

# **Regime Type and Political Trust:**

## **An Quantitative Analysis on 26 Asian-Pacific Societies**

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**Abstract:** The prevailing view is that type of regime type impacts political trust, and democracies theoretically own strong political trust, while authoritarian regimes hardly win political trust. This article examines the relationship between regime type and political trust by analysing twenty six Asian-Pacific societies' pooled data from the 2003-2008 AsiaBarometer Survey. It finds that democracies hold a mid level of political trust, and authoritarian regimes hold a higher level of political trust than democracies on average. Regime type which represents different level of democracy overally has an extremely weak negative effect on political trust. Regime type doesn't have a significantly direct effect on political trust, but significantly indirect effects through macro-institutional factors, micro-institutional factors and traditionalism.

**Keywords:** Political Trust; Regime Type; Direct Effect; Indirect Effects

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## 1. Introduction

Political Trust is very important for the stability of any regime which may be established democracy, new/flawed democracy, hybride regime or authoritarian regime. The western students who study political trust usually argue that democratic countries hold a high level of political trust(马克·E·沃伦, 2004), while political trust is hard to be won by authoritarian regimes(Levi, 1998). However, the fact is that political trust has been plummeting since about 1960s in western established democracies(Levi & Stoker, 2000). Moreover, some non democratic countries/societies, like Chinese mainland, Thailand and Singapore, have a higher level of political trust than those democratic countries/societies like Japan and South Korea do(Wong et al, 2011; 马得勇, 2007; 吕鹏, 2013). Contradicting the above fact, some non democratic countries like Russia hold a lower level of political trust than established democracies like America and France(吕鹏, 2013).

So, which of the democracies and the authoritarian regimes empirically hold a higher political trust? What is the real empirical relationship between regime type and political trust? If they correlate empirically, is regime type one of origins of political trust? How does regime type impact political trust? This article explores the data of 26 Asian-Pacific societies from AsiaBarometer Survey conducted in 2005-2008 to answer these questions.

The main goal of this essay is to determine the relationship between regime type and political trust by analysing quantitative data. In next part, this essay gives a brief review about political trust and builds hypothesis of this essay according to the previous studies. Then, the description of the correlation between regime type and political trust is made, and the causal relationship and mechnism between both of them is further explored by OLS Regression analysis.

## 2. Regime Type: An Institutional Factor Explaining Political Trust

The institutional approach and the socio-cultural approach are the two theories that explain political trust(Denters, et al, 2006; Mishler & Rose, 2001; Wong et al, 2011). There are too much literature about the two approaches. Therefore, to be simple, this article mainly combs the studies that relate to this article's subject, regime type.

Some scholars theoretically think that democratic constitutional systems win more spontaneous political trust from citizens by arranging such institutions as regular elections, separation of powers, independence of judiciary based on political distrust(Barithwaite, 1998; Geraint, 1976; 皮奥特·斯托姆卡, 闫健, 2007). Authoritarian regimes can't win political trust, because authoritarian regimes don't give people opportunities to know, supervise and check the pubic power, and protect their own rights and interests(彼得·什托姆普卡, 2005). Huntington holds that it is most important for political stability and political trust that political system has the capacity mobilizing new social forces and political groups into itself and political processes(塞缪尔·P·亨廷顿, 2008). It is reasonable to infer that democracies have greater capacity of this political mobilization than non democracies, and hold higher level of political trust than non democracies. However, some empirical studies don't support this argument, and find that societies governed by authoritarian regime get more political trust than those governed by democracy(Shi, 2001; Wong et al, 2011). But those studies have some

methodological problems, for example, using the dummy variable, society governed by different regimes, to measure regime type and too small sample of societies. Society type measures not only regime type but also the level of economic development, which makes results not completely reliable and precise. Therefore, the relationship between regime type and political trust need be reexplored by using more appropriate measure of regime type and more reliable survey data. The following is this article's first hypothesis: the democracy holds a higher level of political trust than the authoritarian regime, and regime type directly impacts political trust. In this article regime type is classified by the degree of democracy, which will be detailedly elaborated in the next section. In other words, this hypothesis also means that the higher degree of democracy a regime has, the higher level of political trust it holds; and regime type has a direct influence on political trust.

