Democratic Citizenship and Voices of Asia's Youth 研討會

【Panel II : Paper 4】

The Youth's Civic Engagement:

Social Capital, Psychological Involvement, and Partisanship

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Introduction

Democracy is not just a political system, it requires many supporting conditions to function and sustain. In political science, there has been massive literature on this topic since 1950s, and one of the most famous theories is Almond and Verba's "Civic Culture"(1963), which claims that a well-functioned democracy requires a corresponding political culture, by which people love their country, care about politics, trust the political system, delegate their power to professional politicians, but they are willing to participate in politics actively if they do not satisfied with politics. This theory was later on elaborated as a concept of democratic citizenship (Dalton, 1988), which comprises three key elements: participation, autonomy, and allegiance. Participation refers to citizen's concern about politics, and they want to make efforts to better their country. Autonomy represents citizen's cognitive capability to participate in politics as rational individuals with independent deliberation. Allegiance reflects citizen's affection and trust toward their compatriots and also the feeling of solidarity originated from their primordial identity.

The above discussion has delineated why psychological involvement in politics, sense of citizen empowerment (or political efficacy) and social trust are important to democratic citizenship. First of all, citizens need to have interest in political affairs and their psychological involvement in politics provides the incentive to acquire political information and shape political opinions. Next, citizens need to think that participation in politics is meaningful and accomplishable, and their sense of citizen empowerment justifies the importance of political participation and equips them with cognitive capability. At last, given the fact that the nature of politics is about how to organize collective actions, citizens need to develop certain level of trust among their fellow countrymen when they engage in political action without knowing each other.

The conventional wisdom in political science believes that youth tend to lack interest in civic engagement because of limited social experiences and different goals associated to the life cycle (Mindich, 2005). By definition, most of the youth are still in school or just start their career not too long. Many of them have not married nor organized their own family. Their financial obligation is relatively moderate and the scope of their concern is limited to short life experiences. While the youth might be more idealistic and have a great passion to change the society, their political knowledge and experience are much less than the older generations. Meanwhile, their

social skills in general are less mature, and thus, the youth's ability to develop social networks is not as strong as their adult counterparts. All these disadvantages make the youth less capable to engage in civic activities.

However, there are many cases in Asia where the youth did significantly contribute to the democratization process, such as student movements in Korea. Therefore, we should not expect that the conventional wisdom can explain all Asian cases, but rather we want to know whether most of the cases conform to a certain pattern, given the known contextual differences. Our analytical purpose is to present the distinguishing characteristics of Asian youth as opposed to older generations with regard to civic engagement and explain how these characteristics affect the prospect of democratic development in the future.

Specifically, we are going to answer the following questions in this chapter:

1. Do Asian youth conform to the generalization that young people tend to have lower level of psychological involvement and sense of citizen empowerment?

2. Are Asian youth less attached to political parties than other age groups? Does partisan attachment affect the youth's psychological involvement in politics and sense of citizen empowerment?

3. Do Asian youth harbor less social trust and posses less social capital (in terms of memberships and social network) than other age groups? Does social trust and social capital affect the youth's psychological involvement in politics and sense of citizen empowerment?

4. Do Asian youth perceive a less tolerant social environment for free political engagement? Are they more intimated by intolerance than older generations?

5. To what extent education, urban residence, Internet use and family income affect Asian youth's psychological involvement and sense of citizen empowerment?

6. What's the implication for satisfaction with and support for democracy and demand for political reform?

Asian Youth's Psychological Involvement and Citizen Empowerment

Conceptually, psychological involvement in politics and sense of citizen empowerment tap into citizen's political interest and political efficacy, respectively. Asian barometer designs three questions to measure each concept. For psychological involvement in politics, the three questions are "how interested would you say you are in politics?", "how often do you follow news about politics and government?", and "when you get together with your family members or friends, how often do you discuss political matters?" The first question is a self-evaluation of political interest. The second and third are factual questions, despite the fact the latter is more sensitive in many countries due to political and historical reasons. For sense of citizen

