



A Comparative Survey of
DEMOCRACY, GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

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Norms of Good Citizenship –
The Case of Southeast Asian Countries

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Norms of Good Citizenship – The Case of Southeast Asian Countries*

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Introduction

Citizenship is an old but still developing concept. It entails critical and controversial issues. The essence of citizenship is about how to construct and sustain a political order in which every individual person both as a self and a social being can realize his full development as a whole human person.

The main issue is to define his membership in an ordered community in which he leads a life. Is he an ordinary member in the full sense? Is he protected, as an individual self, under the law in an equal and fair way as all others? How is he as a social being related to the others and to the community as a whole? These are simple questions but difficult to answer, depending on relational circumstances that may be complex, multi-layered and, in our time, rapidly changing.

These questions having been addressed over the millennia one way or the other, and contemporarily resolved, citizenship in practice becomes a social lives embedded in sets of norms with country-specific institutional implications. Citizenship in practice also affects the functioning of the political regime and civic integration of the society. The dynamic is mediated by socio-political “identity” as affected by the way in which the membership issue is handled. Are members in the community regarded as strangers, second class and the like? The answer then informs how the members in question experience his self as belonging or not to the community, how they negotiate with the others, and manage their socio-political relations.

All in all, it is important to always keep in mind that citizenship norms and even¹ practices are socially constructed through history as a reflection of multiple experiential conditions and fundamental ideas about the human person and meanings of (social) life. Both context and idea matter. Since contexts vary, problems and

* We are grateful to the professional and efficient services provided by our research assistant Mr. Mathew Yee-hang Wong.

¹ We are aware of the social science debate of agency and structure but cannot take care thereof in this paper for short of the necessary data.

challenges arise and reflexive ideas emerge in competition, the meanings, institutions and practice of citizenship change from time to time too.

All countries covered in this study have experienced state and nation building in changing, challenging contexts of domestic pluralism and differences, regionalization, and globalization. How citizenship has been or is being constructed represents a fascinating subject that has theoretical as well as practical significance. Ours is a baseline study not of the history of construction, but the patterns of received norms of citizenship in those countries. It is neither meant to cover the institutional implications nor all aspects of citizenship practice. The primary aim is, in the light of theoretical models of citizenship, to ascertain, in a very basic manner, popular orientations and their impact, if any, on self-reported activities of political participation. We will first briefly review the theoretical models before presenting the empirical findings and drawing the conclusion.

Theoretical Models

There are two major normative models about citizenship. The liberal model that is more popular in the modern world focuses on the formal, legal dimension of citizenship. It draws on the legacies of legal culture of the Roman Empire². In such a model, citizens are regarded as full members of the political community, with unabridged equality to protection under the Law. They enjoy equal rights and assume common duties of membership. To put it simply, citizenship mean above all full membership with equal rights and duties. As the Roman Empire expanded, citizen rights were extended generously to the conquered people. The theoretical repercussion of the Roman experiences is thus profound. Citizenship can now be conceptualized not only primarily as legal status, whereby citizens are protected by the shared law, but also more importantly, but also universal norms that are capable of transcending spatial constraints. It is extensible beyond the defined territorial boundary of a political community and applicable above or below any hierarchical level of its political system. In other words, citizenship can operate at many sites at the same time with full membership in a plurality of “occasional” communities. In short, citizenship can be all-inclusive.

Historical developments in the medieval age through the 17th century turned out to be important for the maturity of the liberal model of citizenship. With political

² Michael Walzer, “Citizenship,” in T. Ball, J. Farr and R. L. Hanson, *Political Innovation and Conceptual Change*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, pp. 211-220.

practice as represented by the Magna Carta (1215) and the British Reform Acts (1831, 1867, 1884-5) and theoretical discourses around the same time, the liberal tradition of citizenship has acquired much stronger emphasis on the individual as an autonomous person with a legal status as citizen as well as on the norm of political liberty, whereby private individuals are free, within legal bounds, from interference by other individuals or the political authority. It is thereby believed that by the equal treatment under universal legal norms, citizens can fully experience human respect from their counterparts and the authority, thereby contributing to civic integration of the community in question. In his classic book *Citizenship and Social Class*, T.H. Marshall has offered a class analysis of the development from civil, political to social rights³. Civil rights offer citizens equal protection of their freedoms under the law, political rights to representation and vote, and social rights to enjoy wellbeing, such as health, education and welfare benefits. The latter rights were hailed by Marshall as the most significant advancement in liberal citizenship that was conducive to social harmony and integration in England.

On the basis of Marshall's categorization, we use three questions⁴ to test the fit of the rights-based liberal model in Southeast Asia, preceded by a leading question designed to examine whether there are relevant identities, such as ethnicity, locality, religion or whatever, that may become relevant sources of the exclusion of citizenship to certain groups of people in the countries concerned. The whole battery can then tap the extent to which citizenship is inclusive, equal, full and rights-based. The battery is also sensitive to contexts of plurality and concomitantly politics of differences.

The leading question is set to ask "(A)re there any people from the following list (specifically designed by each country survey team) who you believe are very different from the rest of us?" If the answer is positive, then the respondents were asked whether they agree or disagree with three follow-up statements as follows, with short-titles in bracket.

1: (CvIRight) "These people [name the people identified first by the respondent] should have the equal right to do whatever they want to do as other citizens."

2: (PolRight) "They should enjoy the same right as other citizens to vote in the

³ Thomas Humphrey Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Class and Other Essays*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950; or *Citizenship and Social Class*, London: Pluto Press, 1992 (original edition 1950).

⁴ In so doing, we can be faulted for having neglected the issues of other kinds of rights and therefore of citizenship, such as cultural, regional, global and whatever since citizenship can be all-inclusive.

election of the top leader”.

3: (SocRight) “Their basic well-being should be taken care of by the government to the same extent as other citizens.”

Affirmations of these statements may be taken either as a straight-forward subscription to the legal norms per se by the respondents or, because of the leading question, as an indication of inclusive or exclusive conception of citizenship in the countries under study.

The liberal model has been under critiques from various quarters. It has several main deficiencies. First, theoretical tensions within the model (between for instance competing values of equality and the authority or individuality versus common human nature), suggest that universal application of equal rights may result in substantive injustice, e.g. to the ethnic minorities who wish to be different in cultural or religious practices. The liberal model is difference blind. What is needed, the critique maintains, is “equal respect” not “equal treatment”. Second, the model is primarily concerned with citizens as private persons who are free to act, within legal bounds. They are not expected to be active in the business of government, although granting of political right to vote itself does create enabling institutions for periodical political participation⁵. At any rate, representative democracy as it is constituted today can hardly live up to the “activism” standard of democratic citizenship, as most challengers of the model insist. Third, the emphasis on rights easily leads to possessive individualism, therefore harmful to social integration. It is the republican model that appears to be a better choice in view of the second and third defects of the liberal alternative.

