CHAPTER EIGHT

Democratic Support and Generational Change in South Korea

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New research suggests a downward trend in support for a democratic political order among younger age cohorts in consolidated Western democracies. What about newly consolidated democracies in East Asia? Using a research design similar to that employed in studies of post-Communist societies, this research investigates how democratic transition and consolidation in South Korea has affected the political opinions of Korean citizens by comparing support for democracy and political norms across generations and by levels of economic satisfaction. Generational analysis measures the impact of formative years' experiences on political attitudes and orientations, while testing an economic theory of democratic support considers whether preferences are constantly updated over the course of the life-cycle. Overall, this research finds that younger South Koreans—those from the democratic generation—are, like their Western counterparts, more critical (i.e., less supportive) of democracy in the abstract, but hold values congruent with a democratic order. The research findings provide both comparative and case-specific insights into democratic support, generational analysis, and political culture.

Whither Democracy? Democratic Support and Global Trends

It has been long argued that citizens socialized in democratic political systems internalize democratic values and show supportive attitudes towards democratic regimes, even if they show signs of dissatisfaction with

democratic governments. Indeed, "critical citizens" is a trademark feature of democratic societies.[1] New research suggests a downward trend in support for a democratic political order. Amid worsening inequality and diminishing expectations for upward mobility and a better life, some find support for democratic rule among younger age cohorts in long-consolidated democracies is waning. In the July 2016 edition of the *Journal of Democracy*, Roberto Stefan Foa and Yascha Mounk sound the alarm:

> Even as democracy has come to be the only form of government widely viewed as legitimate, it has lost the trust of many citizens who no longer believe that democracy can deliver on their most pressing needs and preferences. The optimistic view that this decline in confidence merely represents a temporary downturn is no more than a pleasing assumption, based in part on a reluctance to call into question the vaunted stability of affluent democracies.[2]

Comparing data from two waves of World Values Survey data collected between 2005–2014 for the United States and Western Europe, Foa and Mounk examine responses to relevant measure of democratic support. The authors fix their attention on one particular question, which reads: "How important is it for you to live in a country that is governed democratically?" This is seen as the most direct and reasonable measure of one's support of a democratic regime. Respondents are asked to answer on a scale of 1 ("not at all important") to 10 ("absolutely important"). The authors look specifically at the number of respondents who answered 10/10, or those who think it is essential to live in a democracy. They find significant variation across birth cohorts. Seventy-two percent of those born before World War II in the United States thought it essential to live in a democracy; only 30 percent of those born in 1980 or earlier agreed. The same cohorts for Europe show a similar downward trend across cohorts, although support has never been as high as in America or, currently, as low (e.g., in the Netherlands, the authors find that 55 percent of the interwar generation answered 10 and 33 percent of those born in 1980 or after).[3] Foa and Munk dismiss the idea that this discrepancy is due to young people being more "critical," or because of life-cycle effects. To the authors, the differences in opinion are due to a cohort effect rather than a life-cycle effect.[4] In other words, the decline in support for democracy is part of a new generational predisposition[5] and reflective of a downward trending democratic support—the beginnings of democratic deconsolidation. The authors' claims challenge the long-held belief that once democracies consolidate, they never go back. In a time of rising populist-authoritarianism,[6] Foa and Munk's finding could be seen as the proverbial canary in the coal mine.

Not everyone, however, is convinced that there is an anti-democratic wave sweeping the West. Pippa Norris and Erik Voeten, for instance, do not think Foa and Munk's findings are necessarily supported by the data. Their main criticism is that, without data going back further than the 2000s (additional measure considered by Foa and Munk go back to the mid–1990s), one cannot conclude that the variation in opinion across birth cohorts are due to generational differences and not simply a predisposition of young people.[7] In other words, the differences in opinions might be due to life-cycle effects, something which the authors cannot so easily dismiss. There is also exception taken to Foa and Munk's measurement of democratic support. To take only those who answered 10/10 to questions about democratic support as constituting those who support democracy conflates those who answered 9 and those who answered 1 as *the same*. As Voeten points out, "In reality, almost no one (less than 1 percent [of the samples used]) said that democracy is 'not at all important.'"[8]

Criticism of interpretation and measurement aside, the data do show significant variation in opinion in the United States and Western Europe. But what about in newly consolidated democracies elsewhere? The debate about democratic deconsolidation has focused mainly on Western countries, but there is no reason to limit the scope to only these democracies. There is much to learn comparatively about democratic political culture by expanding the scope of the investigation to the newly consolidated democracies of East Asia, specifically South Korea. Do differences in historical sequencing and the timing of democratic transitions make any difference? As a newly consolidated democracy, is there a difference in values between the pre-democratic and post-transition generations? This research adds to the ongoing debate by considering the extent of democratic support among generations in South Korea. Similar studies of post-autocratic political cultures haven't rendered definitive answers.[9] This paper won't forward unequivocal evidence either, but it will contribute to the ongoing conversation on democratic political cultures and support for democracy in the current era.[10]

Consolidation Among the Third Wave Democracies: South Korea as a Case Study

Most research into democratic values centers on Western Europe and North America. This is not surprising. Most of the world's democracies are found there, and they have been there the longest. However, the universe of possible cases has expanded as the number of democracies have grown. With the

maturation of some "Third Wave" democracies,[11] there are new cases from which to choose and data to use. Recent political developments in South Korea have also attracted more attention to its relatively young democratic political system. On March 10, 2017 then-president Park Geun-hye was removed from office by the Constitutional Court following an impeachment process started by the country's legislature after the revelation of a corruption scandal and the severe abrogation of presidential duties. The lead-up to the impeachment vote on December 9, 2016 saw large-scale, peaceful protests by an engaged citizenry in the capital Seoul and throughout the country. The videos and images of protestors dancing, chanting, and marching are impressive, and repeatedly went viral. For a country with a history of military intervention during times of government instability, what happened is no small feat—even if the peacefulness with which it took place wasn't all that surprising.[12]

