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Similarities and Differences in East Asian Confucian Culture: A Comparative Analysis

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Abstract

In East Asia, Confucianism has long been regarded as the cultural basis for social norms and political order. In the past literature, many scholars have argued that the special nature of Confucian culture is an important factor hindering the modernization of East Asian countries. However, rapid modernization in the past two decades has shown that East Asia is not limited in its modernization by its cultural features. In this paper, the authors explore how the effects of modernization and democratization affect Confucian values in East Asian. Using data from the latest wave of the Asian Barometer Survey data in nine East and Southeast Asian countries, the authors find that modernization and democratization might attenuate Confucianism, but this trend is actually transformative instead of linear, meaning that Confucianism may be transformed into a post-modern culture that offers spiritual well-being and continues to guide the future progress of human civilization.

■ **Keywords** : Confucianism, modernization, social structure, cultural evolution, socioeconomic change

Introduction

In East Asia, Confucianism has long been regarded as the cultural basis for social norms and political order (He, 2010).¹⁾ In the past, many scholars have argued that the special nature of Confucian culture is an important factor hindering the modernization of East Asian countries (Pye, 1985; Li, 1997). However, the rise of Japan in the twentieth century, the post-War economic miracle of the East Asian tigers, and more recently the rapid development of Southeast Asian countries over the last two decades driven by globalization as well as the global impact of

China's rise show that the areas of East Asia and Southeast Asia have not been limited in their modernization by their cultural features. In fact, some elements of Confucian culture such as an emphasis on collectivism, the importance of family ethics, and a belief in thrift and hard work appear to have considerable advantages for social modernization (Kahn, 1979; Zhang, 1999), so that East Asia has become the most modernized region in the world outside of the West.

Although Confucian culture has shown qualities that may promote modernization in certain areas, many Confucian cultural values run contrary to modernization (Worsman, 2012).²⁾ For example, in terms of family ethics, although filial piety remains a fundamental moral principle in East Asian societies, this principle involves many different aspects of life, such as providing care for parents and unconditional obedience to parental authority, making children into the primary source of economic support and emotional care for their parents (Chen, 1908). However, with the modernization of state and society, many elements of Confucianism have been gradually taken over by the government and social organizations (financial support), or been redefined as a result of changes in the social structure (shifting from the extended to nuclear family). Therefore, we would expect Confucian culture to weaken as societies modernize. However, at the same time, the interaction between modernization and Confucian culture has produced a change in the character of Confucianism. This complex relationship, which reveals that different elements of Confucianism and modernization may be either compatible or mutually exclusive, defines the changes in Confucian culture in the context of the rapid economic modernization of East Asian societies (Tu, 1996).

In comparative politics, "traditionalism" is a concept that is similar to Confucianism but is applied over a wider range of cultures (Lerner, 1958). Like Confucianism, traditionalism also advocates many "pre-modern values," primarily reflecting the feudal hierarchies of traditional agricultural societies. Core concepts include: collectivism, focus on long-term relationships, tendency to avoid conflicts, patriarchal views, and a belief that one's fate is already determined (Huntington, 1996; Inglehart &

Baker, 2002). These views are very similar to Confucianism, because they both originated in feudal agricultural societies. However, traditionalism expresses a more diverse set of values that emerged in the context specific social structures and systems of production. Therefore, the “traditionalism of agricultural society” is measured against the “modernism of industrial society.” Based on this, the development of Confucianism across 2,000 years in China naturally includes components of traditionalism. Therefore, there is a significant overlap between Confucianism and traditionalism.

However, Confucianism is not identical to traditionalism. In particular, in terms of its geographical reach, Confucianism reflects the historical and cultural experience of the “Chinese cultural sphere,” including the use of Chinese characters as well as the system of philosophy led by Confucius and Mencius that emerged in the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, which produced a political culture dominated by Confucianism from the Han Dynasty onwards. Furthermore, Chinese culture and Confucianism exerted a powerful influence on neighboring countries (Reischauer, 1974; Huntington, 1996).³⁾ The influence of Confucianism has reached societies populated by Han people, including China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, as well as Chinese communities in Malaysia and Singapore. It has also reached non-Han regions such as Korea, Vietnam, Japan, and Mongolia. In these countries and regions, the significance of Confucianism is not limited to the traditionalism of feudal agricultural society; it also refers to a cultural system centered on the teachings of Confucius and Mencius. Despite the overlap between Confucianism and traditionalism, the specific values of Confucianism reflect the core thinking of Confucius and Mencius. In particular, a social order based on the five cardinal relationships has considerable differences with the pre-modern features of traditionalism.

In this paper, we use comparative survey data from the latest wave of Asian Barometer Survey (ABS 4, 2014-2016) for a systematic comparative analysis of nine societies in the Confucian cultural sphere in order to answer the following questions. First, how are the different his-

torical experiences of societies within the Confucian cultural sphere reflected in the features of Confucianism in each society? Second, following different periods of rapid economic growth, how has Confucianism in different East Asia societies been subject to the influence of modernization? Third, how have differences in the democratic development of East Asian societies influenced the features of Confucianism in each society?

The Change and Unchanged of Confucianism in Contemporary Asia

When discussing how Confucian culture has been subject to economic and political modernization, it is first important to define Confucianism conceptually. In this paper, Confucianism is defined as the ethical norms of the five cardinal relationships between the ruler and the ruled, father and son, husband and wife, between brothers, and between friends (Yang, 2015, p. 481). These five cardinal relations are listed in order of importance, with the relationship between emperor and subject acting as the basis for ethical norms, meaning the “eight virtues”⁴ of “loyalty and filial piety, benevolence and love, honesty and justice, and harmony and peace.” (Lai, 2009, p. 116). Of the eight virtues, “loyalty and filial piety” (zhongxiao, 忠孝) are the most fundamental virtues defining human relations. In the context of the state, this means subject’s loyalty to the emperor; in the context of the family, this means children’s filial piety to one’s parents. “Loyalty and filial piety” are the core ethical values of Confucianism, meaning obedience to one’s superiors if they are morally qualified (Chen, 1986, pp. 214-216). Such relationships of authority are reflected in the social positions of emperor and subject, father and son, and husband and wife.⁵ “Benevolence and love” (ren’ai, 仁愛) refers to general principles when dealing with others, and defines moral values for those in positions of authority, including benevolence, compassion for the people, acting for the benefit of the people, and sharing their worries (Chen, 1986, p. 479). These moral principles are also applied when dealing with people of the same status. “Honesty and righteousness” (xinyi, 信義) refers to the equal relationships between brothers

and friends, in other words helping those in need and acting in good faith, and providing assistance to one's brothers or friends when they require. In addition, the promises and commitments between brothers and friends do not change due to the interests involved (Cheng, 1972). The values of "harmony and peace" (heping, 和平) extend this concept to relations with strangers, meaning that even in our relations with strangers, we should strive for peaceful coexistence, avoidance of conflicts, and interaction on a harmonious and equal basis (Berthrong, 2014).

The five cardinal relationships can also be understood using the concept of concentric circles (Tu, 1994, p. 144), meaning that how people treat each other is defined by the type of relationship—categorized in order as "the ruler and the ruled, father and son, husband and wife, between brothers, and between friends." At the same time, specific moral content is reflected in a hierarchy of values—"loyalty and filial piety, benevolence and love, honesty and righteousness, and harmony and peace." In the case of a conflict, higher ranked human relations and moral values are given priority.

Applying the above conceptualization, we understand Confucianism as a value system that is fundamentally about political order and social norms (El Amine, 2015). At the same time, Confucianism stressed the idea of the moral teacher and was characterized by a flourishing literati culture. This is of course related to the tradition of the moral teacher in the works of Confucius and Mencius and the emergence of the imperial examination for political recruitment in China. But societies that were strongly influenced by Confucian culture such as Korea, Vietnam, and even Japan have historically also had a tradition of the moral teacher and literati culture.⁶⁾ Moreover, the ethical principle of regarding a "teacher for a day as a father for a lifetime"⁷⁾ (The Lesson of Great Grandfather太公家教) has become deeply embedded among social elites. This feature of Confucianism that regards the relationship between teacher and students as that between father and son is lacking in other types of cultural traditionalism.