The republican model, also known as the moral dimension, of citizenship can be traced back to ideas and practices in ancient times. Its essence is civil self-rule. In ancient Athens, male citizens actively took part in political deliberation and law-making to manage the collective life in the public sphere. It was through practice in the business of constructing the common good for the city-state that the citizens acquired desirable feelings of identity and belonging. The ontological foundation of the model is on the concept of the human person primarily as social beings. They are political agency having commitment to the community’s future. The republican model differs from the liberal counterpart radically in the idea of political participation. Unlike

⁵ John Rawls, a liberal thinker, differs from the libertarian concept of citizenship by arguing for active participation of citizens. The essential nature of citizenship is, according to him, “is most fully realized in a democratic society in which there is widespread and vigorous participation in political life.” See his *Political Liberalism*, N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1993, p. 26.

the latter that regards participation as legal rights and occasional practice, the republican model takes active participation in collective decision-making as the fundamental duty of citizens. The way to be free is through political participation in the common good⁶. For the liberal model, the cardinal norm is freedom of the individual as an autonomous self, whereas the cardinal standard of the republican model is civic responsibility of the individual as a social being.

The republican model has its own shortcomings though. In the classic contexts where the model evolved, collective life was anchored in small, relatively homogenous political communities where family, religion, and politics were closely intertwined. As political communities change through modern times in terms of increasing scale, greater structural/functional complexity and growing plurality, the republican citizen as political agency sounds increasingly unrealistic. With regard to the problem of scale, direct citizens' participation in public affairs can no longer be organized at the national level but can still be promoted at the regional/local as well as functional levels. The European Union represents an attempt to apply the republic model of citizenship under the name of the principle of subsidiarity.

As to the issue of plurality and difference, the classical republic model certainly needs revision. In the United States, a communitarian vision of citizenship serves well to bridge the liberal and republic models of citizenship in light of the modern contexts. It emphasizes at the same time individual entitlements, active participation in social-cultural life and communal attachment⁷. The essence is for the majority group to recognize "difference" with respect while demanding minority subgroups to take up commitment towards the core values of the community at large. Alternatively, the neo-republican theory as advocated by Herman van Gunsteren⁸ starts from the reality of diversity and difference and rests more on civil society rather than the national political arena. On the one hand, citizens have to be "reasonable" and accept diversity and difference. On the other hand, the society in particular and the polity should not search for consensus but focus on processing of plurality, making citizens competent through education to use rationality and emotion in dealing with each other's difference. To Gunsteren, it is exactly through interaction between pluralities that civic responsibility, the defining core of the republican model, arises. In other words, the

⁶ There are other citizen duties not much discussed at all in the theories, such as abiding by the laws, paying taxes, serving in the armed forces/national service and the list can be further extended.

⁷ See A. Etzioni, "Citizenship Tests: A Comparative, Communitarian Perspective," *Political Quarterly*, Vol. 78, No. 3 (2007), pp. 353-363.

⁸ Herman Van Gunsteren, *A Theory of Citizenship: Organizing Plurality in Contemporary Democracies*, Boulder, CO: Westview, 1998.

essence of politics to him is processing of plurality. Legal and social rights themselves do not constitute citizenship but serve as resources to support citizens' participation in the public-political sphere. Citizenship is not confined to the political sphere. Instead of encouraging citizens to be active in political participation, he prefers them to spend more energy in the civil society where the basis for citizenship is primarily created. It is so because civic responsibility is nurtured and located in the religious, educational, work and other social spheres.

In our survey, the duties-based (neo-)republic model is operationalized into the following statements for the interviewees to express their agreement or disagreement. There are listed below with short-titles in bracket.

4: (Particip) "A citizen who does not actively participate in the affairs of his local and national community is not performing his duties."

5: (ObeyLaws) "Citizens should always obey laws and regulations, even if they disagree with them".

6: (Loyalty) "A citizen should always remain loyal only to his country, no matter how imperfect it is or what wrong it has done."

A note on the ambiguous status of the 6th statement is in order. Loyalty can be either treated as a republican norm required of good citizens or as a matter of identity. In the latter case, loyalty is just an empirical fact of emotional attachment occasioned as a result of successful practice in citizenship as political agency. It can also be theoretically elevated to a kind of shared identity as an expression of memberships in a political community. In the real world, the former understanding, normative quality of citizenship, is predominant in a number of countries preoccupied with the task of state/nation-building.

The intricate relationship between political agency, identity and plurality (difference) in a national community has rendered the development of (neo-)republican model of citizenship complicated. The requirement of national loyalty is premised on a concept of universal citizenship, while differential citizenship allows for multiple loyalties according to differentiated identities, which in turn gives rise to differentiated rights for the minorities⁹. Given the growing tides of

⁹ See Iris Marion Young, "Polity and Group Difference: A Critique of the Ideal of Universal Citizenship", *Ethics*, Vol. 99 (1989), pp. 250–274.

immigration with the consequence of growing diversity in several more affluent countries, a second loyalty to one's country of origin has gradually become a practice. The above growing complexities call for a theoretical revisit of the very foundation of citizenship. If the acid test for any conceptualization of citizenship lies in its integrative function, especially in the context of plurality and difference, to glue together a plurality of autonomous but sociability-capable human beings into a solidary political community, the requirement of political agency alone is insufficient. Even if the political agency is expected to be actualized in the pursuit of the common good, there is still a missing institutional link between active participation and decision-making. In the small, homogenous context of ancient Athens, one may expect decision by consensus after thorough deliberation. In the modern context of a large community with plurality and diversity, consensus rule is certainly unrealistic. That is why most democracies today are of the majoritarian, representative type where citizens are only occasionally active in political participation. Popular acceptance of the rule of majoritarian decision-making and the priority of the general interest over private ones is critically important for the cohesion and solidarity of the political community concerned¹⁰. Hence, two statements presented below can be regarded as either supplements to the republican model or a stand-alone model of altruism. The third model of citizenship can be justified in situations where the republican idea of citizenship as political agency is infeasible in view of the size and complexity of modern states and where majoritarian rule of decision making is the necessary evil in representative democracy. Hence, the following two statements in our survey battery:

7: (Majority) "If a government policy serves the interests of the majority of people, I should support it even if it jeopardizes my private interests".

8: (Sacrific) "For the sake of the national community/society, the individual should be prepared to sacrifice his/her personal interest.

[Need to specify country profiles of Vietnam, Thailand, Philippines, Singapore and Indonesia, interview designs, sample sizes, representativeness and so on?]

Popular Support of the Normative Orientations

In Table 1, we present the mean scores of responses to the above statement items in the five Southeast Asian Countries. The scores range between 2 as the maximum and -2 as the minimum. Thus a score of 2 denotes that a norm item receives the

¹⁰ This has to be supported by the norms of due respect of the minority and differential rights in areas, such as religion and culture, specific to and constitutive of their "second" identity.

greatest support whereas -2 the least.

