Youth Support for and Engagement in Democracy in Asia: Lifecycle Effect or Generational Change

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Separating Three Mechanisms

• Lifecycle
  • Younger people and older people differ in their political values/attitudes/behaviors
  • People change as they age

• Generational Change
  • People of different age differ because they belong to different generations
  • Not because of age difference
  • Values are formed when people are young, and remain stable for the rest of life

• Recency—Adult Learning
  • People’s change values/views because of recent events/information even after age of socialization
  • As a result, people of different age groups or different generations often reach at the same values/attitudes/behaviors
Differentiated intervention strategies

• Lifecycle effects: Age-specific programs

• Generational changes: shaping the social and political environment in which young people grow up

• Recency/Adult-learning: general public communication programs
  • need to take into account the age differences in media/information habits
Hypotheses

• Participation and engagement behaviours
  • lifecycle effect
  • Generational changes

• Basic democratic values—generational change
  • Liberal democratic values (linear with long-term trends of social changes)
    • Modernization theory at work in East Asia
  • Partisanship, ideological tendency (likely to be non-linear, “political generation”)

• Satisfaction with democracy/government performance—recency, adult learning
Cohort/Age-group Analysis Strategies

- Lifecycle effect: people of the same age will demonstrate similar values/attitudes/behaviours at different time points.

- Generational change: people of the same generation will demonstrate similar values/attitudes/behaviours at different time points except the youngest generation, as their values are still forming.

- Recency/Adult-learning:
  - People of all generations will demonstrate similar values/attitudes/behaviours at all time.
  - People of the same generation show different values/views/behaviors at different time points, but intergenerational patterns remain the same.
Liberal Democratic Values: ABS wave1 vs. wave2 (Taiwan)
Democracy is more important than economic development (Taiwan data)
Democracy is always preferable to other types of political regimes (Malaysia)
Follow politics/discuss politics (Malaysia)
Political generations: Democracy always preferable Often follow political news

(Korea)
Lifecycle effects: Satisfaction with democracy & How often do you follow politics (Malaysia)
Lifecycle: democracy more important than economic development (The Philippines)
Lifecycle: democracy more important than economic development (The Philippines)
Psychological involvement: How interested are you in politics
How often do you follow politics (Thailand)

Lifecycle effect? Only people of some age groups show similar tendency at two time points.
Psychological involvement: How interested are you in politics How often do you follow politics (Thailand)

People’s attitude increases as they age, but remain stable for a while (between 30-50 years Old, then decline as they age)
How often do you follow politics (Thailand)

- People’s attitude increases as they age, but remain stable for a while (between 40-60 years old, then decline as they age)
Political generations + Recency
Persuade others to vote for a certain candidate or party (Taiwan/Korea)
Political generation + Recency: satisfaction with democracy (Singapore)
Generational change and adult learning: following politics and discussing politics (Singapore)
Generational change + adult learning/recency

Democracy more important than eco development (Malaysia)
Recency/Adult Learning: Support Democracy, Wave 2 data
Tentative Conclusions

• Some pro-democratic values demonstrate clear generational change patterns. The younger generations in Asia are more pro-democratic than their parents.

• Some behaviors and attitudes related to democratic engagement demonstrate lifecycle patterns. Youth-specific programs are necessary to engage young people in Asia more effectively.

• Political generations do exist, therefore it is critical to understand each generation of Asian youth with more focused effort.
Generational changes

- 20s
- 30s
- 40s
- 50s
- 60s
- 70s
- 80s
- Dead

Value

T

T+10

T+20

age
Generational changes

Value

20s ➔ 30s
30s ➔ 40s
40s ➔ 50s
50s ➔ 60s
60s ➔ 70s
70s ➔ 80s

T ➔ T+10
age
Generational Change Observed in Panel Data

Value

Generational/Cohort Effects

age

20s 30s 40s 50s 60s

G 1 G 2 G 3 G 4 G 5 G 6

T

T+10
Generational changes

Value

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Age</th>
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If we have panel data
SD W1 (cont.)
SD W2
**Tentative Conclusions**

- post-industrial (Japan): High LDV, all generations
- Recently entered post-industrial (Taiwan, HK, Korea); Modernizing societies (China, Vietnam, Thailand): higher LDV among more recent generations
- Slow-growing economies: no intergenerational differences in LDV
Adult Learning

- Recency
- Political discourse

![Graph showing three generations: Generation 1, Generation 2, and Generation 3, with values/beliefs plotted on the y-axis and an unspecified horizontal axis. Each generation is represented by a line moving upwards to the right, indicating change over time.](image-url)
Adult Learning
Political Discourses in Taiwan

Intensity

Taiwan Identity

Democracy

1987 1996
Liberal Democratic Values

- Same political rights regardless of education
- (reject) people should follow leaders
- (reject) discussions of ideas should be allowed by government
- (reject) too many groups disrupt harmony
- (reject) judges should accept views of the executive branch
- (reject) too many ways of thinking bring chaos
Support for Democracy

• Democracy is preferable than other forms of government - Preferability
• Democracy can solve our country’s problems - efficacy
• Democracy is more important than economic development - priority
• Democracy is desirable for our country - desirability
• Democracy is suitable for our country - suitability
Generational/Cohort Effects

[Graph showing generational effects with age and value axes, comparing different generations (G1 to G6) and time points (T and T+10).]
Persuade someone to vote for a certain candidate/party (Taiwan)
Democracy more important than eco development (Taiwan)
Liberal Democratic Values - age group differences (Taiwan data)