Another clear distinction between Confucianism and traditionalism

can be found in religion. Although Confucianism adopted a respectful attitude towards the worship of the gods and ancestors, it has a fundamentally agnostic attitude to religious beliefs. Confucian classics teach us to “keep the aloof from spiritual beings” (Yong Ye 雍也, *The Analects 論語*)⁸) and asks us “while you do not know life, how can you know about death?” (Xian Jin 先進, *The Analects 論語*).⁹) In other words, while Confucianism is not against practices of ancestor worship, it lacks religious concepts such as “redemption,” the “afterlife,” “eternal life,” “heaven,” and “hell,” and it does not advocate the excessive pursuit of these beliefs. This Confucian position on religion led to the subsequent arrival of Buddhism and Taoism as well as the emergence of new local religions to fill the gap on religious teachings in Confucianism. However, from a Confucian perspective, no religion is more important than secular human relations. For this reason, followers of Confucianism regard human relations as the greatest priority for social norms, while religious beliefs, which are viewed as the spiritual pursuits of humans, take a secondary place. As a result, Hu Shih has said that “the educated people in China are indifferent to religion” and, moreover, that “China is a country without religion and the Chinese are a people who are not bound by religious superstitions” (Yang, 1991, p. 5). These ethical norms derived from the secular Confucian tradition are qualitatively different from the ethical norms under traditionalism which is derived from religious authority.

Although the features of Confucianism described above are still recognized by most people, the content and manifestations of Confucianism have evolved with social modernization and political change. Of course, some aspects have remained constant, but overall, a greater level of socio-economic modernization and political democratization is associated with a weakening of many of the norms in the five cardinal relationships. For example, socioeconomic modernization has brought about a greater division of labor, changes in the structure of society caused by urbanization (the rise of nuclear families), the increasing complexity and legalization (depersonalization) of human relations, increased population movements, a growing divorce rate, the rise of female consciousness,

and a transformation in traditional relationships of subordination into institutionalized managerial relationships, especially through the expansion of labor legislation between employer and employee. Therefore, when we try to measure Confucianism, we must take into account the weakening effect of modernization on the core concepts of the doctrine.

In addition, we must also consider the effects of political democratization, particularly the elevation of political rights and civil liberties. In non-democracies, the relationship between ruler and the ruled is based on the rule of man, while in democratic countries it is based on the rule of law. Therefore, the relations of authority between rulers and ruled will be considerably weakened in democracies.¹⁰⁾ This reasoning may also be applied to the four remaining types of relationship. For instance, in order to consolidate their rule, authoritarian states may use their political influence to instill and consolidate certain individual moral values. This will have a powerful influence on individual attitudes. Such influence is not only experienced at the level of individual personal relationships, but also defines all social relationships that exist within the all-embracing political context.

Measurement Issues

Measuring Confucianism empirically requires overcoming two problems mentioned in the preceding section. The first is how to deal with the conceptual overlap between Confucianism and traditionalism; the second is how to account for the influence of modernization on Confucianism. With regard to the first issue, we can carry out confirmatory factor analysis on the core values of Confucianism and the wider values of other forms of traditionalism, using the latent factor structure of the best-fit model with the parsimonious principle to identify whether individual indicators better reflect Confucianism or traditionalism, or both of these value systems. For the second question, we can analyze the relationships between the level of socioeconomic development and political authoritarianism on the one hand, and our original

measure of Confucianism on the other. We carry out a linear regression on the original measures of Confucianism by adding predictors of socio-economic development and political authoritarianism to obtain residuals, which we use as a partial-out measure of Confucianism after controlling the influence of modernization and democratization.

The Asian Barometer covers the entire Confucian cultural sphere, while also providing comparative cross-national data on core measures of Confucianism and traditionalism. This paper only used data from Wave 4 of the Asian Barometer Survey for the following reasons. First, of the three core measures of Confucianism, only two are available in the First and Second Wave of the survey, significantly affecting the comparability of measures across survey waves. Second, the Third Wave of the survey lacks data on ethnic identity, meaning that we are unable to identify ethnically Chinese respondents in Singapore and Malaysia, affecting our ability to analyze the Confucian cultural sphere in Southeast Asia.

As to case selection, the Confucian cultural sphere in theory should include societies characterized by the following four elements: the use of Chinese characters, influence of Confucianism, Mahayana Buddhism, and the Asian system of centralized government (Kao, 1984). These four factors are derived from the historical experience of the ancient Chinese. As a result, the Confucian cultural sphere includes societies that are considered Chinese: mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, but also includes vassal or independent regimes that were subject to Chinese political influence, including Korea, Vietnam, Japan, and Mongolia. These countries currently or previously used Chinese characters as their main written language, and were also influenced by Confucian thought, Mahayana Buddhism, and the Asian system of centralized government. Therefore, despite divergence in written language, religion, and politics that started to emerge in the nineteenth century, the continued influence of Confucian culture means that these four countries continue to be identified as part of the Confucian cultural sphere. Finally, Chinese who emigrated to Southeast Asia from the nineteenth century onwards are also

regarded as belonging to the Confucian cultural sphere. Due to the political environment in the receiving societies, these emigrants remained isolated from local communities, maintaining the language and religious practices from their place of origin. This phenomenon has been observed among the Chinese communities of Singapore and Malaysia. In summary, we can identify nine societies belonging to the Confucian cultural sphere, including Chinese societies (China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan), Northeast Asian societies (Japan, Korea, and Mongolia), and Southeast Asian societies (Vietnam, Malaysia, and Singapore).

In terms of measurement, the Asian Barometer Survey applies three items pertaining to the core concepts of Confucianism: (1) [q60] Even if parents' demands are unreasonable, children still should do what they ask (father-son relationship); (2) [q61] 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 (mother-in-law-daughter-in-law relationship); and (3) [q62] Being a student, one should not question the authority of their teacher (teacher-student relationship). These three items test whether respondents are willing to defer to the authority of their superiors even when their demands are unreasonable. Here, the father-son relationship can be extended to the emperor-subject relationship, and the mother-in-law-daughter-in-law relationship can be extended to the husband-wife relationship. At the same time, the teacher-student relationship is a moral relationship that is given particular importance in Confucianism. From another perspective, the father-son relationship involves issues of filial piety and whether demands are reasonable or not, while the mother-in-law-daughter-in-law relationship also involves issues of filial piety and patriarchal culture, while the teacher-student relationship involves issues of conflict avoidance and establishing long-term relationships. These dimensions may have some overlap with measures of traditionalism and may also be influenced by social changes resulting from modernization.

To test whether Confucianism can be clearly distinguished from traditionalism in construct validity, we apply the battery of questions on tradi-

tionalism in the ABS with their original scales, including the following sub-dimensions and indicators: (1) “Collectivist tendency”: [q55] For the sake of the family, the individual should put his personal interests second; [q56] In a group, we should sacrifice our individual interest for the sake of the group's collective interest; [q57] For the sake of national interest, individual interest could be sacrificed. (2) “Emphasis on long term relationships”: [q58] When dealing with others, developing a long-term relationship is more important than securing one's immediate interest; [q59] When dealing with others, one should not only focus on immediate interest but also plan for future; [q68] When dealing with others, one should not be preoccupied with temporary gains and losses. (3) “Tendency to avoid conflict”: [q63] In a group, we should avoid open quarrel to preserve the harmony of the group; [q64] Even if there is some disagreement with others, one should avoid the conflict. [q65] A person should not insist on his own opinion if his co-workers disagree with him. Finally, we include some traditional values frequently found in human societies, including “fatalism”: [q66] Wealth and poverty, success and failure are all determined by fate and “patriarchy”: [q67] If one could have only one child, it is more preferable to have a boy than a girl.