empowerment, the three questions are whether the respondent agrees "I think I have the ability to participate in politics", "sometimes politics and government seems so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what is going on", and "people like me don't have any influence over what the government does". The first two questions are self-evaluations about cognitive capability by wording in positive and negative phrases, respectively. The third is the so-called "external political efficacy", which asks whether the respondent think he/she can exert influence on the government if they participate in politics. All the answers to the above six questions are dichotomized into "very vs. not very", "often vs. not often", or "agree vs. disagree" categories. The average for the overall or country samples represents a probability measure for each question. Throughout this paper, we use "civic engagement" as an overarching term to denote citizen's interest and efficacy in political participation.

Figure 1　Psychological Involvement in Politics, Youth vs. Adult
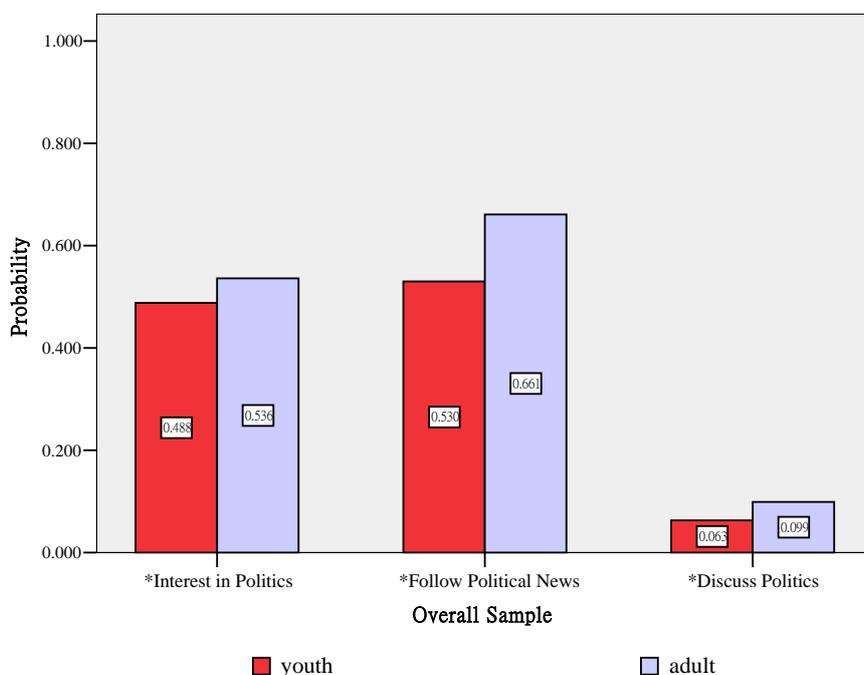
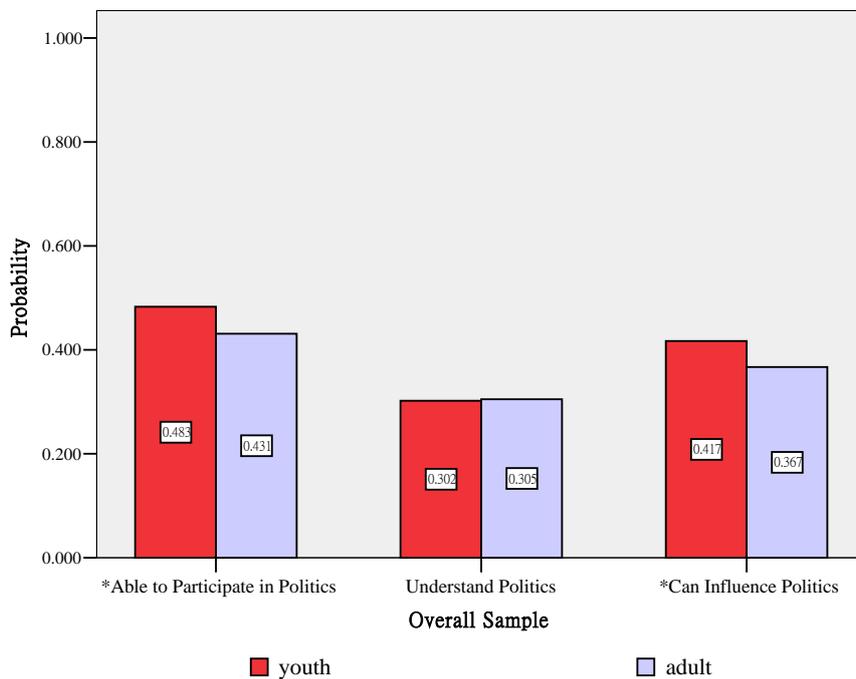*Statistical significant at p≦0.05
Data Source: Asian Barometer