As can be seen from the data shown here, the Vietnamese citizens appear to be the most ardent supporters of all the citizenship norms. It is an amazing puzzle why the Western ideas of citizenship are so well received in a young, communist country. The Indonesian citizens are no less astonishing, in their being very different from the others folks covered in this study. They are the only people who flatly reject the liberal model and the maxim of majoritarian rule. They are also quite negative about the concept of republican citizenship. Are they non-citizens or a very special breed? Between these two extremes, we have the Thai, the Philipinos and the Singaporeans. The Philipinos are the least remarkable as a mixture of bits and pieces, the Thais citizens embrace the liberal model more than the republican competitor and the Singaporeans emerge as the most distinct group in their rejection of the core norm of republican citizenship, i.e. participation. All said, there appears to be no commonality in the popular conceptions of citizenship in these five countries. Why?

[Table 1 about here]

Vietnam

Liberalizing as a factor?

As said above, the Vietnamese people are the most zealous supporters of all citizenship norms in our country samples, scoring the highest means across the board and in the positive directions. They stand out on the norms of 1) ensuring equal rights to freedom, vote and social wellbeing, 2) honouring duties of political participation and legal obedience, and 3) deferring to the views and interests of the majority or the whole community, even at the expense of one's own interests. There are a few puzzles in light of the contexts.

Vietnam has the oldest continuous history of any Southeast Asian countries. It was under the rule of imperial China for about one thousand years from 111 BC to 939 CD, having thereby acquired Confucian values of authority and obedience within a paternalistic state structure. The same values and state structure could have served modern Vietnam well, given the authoritarian nature of communism led by a single party. It should have citizens who are abiding by the laws and loyal to the state. The cultural-historical legacy should also leave no room for the growth of rights awareness, not to speak of granting equal rights to members of unacceptable ethnicities or groups. In the same vein, active participation in the political processes should be beyond expectation, unless mobilization by the government is equated with autonomous

participation. Yet, the reality as suggested by survey statistics looks different. What are the alternative factor(s) of influence? Could the *doi moi* (the new way) strategy of (more economic than political) liberalization since the 1980 have successfully promoted liberal values among the Vietnamese? What about the possible effects of globalization forces in the areas of the economy, communication and culture?

Another historical context speak against our findings too. It concerns the war experiences and memories. The history of Vietnam is full of bitter wars for independence and unification, in ancient as well as recent times. After the Second World War, an independence war against French imperialism took eight years before its end after the fall of French garrison at Dien Bien Phu in 1954. Vietnam remained, for a while, divided between the communist North and the anti-communist South. National unification was first interrupted by the failed agreement to hold elections and then the eventual U.S. involvement in a civil war 1962 and 1973 for the fear of a domino effect of communist expansion. The Vietnam War was finally ended when the South was overrun by the communists. The war produced heavy casualties on both sides, atrocities against civilians, and destruction of infrastructure, especially in the North¹¹. Experiences with long and bitter wars and long periods of national disunity used to generate mutual misunderstanding, suspicion and hatred. Vietnam is no exception. As a result, there is no fertile soil for the growth of citizenship, especially with regard to the liberal strand, as understood in the above.

Alternatively, ethnicity and relatedly, religion could be a barrier to the healthy growth of citizenship. Deterioration of relations between Vietnam and China in the wake of the war against Cambodia (1978) and China (1979) had led to a series of anti-ethnic Chinese purges. Various other minorities have experienced similar treatments. For instance, the Human Rights Watch has reported Vietnamese government's persecutions against the Christian Montagnards of the Central Highlands and the Khmer Krom in the southern delta region, who have protested in their fight for rights of religious freedom and others¹². The evidence of government's intolerance of ethnic minorities does not necessarily entail that the people of Vietnam are equally intolerant and therefore deny the same rights to those different people. It is however still possibly so, until proved otherwise. All in all, the question remains how the

¹¹ Deaths are estimated to be around 1 million troops for ARVN, another million for NVA and Viet Kongs, and 4 million civilians. There are still 500,000 people unaccounted for.

¹² See Human Rights Watch, *Montagnard Christians in Vietnam: A Case Study in Religious Repression*, 2011.

<http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/vietnam0311Web.pdf>; Human Rights Watch, *On the Margins: Rights Abuses of Ethnic Khmer in Vietnam's Mekong Delta*, 2009.
http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/vietnam0109web_0.pdf

Vietnamese could have acquired the Western idea of citizenship. It is perhaps beyond the survey design to arrive at any answer.

Thailand

As revealed in Table 1, the pattern of distribution of citizenship norms received in Thailand is somewhat similar to that in Vietnam. Support for all items is comparatively high. However, Thais are less supportive of the republican norms of participation and law-abidingness than their counterparts in Vietnam. There is also significant difference between the two countries that is not revealed by the statistics of means. In Vietnam, opinions on the norms of participation and law obedience are equally divided while Thailand has many more supporters than otherwise.

The historical, cultural and political contexts in Thailand seem conducive to the development of good citizens. Despite a long history of political instability troubled by alternation of military coups/rule and democratic restorations, Thailand has gradually consolidated as a liberal democracy with a structure of constitutional monarchy. It has in fact been regarded as the model state in Southeast Asia with a most democratic and free society. Ever since the reign of King Chulalongkorn (1868-1910), Thai governments have persistently endeavoured to forge through tolerance and assimilation a unified national identity with a Siamese emphasis. Religion also serves as a positive influence, as Theravada Buddhism, in which about 95% of Thais believe, is a more peaceful and tolerant religion that is accommodative to differences.

The growth of civil society and active middle class has been facilitated by diffused pattern of power configurations among (A) the military in transformation towards modernity and professionalism, (B) political and bureaucratic elites in constant divisions, (C) business tycoons immersed in political (sometimes corrupt) connections and (D) an active king playing a decisive role in arbitrating political conflicts. Popular activism that can be dated back to the revolution of 1932 when absolute monarchy was toppled, has all along provided a check against both authoritarian and corrupt tendencies in the government state. It has been further augmented and sustained by the growing civil society and middle class., thereby facilitating the gradual consolidation of the liberal democracy. The growing maturing of democracy has in turn been reinforcing the embrace of the republican idea of participation by the Thai people.