However, not everyone in South Korea agreed that the president should have been impeached. A number of pro-Park Geun-hye rallies are evidence that at least some in South Korean society did not agree that the president should have been removed from office.[13] They may not have been as large as the anti-Park rallies, but these counter-protests, which were made up largely of elder members of society, indicate that not all Koreans agree on what it means to be a democracy. One organization that rallied in support of Park Geun-hye—the "National Coalition of Martial Law Implementation"—publicly called for the re-implementation of martial law, citing threats from communists and anti-state elements.[14] Anti-communism may seem like a strange and antiquated remnant of the Cold War, but the message is better received than some might otherwise think. Survey data indicates that many South Koreans, and a vast majority of elderly South Koreans, find value in anti-Communist ideology.[15] It's also worth noting that the main conservative candidate in the latest presidential election, Hong Jun-pyo, ran on an anti-Communist platform. Hong publicly accused the current President Moon Jae-in of being a "pro-North Korean leftist" during his election campaign.[16] His message did not resonate with the 20–40 year-old crowd, but it did succeed in capturing the older, more conservative base. Among older age groups, Hong received either a plurality or majority of the vote. By stark contrast, with those 30–39, he received effectively no votes![17]

On the day of the Constitutional Court, the institutional body with authority to remove presidents, voted in favor of upholding the impeachment motion, many pro-Park protestors marched to the location of the court, demanding its dissolution.[18] They may not have been calling for the reinstatement of a dictator, but democracy means something different for these citizens than it

does for their younger compatriots. This is worth further consideration. Are there any differences in political attitudes and orientations between those who came of age prior to South Korea's transition to democracy in 1987 and those who "grew up democratic?" If there is indeed a downward trend in support for a democratic political system, then we should expect to see some evidence of this in South Korea. To orient our empirical expectations, we will turn briefly to existing theoretical explanations regarding the legitimacy of democratic regimes and the foundation of democratic norms.

Basis of Democratic Support: Existing Explanations

Why do citizens support democracy? There are many ways to answer this question, but this research draws from two bodies of research: that which looks at the role of political socialization and regime legitimacy (1) and performance-based theories of political support (2). The first body of literature focuses on the theoretical relationship between late adolescent and early adult life experiences (the "formative years") and support for political systems. It argues that early life experiences shape political predispositions over the course of the life-cycle. The second body of research sees regime legitimacy as rooted in things like economic performance; predispositions towards a particular regime, then, are not enduring but are constantly updating over the course of one's life.

Socialization and Political Generations

Political culture has long been understood as reflective of deeply ingrained norms, values, and behavior. Early research into this subject stressed the importance of early-life family and educational experiences in cultivating democratic norms.[19] The importance of early life experiences has been repeatedly confirmed in the political culture literature.[20] The theoretical expectation established by this literature is that learning in the early years is conditioned by the socialization process within the family, at school, and from the broader structure of society.

Socialization theory suggests that citizens internalize values of the political systems into which they are socialized, forming concrete political values in late adolescent and early adult years.[21] The assumption here is that political attitudes and values broadly supportive of the extant political system will be cultivated during the formative years and that these predispositions will endure over time. In short, the *type* of political system in which one comes of age will determine what kind of system they are more likely to support. Those coming of age under democratic conditions, then, will show political values

more in align with democratic principles. By contrast, older generations—those who came of age under autocratic or distinctively non-democratic conditions—will find it more difficult to adjust to a new, democratic political system.[22] The theory is congruent with the story told above of older South Korean citizens, upset at the conditions created by mass protests and impeachment, calling for the restoration of order, even if it means acting in a manner not befitting a consolidated democracy (i.e., dissolving a court).

According to socialization theory, we should expect to find those socialized under democratic conditions show greater support for democratic rule and have values congruent with a democratic political order. Inversely, we can expect to find those socialized under alternative political systems to show relatively less support and have values less congruent with democracy.

Economic Performance

Research exploring the relationship between economic conditions and political order shows that support for a given political system is a function of economic performance.[23] Economic theories of democratic support posit that attitudes towards democratic political systems stem mainly from the successful implementation of a market economy, in addition to continuous economic growth.[24] This approach, tucked within the folk of revised modernization theory, specifies political culture as a crucial intermediary variable between economic performance and regime type, arguing sustained growth and development creates and maintains cultural conditions supportive of democracy.[25] Studies in post-Communist countries finds the same effect at play. Those who perceived themselves as beneficiaries of the democratic transition were more likely to positively evaluate the new democratic system.[26]

An economic theory of political support suggests legitimacy of a democratic regime has little to do with political socialization; it is a function of economic satisfaction. Assessments are, in other words, performance-based. There is a constant updating of institutional preferences over the course of the life-cycle with adult experiences mattering just as much, if not more than, early-life experiences. Theoretically, then, we should expect to find that the more satisfied one is economically, the more support they will show for a democratic political system and the more oriented their values will be towards democratic rule.