As Figure 1 shows, 48.8% Asian youth said they are interest in politics, 53.0% often follows political news, and only 6.3% would discuss politics with family members or friends.[1] All the three numbers are significantly lower than adult, and the difference ranges from 3.6% (discuss politics) to 13.1% (follow political news). This

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[1] There is a tendency in Asia societies that people think politics is dirty and discussing politics is no good at all and would bring trouble anyway. So the probability measure ranges from 2.8% (Cambodia youth) to 16.2% (Vietnam youth), which is very low comparing to other two items.

result confirms the conventional wisdom that youth tend to have less psychological involvement in politics. If we change the definition of youth by "under 25 years old", the probability measures for "interest in politics" and "follow political news" would even significantly drop to 46.6% and 48.9%, respectively. Apparently, psychological involvement is inversely related to age, and this finding further strengthens the explanatory power of the conventional wisdom.

Figure 2 presents the findings about sense of citizen empowerment. As can be seen, 48.3% Asian youth think they are able to participate in politics, 30.2 think they can understand politics even though politics is so complicated, and 41.7% believe they can influence politics. For adult, the three probability measures are 43.1%, 30.5%, and 36.7% in order. Contrary to the conventional wisdom, Asian youth have stronger sense of citizen empowerment since their probability measures are even higher in the first and third questions, while the difference is not significant for the second one. If we redefine youth as "under 25 years old", none of the probability differences for different youth definition are significant. Obviously, political efficacy of Asian youth is higher than their adult counterparts.

Figure 2   Sense of Citizen Empowerment, Youth vs. Adult
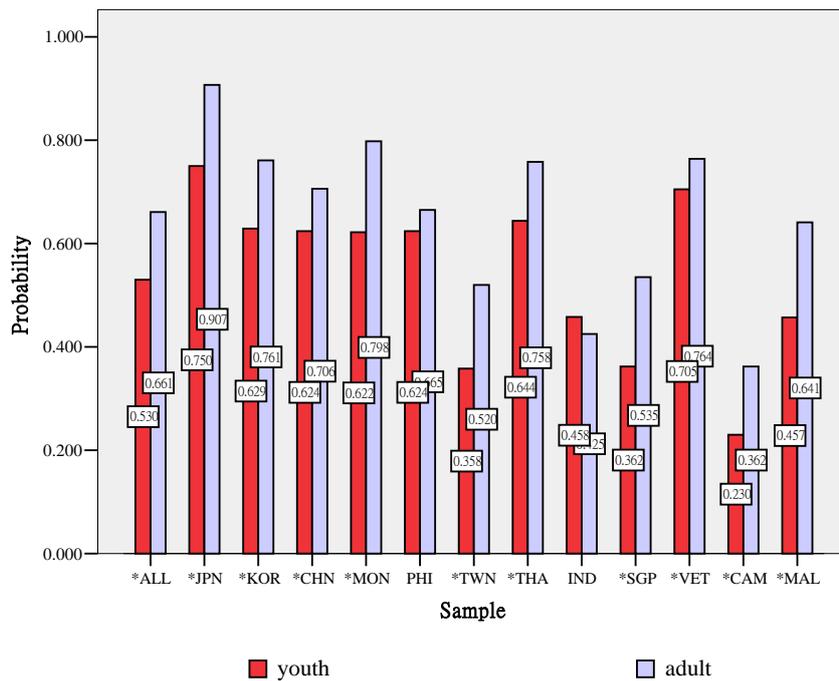

