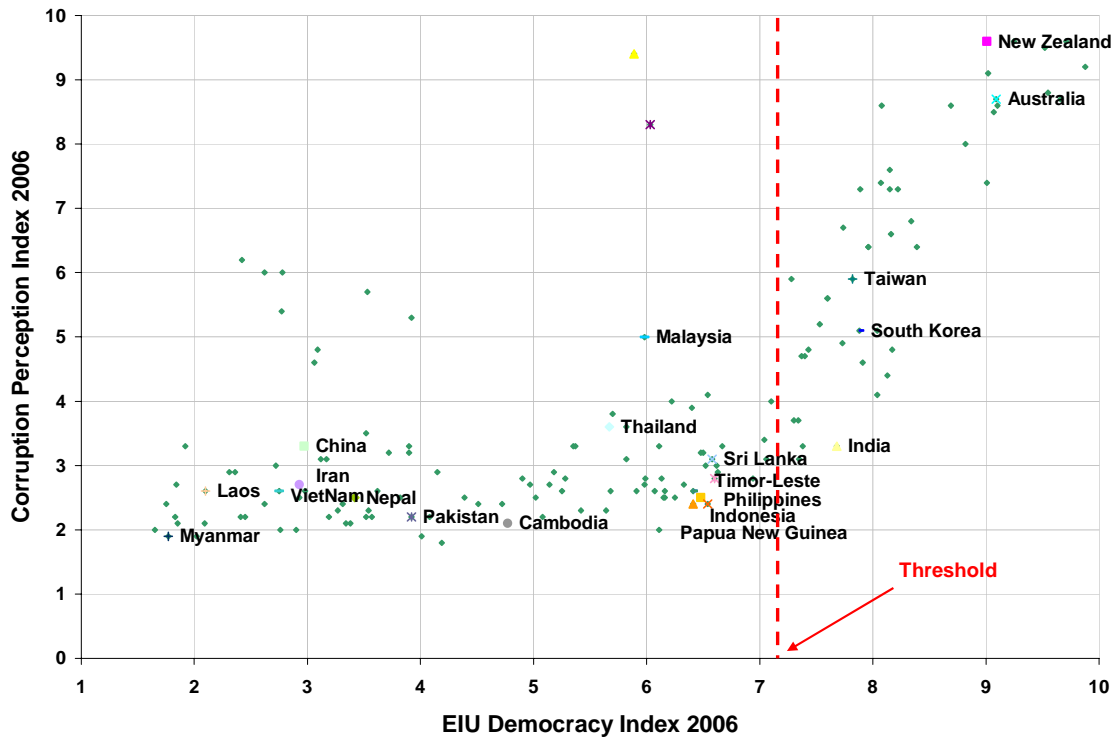


China vs. India's approach to fighting corruption: An insight through the human development's lens?

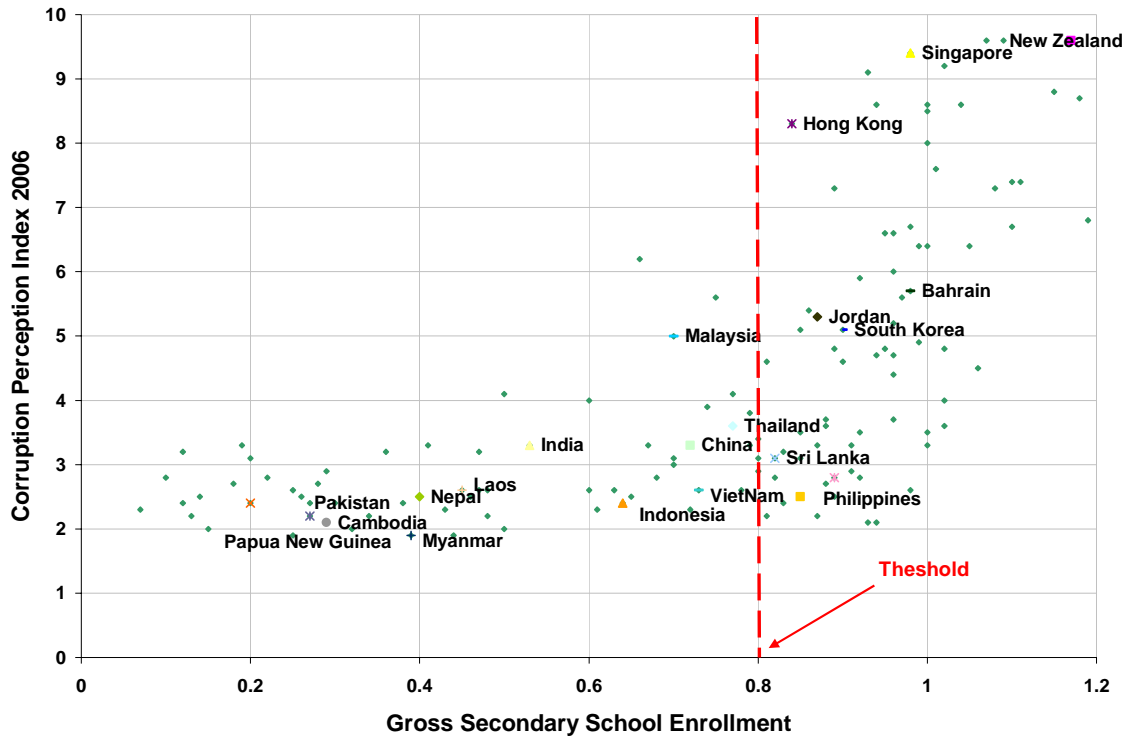
India is a functioning democracy. China is a one-party state. Both are struggling with rampant corruption. Does it imply that both models are not working? Let us put the human development lens on and examine.



Let us look at one important aspect of human development: democracy. The graph above shows the relationship between democracy and corruption control for 160 countries in the world (Each dot represents a country; being higher means being less corrupt; being more on the right means being more democratic). Some Asia Pacific countries are highlighted. As we can see, when democracy is under some threshold, there is no relationship between democracy and corruption. Beyond the threshold, this relationship becomes strongly positive.

India performs very well in term of democracy and has moved beyond the threshold. It seems that India will quickly catch up with Taiwan and South Korea on the corruption control dimension. China is doing poorly: it needs to do a lot to reach the democracy threshold before it can hope to effectively control corruption.

Let us now look at another important aspect of human development: education. On the below graph, we can see the same pattern: there is insignificant relationship between education and corruption under a threshold; and a strong relationship beyond it. However, China and India now swap their positions. China is right near the threshold but India falls back far away.



In India, democracy cannot be an effective measure against corruption because a large proportion of the population is illiterate. In China, mass education cannot be mobilized to fight corruption because there is limited democracy. Look at the first graph one more time, among the countries with the same level of democracy, China is already the best in terms of controlling corruption (in this graph China is statistically termed an *outliner*). This means the Chinese government is already doing all it possibly can to constrain corruption, given the current level of democracy. To advance further in the fight against corruption, China inevitably needs strengthen its democracy.

India needs to do a similar thing. The second graph shows that few countries can successfully control corruption without the support of an educated population. For India, the investment in education is the investment in fighting corruption.

Through the human development lens, we can see the biases in China and India's approaches to dealing with corruption, and the ways to correct them. This lens may help our own countries too.