Methods, Variables, and Data

This research looks at whether there are any generational differences in South Korea on two dimensions: regime support for democracy (regime legitimacy) and political orientations (norms). It also considers whether

Table 8.1. Generations by Historical Period

Historical Period			*Birth Year*	*N (2005)*	*N (2010)*
Democratic	1988–	Transition in 1987; successful turnover in rule (party-opposition in 1997 and again in 2006). Increasing political (and social) pluralism coupled with post-industrial social and economic changes.	1970–	500	549
Transition	1980–1987	Political instability and military coup (1979–1980); oppressive authoritarian rule (e.g., Gwangju massacre); social unrest notable, with large-scale opposition and protests.	1962–1969	267	269
Authoritarian	1971–1979	Heavy industrial push coupled with centralized and highly authoritarian control under the Yushin Constitution (promulgated in 1972, ended in 1979).	1953–1961	203	188
Older Authoritarian	Before 1968	Late colonial rule followed by contentious state-society relations (esp. under First Republic) and economic malaise; modest economic recovery and social stability in the 1960s following a military coup lead by Park Chung-hee.	Before 1953	230	194

opinions vary according to economic performance. Data for this research come from the World Values Survey (WVS) longitudinal dataset (survey years 2005 and 2010). The WVS is a cross-national survey project that collects nationally representative samples on values, beliefs, and attitudes using a common questionnaire. In addition to collecting demographic and socioeconomic data, the WVS tracks support for democracy and attitudes towards religion, political leadership, and the military, among many other variables.[27]

South Korea by Generations

Defining a generation is as much a work of art as it is a science. Generally, the age range of 18–25 is understood as the pre-adolescent formative years when political predispositions are formed. Following closely previous examples in generational analysis[28] five generations are identified. Each generation is defined by the historical period under which individuals turned 18 (i.e., "came of age"). Due to the space and scope constraints of this paper, it isn't possible to go into great detail regarding the conditions which define each generation. Table 1 provides a description of each generation by the historical period under which they came of age.

Economic Performance

While measurements for economic performance aren't as difficult as that for generations, there is some debate as to whether people's opinion of the economy as a whole (sociotropic) or egocentric measures (individual or household) should be used. This research uses egocentric evaluations of financial well-being, which measures how satisfied people are with their household's financial situation, as a measure of economic performance. Respondents are asked to rate on a scale of one-to-ten how satisfied they are with their household's financial situation, with ten being "completely satisfied." While alternative measures may capture a similar sentiment (and perhaps do so better than the one chosen here), it is in the opinion of the researcher that an egocentric measure of financial well-being is a suitable measure for economic performance for this research.

Regime Legitimacy and Political Values

There are many ways to measure support for democracy. No one way will best capture the desired concept. What questions are used is in part determined by what the researcher is interested in measuring. This research is concerned first in regime legitimacy—whether people think living in a

democracy is important—and second in the political orientation or norms of citizens. The former is a relatively straight-forward and admittedly abstract gauge of democratic support, while the latter is a deeper, more substantive measure.

To measure regime legitimacy, we look at the importance South Korean citizens place on living in a democratic political system. Respondents were asked to rate how "important" it is "to live in a country that is governed democratically" on a ten-point scale. The distribution of responses for the entire sample is shown in Figure 1.

It is clear that most South Koreans think it is important to live in a democracy, with most of the variation taking place between seven and ten. Rather than consider scores across the entire index, this research looks instead at those who score at or above the median for the sample (a score of nine). Accordingly, a new binary variable is created with those responding with nine or greater categorized as "strongly supporting democracy." The research by Foa and Mounk (cited above) measured only those answering 10/10 as strongly supportive—that is, those who think it is "absolutely important" to live in a democracy. As discussed above, it is problematic counting those who answered nine and one as the same. The same could be said for counting those who answered eight and one as the same, but the point here is to set a high threshold for regime legitimacy.

However, to consider only whether people think it is important to live in a democracy doesn't give us a full appreciation of what people think about democracy. We need to look at a more substantive measure of democratic support. To do this, a battery of questions from the WVS that

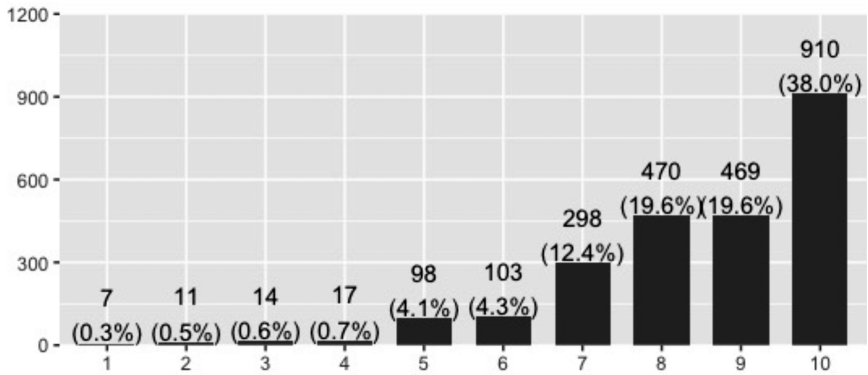

Figure 8.1. Importance of living in a democracy (10 = absolutely important)
Source: World Values Survey (2005 and 2010); missing variables (n=3) excluded

examine what people think is "essential" in a democratic political system are assessed. Respondents are asked to indicate, for instance, if the army taking over when the government is incompetent is desirable in a democracy and whether obedience to rulers is an essential trait of democratic rule. Answers range along a ten-point scale, with 10 indicating the respondent thinks the quality is essential to a democracy and 1 indicating the inverse (not essential). The most relevant items were identified using a data reduction technique on a dimension relevant to this research.[29] The items used are shown in Table 2.