First, we carry out a dimensionality test for the measurement results for traditionalism (11 items) and Confucianism (three items). We then apply categorical IRT factor analysis using Mplus 6. For the model specification, we carry out confirmatory factor analysis, applying the parsimonious principle for the number of factor extraction. That is, based on the standard for a good model fit ($CFI \geq 0.9$, $TLI \geq 0.9$, $RMSEA \leq 0.05$), we select the minimum number of factors, using Geomin oblique rotation with maximum variation. As shown in Table 1, on the dimensionality test, the measurement validity for “collective tendency,” “emphasis on long-term relationships,” “core Confucian values,” “and tendency to avoid conflict” are conceptually distinct, so each of their respective measurements shows a good correlation, but among specific concepts, certain measures perform better. For example, under “collective tendency,” q56 has the best measurement validity. Similarly, under “emphasis on

long-term relationships,” q59 has better factor loading. In addition, under “tendency to avoid conflict,” q63 and q64 show a higher correlation. With regard to the core values of Confucianism, the results show that the father-son relationship (q60) and mother-in-law-daughter-in-law relationship (q61) have higher measurement validity, while the teacher-student relationship (q62) has acceptable factor loading ($r=0.46$). Our data show that the teacher-student relationship is also associated with the “tendency to avoid conflict” ($r=0.31$). It is also noteworthy that “fatalism” (q66) and “patriarchy” (q67) have a strong association with Confucian concepts, but a lower association with traditionalism. The above results show that aside from father-son, mother-in-law-daughter-in-law, and teacher-student relationships, fatalism and patriarchy can also be included as measurement indicators for Confucianism.

Table 1
Testing Dimensionality of Traditionalism Battery

Dimensions/Items	ABS4 (2014-2016)			
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
<i>Collectivism</i>				
q55. For the sake of the family, the individual should put his personal interests second.	.36	.23	-.01	.11
q56. In a group, we should sacrifice our individual interest for the sake of the group's collective interest.	.85	.01	-.01	-.03
q57. For the sake of national interest, individual interest could be sacrificed.	.72	.01	.05	.05
<i>Long-term Expectation</i>				
q58. When dealing with others, developing a long-term relationship is more important than securing one's immediate interest.	.14	.65	-.02	.05
q59. When dealing with others, one should not only focus on immediate interest but also plan for future.	-.01	.86	.04	-.02
q68. When dealing with others, one should not be preoccupied with temporary gains and losses.	-.01	.42	-.04	.24
<i>Confucianism Cores</i>				
q60. Even if parents' demands are unreasonable, children still should do what they ask.	-.02	.13	.66	-.01

Dimensions/Items	ABS4 (2014-2016)			
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
q61. 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.	.09	.04	.70	-.06
q62. Being a student, one should not question the authority of their teacher.	.12	-.04	.46	.31
<i>Conflict Avoidance</i>				
q63. In a group, we should avoid open quarrel to preserve the harmony of the group.	-.01	.08	.00	.76
q64. Even if there is some disagreement with others, one should avoid the conflict.	.06	.00	-.02	.79
q65. A person should not insist on his own opinion if his co-workers disagree with him.	.01	.10	.12	.51
<i>Other Traditional Thoughts</i>				
q66. Wealth and poverty, success and failure are all determined by fate.	-.04	-.11	.50	.21
q67. If one could have only one child, it is more preferable to have a boy than a girl.	-.08	-.03	.47	.03
CFI		.981		
TLI		.958		
RMSEA		.040		
SRMR		.022		
N		12729		

Note. All the country samples are weighted to have equal influence.

Data Source: ABS4. Program: Mplus 6.

Based on the above results, we further carried out confirmatory categorical IRT factor analysis to test the measurement quality of Confucianism using the five items mentioned above. The results are shown in Table 2 with the factor loading values for the five indicators in the range of 0.45 to 0.71. The ranking for validity is as follows: mother-in-law–daughter-in-law, father-son, student–teacher, fatalism, patriarchy. In terms of measurement indicators, the results show that CFI=0.952, TLI=0.903, RMSEA=0.083. The first two indicators are good, while the value in the final indicator is fair/mediocre at around 0.08 (MacCallum,

Browne, & Sugawara, 1996, p. 134), indicating that within the samples from different countries, certain indicators may have a worse measurement validity in some cases. Since this paper is focused on cross-national comparison, we apply the five items to form a unified scale for factor scores for Confucianism across the nine societies, with values in the range of -1.353 and 1.651, with an average of 0.017 and a standard deviation of 0.512.

Table 2
Information of Confucianism Measures

Items	ABS4 (2014-2016) Loadings
<i>Confirmatory Factor Analysis</i>	
q60. Even if parents' demands are unreasonable, children still should do what they ask.	.65
q61. 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.	.71
q62. Being a student, one should not question the authority of their teacher.	.60
q66. Wealth and poverty, success and failure are all determined by fate.	.55
q67. If one could have only one child, it is more preferable to have a boy than a girl.	.45
CFI	.952
TLI	.903
RMSEA	.083
N	12698

Note. All the country samples are weighted to have equal influence. Factor scores for Confucianism measures range from -1.353 to 1.651 with the mean .017 and the standard deviation .512.

Data Source: ABS4. Program: Mplus 6.

As previously mentioned, the measurement of Confucianism is subject to the effect of modernization. In order to account for the effect of modernization on measurement outcomes, we adjusted the Confucianism measure by the level of socioeconomic development and the level of authoritarianism for each country sample by the partial-out operation.¹¹⁾

As Figure 1 and Figure 2 show, the level of socioeconomic development and political authoritarianism are strongly correlated with the measurement of Confucianism at the macro level, with correlation coefficients of -0.515 and 0.626 respectively. In other words, the higher the level of social development, the lower the measurement values for Confucianism, while the higher the level of authoritarianism, the higher the measurement values for Confucianism. Both results are in line with our expectations.

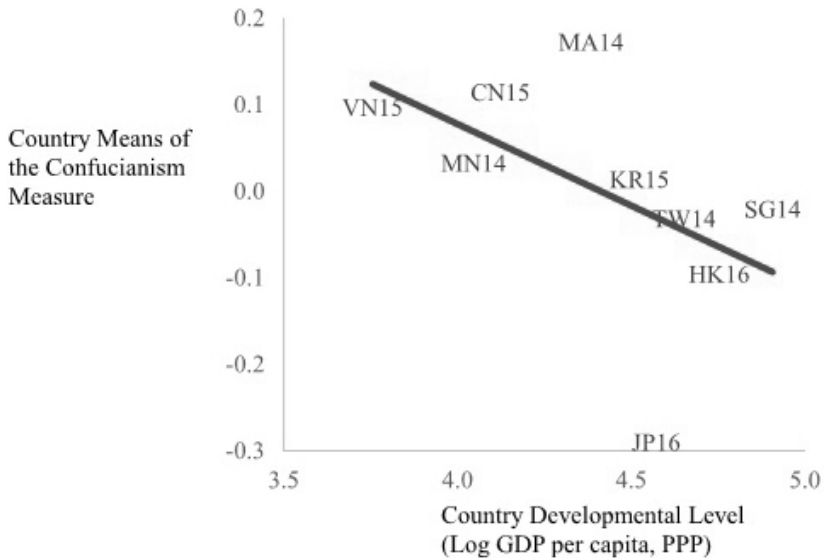


Figure 1. Confucianism measures and country developmental level. $r=-.515$, $p=.156$. Source: ABS 4 (2014-2016).