According to the institutional approach, political trust is an reaction to government performance which is the macro-institutional factor. "The outputs and performance of incumbent authorities may slowly nourish or discourage sentiments of trust"(Easton, 1975, P448). Government performance usually includes political performance and economic performance. Citizens tend to trust political system when they give a high level of evaluation of such performance of political institutions as protection of human rights and freedom, corruption governance and so on(Hetherington, & Rudolph, 2008). Economic performance can also influence political trust, bad economic performance leads to low level of political trust(Nye et al, 1997). Previous empirically quantitative studies prove that both of political performance and economic performance are the sources of political trust(Mishler & Rose, 2001; 马得勇, 2007; Wong et al, 2011), and government performance has different degrees of effects on political trust in different societies governed by different regime types (Catterberg & Moreno, 2005; Wong et al, 2009; Wong et al, 2011). 李佳佳(2012) even believes that there's no certain relationship between regime type and economic performance. Authoritarian regimes can gain high level of political trust by making good economic performance, while democracies can also lose political trust for making bad economic performance(Przeworski et al, 1996). It is obvious the path of regime type's effects on political trust through government performance need be reexamined by survey data with quality. Therefore, this article's second hypothesis is that regime type produces effects on political trust through government performance. That is to say regime type impacts government performance, and government performance influences political trust.

Cultural factors and micro-institutional factors also impact political trust. The cultural factors mainly include social trust, traditionalism, authoritarianism and post-materialism, the micro-institutional factors mainly include external efficacy, happiness and life satisfaction. Putnam's social capital theory's key point is that social trust produces political trust(Pharr et al, 2000). However, empirical studies show that the relationship between social trust and political trust is positive but weak(Kaase, 1999; Kim, 2005), depending on country(Tan & Tambyah, 2010), even negative(Peggy and Koop, 2010) or false(Newton, 2001). Traditionalism and authoritarianism are sources of political trust(Shi, 2001; Wong et al, 2011), the rising of post-materialism leads to the decline of political trust in western countries(Inglehart, 1997; Norris, 1999). External efficacy as "a representation of governmental responsiveness" positively explains political trust (Catterberg and Moreno, 2005). Happiness and life satisfaction are also positively related to political trust(Lipset and Schneider, 1983; Baltatescu, 2005). According to the mainstream view, compared with authoritarianism countries, democratic countries possess more social trust, smaller degree of traditionalism, smaller degree of authoritarianism, greater degree of post-materialism, and stronger

external efficacy. It's also logic to hold that regime type influences happiness and life satisfaction. Based on the above review, this article's third hypothesis is that regime type places effects on political trust through cultural factors(social capital, traditionalism, authoritarianism and post-materialism) and micro-institutional factors(external efficacy, happiness and life satisfaction). That is to say regime type explains cultural and micro-institutional factors ,and cultural and micro-institutional factors influence political trust.

### 3. Research Design

#### 3.1 Data and Method

This article uses the data from AsiaBarometer Survey conducted between 2003 and 2008. The 2003-2008 AsiaBarometer Survey covered thirty two societies which are located in Asia & Pacific area. Some societies were covered for more than one year. Therefore, the 2003-2008 AsiaBarometer Survey got thirty two society datasets. Because not all of the thirty two Asian-Pacific society datasets include data of political trust, this article finally chooses twenty six societies and extracts data which covers each of the twenty six societies in some year from the 2003-2008 AsiaBarometer Survey to make a pooled data. The twenty six Asian-Pacific societies are four Central-Asia societies<sup>①</sup>, seven South-Asia societies<sup>②</sup>, six Southeast-Asia societies<sup>③</sup>, six East-Asia societies<sup>④</sup>, Australia, Russia and America. The pooled data includes 24582 respondents.