Citizenship in Thailand is not without trouble though, in spite of the apparent

success of assimilation of ethnic differences into the mainstream. For instance, the Chinese minority were for much of the 20th century, granted with Thai nationality but at the same time without voting and other rights. Malay Muslims in Southern regions of Thailand continue to feel deeply alienated from the broader society. They are not only inactive in national affairs but rather rebellious for the course of self-government. The official construction of Thai identity thus has at best the effect of forcing some people to conceal, deny, or play down their underlying cultural and ethnic origins. At its worst, the same policy strategy simply fails to provide long term stability in those areas of ethnic minorities. Duncan McCargo concludes that “being a citizen of Thailand is not an either/or matter, but a question of degree. All Thai people may be citizens, but some Thai people are more ‘citizenly’ than others.”¹³

The Philippines

In our survey, the Philippines emerges as the median country in terms of the reception of citizenship norms by its people. As far as the mean scores can tell, attitudes of the Philipinos are situated between the extremes of Vietnamese and the Indonesians. Yet, the patterns of frequency distributions of their responses reveal two distinct features. There are very large percentages of respondents (around 55%) who could not choose any from the agree/disagree options for the three questions on the rights. Therefore, the apparent support of the liberal model of citizenship in the Philippines may still be on shaky ground. There appears to be weak support for the republican model too, especially with regard to the citizen duty to political participation. Moreover, the percentages of answers given to the questions on the duty to participate and to abide by the law are equally divided between the agreement and disagreement options. In the former, it is 48.8% versus 47.1% and in the latter, 49.3% versus 48.1% respectively. Why so many respondents cannot decide to grant the same citizenship rights to their fellow countrymen who are different? Why are they so divided on the duty to participate and to obey the laws? The first question must remain a puzzle for the time being. As to the second question, the history of political development in complex, social contexts may offer a clue.

The political history of the country seems to be a story of disillusionment. Politics in the Philippines has suffered from the resilient legacy of entrenched dominance of predatory elite. The seed was sowed when the colonial power opened up the window

¹³ Duncan McCargo, “Informal citizens: graduated citizenship in Southern Thailand,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 5 (2011), pp. 833-849.

of political participation to the few, leading to the emergence of politics of personality and patrimonial, patron-client relations which in turn was boosted by the expansion of suffrage during the American occupation and after independence. This kind of politics had not only survived but had been reinforced during the thirteen years of authoritarianism under President Marcos, thanks to his corporatist strategy of winning support from selected elites for the governance of the economy and society. The restoration of democracy in 1986 and formal consolidation through four presidential turnovers as the result of competitive elections aroused initial hope, to be followed however by disappointment that the more things change, the more they stay the same. The same remains the pattern of rich and powerful families controlling vast networks of patronage by means of traditional patron-client ties and political corruption, sometimes well ground in local pockets. One may say that more elections have not completed the Philippines' road to democracy, since the predatory and clientelist forces remain so strong and well anchored in political institutions, such as the patrimonial parties of oligarchic elite. It is those elite who control, apart from their majority hold in the bicameral legislature, over 90% of the country's local government units at the municipal, city and provincial levels.

The political illusion generated by the historical legacy is accompanied by a historical mockery of citizens' mobilization and participation (sic!). The authoritarian regime under President Marcos had first undertaken a massive campaign of de-politicization by eradicating opposition forces and political parties, and then created in their place new institutions for mass mobilization, such as plebiscites, under tight government control for political goals such as approval of the new constitution and constitutional amendments. President Marcos was toppled by the "people's power" that was repeated in 2001 to seal the fate of the film-star President Joseph Estrada. The "people's power" is genuine, as a tide of more or less autonomous participation by citizens. On the other hand, the "people's power" does not attest to the power of the people, since it was the intervention of the military that was decisive in bring down the corrupt presidents. Anyways, "people's power" has failed to keep Philippines' subsequent presidents clean. Old-style patronage politics has well adapted to the new context of globalized economy and predatory politics has become more brazen and pervasive. It is said there is now a fatigue of "people's power". Why participate? This may be the question in the mind of half of our respondents when provoked by the political ethics of citizens' duty to participation.

Why half of the people refuse to abide by the laws as good citizens should do? There are no direct relevant answers given our research design in which popular views

about the legitimacy of the laws, the credibility of the courts, and social justice in general is explored. A few conjectures are on offer. The dominance of corrupt and predatory law makers and the corrupt of the rule of law by self-serving judges might be inhibitor to the growth of law-abiding citizens. Why should they if the law-makers and enforcers are fouling the laws themselves?

To conclude our journey to the Philippines, we may perhaps say that the true consolidation of a democracy depends also on the congruence between the formal democratic institutions and the living social institutions. Therefore, we need to add to the already well known contextual problems, such as major insurgency, extreme poverty, severe socio-economic inequality, the resilient patron-client network controlled by the few predatory elite as a barrier to the development of good citizenship.

Singapore

Like the Indonesians, albeit to a much lesser extent, Singaporeans fare badly on liberal model of citizenship. They do not believe that the rights to freedom and to vote should not be given to those fellow countrymen who are different from the rest. Yet, what makes Singapore distinct is its citizens' disbelief in the duty to participate in public affairs of the local or national community.

The illiberal citizenship orientations of Singaporeans can be explained by the country's political legacies, including the illiberal tradition of colonialism, haphazard state-building in a hostile environment in the 1960s and 1970s, nation-building that began in the 1980s against the context of great pluralism in ethnicities, religions and cultures. Singapore became fully independent in 1965, following the British colonial rule of almost one and a half century and three years of failed merger with Malaysia. The state and nation building processes involve adaptation of the colonial apparatus to the new circumstances, zealous promotion of a new national, i.e. "Singaporeans" identity among its inhabitants through a dedicated programme of national education, safeguarding the young nation-state against real or imagined threats from big neighbours, especially Malaysia with whom Singapore had quarreled during the merger period, and last but not least implementation of socio-economic policies designed not only to improve the well-being of the citizens but also nurture their sense of belonging to the city-state. Citizenship in Singapore was born of reluctance in building an independent city-state. The leadership originally hoped instead for a Malay federation using Malay as the official language, in which the ethnic Chinese can make

great contributions. The hope was dashed and they had to eventually settle with the construction of a city-state with a “Singaporean” identity, because all other alternatives proved to be non-starters, because the challenges of multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural conditions. The state and nation building efforts are partially successful especially in materialist terms. It has become one of the world’s most prosperous countries, with per capita GDP equal to that of the leading nations in the world, high reputation in terms of a clean and efficient government and consistent socio-political stability. There are however cracks here and there.

Singapore’s state-building work has left behind a hybrid political system that defies categorization, because of its strange mixture of paternalist, authoritarian and electoral-democratic elements. No wonder there are many concepts on offer, such as illiberal democracy¹⁴, liberal semi-democracy¹⁵, and soft authoritarianism¹⁶ and so on. Nation-building results are problematic too. It has sought to construct an Asian-values based “authoritarian civic national identity” that turns out to be unsustainable¹⁷. Singapore’s political socialization strategy is faulty in its emphasis on economic and material successes and citizens’ pride in and loyalty to the nation have been deteriorating in recent times, with sustained exodus of talents from the city. As far as the mass are concerned, a survey study by the Institute of Policy Studies in Singapore in 2010, Tan Ern Ser and Gillian Koh has revealed that those who have benefited most from Singapore’s economic growth are the least likely to be loyal to and proud of the nation¹⁸.