Together these questions represent a close measure of respondents' orientation towards democratic and authoritarian norms. Scoring higher on the items selected will indicate values more congruent with an authoritarian political system than a democratic one. Rather than examine responses to all questions individually, a new variable was created by averaging the total scores of all items on the authoritarian/democratic dimension. The higher the score, on a scale of zero to one, indicates a stronger preference for authoritarian norms. The distribution of responses for the sample is shown in Figure 2.

Unsurprisingly, scores are skewed towards zero. Strong orientations towards authoritarian norms isn't to be expected in a consolidated democracy. This doesn't mean, however, that there isn't notable variation in the data. The question is whether one generation or another scores relatively higher (or lower), and why. As with the previous measure, a binary variable is created using the median score. This sets a higher threshold for what constitutes firmly entrenched democratic values. The democratic/authoritarian scale is divided by the median score (.375); those scoring lower than this central point are counted as demonstrating "strong democratic norms."

Empirical Findings

Before considering a statistical model that takes into account our primary explanatory variables (generation, financial well-being) plus relevant con-

Table 8.2. Measuring Political Orientation

What is "Essential" to a Democracy?
1. Religious authorities interpret the laws.
2. The army takes over when the government is incompetent.
3. The state makes people's incomes equal.
4. People obey their rulers.

(authoritarian/democratic norms)

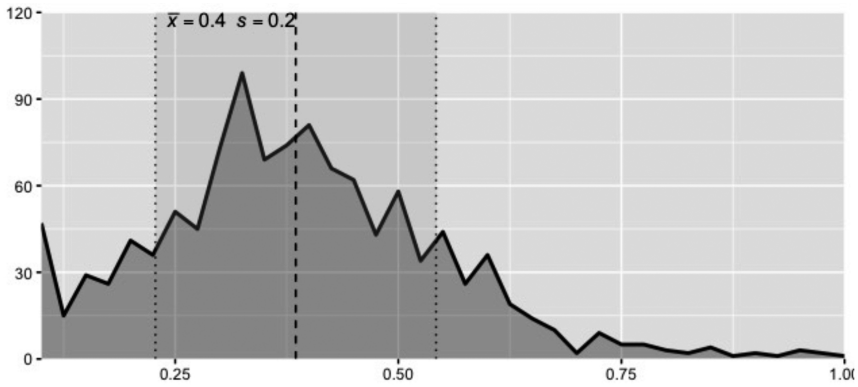

Figure 8.2. Political orientation scores (higher score means more authoritarian)
Source: World Values Survey (2010). N=1136 (no missing variables reported)

trols, we can look at descriptive statistics to get an idea of whether there is any meaningful variation. Table 3 shows the percentage of each generation showing strong support for democracy with a control for economic evaluation.

The immediate takeaway is that there isn't a great deal of variation across generations for regime legtimacy. A closer look, however, indicates some small but notable differences. Specifically, the authoritarian generation scores highest, with 61 percent indicating strong support for democracy. It is only three percentage points higher than the average (58%), but five points higher than the democratic generation (55%)—who we expect to score highest—and six points higher than the older authoritarian generation (55%). It would appear that having experienced autocracy—these are citizens who came of age during Park Chung-hee's highly repressive Yushin regime—makes one modestly more supportive of a democratic regime. These findings run somewhat contrary to theoretical expectations. Socialization theory, as it is understood in the context of regime legitimacy, suggests that regimes cultivate supportive attitudes through various mechanisms (education, propaganda). Political culture, in other words, is tilted in favor of the

Table 8.3. Strong Support for Democracy by Generation and Economic Evaluation

	Democratic	*Transition*	*Authoritarian*	*Older Authoritarian*
Positive Economic Evaluation	57%	62%	66%	61%
Negative Economic Evaluation	54%	58%	56%	49%
Overall	56%	60%	61%	55%

Data: World Values Survey (2005 and 2010). N = 2397 • $\bar{x}$ = 0.58 • σ = 0.49

ruling regime. It is thus somewhat surprising that those from the authoritarian era are more supportive of democracy than those of the democratic era.

When economic performance—that is, life-long learning effects—is taken into account, there is a clear additive effect. Regardless of the generation, support increases or decreases according to how one evaluates their economic well-being. The only thing of note is that the performance effect seems strongest among older cohorts. This is not unexpected, as younger people are more able to adapt to new political and economic conditions.

As discussed above, only looking at eagerness to live in a democracy (ergo, democratic support) may not give us the full picture. Looking at political orientation might uncover differences in an understanding of the way democracy works, and what it means, to citizens. Table 4 shows the percentage of those showing strong democratic values, as measured by the selection of items from a battery of questions that measure democratic/authoritarian orientation (see Table 2).

Results for strong democratic norms show significant generational differences. Those coming of age under democracy score highest (54%). This is seven percentage points higher than the average and 19 points higher than older authoritarians. Notably, the authoritarian generation scores closer to the democratic generation (48%, or a six-point difference) than the historically closer older authoritarian generation (15-point difference). The closeness between the democratic and authoritarian generations suggests they are the most similar generations—norms-wise—in South Korea. The effect of economic performance is less clear on norms than it is for general support for democracy. For two of the generations (democratic and authoritarian), those with positive economic outlooks score lower. For older authoritarians, however, the effect is reversed. There is no effect for the transition generation.

There are other notable findings from our descriptive statistics. Comparing results from Tables 3 and 4, we see that those from the democratic gener-

Table 8.4. Strong Democratic Values by Generation and Economic Evaluation

	Democratic	*Transition*	*Authoritarian*	*Older Authoritarian*
Positive Economic Evaluation	52%	40%	43%	38%
Negative Economic Evaluation	58%	40%	53%	31%
Overall	54%	40%	48%	35%

Data: World Values Survey (2010). N = 1136 • $\bar{x}$ = 0.47 • σ = 0.50

ation and older authoritarian both put a relatively lower level of importance on living in a democracy compared to other generations, but only the latter shows any indication of holding values incompatible with established democratic norms and practices. It would appear that the democratic generation might be simply more critical than other generations, a finding consistent with the existing literature.