**Table 1 Make Up of the Pooled Data**

No	Society	Reime Type	Level of Economic Development	Year of Survey	Size of Sample
01	Afghanistan	Authoritarian Regime	Low Income	2005	874
02	Australia	Full Democracy	High Income	2008	1000
03	Bangladesh	Flawed Democracy	Low Income	2005	1008
04	Bhutan	Authoritarian Regime	Low Income	2005	801
05	Cambodia	Hybrid Regime	Low Income	2007	1012
06	Chinese Mailand	Authoritarian Regime	Lower Mid Income	2008	1000
07	Hong Kong SAR, China	Flawed Democracy	High Income	2006	1000
08	India	Flawed Democracy	Lower Mid Income	2008	1052
09	Indonesia	Flawed Democracy	Low Income	2007	1000
10	Japan	Full Democracy	High Income	2008	1012
11	Kazakhstan	Authoritarian Regime	Lower Mid Income	2005	800
12	Kyrgyzstan	Hybrid Regime	Low Income	2005	800

<sup>①</sup> Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are classified into Central Asia in this article.

<sup>②</sup> Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka are classified into South Asia in this article.

<sup>③</sup> Indonesia, Cambodia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand are classified into Southeast Asia in this article.

<sup>④</sup> Chinese Mailand, Hong Kong SAR, China, Japan, Mongolia, South Korea and China Taiwan are classified into East Asia in this article.

13	Malaysia	Flawed Democracy	Upper Mid Income	2007	1000
14	Mongolia	Flawed Democracy	Low Income	2005	800
15	Nepal	Authoritarian Regime	Low Income	2005	800
16	Pakistan	Authoritarian Regime	Low Income	2005	1086
17	Philippines	Flawed Democracy	Lower Mid Income	2007	1000
18	Russia	Hybrid Regime	Lower Mid Income	2008	1005
19	Singapore	Hybrid Regime	High Income	2006	1038
20	South Korea	Flawed Democracy	High Income	2006	1023
21	Sri Lanka	Flawed Democracy	Upper Mid Income	2005	813
22	China Taiwan	Flawed Democracy	High Income	2006	1006
23	Tajikistan	Authoritarian Regime	Low Income	2005	800
24	Thailand	Hybrid Regime	Lower Mid Income	2007	1000
25	United States	Full Democracy	High Income	2008	1002
26	Uzbekistan	Authoritarian Regime	Low Income	2005	800
Total Number of Sample			24582		

Note: This table shows the regime type of each society in the year when each society was surveyed. This article also shows the level of economic development of each society in the year when each society was surveyed.

The process of this article's analysis involves two stages. This article will firstly use OLS Regression to analyse the direct effect of regime type on political trust by controlling institutional, cultural and socio-demographic factors. And then, this article will explore the indirect effects of regime type on political trust by deploying OLS Regression to analyse the effect of regime type on the institutional or cultural factors that has direct effects on political trust in the first stage.

### 3.2 Measurement of Variables

**Dependent Variable.** Political trust is measured by an index which is composed with the following five indicators: trust on central government, trust on state/local government, trust on legislative system, trust on congress/parliament, and trust on political party. Respondents were all asked to indicate the extent of their trust on each of the above five political institutions. The extent ranges from 1(don't trust at all) to 4(trust a lot), and the respondents' options of "don't know" and "haven't thought about it" are excluded. The political trust index is constructed by taking the mean value of the above five indicators. The KMO for the political trust index is 0.815, and the Cronbach's alphas is 0.832.

**Independent Variable.** The independent variable of regime type is also the exogenous variable of this article. Regime type includes authoritarian regime, hybrid regime, flawed democracy and full democracy according to the Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index(Economist, 2007, 2008). The four different regime types represent varying degrees of democracy. Authoritarian regime has a less-than-4-point degree of democracy. The degree of democracy for hybrid regime is between 4 points and 5.9 points. Flawed democracy has a between-6-point-and-7.9-point degree of democracy. Full democracy has a between-8-point-and-10-point degree of democracy. Therefore, this article codes the variable of regime type as a scale variable whose value ranges from 1(extremely low level of democracy by authoritarian regime ) to 4(extremely high level of democracy by full democracy). Each of the twenty six societies is classified as some regime type according to EIUDI(Economist, 2007, 2008), seeing Table 1.