Indonesia

In stark contrast to the Vietnamese, Indonesians are no believers in citizenship norms. It begs the question whether a liberal democracy can truly consolidate itself with citizenship. The greatest fault line in the popular attitudes here lies in the people’s very negative reception of the liberal model of citizenship. Specifically, scores for all three liberal rights items in Table 1 are all in the negative and the worst as compared

¹⁴ Hussin Mutalib, “Illiberal democracy and the future of opposition in Singapore,” *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 21, No.2 (2000), pp. 313-342.

¹⁵ Fareed Zakaria, “The Rise of Illiberal Democracy,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 76, No. 6 (Nov/Dec 1997), pp. 22-43.

¹⁶ Marco Verweij and Riccardo Pelizzo, “Singapore: Does Authoritarianism Pay?” *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (April 2009), pp. 18-32.

¹⁷ Stephan Ortmann, “Singapore: The Politics of Inventing National Identity,” *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (2009), pp. 23-46.

¹⁸ Eugene K B Tan, *To be a nation from the bottom up*, 5 August 2010.

http://www.spp.nus.edu.sg/ips/docs/media/yr2010/NOS4/TD_To%20build%20a%20nation%20from%20the%20bottom%20up_050810.pdf

to those for the other countries. It means a large number of Indonesians do not want “people who are very different from the rest of us” to enjoy the rights to freedoms, vote and social well-being, in an equal way. Among these rights, freedom rights receive the least backing with a mean score of -0.52 (or 50.2% of the respondents somewhat disagreed or strongly disagreed with the question). It entails a considerate extent of political intolerance vis-a-vis those fellow citizens who are regarded as different. Indonesians also fare badly in terms of the republican model. All norms here received poor support and the level of national loyalty is even the lowest (mean score=0.60) among all five national samples. Indonesians are thus unlikely to be active citizens, law-abiding, and loyal to their country. The same bleak picture can be painted about the majoritarian principle as a way to arrive at decision making in a liberal, representative democracy. In fact, the Indonesians are staunch opponents against the rule of majority and a large number of them are not prepared to sacrifice their own interests for the sake of the common good. Why?

Indonesia is the world’s most populous state governing the world’s largest archipelago endowed with rich natural resources. It has become between 1998 and 2009 a “surprising political success story” in many ways. Indonesia’s democracy “has not only survived but has been improving particularly in recent years. It is not only stable but also in some respects relatively liberal, with reasonably fair elections and extensive freedoms of press and association.”¹⁹ The survey data leads us to suspect that Indonesian politicians have, in their nation-building efforts, failed to deal, in an adequate way, with the tricky relationship between religion, ethnicity²⁰, political representation and electoral democracy. Let’s note first that the illiberal orientation of the Indonesians must have to do with a combination of many factors. Yet a major one is the country’s troubled process of nation-building, in which religion poses the greatest hurdle. There are generally two major threats to religious freedoms: from the state or society. China, a secular state, represents the worst case in the former case whereas the worst in the second category is represented by the society of India, a state with religious plurality. Compared to those extremes, Indonesia is much more complicated. It is a state where Islam is the majority religion with Muslims accounting for about 86% of the total population. The major threat to religious freedom before 1998 came from the autocratic state when even Muslims themselves felt mistreated by the governments whereas the post-1998 period has witnessed growing threat from

¹⁹ Larry Diamond, “Indonesia’s Place in Global Democracy,” Edward Aspinall and M. Mietzner eds., *Problems of Democratisation in Indonesia: Elections, Institutions and Society*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2010.

²⁰ Among the five countries under study, Indonesia has the largest percentage of respondents (35%) who found specified ethnic or other groups of people who are very different from the rest of us.

Indonesia's society, where the religious majority wishes to impose its views and values on the country's minorities. What makes things worse is the fact that politicians support or ignore this trend of religious intolerance, with personal political interest to win votes from the majority voters. It is a case of electoral, albeit relatively liberal democracy turning out to be a "tyranny of the majority", because public policies tend to follow the wills of the "median voter".

The ethnic/religious issue of nation-building is complicated by other problems. After the bitter struggle for independence in the mid-1940s and the end of 450 year Dutch colonialism in 1949, Indonesia's foremost concern has been how to ensure national unity. Almost at the same moment when Sukarno declared the birth of the Republic of Indonesia, a Republic of South Moluccas was proclaimed in Ambon. While Indonesia is the largest Muslim country, Christians account for more than 9% of the total. Another significant fact concerns ethnic pluralities, with Javanese (41%), Sundanese (15%), Madurese (3%), Minangkabau (3%), Minangkabau (3%), Betawi (2), Banten (2%), Banten (2%) and others (30%), inhabiting in 6,000 of 17,508 islands. How to govern the Indonesian archipelago is not an easy task. The parliamentary democracy led by Sukarno was preoccupied with economic restoration and political survival to have any vision to build a new nation. The support of a vibrant leftist movement (the most influential and dynamic in the non-socialist world) that Suharto enjoyed had eventually antagonized influential elements in the military. He was brought down by a coup in 1965 that ushered more than three bloody decades of personal dictatorship under Suharto. The legacy of General Suharto is particularly relevant to our subject of enquiry. First, about two generations of Indonesians have lived under a harsh dictatorship for 33 years out of 55 years' of the country's independent existence since 1950. Could it be that our respondents have been imbued with illiberal orientations as a result of having lived under three decades of dictatorship? Lo and behold, Suharto had even encouraged politicization of Islam and allowed divided religious loyalties immobilized local security forces some of them are connected with ethnic/religious movements for independence or special autonomy. The reformist government with a capable president Yudhoyono installed in 1998 has achieved some initial successes in having separatist forces in Aceh and Maluku contained²¹, there are yet still ethnic, religious tensions in those regions and elsewhere. The overall problem of religious freedom has not be resolved as some aggressive Islamic groups continue to exploit whatever pertinent issues available to reinforce the position of Muslims as the dominant majority, thereby infringing the rights of religious

²¹ See Harold Crouch, *Political Reform in Indonesia after Soeharto*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2010, Ch. 7 and Ch.8.

minorities.²²

It is in this connection to reiterate that citizenship involves membership and, derivatively, identity too. It has therefore significant implications for social and national integration. Citizenship can hardly be nurtured if it is overshadowed with identity issues and situated in crisis-ridden and authoritarian environments. In addition, citizenship in the interwoven case of electoral democracy and majority religion is also problematic. In this regard, Indonesia is an “unfinished nation,”²³ as its political elite have so far failed to offer, like their Singaporean counterparts, a credible vision with appropriate policy packages to build up a new nation that can transcend ethnic/religious differences.

Who Support those Citizenship Norms?