These descriptive statistics reveal some interesting differences between generations, but they are merely suggestive of what the relationships are between our variables of interest. Not yet considered is whether outcomes are influenced or confounded by relevant socioeconomic, political, or geographic variables. Subject to our preliminary findings to greater rigor, probit regression models are estimated (see Appendix for control variable construction and description). These models let us consider the independent effects of our two main explanatory variables, in addition to controlling for the effects of other relevant variables.

One model is specified for each of the response variables (democratic support and political orientation). The probit regression output (coefficient estimates, corresponding standard errors, and odds ratios) are produced in Table 5. For the generational variable, the democratic generation is used as the reference category against which all other generations are compared. In model 1 (democratic support), we find that the transition generation and authoritarian generations are statistically significant predictors of democratic support. Those from the authoritarian generation are, in fact, 1.48 times more likely than the democratic generation to show strong support for democracy. Economic evaluation also has a strong and independent effect. As expected, the better one assesses their economic well-being, the more supportive they are of a democratic political system.

Model 2, which regresses generation and economic valuation on a measure of political orientation, adds much needed nuance to the story. Compared to the democratic generation the coefficients for transition and older authoritarian generations (negative) indicate that the democratic generation is more strongly oriented towards democratic norms than the older cohorts. The older authoritarian generation is .50 times more likely than those from the democratic generation to show *authoritarian* values.

Probit estimates aren't intuitive to read and while odds ratios are certainly useful, predictive probabilities—which tells us the likelihood that any one of our four generations either strongly support democracy or have strong democratic orientations—provide a better reading of our regression output. Figure 3 shows predictive probabilities for democratic support (showing gen-

Table 8.5. Logit Regressions (Standard Errors in Parentheses)

	Model 1 *Democratic Support*	*Model 2* *Political Orientation*
Generations		
Democratic (ref.)		
Transition	0.28**	–0.55***
	(0.12)	(0.17)
Authoritarian	0.39***	–0.22
	(0.13)	(0.19)
Older Authoritarian	0.16	–0.69***
	(0.13)	(0.19)
Economic evaluation	0.08***	–0.08**
	(0.02)	(0.03)
Controls		
University degree	0.19*	0.13
	(0.10)	(0.15)
Female	0.11	–0.07
	(0.09)	(0.12)
Unemployed	–0.16	–0.46
	(0.22)	(0.33)
Urban dweller	0.04	–0.15
	(0.10)	(0.15)
Rural dweller	0.03	–0.10
	(0.13)	(0.18)
Progressive	0.48***	0.48***
	(0.12)	(0.17)
Conservative	0.14	0.39**
	(0.11)	(0.16)
Survey Year 2010	–0.12	
	(0.09)	
Constant	–0.65***	0.32
	(0.19)	(0.29)
N	2349	1136
Log Likelihood	–1576.95	–762.71
Pseudo-R^2	R^2_N = .063	R^2_N = .051
X^2 deviance	p = .000	p = .000
AIC	3179.89	1549.42

***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < .1

Notes: Reference for year dummy in Model 1 is 2005. Model two uses responses from 2010 WVS survey wave only. R^2 is Nagelkerke's pseudo R-squared.

erations only). The authoritarian generation is most likely to show strong support for a democratic political system. The probability of someone from the authoritarian generation showing a strong preference for democracy is relatively high at 65 percent. Those from the democratic generation come

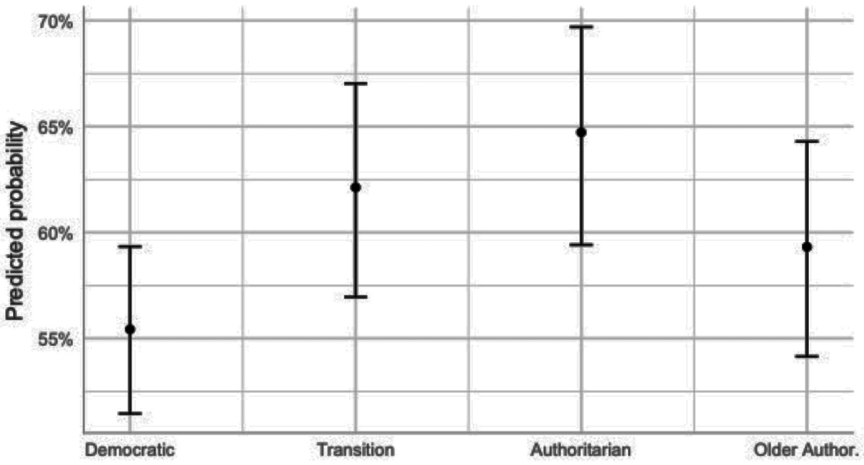

Figure 8.3. Democratic support model (Generations Only)
Source: Author, based on World Values Survey 2005 and 2010.

in at 55 percent, noticeably lower, as the descriptive statistics originally suggested. These probabilities are calculated holding the effects of economic satisfaction constant. How do the predicted probabilities differ according to the level of one's economic satisfaction?

Figure 4 shows predictive probabilities across different levels of economic satisfaction for each generation. The additive effect described above can be clearly observed. The more well-to-do one perceives their household to be doing, the more likely they are to approve of democracy *regardless* of the period during which they came of age. The democratic generation has the lowest probability of showing strong democratic support relative to older cohorts (especially the authoritarian generation, which has the highest probability), no matter the level of economic satisfaction.