**Control Variables.** There are two groups of control variables in this article. The first group of control variables include political performance, economic performance, social trust, traditionalism, authoritarianism, post-materialism, external efficacy, happiness and life satisfaction, which are used not only as control variables but also endogenous variables which mediate the effects of regime type on political trust. The second group of control variables are gender, age, education, occupation and level of economic development of the whole society, which are only used as control variables. The variables of age, gender, education and occupation were proved to place effects on political trust(Christensen and Laegreid, 2005; Langton, 1984).

The two macro-institutional factors are measured by two composite indexes. Political performance is measured by the political performance evaluation index consisting of two indicators which are the evaluations of government's dealing with political corruption and government's protecting human rights, and economic performance is measured by the economic performance evaluation index consisting of two indicators which are the evaluations of government's dealing with economy and government's dealing with unemployment, with the response categories "coded on a four-point scale Likert scale ranging from 1(very poor) to 4(very good)" (the bases of political trust,2011,p268). Both of the above two indexes are constructed by taking the mean value of their two respective indicators. The KMO for the political performance evaluation index is 0.500, and the Cronbach's alphas is 0.660. The KMO for the economic performance evaluation index is 0.500, and the Cronbach's alphas is 0.672.

The three mirco-institutional factors are measured as follows. External efficacy is measured by the following question "I am going to read out the following statement(Government officials pay little attention to what citizens like me think). Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with it". The response categories are measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1(strongly disagree) to 5(strongly agree). Happiness is is measured by the following question "All things considered, would you say that you are happy these days". The response categories are also coded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1(very unhappy) to 5(very happy). Life satisfaction is measured by the life satisfaction index consisting of elven indicators which are the satisfaction of housing, friendship, standard of living, household income, health, education, job, neighbourhood, family life, leisure and spritual life. The response categories are coded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1(very dissatisfied) to 5(very satisfied). This index is constructed by taking the average value of the elven indicators. The KMO for the life satisfaction index is 0.897, and the Cronbach's alphas is 0.856.

The four cultural factors are measured as follows. In accordance with the prevailing measurement, social trust is measured by the following question "Generally, do you think people can be trusted or do you think that you can't be too careful in dealing with people (that it pays to be wary of people)". The response of "Can't be too careful in dealing with people" is recoded as 1, the response of "Most people can be trusted" is recoded as 2, and the response of "Don't know" is excluded out of the analysis. To measure traditionalism, this article designs the following question "If you had no descendants, would you think it desirable to adopt somebody in order to continue the family line, even if there was no blood relationship? Or do you think this would be unnecessary". The response of "Would not adopt in order to continue the family line. I think it would be pointless" is recoded as 1, the response of "It would depend on the circumstances" is recoded as 2, and the response of "Would adopt in order to continue family line" is recoded as 3. The higher the score, the higher the level of traditionalism. Authoritarianism is measured by

“asking the respondents directly whether greater respect for traditional authority is a good thing or a bad thing”(the bases of political trust,2011,p268). The response of “Bad” is recoded as 1, the response of “Don’t mind” is recoded as 2, and the response of “Good” is recoded as 3. The higher the score, the higher the level of authoritarianism. One important facet of post-materialism is tolerance. This article tries to measure post-materialism by the tolerance index consisting of two indicators which are the tolerance of abortion and homosexuality. The response categories are coded on a ten-point Likert scale ranging from 1(can’t tolerate at all) to 10(can completely accept). This index is constructed by taking the average value of the two indicators. The KMO for the post-materialism index is 0.500, and the Cronbach’s alphas is 0.679.