*Statistical significant at $p \leqq 0.05$
Data Source: Asian Barometer

It would be interesting to know whether these two findings are consistent in individual countries. Here we examine the item that has most significant statistics in each concept. For psychological involvement in politics, as Figure 3 shows, the

difference of probability measures are significant in 10 of the 12 countries, and all these statistics confirm the previous finding that Asian youth are less interested in politics than adult. The magnitude of the probability measure varies greatly, ranging from the highest 90.7% (Japan's adult) to the lowest 23.0% (Cambodia's youth). Surprisingly, the probability measures in Taiwan and Indonesia are quite low for both youth and adult. As a democracy, this finding signals unusual political alienation in both countries in which people do not pay much attention to political news.[2]

Figure 3   Follow Political News in Individual Countries, Youth vs. Adult
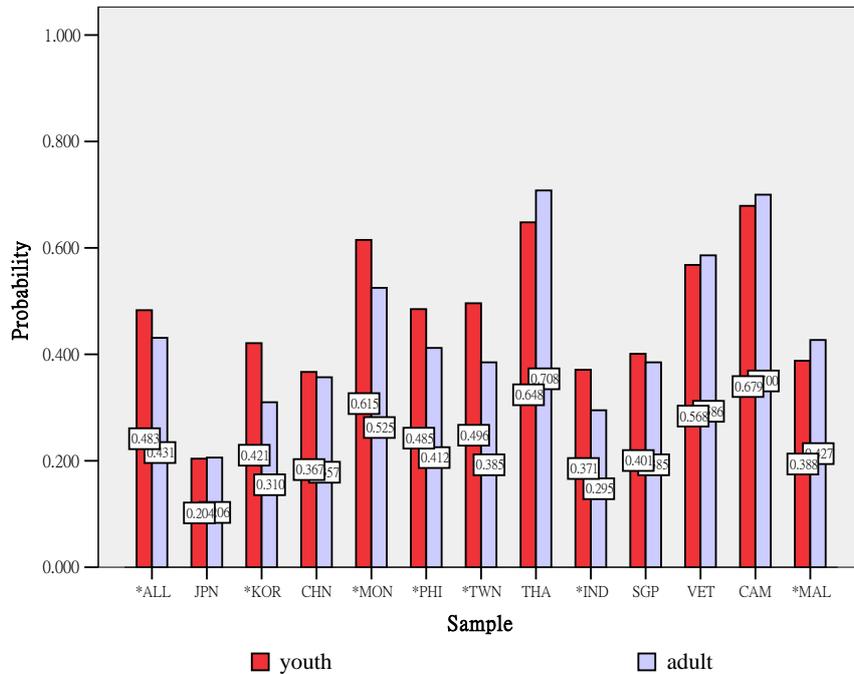

*Statistical significant at p≦0.05
Data Source: Asian Barometer

For sense of citizen empowerment, Figure 4 presents the probability measure of the individual countries in terms of the youth and the adult groups. Among 12 countries, 5 countries has the same result as the overall sample that Asian youth think themselves cognitively more capable than the adult. Only in Malaysia we have the opposite finding, and the difference between youth and adult for the rest six countries is not significant. The variation across different countries is remarkable, ranging from about 20% in Japan for both youth and adult to about 70% for adult in Thailand and Cambodia. In general, Asian youth are more idealistic than adult, and therefore, they have stronger sense citizen empowerment. However, this characteristic does not

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[2] A plausible reason for the Taiwan case is that people tend not to trust the media, and therefore, they are tired of following political news that are harbored with specific partisan prejudice. In Asian Barometer, Taiwan has the lowest measure in terms of trusting newspaper (2.11 in a one-to-four scale) and television (2.2 in a one-to-four scale).

accompany with more interest in politics. The two conclusions seem contradictory to each other, but they do reflect two different sides of the fact that young people tend to have a passion but lack experience, and older generations tend to be worldly because of their ample experiences.