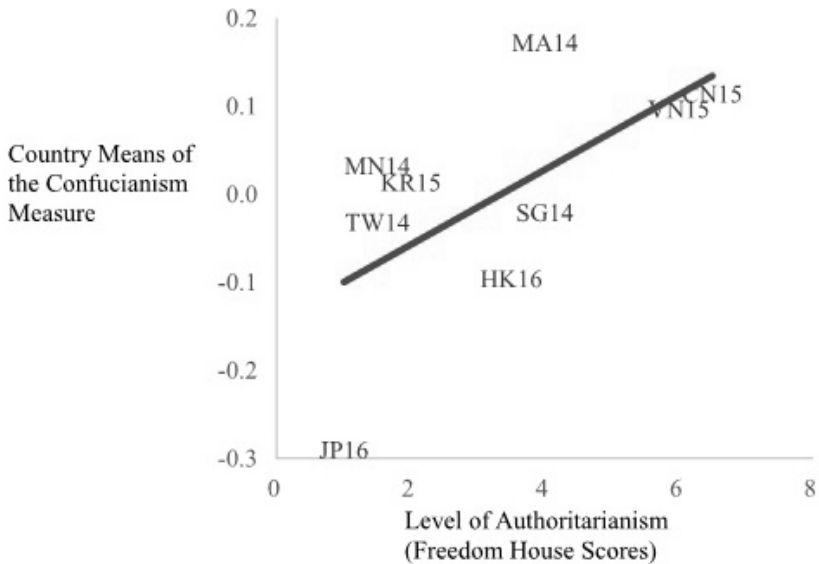


Figure 2. Confucianism measures and level of authoritarianism. $r=.626$, $p=.071$. Source: ABS 4 (2014-2016).

To compare the societal level of Confucianism, we carried out ANOVA analysis to derive means comparison results for all nine samples as shown in Table 3. We find that for the original Confucianism measurement results, the ranking of Confucianism from highest to lowest is as follows: Malaysia, China and Vietnam, Mongolia and South Korea, Singapore and Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Japan, clearly showing the influence of the extent of modernization development and the level of authoritarianism. However, after adjustment by partial-out operation, the ranking of Confucianism from highest to lowest is as follows: Malaysia, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Mongolia, China and Hong Kong, Vietnam, and Japan. In the second ranking, the possible effects of the two macro-level factors are removed but partial-out operation does not affect the relative level of the observations within each sample. This adjusted scale should be a purer measure of Confucianism. We use a hierarchical linear modeling to validate this

measurement result in the later analysis.

Table 3

Confucianism Measures before and after Partial-Out

Before Partial-Out		After Partial-Out	
Sample	Mean Score	Sample	Mean Score
Japan	-.289	Japan	-.197
Hong Kong	-.095	Vietnam	-.098
Taiwan	-.031	Hong Kong	-.036
Singapore	-.020	China	-.025
Korea	.014	Mongolia	.013
Mongolia	.033		
		Singapore	.054
Vietnam	.098	Taiwan	.063
China	.115	Korea	.071
Malaysia	.173	Malaysia	.149

Note. Confucianism measures after partial-out range from -1.549 to 1.745 with the mean 0 and the standard deviation .539. Dotted lines indicates those measures do not differ significantly ($p < 0.05$) by the ANOVA analysis.

Data Source: ABS4.

Research Design

This paper tries to answer three questions: first, what factors at the individual level explain the variation of Confucian values across Asia. Second, how do contextual factors, specifically the modernization development and the level of the regime's authoritarian, influence the level of Confucianism. Third, are there are crossover effects that significantly alter individual-level relations under different contexts. Through investigation of the above questions, the authors try to tease out the similarities and differences of Confucianism across East Asian societies. We hope this can increase our understanding of the changes and constant features of Confucianism in East Asia.

Our previous discussion focused on the contextual influence of economic modernization and political authoritarianism, but we should also highlight the importance of individual-level predictors, especially those which are highly associated with the societal changes brought by the economic, social, and political development. With this consideration, the selection of individual-level predictors centers on objective socio-economic and demographic features instead of subjective attitudes or values. This not only avoids the potential problem of tautological explanation, but more importantly, can help us to explain the variation of Confucianism by exogenous individual-level factors driven by overall national development.

To achieve the above analytical purpose, we adopt two strategies for causal investigation. First, we use the partial-out measure of Confucianism as the dependent variable and specifically conduct a regression analysis in each of the nine country samples. We group the samples by ethnic and geographical proximity into three categories: Chinese society (China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan), Northeast Asia (Japan, South Korea, and Mongolia), and Southeast Asian (Vietnam, Singapore, and Malaysia). The first group of the samples represents Han-ethnic national identity, the second group represents the neighboring countries that were historically under strong Chinese influence but are not ethnically Han Chinese, and the third group represents those societies which were alienated from Chinese influence due to western colonialism from the late nineteenth century onwards. The second strategy we apply is to use the original Confucianism measures without partial-out operation to conduct a hierarchical linear modeling that includes contextual variables to tease out individual-level, contextual, and crossover effects that can explain Confucianism across East and Southeast Asia. The result can be employed to test whether the partial-out argument is tenable as well as whether we can generalize the similarities and differences we derive from analyses of individual country samples.

The contextual variables included in the model are the level of national development (measured by the log of GDP per capita with purchas-

ing power parity) and the level of political authoritarianism (measure by the Freedom House scores). The individual-level predictors include the following seven groups:

1. Demographic variables: male and urban residence, included for control purposes.
2. Religious variables: Type of religion (Christianity, traditional religions such as Taoism, Buddhism, folk religions, Islam, other religions, and no religion as the reference category), frequency of religious practice, and self-expressed religiosity. We expect a non-significant relationship between Chinese religious belief and Confucianism as suggested in classical texts of Confucianism.
3. Level of education: illiterate, elementary school, high school, university (reference category). We expect a negative relationship between level of education and Confucianism due the relationship between education and modernity.
4. Generations: Youth (18-35), adult (36-55), senior (56+, reference category). We expect greater Confucian orientation in the older cohorts as this cohort is expected to be less influenced by modernity.
5. Family size: Nuclear family (1-3 people, reference category), mid-size (4-7 people), and large-size (8+ people). We expect greater Confucian orientation with the greater family size due to its stronger socialization effect of collectivism.
6. Family structure: Number of generations living together in the household. It comprises of four dummies: One generation (reference category), two generations, three generations, and four or more generations. We expect more generations living together tend to produce greater Confucian orientation due to socialization effects.
7. Socioeconomic variables: includes socioeconomic situation, subjective social class, income (five quantile), and subjective economic satisfaction. We expect greater Confucian orientation is

associated with lower socioeconomic status due to the positive relationship between economic status and modernity at the individual level.

The above individual-level predictors help us understand who has higher levels of Confucian values and why that is the case by demographic, socioeconomic, and socialization variables. They were formed by using survey items in Asian Barometer fourth-wave surveys, 2014-2016. Interested readers can consult the Appendix I for information of variable construct and operationalization.

We apply the Mplus 6 statistical program to conduct linear regressions with the built-in function to handle missing values by a FIML (full information maximum likelihood) estimator MLR. Except for the observations with all variables missing, all the information is used in parameter estimation, so that the maximum number of observations is kept in the regression analysis (Muthen & Muthen, 2010, p. 26). With regard to the hierarchical linear modeling, we apply HLM6.08 statistical program (Bryk & Raudenbush, 1992) to conduct the analysis. In considering that some variables have an all-missing values in some country samples, we adjust the number of individual-level predictors as well as the specification of reference category for group dummies in order to keep the maximum number of macro-level cases in analysis. The modeling strategy is to test a random coefficient specification model first to find out which individual-level beta coefficients have significant variance across macro-level units. The beta coefficients with a significant cross-national variance component will be specified by estimating contextual (level-1 intercept) and crossover (other level-1 predictors). Given the high percentage of missing values in frequency of religious practice and income, we will present the result of the two models, one with both variables and the other with neither, to evaluate the robustness of the empirical findings.

Findings of Linear Regressions

The empirical findings presented in this section are reported in the following order: results of the linear regressions in the three Chinese societies, three Northeast Asian countries, and three Southeast Asian countries are reported in Tables 4, 5, and 6, respectively. We intend to compare the similarity and difference of the individual-level relations with contextual knowledge. Table 7 reports the results of HLM analysis for three purposes: one is to test whether the contextual effect is robust as we concluded from the partial-out analysis in the earlier section; the second is to compare the individual-level relations with the linear regressions to evaluate the consistency of results; the last is to look for a systemic explanation on the varying relations that could be associated with contextual-level variation, or simply called “crossover effects.” In this way, the individual-level findings which were found different by context might be sensibly explained under the same macro predictors with different values.