For the variable of gender, female is recoded as 1, and male is recoded as 2. The age in the year of survey is taken into the model as a scale variable. This article measures education as an ordinal variable whose value ranges from 1(low), 2(mid), to 3(high). As a categorical variable with three levels, that is, unemployed, employed and self-employed, occupation is measured by this article creating two dummy codes that are unemployed and self-employed. According to the World Bank, this article classifies the level of economic development of society into four levels: low income, lower mid income, upper mid income and high income(World Bank, 2013), which is coded as 1, 2, 3 and 4. The level of economic development of each society is determined according to the World Bank’s class of level of economic development in 2008 and each society’s data about GNI per capita in the year when each society was surveyed.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Description of Sample

Table 2 shows the description of the twenty-six-society sample. In the sample, 51.5% of all the respondents are female, and the rest is male. The average age of the respondents is 39.23. 33.8% of the respondents gain a low level of education; 35.7%, a mid level of education; 30.5%, a high level of education. The not employed respondents takes up 38.7% of the sample; the employed, 45.8%; the self-employed, 15.5%.

The political trust of the whole twenty-six-society sample is 2.58 points(all with a four-point scale), which represents that the people of the whole twenty six societies have a little of trust for their own respective society’s political institutions. 28.3% of the sample societies belong to authoritarian regime; 20.0%, hybrid regime; 39.5%, flawed democracy; 12.3%, full democracy. This distribution of the regime type of the twenty-six Asian-Pacific societies is close to the distribution of the regime type of the whole world’s societies<sup>⑤</sup>.

**Table 2 Profile of the Twenty-Six-Society Sample**

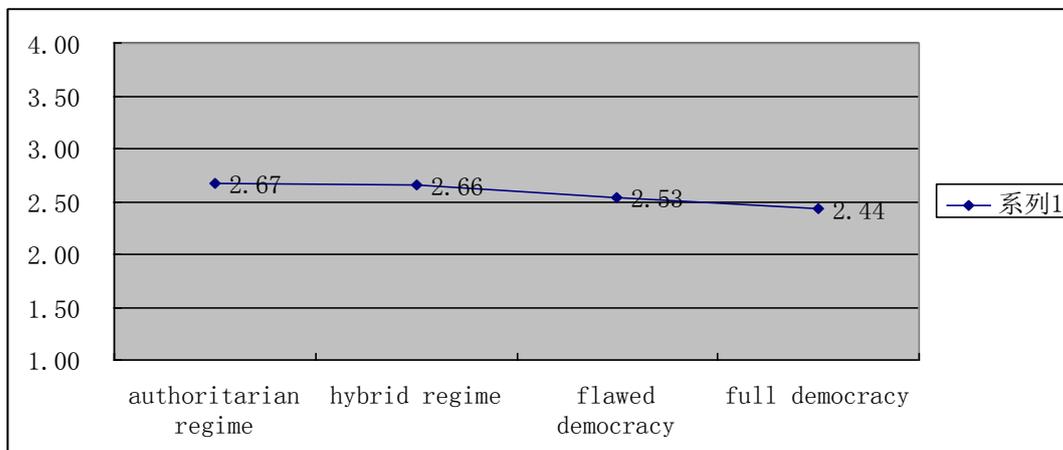
Variable	Category	Percentage/Mean
gender	female	51.5%
	male	48.5%
education level	low	33.8%
	mid	35.7%
	high	30.5%

<sup>⑤</sup> 30.5% of the whole world’s societies belong to authoritarian regime; 21.6%, hybrid regime; 29.9%, flawed democracy; 18.0%, full democracy.

occupation	not employed	38.7%
	employed	45.8%
	self-emplod	15.5%
regime type	authoritarian regime	28.3%
	hybrid regime	20.0%
	flawed demoracy	39.5%
	Full democracy	12.3%
level of economic development	low income	39.8%
	lower mid income	24.0%
	upper mid income	7.4%
	high income	28.8%
age		39.23(13.04)
political trust		2.58(0.66)
political performance evaluation		2.28(0.72)
economic performance evaluation		2.23(0.74)
happiness		3.71(0.95)
life satisfaction		3.81(0.61)
external efficacy		3.77(1.00)
social trust		1.33(0.47)
traditionalism		2.05(0.75)
authoritarianism		2.35(0.79)
post-materialism		2.88(2.23)

#### 4.2 Change of Political Trust with Regime Type

In Figure 1, it is found that political trust of the twenty-six Asian-Pacific societies' people gets weaker with the society's regime type becoming more democratic. This phenomenon overthrows the first half of this article's first hypothesis that the democracy holds a higher level of political trust than the authoritarian regime. However, does it mean that regime type directly impacts political trust? This question needs to be further analysed by OLS Regression in the next part.