Citizenship has to do with the relational nature of lived membership in a community. The norms of citizenship are products of social life through history. Therefore, the support for citizenship norms can be understood in light of the socio-economic background of the people themselves. Among many possible candidates, we assume that gender, age, education, subjective social status and religion are potential predictors. Association between these variables and the eight citizenship norms is measured using the Chi-Square statistics. To simplify the presentation, Table 2 below provides findings on one norm each from the three major clusters. The overall pattern of association is not strong with the exception of religion. Education has some influence while age and gender are weak predictors. Subjective social status has an influence on the perception about the republican norm of participation in all countries except Thailand, but not on other norms.

[Table 2 about here]

Among all countries in this study, Vietnam conforms best to the commonly expected relations. Here, supporters for equal right to freedoms tend to be male, young, and better educated. It is also the younger generation who agrees with the republican idea of political participation as a citizen’s duty. Thailand is a surprise, where support of liberal rights comes from the less educated. In Philippines, the citizens’ duty of participation is approved by women more than by men. For Singapore,

²² For a theoretical discussion with case studies see “Muslim Politics in Indonesia’s Democratisation: The Religious Majority and the Rights of Minorities in the Post-New Order Era,” Ross H. McLeod and A. MacIntyre eds., Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2007, pp. 115-137.

²³ Max Lane, *Unfinished Nation: Indonesia before and after Suharto*, London: Verso, 2008.

only age and education are relevant factors to the three norms. It is the young people who believe in freedom rights. The better educated people, surprisingly, refuse to recognize the duty of participation. They are also more reluctant than the less educated ones to sacrifice their own interest for the sake of the common good. This phenomenon brings us back to the theme of faults in Singapore's citizenship education. In Indonesia, in contrast, education proves to be the most important factor for all three norms. Those who are better educated are more oriented towards equality to freedom rights, citizens' duty to participate and self-sacrifice for the sake of the general interest. In terms of the norm of self-sacrifice, males are more willing than females.

Among all socio-economic background conditions, the impact of religion is most substantial across the board in almost all countries. Figure 1 provides a summary of the complex pictures. It consists of three parts dealing with the three selected norms respectively. With the exception of Vietnam, religion matters for the support of the liberal norm of equal right to enjoy freedom. Its influence is unambiguously positive, except for Indonesia. Most religious believers in Thailand, Philippines and Singapore are supporters of the liberal norm. The case of Indonesia is the reverse, where non-supporters amount to 70%! It is interesting to note that same religions perform differently across the countries. For instance, Hindu positions itself at the far end of the opposition, with 93.3% of believers disagreed with the norm concerned, while 90.2% of believers in Singapore agreed. In the same vein, Muslims in Thailand are quite different from their counterparts in Singapore and Indonesia. Roman Catholics are more conservative in the Philippines than those in Singapore.

Moving to Part II on the republican norm of political participation, Indonesia remains the country in greatest trouble. In overall terms, there are many more believers who reject the concept of political participation as a duty of citizens. It is Hindu that is again most unsympathetic to the norm. The other countries fare much better in the overall sense. Attitudes of Roman Catholics and Muslims exhibit different attitudes in different countries.

With regard to the norm of self-sacrifice for the sake of the general interest (Part III of Figure 1), the overall pattern is positive but with significant numbers of people who are not ready to accept of priority of the general interest over their own interests. In the Philippines, 46.2% believers in Aglipayan and 36.7% in Islam do not subscribe to the priority of the general interest. The corresponding figures for Singapore are 46.2% Catholics, 26.2% Buddhists and 27.1% of Protestants. Indonesia has 41.8% of Protestants and 37.3% of Catholics who reject the norm. Even Thailand has to face

30.3% of Muslims as opponents against the priority of the general interest. These four countries all have to deal with the politics of difference. It has apparently not yet been adequately dealt with so much so that insurgencies, rebels, protests occurred occasionally in areas these people are inhabited. The negative attitudes revealed in relation to the citizenship norm may attest to the failure of majoritarian rule of liberal democracy, single-handed policy of assimilation, and socio-economic development in areas of ethnic/religious minorities.

With respect to the altruist norm here, the case of different attitudes of the same religions in different countries repeats itself. The greatest contrast happens with Aglipayan in Vietnam and the Philippines.

Finally, it is noteworthy that attitudes of same religions also differ from norm to norm with a given country. Roman Catholics tend to be more conservative with respect to the norm of self-sacrifice, but not to the norm of freedom right. Evangelicals in the Philippines are progressive on the duty of participate, but conservative in the issue of freedom right.

Citizenship Norms and Political Participation

It is submitted in the first section above that the models of citizenship is socially constructed in response to major challenges of the time. There are different norms in competition as there are contending framings of problems. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that the relations between different norms of citizenship and different modes of political participation are also context sensitive. How and to what extent citizenship norms are related to participation depend also on the confounding of rival influences from education, other political attitudes and so on. A recent study of the same subject matter across 25 countries has established that despite variation, norms about “good” citizenship matter for political participation, especially for the least institutionalized type, such as political activism²⁴. They have also found that the relationship between norms and participation differs across nations. This relationship is weakest among Eastern European countries, as compared with Western European and Western non-European countries, thereby suggesting implications of democratic learning.

²⁴ Catherine Bolzendahl & Hilde Coffé, “Are ‘Good’ Citizens ‘Good’ Participants? Testing Citizenship Norms and Political Participation across 25 Nations,” *POLITICAL STUDIES*, Vol. 61 Special Supplement S1, (April 2013), pp. 45–65. Their study does not include any country from Southeast Asia.

As captured in Table 4, we can only find a weak relationship between citizenship norms and overall political participation, after control of alternative explanations. Such a finding is as expected, since democracies in Southeast Asian countries are as equally immature as those in the Eastern European counterparts.

Table 4 consists of two parts: one deals with the effect of specified norms of the three models of citizenship (liberal, republican and altruist) and the other focuses on the combined impact of the liberal norm of participation as right or legal status and the republican norm of participation as citizens' duty. The latter should be more relevant to the study of citizenship as participatory practice, either when a citizen claims or asserts her right or fulfill her duty.

Apart from citizenship norms, we need to control for other plausible factors of influence on political participation. These control factors are age, education, religious piety, political efficacy, dissatisfaction with government performance, and the feeling of empowerment labeled as "Can Change" in the table. Specifically, the last control variable refers to that the people can speak without fear, that the government is responsive to what the people want and that the people have the power to change a government they don't like.

As can be seen from Table 4, the relation between citizenship norms and political participation varies from country to country. Above all, the composite norm of participation as both right and duty turns out to be the strongest and most significant in Vietnam (Part II). The general picture presented in Part I points to political efficacy as the most important factor on the political activities of our survey respondents, followed by Education. Citizenship norms have influence only in Vietnam, Singapore and Indonesia. They have nil influence in Thailand and the Philippines. Individually speaking, altruist norms fare reasonably well in Vietnam and Indonesia. The republican norms are weakly influential in Singapore only. Most interestingly, the liberal norms of rights are negatively related to overall political participation in Singapore, probably because of the competing influence of "Asian values".