If the analysis stopped here, we might conclude that South Koreans growing up democratic aren't fashioning opinions supportive of a democratic order, similar to what Foa and Mounk did for the United States and Western Europe. In the South Korean case, this means that democrats and older authoritarians think similarly. As suggested in our preliminary findings above, this conclusion might be wrong. Predictive probabilities for political orientation are shown in Figure 5. They confirm the descriptive statistics: the democratic generation is more likely to show values oriented towards democratic norms. In fact, it is the only generation that has a predicted probability above 50 percent. The most similar generation based on the regime legitimacy dimension (older authoritarian) is, on the norms dimension, *the*

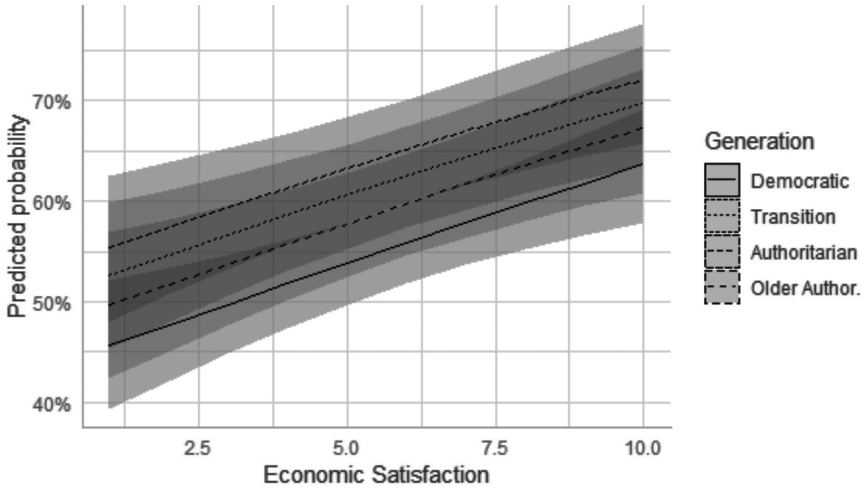

Figure 8.4. Democratic support model (Generations & Economic Evaluation)
Source: Author, based on World Values Survey 2005 and 2010

most dissimilar. The oldest cohort has a predicted probability of 36 percent. The implications of this findings are discussed more below.

An interesting thing happens when we look at predictive probabilities at differing levels of economic satisfaction. There is a similar additive effect for democratic support, but in the opposite direction (Figure 6). It appears that the more positive one's evaluation is of the economy, the more likely they are

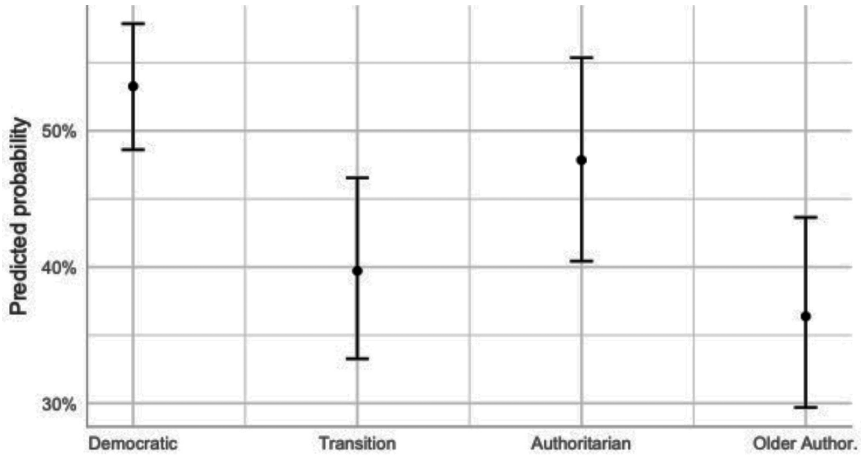

Figure 8.5. Political orientation model (Generations only)
Source: Author, based on World Values Survey 2010

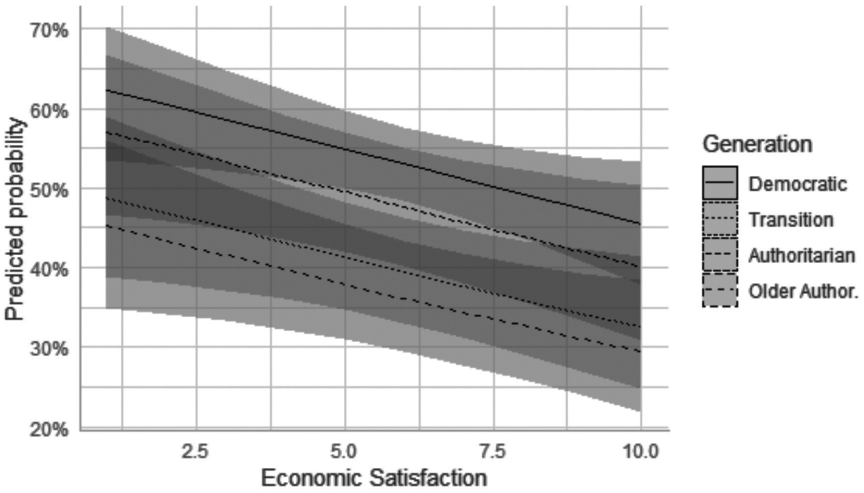

Figure 8.6. Political orientation model (Generations & Economic Evaluation)
Source: Author, based on World Values Survey 2011

to lean authoritarian. Contrary to our theoretical expectations, this somewhat surprising finding is discussed further in the conclusion and discussion.