**Figure 1 Political Trust with Regime Type**

### 4.3 Direct Effect

Political trust is regressed by regime type by controlling the level of economic development, macro-institutional factors including political performance and economic performance, micro-institutional factors including external efficacy, happiness and life satisfaction, cultural factors including social trust, traditionalism, authoritarianism, and tolerance, and socio-demographic factors including gender, age, education and occupation. As Table 3 shows, the OLS Regression result is that regime type has an extremely weak direct effect on political trust (Standardized B = -0.007), yet the effect is not significant. This suggests regime type has no statistically direct impact on political trust. Therefore, this result overthrows the second half of this article's first hypothesis that regime type directly impacts political trust.

Since each of the seven factors which are political performance, economic performance, external efficacy, happiness, life satisfaction, traditionalism and post-materialism has a direct effect on political trust in the regression model, the next step will analyse the direct impact of regime type on each of the above seven factors to test the second hypothesis and the third hypothesis, which are that regime type impacts political trust through macro-institutional factors, micro-institutional factors or cultural factors. For having no significant impact on political trust, two of cultural factors which are social trust and authoritarianism will not enter into the next step's analysis.

**Table 3 Test for Regime Type's Direct Impact on Political Trust**

Predictor	Standardized B
regime type	-.0007
<b>Control Variables</b>	
level of economic development	-0.184***
<b>Macro-institutional factors:</b>	
political performance	0.268***
economic performance	0.217***
<b>Micro-institutional factors:</b>	
external efficacy	-0.129***
happiness	0.053***
life satisfaction	0.167***
<b>Cultural factors:</b>	
social trust	0.005
traditionalism	0.016*
authoritarianism	0.003
post-materialism	-0.048***
<b>Socio-demographic factors:</b>	
gender	-0.021**
age	0.004
education group	-0.082***
occupation contrast: employed unemployed	-0.025***
self-employed	0.004

Constant	1.482***(0.047)
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.367
N	14728

- Note:**
- a. \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001.
  - b. The tolerance is between 0.4 to 1.0 for all the variables. Variance inflation factor (VIF) is less than 3 for all.
  - c. This table reports the Standardized B for all the predictors except constant.

#### 4.4 Indirect Effects

Table 4 shows the OLS Regression results of regime type's impact on the seven mediating variables including political performance, economic performance, external efficacy, happiness, life satisfaction, traditionalism and post-materialism.

As Table 4 shows, Regime type has significant negative influence on political performance and economic performance, with the standardized B of -0.145 (p<0.001) and -0.157 (p<0.001). And, both of political performance and economic performance significantly and positively impact political trust, with the standardized B of 0.268 (p<0.001) and 0.217 (p<0.001), which are showed in Tabel 3. This proves this article's second hypothesis that regime type produces effects on political trust through government performance. The indirect effect of regime type on political trust through political performance is -0.03886 derived from -0.145 multiplied by 0.268, and the indirect effect of regime type on political trust through economic performance is -0.034069 derived from -0.157 multiplied by 0.217. Therefore, the overall indirect of regime type on political trust through government performance is -0.072929.

Regime type also has significant positive influence on the three micro-institutional factors which are external efficacy, happiness and life satisfaction, with the standardized B of 0.040 (p<0.001), 0.184 (p<0.001) and 0.182 (p<0.001). And, Table 3 shows that all of the three factors of external efficacy, happiness and life satisfaction significantly impact political trust, with the standardized B of -0.129 (p<0.001), 0.053 (p<0.001) and 0.167 (p<0.001). This proves one part of this article's third hypothesis that regime type produces effects on political trust through micro-institutional factors. The indirect effect of regime type on political trust through the three micro-institutional factors is -0.00516 derived from 0.04 multiplied by -0.129; happiness, 0.009752 derived from 0.184 multiplied by 0.053; life satisfaction, 0.030394 derived from 0.182 multiplied by 0.167. Therefore, the overall indirect of regime type on political trust through micro-institutional factors is 0.034986.