We first focus on the regression findings for the three Chinese societies. As Table 4 shows, among the seven groups of predictors, demographic factors, education, and generation have the most consistent explanatory power and exhibit the same relation in all of the three Chinese societies. In terms of demographic predictors, male and rural residence are positively correlated to greater Confucian values. For educational predictors, compared to those with a university education, people with only a high-school education or less have greater adherence to Confucian values, except the non-significant result for illiterate people in Hong Kong. As to the generational predictors, compared to the senior cohort, the adult and youth cohorts have lower Confucian values. These findings are consistent with conventional wisdom. Another salient result is the total lack of explanatory power for religious predictors, regardless of religious type, frequency of religious practice, or subjective religiosity. This shows that, at least in contemporary Chinese societies, Confucianism is an areligious value system that has followed a very distinct historical and political

trajectory since the late nineteenth century. The third important result is related to consistent but indicator-sensitive result findings. In terms of socioeconomic situation, greater Confucian values are associated with less satisfaction in subjective economic evaluation in China and Hong Kong, a corroborated finding which meets our expectation that socio-economically underprivileged people tend to be less subject to the influence of modernity and therefore have greater Confucian orientation.

Table 4
Multivariate Analysis of Confucianism Measures in Three Chinese Societies

Predictors	China (2015)	Taiwan (2014)	Hong Kong (2016)
<i>Demographic Background</i>			
Male	.05(.02) **	.07(.02) **	.12(.03) **
Urban Residence	-.03(.02) *	-.05(.02) *	—
<i>Religion (ref: No Religions)</i>			
Christianity	.01(.03)	.02(.03)	.03(.06)
Traditional (Taoism, Buddhism, Folk Religion)	-.05(.03)	.05(.03)	.14(.08)
Islam	.01(.01)	-.05(.03)	—
Other Religions	.00(.01)	.02(.01)	.00(.01)
Frequency of Religious Practice	-.02(.04)	.03(.02)	.05(.07)
Subjective Religiosity	.06(.04)	.04(.03)	-.10(.08)
<i>Education (ref: University)</i>			
Illiterate	.31(.02) **	.10(.02) **	.04(.04)
Elementary School	.18(.02) **	.17(.03) **	.16(.05) **
High School	.13(.02) **	.09(.03) **	.12(.04) **
<i>Generation (ref: Senior, 56+)</i>			
Youth (18-35)	-.15(.02) **	-.32(.03) **	-.20(.04) **
Adult (36-55)	-.05(.02) **	-.14(.03) **	-.08(.04) *
<i>Family Size (ref: Nuclear Family, 1-3 people)</i>			
Mid-Size (4-7 people)	.01(.02)	.03(.03)	-.04(.03)
Large-Size (8+) people	-.01(.01)	.01(.03)	—
<i>Number of Generations Living Together (ref: one)</i>			
Two Generations	-.05(.02) *	-.01(.04)	.02(.03)
Three Generations	-.05(.02) *	.02(.04)	-.02(.03)
Four or More Generations	-.01(.02)	.06(.03) *	—

Predictors	China (2015)	Taiwan (2014)	Hong Kong (2016)
<i>Socioeconomic Situation</i>			
Subjective Social Class	.03(.02)	.02(.03)	—
Income (five quantile)	-.04(.02)	-.07(.03) *	.01(.03)
Subjective Economic Satisfaction	-.06(.02) **	-.01(.03)	-.12(.03) **
R-squared	.16	.24	.12
N	4068	1657	1217

Note. Entry is standardized coefficient and figures in parentheses are standardized errors. Level of Significance: * $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$.

Data Source: ABS 4. Program: Mplus 6.

The remaining findings can be summarized as below: family size does not matter for Confucian values, and the number of generations living together has heterogeneous findings among the three Chinese societies. Specifically, a two or three generation family in China has lower Confucian values than one (single, no-child couple, empty-nest family, etc.) and four or more generation family. This might be related to the impact of China's one-child policy between 1980 and 2015, meaning that most families consist of two or three generations with only one child or grandchild. Excessive indulgence of children or grandchildren is very highly associated with the relatively weaker Confucian values in these two- or three- generation families. In Taiwan, only people living in a family with four or more generations together score higher in Confucian values, and that shows the traditional socialization effect of Confucianism now only exists in the extensive family structure that contains four or more generations due to the advanced level of modernization. No significant finding is found for Hong Kong, which might be related to its even greater level of modernization and lack of rural environment as an almost entirely urban society.

Next, we turn to the results of the regression analysis on three Northeast Asian societies as shown in Table 5. In general, we also found similar findings as we did in the three Chinese societies: demographic factors, education, generation cohorts, and socioeconomic situation all

exhibit the same findings, but these findings are less consistent in terms of coherence among the three societies, and they are also indicator-sensitive as well. For example, male respondents have greater Confucian values in Japan and Korea but not in Mongolia; university education is associated with lower Confucian values in Japan and Mongolia but not in Korea; on the contrary, it is only in Korea that the senior cohort has higher Confucian values than other younger generations but this finding is not applicable to Japan and Mongolia. Lastly, subjective economic satisfaction simultaneously shows positive, negative, and no relations to Confucian values in Japan, Korea, and Mongolia, respectively. The last finding indicates that Confucian culture is associated with the features of the elite class in Japan, but in Mongolia it is rather a feature of the socioeconomically underprivileged. Most interestingly, the non-significant finding in Korea might paradoxically indicate that Confucianism is culturally well-perceived regardless of people's socio-economic situation.

Other findings differ even more greatly for the remaining groups of predictors among the three societies. In the religious group of predictors, subjective religiosity is positively correlated to Confucian values in Japan and Mongolia, but not in Korea; in terms of religious category, traditional religion is associated with lower Confucian values in Mongolia but not in Japan and Korea.¹²⁾ In the group of socialization predictors, family size does not matter but a greater number of generations living together is related to greater Confucian values, although the actual significant indicator is three generations for Japan and Korea and four or more in Mongolia. This suggests that the Confucian ethical tradition might still be passed down through everyday socialization in multi-generational family structures. Lastly, comparing the degree of explained variance, the three Northeast Asian societies range from 0.07 and 0.08, which shows inferior model fit to the Chinese societies (ranging from 0.12 to 0.24).

Table 5
Multivariate Analysis of Confucianism Measures in Northeast Asia

Predictors	Japan (2016)	Korea (2014)	Mongolia (2014)
<i>Demographic Background</i>			
Male	.12(.03) **	.11(.03) **	.03(.03)
Urban Residence	.04(.03)	.01(.02)	.11(.03) **
<i>Religion (ref: No Religions)</i>			
Christianity	.04(.03)	-.07(.05)	.01(.03)
Traditional (Taoism, Buddhism, Folk Religion)	.03(.04)	-.04(.04)	-.16(.05) **
Islam	—	—	.00(.03)
Other Religions	-.01(.03)	.01(.03)	-.05(.04)
Frequency of Religious Practice	-.01(.04)	-.01(.05)	.03(.04)
Subjective Religiosity	.09(.04) *	.09(.06)	.11(.05) *
<i>Education (ref: University)</i>			
Illiterate	.08(.02) **	.03(.02)	.02(.03)
Elementary School	.15(.04) **	.02(.03)	.18(.04) **
High School	.09(.03) **	.02(.03)	.10(.03) **
<i>Generation (ref: Senior, 56+)</i>			
Youth (18-35)	-.06(.04)	-.29(.04) **	-.02(.04)
Adult (36-55)	.00(.04)	-.19(.04) **	-.05(.04)
<i>Family Size (ref: Nuclear Family, 1-3 people)</i>			
Mid-Size (4-7 people)	-.03(.04)	-.01(.03)	-.05(.03)
Large-Size (8+) people	-.03(.03)	.00(.01)	.07(.03)
<i>Number of Generations Living Together (ref: one)</i>			
Two Generations	.05(.04)	.03(.04)	-.04(.03)
Three Generations	.12(.04) **	.06(.03) *	-.04(.04)
Four or More Generations	.00(.04)	.02(.02)	.03(.03) **
<i>Socioeconomic Situation</i>			
Subjective Social Class	-.02(.04)	-.01(.03)	.00(.03)
Income (five quantile)	-.08(.05)	.01(.04)	.07(.04)
Subjective Economic Satisfaction	.08(.04) *	-.03(.03)	-.10(.03) **
R-squared	.08	.08	.07
N	1081	1200	1228

Note. Entry is standardized coefficient and figures in parentheses are standardized errors.
 Level of Significance: * $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$.