Concluding Discussion

[To be written]

Table 1 – Popular Attitudes towards Citizenship Norms
Mean scores (standard deviation)

	Vietnam	Thailand	Philippines	Singapore	Indonesia
CvlRight	1.37 (0.86)	1.35 (0.78)	0.82 (1.44)	0.96 (0.90)	-0.52 (1.05)
PolRight	1.43 (0.78)	1.3 (0.81)	1.24 (1.13)	0.97 (0.86)	-0.21 (1.10)
SolRight	1.48 (0.73)	1.31 (0.81)	1.18 (1.14)	1.07 (0.85)	-0.24 (1.12)
Particip	1.29 (1.06)	0.89 (1.13)	0.05 (1.44)	-0.44 (1.2)	0.30 (1.04)
ObeyLaws	1.37 (0.99)	0.89 (1.11)	0.02 (1.5)	1.18 (0.83)	0.61 (0.91)
Loyalty	1.43 (0.93)	1.42 (0.87)	0.87 (1.28)	1.02 (1.05)	0.60 (0.94)
Majority	1.23 (1.00)	0.27 (1.24)	0.11 (1.46)	0.49 (1.13)	-0.06 (1.22)
Sacrific	1.36 (0.84)	0.80 (1.07)	0.55 (1.36)	0.55 (1.12)	0.62 (1.11)

Table 2 – Social Base of Citizenship Norms (selected examples)
(Pearson Chi Square, * *weak*, ** moderate, *** strong)

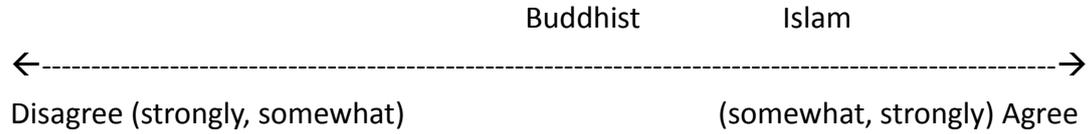
	Vietnam	Thailand	Philippines	Singapore	Indonesia
Equal right to civil liberties					
Gender	14.95**				
Age	33.93**			37.02**	
Education	19.53**	14.0*			15.93*
SSStatus					17.05*
Religion		18.58**	139.52***	29.04*	38.99***
Duty to participate					
Gender			9.8*7*		
Age	28.87**				
Education				17.14**	25.73**
SSStatus	16.38*		14.51*	41.86***	36.58***
Religion	30.53*	17.74**	42.43**	39.97**	65.20***
Sacrifice for the public interest					
Gender					10.477*
Age					
Education				23.90**	42.71***
SSStatus					41.18***
Religion	25.53*	15.72*	121.20***	49.16***	114.95***

Notes: The figures are Pearson Chi Square. Asterisks denote statistical significance, with one * meaning *weak*, ** moderate and *** strong)

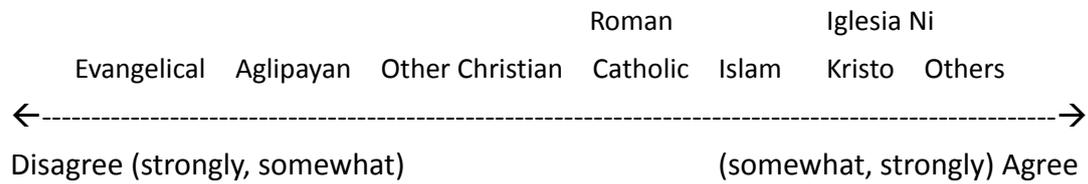
Figure 1 – Religion’s Attitudes towards Citizenship Norm

PART I : Equal right to civil liberties

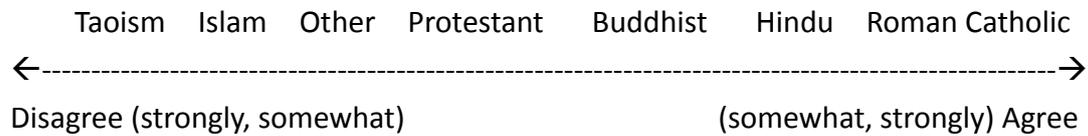
Thailand (Overall “No” vs. “Yes” = 5.3% : 94.7%)



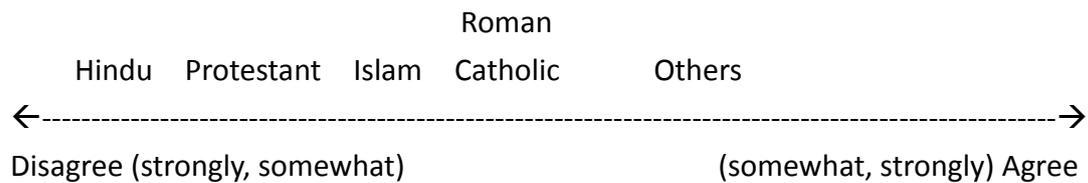
Philippines (Overall “No” vs. “Yes” = 28.8% : 71.2%)



Singapore (Overall “No” vs. “Yes” = 11.3% : 88.6%)

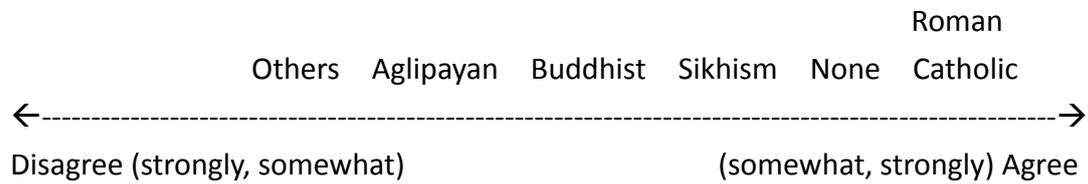


Indonesia (Overall “No” vs. “Yes” = 71.3% : 28.7%)

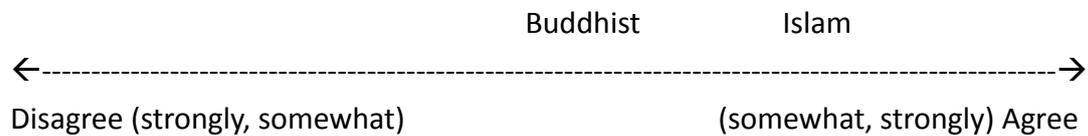


PART II : Duty to participate

Vietnam (Overall “No” vs. “Yes” = 4.8% : 95.2%)