Conclusion and Discussion

Several findings have been presented in this paper. They speak to both the comparative literature on democratic consolidation and norms, including the ongoing debate about democratic (de)consolidation, and to research specifically about South Korea.

First, like in the United States and Western Europe, there are notable cohort/generational differences in South Korea regarding attitudes towards democracy. Younger South Koreans—those who spent their formative years under democratic rule—are less enthusiastic about living in a democracy than those who came of age under an oppressive autocratic regime. In fact, in the South Korean case, the oldest and youngest (democratic and older authoritarian generations) think alike. However, a more substantive measure of political norms shows a significant gap in what these two groups think democracy really means. Those who came of age prior to the highly oppressive Yushin years but well before the period of democratic consolidation exhibit a significantly greater orientation towards authoritarian values than those who came of age later, and especially those who came of age under a democratic regime.

Second, the findings for South Korea suggest that democratic regime legitimacy may not be a function of the life-cycle. The inverted U shape for democratic support (Figure 3) indicates that responses may be a function of generational experiences. Furthermore, that the authoritarian generation shows a greater support for democracy suggests an alternative reading of the data for Western democracies. Older cohorts and South Koreans from the authoritarian era may show greater support for democracy because they understand, in a deeper sense, what is at stake.[30] In South Korea, those from pre-democratic generations (namely, those from the authoritarian generation) directly experienced political oppression; their formative experiences included assaults on political rights and freedoms. Similar to this, the older age cohorts in Western democracies either came of age at a time when autocracy was perceived to be a global threat. Those many decades divorced from the World War eras and the threat of oppressive Communist regimes during the Cold War era may have little appreciation for alternative political systems. This doesn't, however, mean they favor an alternative political system, as has been suggested. This interpretation of the data is far from definitive, but the findings presented here suggest it might be right.

Lastly, the findings of this research lend additional support to the economic theory of democratic support. Independent of generational effects, institutional preferences are constantly adjusted over the course of the life-cycle. Regarding political legitimacy, the causal claims is simple: regime legitimacy is a function of economic performance. The better one perceives their economic well-being, the higher is their approval of the political system in which they live. Democratic support, in other words, is dependent upon its economic performance. This finding is entirely in line with our empirical expectations, as defined by extant theories on the relationship between economic performance and regime support, but not everything is as expected.

There is an interesting, perhaps even puzzling, outcome for the relationship between economic performance and political orientation. As shown above (see Figure 6), the better one perceives themselves to be doing, the more likely they are to show authoritarian values. At first glance, this seems counterintuitive. Theory, after all, suggests that regime approval and, by extension, supportive norms are a function of economic performance. Then why would citizens lean authoritarian the better off they become? There are at least two possible explanations. One, a simple explanation, might be stated as such: If the system isn't broken, then let those in positions of power maintain course. A deference model of political support, it might be called. Authoritarianism in this context isn't *necessarily* a bad thing.

The second interpretation is less optimistic. It reads: economic well-being and support for authoritarianism are positively correlated, because those well-to-do are concerned about redistributive claims by the less well-to-do. Foa and Mounk see similar patterns in both Europe and the United States. They write, "If we widen the historical lens, we see that, with the expectation of a brief period in the late twentieth century, democracy has usually been associated with redistributive demands by the poor and therefore regarded with skepticism by elites."[31] The better off one is materially-speaking, the more they have to lose. Authoritarianism in the second case is contra to the democratic ideal of economic and social inclusion. It isn't clear, based on the data presented here, which interpretation is best (they needn't be mutually exclusive either). Either, or both, interpretation might be correct.

Is democracy undergoing de-consolidation? The answer, at least in the South Korean case, is probably not. While citizens being socialized under democratic conditions may show critical attitudes towards the idea of a living in a democracy (as do their younger compatriots in other consolidated democracies), they simultaneously hold values congruent with a democratic political system. There is a reason, after all, that young people weren't at the forefront of *pro*-Park Geun-hye rallies. They, and indeed much of society, demanded the slate be wiped clean of corruption and a leader, befitting from a consolidated democratic order, be elected. The findings here should not be taken as a guarantee of democracy's success. Discontent at the lack of upward mobility and job prospects has many young people genuinely concerned about their financial futures. Will critical attitudes develop into something more—say, a preference for an alternative to democracy? The findings here suggest that is possible, however unlikely. The future of democracy in South Korea and beyond seems safe for now, but that doesn't mean forever.

Appendix

Additional Variable Construction (controls) from World Values Survey (WVS) Pooled Data.

University Degree

Dummy variable. Those who have finished a four-year university coded as 1, else 0.

Unemployed

Dummy variable. Those answering "unemployed" for employment status coded as 1, else 0.

Female

Dummy variable. Those answering "female" for gender coded as 1, else 0.

Urban dweller

Dummy variable. For size of town, those answering "Urban industrial area," "Urban commercial area," or "Urban residence" coded as 1, else 0.

Rural dweller

Dummy variable. Those answering "Rural area" coded as 1, else 0.

Progressive

On political scale, those who self-identify between 1 (far left) and 4 are coded as 1 (progressive), else 0.

Conservative

On political scale, those who self-identify between 6 and 10 (far right) are coded as 1 (conservative), else 0.