Regime type doesn't have a significant influence on post-materialism but traditionalism with the standardized B of 0.075 (p<0.001). Moreover, traditionalism significantly and positively impact political trust, with the standardized B of 0.016 (p<0.05), which is listed in Tabel 3. This proves the other part of this article's third hypothesis that regime type produces effects on political trust through traditionalism. The indirect effect of regime type on political trust through traditionalism is 0.0012 derived from 0.075 multiplied by 0.016. The statistical analysis results don't support the assumption that regime type influences political trust through authoritarianism and post-materialism.

**Table 4 Regime Type's Direct Impact on Mediating Variables**

Predictor	Dependent Variable <sup>b</sup>						
	political performance	economic performance	external efficacy	happiness	life satisfaction	Traditionalism	post-materialism
regime type	-0.145***	-0.157***	0.040***	0.184***	0.182***	0.075***	0.001
gender	0.005	0.012	0.007	-0.023***	0.007	0.009	-0.057***
age	-0.073***	-0.055***	0.004	-0.091***	-0.042***	-0.009	-0.023***
education group	-0.142***	-0.089***	-0.011	0.051***	0.114***	0.000	0.237***
Occupation							
contrast: employed							
unemployed	-0.033***	-0.052	0.058***	-0.007	-0.034***	0.025***	-0.070***
self-employed	-0.035***	-0.044	0.023***	0.018***	-0.003	-0.017*	-0.016*
level of economic development	0.191***	0.136***	-0.192***	0.041***	-0.155***	-0.266***	0.258***
Constant	2.709*** (0.028)	2.622*** (0.028)	3.966*** (0.038)	3.437*** (0.035)	3.632*** (0.024)	2.272*** (0.028)	1.145*** (0.082)
Ajusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.039	0.027	0.034	0.054	0.037	0.053	0.146
N	22614	23568	23776	24332	21041	23129	21688

**Note:** a. \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001.

b. The tolerance is above 0.1 for all the variables in the seven OLS Regression models respectively for the seven dependent variables. Variance inflation factor (VIF) is less than 5 for all.

c. This table reports the Standardized B for all the predictors except constant.

## 5. Conclusion

The prevailing view is that type of political system impacts political trust, and democracies theoretically own strong political trust, while authoritarian regimes hardly win political trust(马克·E. 沃伦, 2004; Uslander, 1999; Levi, 1998). However, it is found that no certain empirical relationship between regime type and political trust exists. It is found that some non democratic countries/societies have a higher level of political trust than those democratic countries/societies(Wong et al, 2011; 马得勇, 2007; 吕鹏, 2013), but the opposite case is also found(吕鹏, 2013).

This article finds that democracies hold a mid level of political trust, and authoritarian regimes hold a higher level of political trust than democracies on average by analysing twenty six Asian-Pacific societies' pooled data from the 2003-2008 AsiaBarometer Survey. The higher degree of democracy a regime possesses, the lower level of political trust the regime holds. This contradicts the western prevailing view that democracies hold a high level of political trust and democracies theoretically own stronger political trust than authoritarian regimes(Barithwaite, 1998; Geraint, 1976; 马克·E. 沃伦, 2004; Uslander, 1999; Levi, 1998; 彼得·什托姆普卡, 2005; 皮奥特·斯托姆卡, 闫健, 2007).

Regime type which represents different level of democracy overallly has an extremely weak negative effect on political trust. That's to say democracies decrease people's trust on political

institutions, while non democracies increases political trust. Regime type doesn't have a significantly direct effect on political trust, but significantly indirect effects through macro-institutional factors, micro-institutional factors and traditionalism. Firstly, regime type negatively impacts political trust through each of the two macro-institutional factors that are political performance evaluation and economic performance evaluation. Secondly, regime type negatively influences political trust through external efficacy and positively impacts political trust through each of happiness and life satisfaction. Thirdly, regime type produces an extremely weak positive effect on political trust through traditionalism.

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