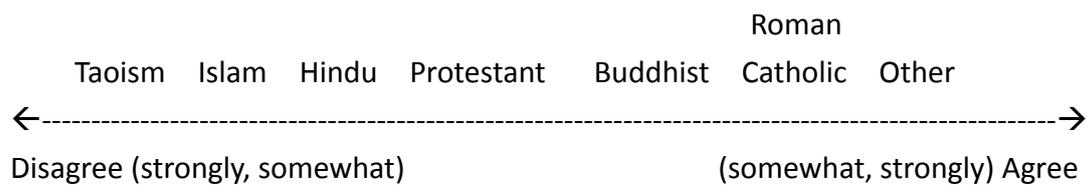
Thailand (Overall “No” vs. “Yes” = 6.0% : 94%)



Philippines (Overall “No” vs. “Yes” = 13.1% : 86.9%)



Singapore (Overall “No” vs. “Yes” = 10% : 90%)

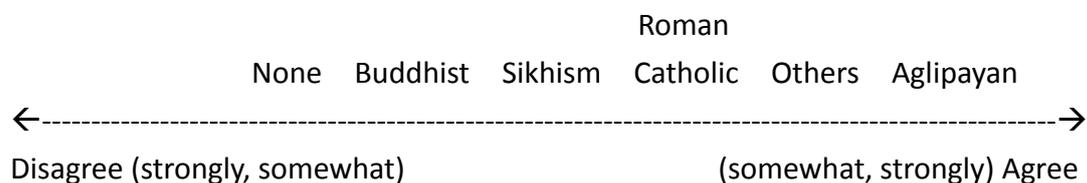


Indonesia (Overall “No” vs. “Yes” = 57.2% : 42.8%)

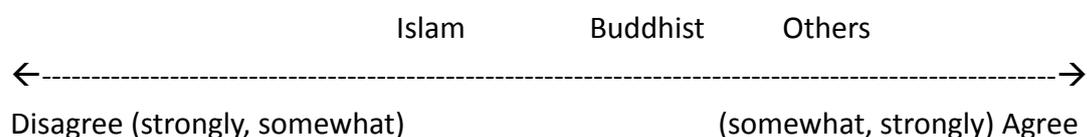


PART III : Sacrifice for the public interest

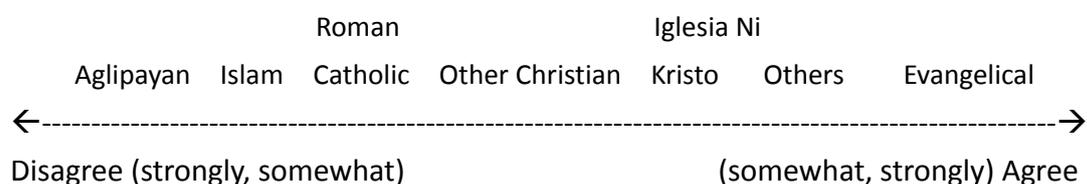
Vietnam (Overall “No” vs. “Yes” = 7.3% : 92.7%)



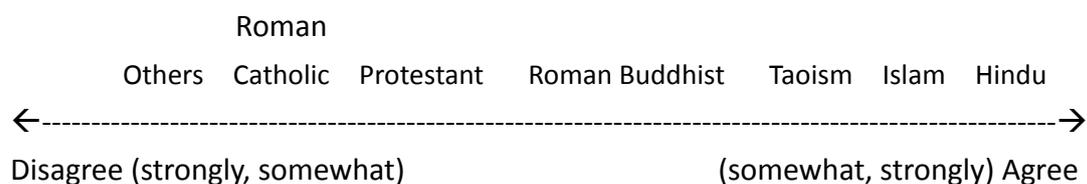
Thailand (Overall “No” vs. “Yes” = 19% : 81%)



Philippines (Overall “No” vs. “Yes” = 31.8% : 68.2%)



Singapore (Overall “No” vs. “Yes” = 25.5% : 74.5%)



Indonesia (Overall “No” vs. “Yes” = 25.5% : 74.5%)

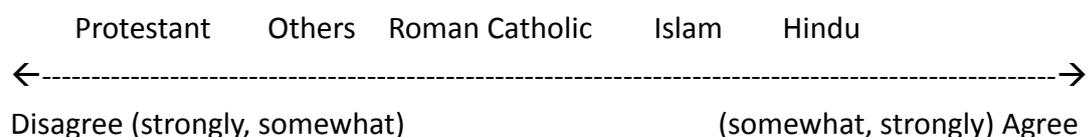


Table 3 -- Modes of Political Participation
Mean scores (standard deviation)

	Vietnam	Thailand	Philippines	Singapore	Indonesia
Social/Psych. Involvement	7.93 (2.47)	7.48 (2.14)	7.20 (2.35)	5.38 (2.53)	5.52 (2.58)
Electoral Participation	4.03 ³ (1.24)	4.11 (1.10)	3.85 (1.62)	0.80 ¹ (0.64)	4.21 (1.10)
Contact	3.70 (3.21)	3.79 (2.82)	2.02 (3.00)	0.99 ² (2.28)	2.97 (3.24)
Protest, Petition etc.	0.08 (0.49)	0.32 (1.08)	0.46 (1.14)	0.08 (0.59)	0.40 (0.88)
Overall Participation	7.99 (3.80)	8.24 (3.47)	6.33 (4.24)	1.81 (2.49)	7.64 (4.06)

Table 4 -- Predictors of Overall Political Participation

PART I: The role of the three kinds of norms

	Vietnam	Thailand	Philippines	Singapore	Indonesia
Liberal normsⁱ	.101**	-.022	.021	-.081*	.042
Republic normsⁱ	.054	.018	.024	.093**	.003
Altruist normⁱ	.122**	-.032	.056	.070	.113***
Age	.098**	.032	.084	-.003	.087**
Education	.086*	.083*	.157	.176***	.256***
Religious piety	-.004	-.071*	-.057	-.073*	-.147***
Efficacy	.170***	.102**	.154**	.143***	.176***
Dissatisfaction	.087*	.024	-.019	.047	.004
Can Change	.051	.054	.083	-.022	.044
R ²	0.085	.017	.051	.064	.161

PART II: The role of the norms of political participation

	Vietnam	Thailand	Philippines	Singapore	Indonesia
Participant Normⁱⁱ	.195***	-.005	.035	-.031	.051
Age	.096**	.032	.087	.006	.093**
Education	.084*	.082*	.162**	.175***	.266***
Religious piety	.005	-.071*	-.059	-.080*	-.151***
Efficacy	.159***	.104**	.150**	.118**	.174***
Dissatisfaction	.058	.031	-.024	.024	.001
Can Change	.056	.049	.095*	-.002	.059
R ²	.086	.018	.052	.047	.151

Notes:

i The clusters of norms, i.e. “liberal,” “Republican,” and “Altruist,” are derived by exploratory factor analyses. They are country-specific and do not necessarily conform to the established theories of citizenship.

ii The “Participant Norm” is a compound variable consisting of the liberal right to vote and the republican duty to participate.

* Asterisks denote the significance of the relationship, with * meaning weak, ** moderate and *** strong.