Data Source: ABS 4. Program: Mplus 6.

The third category of comparison contains three Southeast Asian societies: Vietnam, Malaysian Chinese, and Singaporean Chinese. As Table 6 reports, the distinguishing difference from the previous two categories is the rather stronger explanatory power in socioeconomic predictors: for the respondents in all three societies, lower income is consistently associated with greater Confucian values.

However, in Singapore subjective social class and subjective economic satisfaction show positive relations with Confucian values. The latter finding sounds contradictory, but makes sense when one considers that subjective indicators of socioeconomic situation in Singapore reflect the typical characteristics of Chinese elites who are less socialized in Confucian values by the forces of modernization, but at the same time socialized by Chinese cultural markers such as Confucian values to show greater superiority in terms of subjective class perception. Such phenomenon have long existed in Singapore, tracing back to the national founding father Lee Kuan Yew’s support for Confucian values since independence in 1965.

Table 6
Multivariate Analysis of Confucianism Measures in Southeast Asia

Predictors	Vietnam (2015)	Singapore (2014)	Malaysia (2014)
<i>Demographic Background</i>			
Male	.04(.03)	.11(.04)**	.02(.05)
Urban Residence	.04(.03)	—	.08(.06)
<i>Religion (ref: No Religions)</i>			
Christianity	.01(.03)	.09(.06)	-.18(.10)
Traditional (Taoism, Buddhism, Folk Religion)	-.02(.03)	-.03(.05)	-.13(.13)
Islam	—	-.05(.02)**	-.01(.06)
Other Religions	.09(.03)**	-.01(.03)	-.11(.08)
Frequency of Religious Practice	.02(.04)	.06(.06)	.03(.07)
Subjective Religiosity	.04(.04)	-.01(.07)	.23(.07)**
<i>Education (ref: University)</i>			
Illiterate	—	.04(.04)	.06(.05)
Elementary School	.15(.04)**	.16(.04)**	.14(.07)*
High School	.08(.03)*	.08(.04)*	.15(.06)**

Predictors	Vietnam (2015)	Singapore (2014)	Malaysia (2014)
<i>Generation (ref: Senior, 56+)</i>			
Youth (18-35)	-.28(.06)**	.05(.06)	-.06(.08)
Adult (36-55)	-.20(.06)**	.05(.05)	-.04(.07)
<i>Family Size (ref: Nuclear Family, 1-3 people)</i>			
Mid-Size (4-7 people)	.02(.03)	-.02(.04)	-.04(.07)
Large-Size (8+) people	.07(.04)	.02(.03)	.05(.07)
<i>Number of Generations Living Together (ref: one)</i>			
Two Generations	-.05(.04)	-.07(.04)	-.10(.06)
Three Generations	-.04(.04)	-.02(.04)	-.04(.07)
Four or More Generations	.01(.03)	.01(.03)	-.04(.02)
<i>Socioeconomic Situation</i>			
Subjective Social Class	.01(.03)	.12(.04)**	.05(.05)
Income (five quantile)	-.17(.03)**	-.17(.05)**	-.14(.06)*
Subjective Economic Satisfaction	.00(.03)	.14(.05)**	.05(.05)
R-squared	.12	.10	.14
N	1200	788	358

Note. Entry is standardized coefficient and figures in parentheses are standardized errors.

Level of Significance: * $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$.

Data Source: ABS 4. Program: Mplus 6.

Other salient findings also exist in the education predictors, where the same conclusion can be drawn as we found in the previous two categories: people with university education tend to have weaker Confucian values compared to those with only high-school or elementary-school education. The remaining findings are sparse and inconsistent in nature. In terms of demographic factors, only male respondents in Singapore have greater Confucian values; of the religious predictors, other religions in Vietnam¹³) and greater subjective religiosity in Malaysia have positive relations with Confucian values, but Singaporean Chinese who have Islamic faith tend to have lower Confucian values. As to the generational predictors, seniors in Vietnam have greater Confucian values but this result is not applicable to Singaporean and Malaysian Chinese; and no socialization predictor is found relevant regardless of family size or num-

ber of generations living together. Overall, the model's explanatory power performs in the middle of the three categories of societal samples, ranging from 0.10 to 0.14. This indicates that a society which is composed of ethnically Chinese migrants might still have greater cultural affinity toward Confucian values than ethnically non-Chinese despite the influence of colonialism on the development of these societies since the nineteenth century.

Discussion Based on HLM Findings

The previous section gives us ample information about individual-level findings in explaining Confucian values in different Asian societies. Considering the arbitrary nature of the partial-out measure, we adopt another analytical strategy to estimate both macro and micro predictors under the hierarchical lineal model so we can avoid the need to partial out our dependent variable in advance. In other words, if we can derive the same finding for a particular regression coefficient under HLM specification, we gain greater confidence regarding its robustness. Meanwhile, we can also examine the estimated result of contextual effects to see whether a previous partial-out measure is tenable. Moreover, by specifying crossover effects, we can produce integrated findings that rationalize seemingly contradictory findings across different societies.

Table 7 reports the results of HLM analysis. We first specify the model with random coefficients without macro predictors to test which betas have significant random components to be explained across the nine societies. Considering the fact that some variables have total missing observations or significant percentage of missing values, we adjust the model specification by dropping the variables such as urban residence and subjective social class, merging dummies into one category, such as combining Islam, other religions, and no religion as a reference category, merging elementary education with illiterate into elementary or below education, merging mid-size and large-size family into non-nuclear family, merging three and four or above generations into three or more

generations. Besides, due to the large portion of missing values in frequency of religious practice and income, we specifically run every model with or without these predictors to crosscheck the robustness of the regression result.

Table 7
Hierarchical Linear Regression on Confucianism Measures without Partial-Out

Predictors	RC1	RC2	CE1 (ln_gdpppp1)	CE2 (ln_gdpppp2)	CE3 (fhscore1)	CE4 (fhscore2)
Intercept	.21(.07) **	.24(.08) *	.22(.04) **	.25(.05) **	.22(.06) **	.24(.07) **
ln_gdpppp			-.42(.10) **	-.43(.09) **		
fhscore					.02(.03)	.05(.03)
Male	.07(.02) *	.07(.02) **	.06(.02) *	.07(.01) **	.07(.03) *	.07(.02) **
ln_gdpppp			.09(.04)	.12(.03) **		
fhscore					.00(.01)	-.01(.01)
Christianity	-.05(.05)	-.05(.06)	-.04(.05)	-.04(.06)	-.05(.04)	-.05(.06)
Traditional	-.04(.03)	-.05(.03)	-.04(.03)	-.05(.03)	-.04(.03)	-.05(.04)
Religious Practice	.03(.01) *		.03(.01) *		.03(.01) *	
Subjective Religiosity	.07(.03) *	.07(.02) **	.07(.03) *	.07(.02) *	.07(.03)	.07(.02) *
ln_gdpppp			.01(.04)	.01(.02)		
fhscore					-.00(.01)	-.00(.00)
High School	-.14(.03) **	-.13(.03) **	-.14(.03) **	-.14(.03) **	-.14(.03) **	-.13(.03) **
University	-.24(.03) **	-.29(.04) **	-.24(.03) **	-.29(.04) **	-.23(.03) **	-.29(.04) **
Youth (18-35)	-.13(.06) *	-.12(.06)	-.13(.06) *	-.13(.05) *	-.13(.06)	-.12(.06)
ln_gdpppp			.30(.11) *	.36(.10) *		
fhscore					-.01(.03)	-.05(.03)
Adult (36-55)	-.04(.04)	-.06(.05)	-.06(.04)	-.07(.03)	-.05(.05)	-.06(.05)
ln_gdpppp			.36(.08) **	.36(.07) **		
fhscore					.00(.03)	-.04(.02)
Nuclear (1-3 people)	.02(.03)	.04(.02)	.03(.02)	.04(.02)	.03(.02)	.04(.02)
One Generation	.02(.04)	.02(.04)	.02(.04)	.02(.04)	.02(.04)	.02(.04)
ln_gdpppp			.05(.06)	.05(.04)		
fhscore					.01(.01)	.00(.01)
Two Generations	-.03(.02)	-.02(.02)	-.02(.02)	-.02(.02)	-.03(.02)	-.02(.02)
Income	-.04(.01) *		-.04(.01) *		-.04(.01) **	
ln_gdpppp			-.03(.04)			

