

First part

First, I oppose the idea that an “Asian Culture” even exists. Pye's 'Asian power' theory displays the tendency to homogenize East Asian societies. It fails to acknowledge the considerable diversity within this region, both historically and contemporarily. China, Japan, and Korea, for instance, have distinct political traditions, cultural practices, and societal norms. By lumping these diverse countries together, the theory overlooks the nuances and variations in their approaches to power.

Furthermore, Japan always fares better when comparing democratization processes in East Asian countries. This is by no chance a coincidence, as Pye's theory exhibits a certain degree of ethnocentrism and Western bias. The theory often compares East Asian political systems and power structures to Western models, implicitly implying that Western norms represent the ideal standard. This bias overlooks the legitimacy and effectiveness of alternative governance models within East Asian contexts, hindering a fair assessment of power dynamics in the region.

Hence, Japan, coming closest to the Western ideal of a democracy, unsurprisingly excels in comparison.

Second part

Huang found “that East Asians are more likely to think of democracy in terms of good governance (32 percent), followed by social equality (29 percent), norms and procedures (22 percent), and freedom and liberty (17.1 percent).” (p. 305)

This suggests that Asians assess their material conditions in relation to their governance form. In my opinion, it was implied that such an assessment was "naïve" or "uninformed".

It seemed that the Western model of democracy, characterized by multiparty elections and liberal institutions, is universally desirable and applicable. However, this assumption disregards the diversity of cultural, historical, and political contexts that shape democratic systems. While democratic principles may be appealing, the form and functioning of democratic institutions vary across different societies. This assumption neglects the potential for alternative forms of democratic governance that may emerge from distinct cultural and historical traditions.

In my opinion, the actual existence of democratic instruments and institutions is an important component of a democracy, but the living conditions are just as, if not, more important. After all, what justification would a democratic state have for imposing state power on its citizens if it cannot provide a more peaceful and free life in return? Having numerous liberal institutions is not the only way to establish a democratic state.