





# Confucianism and Growth Policies in East Asia: A Strategic Relationship?

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# Background

- Viet Nam: perceived success story, yet is it sustainable considering the current social issues?
  - East Asian pioneers: Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong - any lesson?
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# A Cultural Answer?

- East Asian industrialisation: standard policies with exceptional and swift success without any serious social or political upheaval
  - The cultural hypothesis: Confucianism embedded in East Asian population encouraged them to behave in ways that were conducive to economic development (bottom-up perspective)
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# Confucianism

- a foreign-invented term
  - a 2000-year-old tradition of Chinese scholars
  - contains elements of an ethical system, a political philosophy, and a religion
  - manifestations in family values, education system, and government structure
  - closely linked with politics - “authorised” interpretation of Confucianism
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# A Cultural Answer (!)

- No valid methodology to test the hypothesis
  - No working definition of Confucianism
  - Conflicting arguments
  - Top-down perspective: Was Confucianism a strategic social policy tool?
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# Social Policies and Sustainable Growth

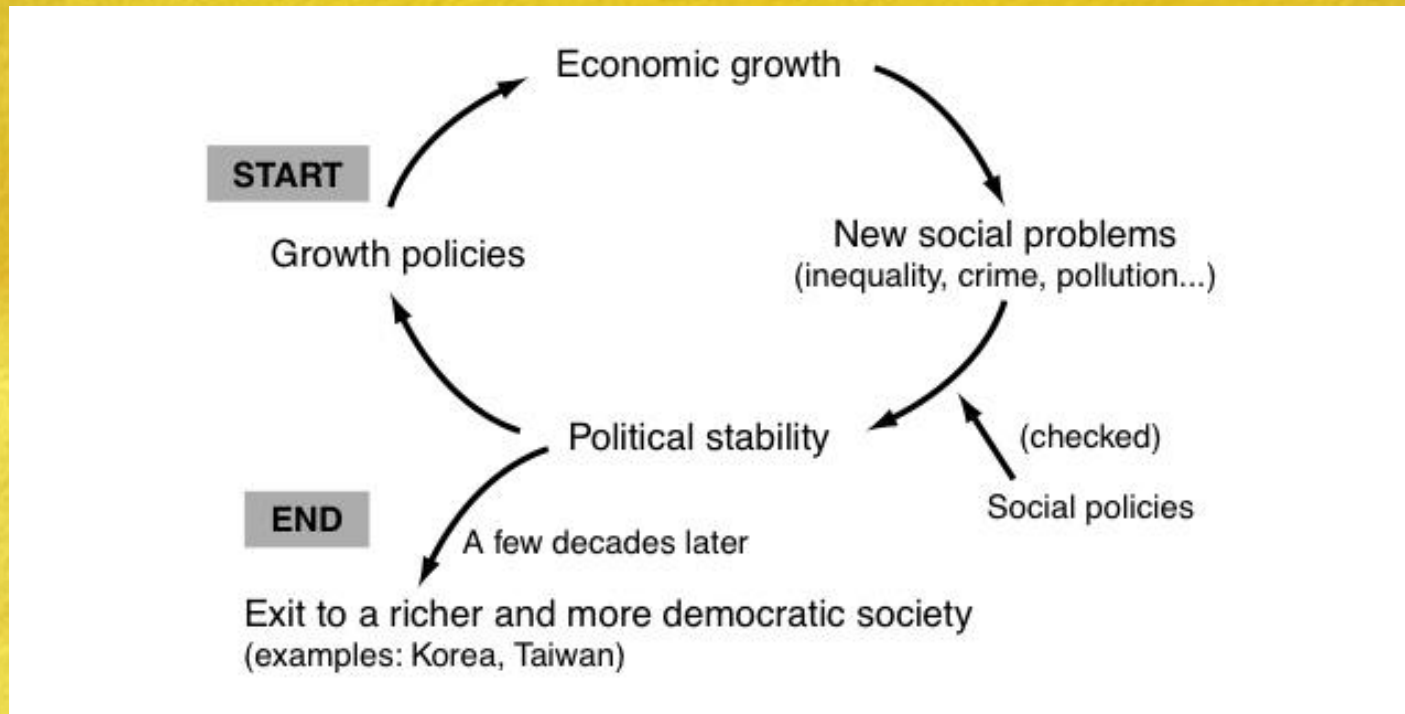



Figure 1: East Asian Policy Mix

Source: Ohno, 2008



# Research Framework


1. Identify social issues created by rapid industrialization
  2. Identify how successful Confucianism was used by East Asian leaders to manage such social issues
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	JAPAN	SINGAPORE
Circles of growth policies	1868 - 1917, 1918-1930s, 1955-1972, 1972 - 1980s	1966-1978, 1979-1985, 1985-1990s
Social issue	urbanisation, industrial labour issues	urbanisation, racial tension, industrial labour
Confucianism as a social policy tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Implicit</b></li> <li>• <b>Education:</b> The 1890 Imperial Rescript on Education (national moral instructions)</li> <li>• <b>Industrial labour:</b> The Cooperation and Harmony Society (workplace as a moral community) (1919-38)</li> <li>• <b>The 1898 Civil Code</b> (“proper” familial relations)</li> <li>• <b>Post WWII <i>Nihonjinron</i></b> (“proper” Japanese)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Explicit</b></li> <li>• <b>Education:</b> Confucian ethics curriculum (1982-89)</li> <li>• <b>Social welfare:</b> public housing policy to encourage three-generation families</li> <li>• <b>Propaganda:</b> public discussions on Confucianism</li> </ul>
Result	Embraced by the public	Ignored by the public



# Conclusion

- Confucianism was a social tool available for East Asian political leadership, but not a strategic one.
  - Lesson for Viet Nam: handle with care
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# References

Ohno, K. (2008). Chapter 2: The East Asian Growth Regime and Political Development. In GRIPS Development Forum (Ed.). *Diversity and Complementary in Development Aid: East Asian Lessons for African Growth*, pp.37-61. Retrieved March 1, 2010 from

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