Predictors	RC1	RC2	CE1 (ln_gdpppp1)	CE2 (ln_gdpppp2)	CE3 (fhscore1)	CE4 (fhscore2)
fhscore					-.02(.01)**	
Sub. Econ. Satisfaction	.03(.03)	.01(.02)	.03(.02)	.00(.02)	.03(.03)	.01(.02)
ln_gdpppp			.18(.05)**	.17(.03)**		
fhscore					.02(.01)	-.01(.01)
Deviance	10468	17550	10487	17650	10518	17600
Num. of Est. Parameters	121	92	121	92	121	92
N	6805	12043	6805	12043	6805	12043

Note. Entry is unstandardized coefficient and figures in parentheses are unstandardized errors. Level of Significance: * $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$.
Data Source: ABS 4. Program: HLM 6.08.

The first two columns (RC1 and RC2) in Table 7 present the result of the random coefficient model. In the former, both of the predictors have high missing values, while in the latter they do not, so that the sample size recovers from 6,805 (53.2 percent) to 12,043 (94.1 percent) out of the total sample size 12,797. From the result of regression coefficients, we found that greater Confucian values are associated with male, higher frequency of religious practice, greater subjective religiosity, lower education, and lower income. Youth generation (21-35) is at the margin of the significance, by which younger generation has less Confucian values; however, this relation falls short of the significance level once frequency of religious practice and income are dropped from the model. Therefore, a caveat has to be put on the explanatory power of generation.

The above findings do not contradict what we found from the individual-country regressions, although they might differ in terms of explanatory power for different groups of predictors. For example, religiosity in terms of practice frequency and self-evaluation both become a stronger predictor. However, generations has much less explanatory power than was previously found. Also, there is a lack of significant findings for the sociological predictors such as family size or number of generations living together. And, subjective economic satisfaction does not explain the Confucian values.

To further test how contextual variables such as modernization or political authoritarianism affect the individual-level relations, we specify a two-level HLM model with both contextual as well as crossover effects. However, due to the small number of macro level units ($n=9$), we only include one macro variable each time to increase statistical power in hypothesis testing of regression coefficient. All of the level-1 beta coefficients are specified with random errors, and eight of them with significant variance components are set to be explained by a macro predictor: level-1 intercept, male, subjective religiosity, youth, adult, one generation, income, and subjective economic satisfaction.

The third (CE1) and fourth (CE2) columns in Table 7 report the HLM model specified with the macro predictor, modernization. The result indicates that all the significant level-1 betas in the random coefficient model remain significant. With regard to the contextual effects, we found significant negative impact on Confucian values as the development of society advances. This indicates that the Confucian values of a baseline-profile respondent can be simply reduced due to being situated in a more developed social context. This corroborates with our expectation that modernization can attenuate Confucian values because of social changes. The last focal point is regarding the crossover effect. For seven level-1 betas with specification of crossover effects, there are three significant findings: youth, adult, and subjective economic satisfaction. However, the crossover effects of the youth and adult predictors are not very substantial because their significance to a large extent reflects the corresponding change of the senior group's (level-1 intercept) estimated level of Confucianism. Therefore, both of the positive crossover effects on level-1 beta balance out the significant negative estimate of the contextual effect in the intercept-1 beta.¹⁴⁾ In addition, the crossover effects produce the same negative impact of modernization on the youth and adult cohorts as shown in the senior cohort. However, it is very interesting that the positive crossover effect on the subjective economic satisfaction turns a non-significant beta into a positive one when the society become more modernized. This means, in a more advanced social context, the

Confucian values increase as perceived economic satisfaction increases. Such attitudinal change vividly describes Ronald Inglehart's (1977) claims about the rise of post-materialist values, under which Confucian values may no longer be understood as a sign of traditional or pre-modern society, but instead as a spiritual identity that reflects post-materialist needs in a post-modern society, similar to our findings in Japan and Singapore for country-specific regressions.

Finally, we run the same HLM model specification by replacing the variable of modernization with that of political authoritarianism. The results are presented in the fifth (CE3) and sixth (CE4) columns. As can be seen, all the findings of the level-1 betas still hold, but there are two major differences: the contextual effect of political authoritarianism is not significant and no crossover effect is found with respect to the age cohorts. In fact, the only novel finding is the negative crossover effect of political authoritarianism on the level-1 betas of income. This suggests that the negative relationship between income and Confucian values may be strengthened when the political system becomes more authoritarian. The following exposition might help us more easily to understand such crossover relation: "other things being equal, if a respondent with the baseline profile except income moves from a more democratic to a less democratic society, the negative impact of income on Confucian values will be magnified." In other words, the negative effect of income might be turned insignificant or even positive as the society becomes more democratic. This finding has remarkable implications for the democratization theory: Confucian values might be viewed as a positive spiritual asset only when the society has a liberal environment. Otherwise, they may be manipulated as a tool for political indoctrination by which ruling elites exert control over society.

Conclusion

As the cultural bedrock of many East Asian societies, Confucianism plays an important function in establishment of social norms and moral

ethics. Our investigation suggests that while modernization or political democratization might reduce the level of Confucianism, its actual impact could be rather on its transformation to a post-material value system, under which people abandon some traditional components but re-embrace other parts as a type of spiritualism in a post-modern world. This phenomenon is likely to become more visible with a post-material religious awakening that has spread beyond Western advanced societies to other less developed societies as well. However, due to the agnostic nature of the Confucian value system, our study shows that its rise does not depend on religious beliefs, but rather on post-material development of human civilization. That answers the question proposed in the beginning of this paper: modernization and democratization might attenuate Confucianism, but this trend is actually transformative instead of linear, in the way that Confucianism may be transformed into a post-modern culture that offers spiritual well-being and continues to guide the future progress of human civilization.

At the same time, we also find some patterns with regard to factors explaining Confucian values. In general, demographic (male and rural), educational (less educated), generational (senior), and socioeconomic (better socioeconomic situated) variables are strongly correlated with Confucian values as expected by conventional wisdom. This can account for why the modernization will attenuate people's orientation towards Confucian values. However, contextual factors at the country level also have a strong influence. For example, the effects of family socialization depend on the social structure in each country. In Taiwan the traditional family is still well-preserved in some rural areas and therefore the socialization effect of four or more generations living together is still significant, but this is not the case in China where the one-child policy bred a spoiled generation of "child emperors" in many families with two or three generations living together. Similar conclusions can be drawn for Northeast Asian countries where the social structure is similar to Taiwan, given the influence of modernization without political intervention in family life. As a result, the effects of family socialization

can be found in the family with three or four generations living together. However, this finding does not apply to the three Southeast Asian societies where the social norms have diverged significantly from other Confucian societies due to the historical trajectory of Western colonization and the subordinated status as migrants.