Notes

1. Norris, *Critical Citizens*.
2. Fou and Mounk. 2016. "The Democratic Disconnect," 16.
3. Foa and Mounk, "The Democratic Disconnect," 8–9.
4. Life–cycle effects refer to changes that take place over the course of one's life. If variation on some variable of interest is a function of age (or the process of aging), then one can expect similar attitudinal or behavioral changes at certain points in the life–cycle regardless of, say, when one was born or what they experienced growing up. Changes due to the life–cycle are different from cohort effects, which emphasizes the importance of period–specific experiences and their life–long effect on attitudes or behavior. Methodologically speaking, it is difficult to determine what is a life–cycle effect and what is a cohort effect, or possible a temporary period effect. See: Glenn, *Cohort Analysis*.
5. Cohort and generation are often used interchangeably and will be done so in this paper.
6. Ronald Inglehart and Norris, "Trump and the Populist Authoritarian Parties: *The Silent Revolution* in Reverse," 443–454.
7. Norris, "Is Western Democracy Backsliding? Diagnosing the Risks"; and Voeten, "Are people really turning away from democracy?"
8. Voeten, "That viral graph about millennials' declining support for democracy? It's very misleading."
9. Shin and Dalton, "Growing up Democratic: Generational Change in East Asian Democracies," 345–372; and Denemark, Mattes, and Niemi, *Growing Up Democratic*.

10. This paper centers its focus on political culture and South Korean citizens' attitudes towards their political system. It is not concerned with elite statements or sentiment, or the formal political process. Of course, democratic orders depend in large part on political elites and other relevant political groups (e.g., political parties) accepting a democratic political order. However, democracy's long–term viability depends upon a supportive populace. In other words, democracy fails if the political system and political culture are incongruent. See, among many others: Ronald Inglehart and Welzel, *Modernization, Cultural Change and Democracy*.

11. Frist first coined by political scientist Samuel Huntington in 1991, the third wave of democracy refers to the countries which transitioned from autocratic to democratic rule between the mid–1970s through the early 1990s in Latin America, Asia Pacific, and Latin America. The failed or troubled transitions rule in many of these countries to consolidated democratic has given rise to the study of "hybrid regimes" and "competitive authoritarianism"—regimes that are democratic in name, but either partially or effectively autocratic. See Diamond, "Thinking About Hybrid Regimes," 21–35 and Way and Levitsky, *Competitive Authoritarianism*.

12. On May 16, 1961 Park Chung–hee (a Major–General in the army), with support from the Military Revolutionary Committee, overthrew the democratically elected—but unconsolidated rule—of the Yun Bo–seon government. General Chun Doo–hwan would lead two more coups (one in late 1979 and another in 1980) to secure and consolidate his rule in the power vacuum that followed the assassination of Park Chung–hee in 1979. Chun's consolidation of power included his violent suppression of the democratic uprising in Gwangju.

13. Aljazeera, "Rival protests in Seoul over Park Geun–hye impeachment."

14. JoongAng Daily, "Pro–Park rally calls for the imposition of martial law."

15. Denney, "Anti–Communism Endures: Political Implications of ROK Political Culture."

16. Kim, "North Korea the first question at first all–candidates presidential debate."

17. Denney, "South Korea's 19th Presidential Election: Lessons Learned."

18. Yonhap, "Two die as pro–Park protest turns violent."

19. Almond and Verba, *The Civic Culture*.

20. Niemi and Sobieszek, "Political Socialization," 209–233; and Pye, *Asian Power and Politics*.

21. Mishler and Rose, "Trajectories of Fear and Hope: Support for Democracy in Post–Communist Europe," 553–581; and Shin and Dalton, "Growing up Democratic."

22. Jennings and Richard Niemi, *Generations and Politics*; Jennings, "The Crystallization of Orientations," in *Continuities in Political Action*, eds. Samuel H. Barnes, Jan van Deth, and M. Kent Jennings (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 1989), 313–348; Sears and Nicholas A. Valentino, "Politics Matters: Political Events as Catalysts for Preadult Socialization," 45–65; and Neundorf, "Democracy in Transition: A Micro perspective on System Change in Post–Socialist Societies," 1096–1108.

23. Lewis–Beck, *Economics and Elections*; and Clarke, Nitish Dutt, and Allan Kornberg, "The Political Economy of Attitudes toward Polity and Society in Western European Democracies,'" 998–1021.

24. Lipset, Seymore M. 1959. "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy." American Political Science Review 53 (1): 69–105; and Przeworski and Fernando Limongi, "Modernization: Theories and Facts," 155–183.

25. The list is long, but revised modernization theory, from which this paper draws, is best summarized in a 2005 book by Inglehart and Welzel, Chapter 1, "A Revised Theory of Modernization, 15–47.

26. Mishler and Richard Rose, "Trajectories of Fear and Hope: Support for Democracy in Post–Communist Europe," 553–581; and Ekman and Jonas Linde, "Communist Nostalgia and the Consolidation of Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe," 354–374.

27. For more, see: http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs.jsp.

28. See Shin and Dalton, "Growing up Democratic" and Neundorf, "Democracy in Transition."

29. Using the latest survey wave (2010), there are nine questions from which to choose. Principal component analysis, a data reduction technique which identifies correlated variables within a dataset, shows two dimensions. The second dimension incorporates four of the original nine items and represents a dimension relevant for this research: democratic and authoritarian values.

30. As was suggested by social commentator Ezra Klein in an interview with Yascha Mounk, the reason older age cohorts may show greater support for democracy is because of their direct or indirect experiences with autocracy and oppression. See the interview, from the Ezra Klein Podcast, at: https://soundcloud.com/ezra–klein–show/yascha–mounk–is–trumps–incompetence–saving–us–from–his–illiberalism.

31. Foa and Mounk, "The Democratic Disconnect," 14.

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