leadership remains united

or undergoes a split, and contingent factors such as natural or health disasters or international conflicts.

Tradition in China remains strong; the cultural values that are most prevalent in the highly modernized society of the 21st century are recognizably similar to those portrayed in the classic Chinese novels. The novels give us a richer sense of what those values meant and why they were so widely respected. Survey research gives us a richer sense of who holds the values and how they change over time. The qualitative and quantitative approaches to understand culture each offer something to enrich our understanding.