Religion is the remaining puzzle that requires more future study. Despite the fact that Confucianism does provide spiritual guidance that makes it a potential candidate to be a religion, it lacks soteriology (a theory of human salvation, eternal life, and cosmology of the after-life). Confucianism is inherently secular and agnostic about life and death, and for many years it was the Mahayana Buddhism and various folk religions (collectively called traditional religions) that filled the religious void. However, as globalization proceeds and Western religions such as Christianity continue to grow in East Asian countries such as China and South Korea, this could lead to significant changes in the future regarding the substantial content of Confucian values in these societies, despite the fact that such an impact is yet found in the current empirical results.

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- 1) This research focuses on empirical investigation of how Confucianism is affected by force of modernization (mainly socioeconomic) and democratization development. It does not involve a thorough literature review in the philosophical debates of Confucianism, Modernization, and Democracy. Nonetheless, we refer interested readers to two important books as the cardinal point of our research. One is “The Cultural Logic of Politics in Mainland China and Taiwan”, written by Tianjian Shi (2014), which addresses how Confucianism and democracy can be compatible; the other is “Confucianism and Democratization”, written by Doh C. Shin (2012), which offers a comprehensive theoretical and empirical assessment and concludes that Confucianism contains both pro-democratic and authoritarian values. While the two scholars hold very different views and approach the issue in different paths, both of their works suggest that Confucianism’s pro-democratic and authoritarian values in fact might not be necessarily contradictory and have their own logics to align together for political stability.
 - 2) The relationship of Confucianism and modernity has been an important debate since the late nineteenth century when China was under the colonial invasion. Apparently they were perceived entirely contradictory at the beginning, but as the content of Confucianism continues evolving as the Chinese societies develop, the debate is getting

more and more complicated, depending on which version of Confucian and which definition of modernity are applied. In this article, we are fully aware of this subtlety and want to keep the referred concepts as basic as possible without elaboration. So when we refer to “filial piety,” we mean what the essential meaning “filial piety” was understood in the Chinese classics instead of any modified modern version.

- 3) Political scientists refer to the cultural zone of Confucianism which includes those countries deeply influenced by the Chinese Empires (Japan, Mongolia, Korea, Vietnam) or immigrants of Chinese (Malaysia, Singapore) as well as the heartland of Chinese culture (Mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong). See Shin (2012).
- 4) The eight virtues were summarized by Sun Yat-sen in his theory of “Three Principles of the People” (Nationalism). Sun made a new interpretation of Chinese inherent ethics, which encompass most of the Confucian values. See Lai (2015, p. 114).
- 5) While the character of the lower status should obey people of the higher status, such as subject/sovereign, child/parent, and wife/husband, this obedience is not unconditional and it requires that the superior behaves morally right. It might be difficult to justify what specifically disqualifies a superior from being obeyed, but the principle is that the superior should also fulfill his own duty. Despite this caveat, in most of the time the subordinate by default should comply with the rule of obedience to the superior unless the irrefutable evidence exists. See Chen (1986, pp. 408, 499).
- 6) The literati culture was a direct result from the imperial examination system. This system once existed for a long time in Korea (958-1894 A.D.), Vietnam (1075-1919 A.D.), and Japan (7 to 11 A.D.). See Liu (2006, pp. 137-138, 140).
- 7) A more elaborative translation is “One should respect this teacher as if the teacher were his own father through his lifetime, even if the student-teacher relationship has existed for only a single day” (Chen, 2009, p. 100).
- 8) The original text is available at <http://ctext.org/analects/yong-ye>. [retrieved December 5, 2016]
- 9) The original text is available at <http://ctext.org/analects/xian-jin>. [retrieved December 5, 2016]
- 10) Fukuyama (1995) distinguished Japanese Confucianism from Chinese Confucianism, by which the former indicates a neo-Confucianism and compatible to democracy but the latter as a more traditional one that inherently contradicts democratic values. What Fukuyama really suggests is that the statist and group-oriented nature of Confucianism is fundamentally incompatible to the idea of liberal democracy.
- 11) See the Appendix for detailed information of the two macro variables.
- 12) In Mongolia, most of the people in the traditional category are in fact believers of Tibetan Buddhism, and are more likely to have strong national Mongolian identity. As a matter of fact, anti-Chinese sentiment always runs high in Mongolian society because of multifarious reasons, e.g., historical memory of being dominated by Qing Dynasty, economic overreliance on China, and cultural conflict in the daily exchange

of business and social activities. (Jargalsaikhan, 2011) Those factors could sensibly explain the negative relationship between those who believe in the traditional religion and the level of Confucian orientation.

- 13) In Vietnam, the third largest religious group is Caodaism, of which the followers are an estimated 4.2 percent in 2014 (Home Office Report, Government of UK, 2014). Caodaism mixes Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and even Islam and other religions (Blagov, 2001, p. 1). The doctrine of Caodaism is very similar to Chinese folk religions with strong orientation akin to Confucian values. So it is reasonable to infer that most of its followers (falls into the others category in Vietnam) show greater Confucian orientation.
- 14) A simple calculation can illuminate this point well: In the CE1 model, assuming that the respondent has the baseline profile except the age cohort, for the senior group's level-1 intercept, it is $(0.22 - 42 \times \ln_gdpppp)$, and therefore the estimated Confucian value for the youth cohort is $(0.22 - 42 \times \ln_gdpppp) + (-0.13 + 30 \times \ln_gdpppp)$, which is $(0.08 - 12 \times \ln_gdpppp)$ exactly. This means that the Confucian value will decrease as the society becomes more modernized, the same finding we found for the senior group, as well as for the adult group (the same proof can be easily demonstrated as above).

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Appendix

Variable Construction

Variable	Questionnaire/Coding (ABS4 question id)	Scale
Confucianism (without partial-out)	Factor score of the following five items (Each is dichotomous) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even if parents' demands are unreasonable, children still should do what they ask. (q60) • 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. (q61) • Being a student, one should not question the authority of their teacher. (q62) • Wealth and poverty, success and failure are all determined by fate. (q66) • If one could have only one child, it is more preferable to have a boy than a girl. (q67) 	Continuous (-1.35, 1.65)
Male	• Gender (se2): 1=1, 2=0	Binary
Urban Residence	• Urban (level3): 2=1, 1=0	Binary
Religion	Religious category (se6) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christianity=(10,20,30,88,74); • Traditional Religion=(1,60,61,76,77); • Islam=(40); • Other Religions=(50,70,71,75,80); • No religion =(90); 	Each category is binary
Frequency of Religious Practice	• Religiosity (se7): 1=5, 2=4, 3 thru 6=3, 7 thru 8=2, 9 thru 10=1, 90=1.	5-point Likert
Subj. Religiosity	• Describe religiosity yourself (se7a): 0=1, 1=4, 2=3, 3=2, 4=1.	4-point Likert
Education	Education (se5): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illiterate=(1); • Elementary School=(2 thru 3); • High School=(4 thru 7); • University=(8 thru 10); 	Each category is binary
Generation	Age (se3_2): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior=(56 or above); • Adult=(36 thru 55); • Youth=(18 thru 35); 	Each category is binary
Family Size	Number of people live in this household. (se8a): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nuclear family=(1 thru 3); • Mid-size=(4 thru 7); • Large-size=(8 or above); 	Each category is binary
Number of Generations Living Together	Generations of family members live in this household (se8b): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One generation=(1); • Two generations=(2); • Three generations=(3); • Four or more generations(4 or above); 	Each category is binary
Subjective Social Class	• Where would you place your family on the following scale? (se12a): 1 thru 5=copy	5-point Likert
Income	• Annual or monthly household income. (se14): 1 thru 5=copy	5-point Likert
Subj. Econ. Satisfaction	• Does the total income of your household allow you to satisfactorily cover your needs? (se14a): 1=3; 2=2; 3=1.	3-point Likert
Modernization development	log of GDP per capita with purchasing power parity, WDI indicators	3.76-4.91
Political Authoritarianism	Freedom House score	1-7

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