Figure 4   Able to Participate in Politics in Individual Countries, Youth vs. Adult

*Statistical significant at p≦0.05
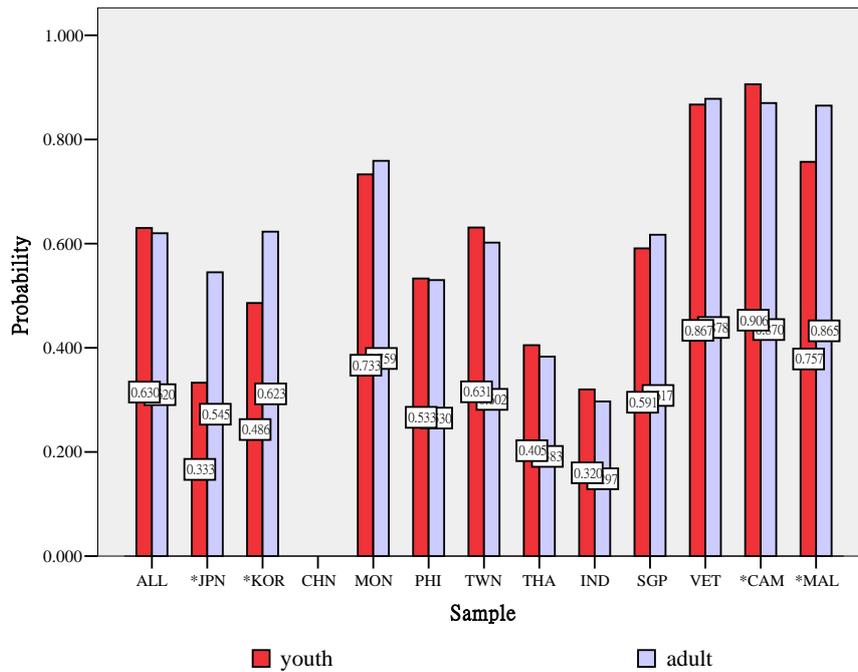Data Source: Asian Barometer

Party Attachment and Civic Engagement

In western democracy, partisan politics plays an important role in elections as well as in parliament. The mainstream political science theory claims that partisan attachment is a result of the long-term socialization process and its existence is an indispensible part for a successful democracy (Diamond and Gunther, 2001). On one hand, partisan attachment increases citizen's interest in politics because they support specific parties and their platforms. On the other hand, partisan attachment increases citizen's political efficacy because their support will turn into votes and decide the change of government. For the above reasons, we expect a higher level of civic engagement for those who have stronger partisan attachment.

In Asian Barometer, we apply two questions to measure partisan attachment. The first is "among the political parties listed here, which party if any do you feel closest to?" If the respondent can name any party, we coded the answer as "have party attachment". If the responder chooses the answer such as "cannot choose", "do not know", "no answer", or "do not feel close to any political party", then we code it as

"do not have partisan attachment. The second question is "how close do you feel to the party" (your previous answer to partisan attachment). We dichotomize the answer into two categories, "very close/somewhat close" vs. "just a little close/do not choose any party", and measure the intensity of partisan attachment as strong (former) or weak (latter).

Figure 5　Party Attachment, Youth vs. Adult

*Statistical significant at p ≦ 0.05
Data Source: Asian Barometer

As Figure 5 makes evidence, the probability measures of party attachment for Asian youth and adult are 63.0% and 62.0%, and the difference is statistically insignificant. This result also appears in most of the Asian countries, expect for Japan, Korea, Malaysia, and Cambodia, where youth has a lower measure in the former three cases but the latter shows a higher measure for the youth. If we apply a more rigid criterion that consider partisan attachment in terms of intensity, such as strong vs. weak, then a clear distinction emerges between youth and adult. As Figure 6 shows, Asian youth generally have a weaker partisan attachment than adult, and the probability measures are 35.2% and 37.8%, respectively. When we look into individual countries, among 11 available cases, 7 cases show a significant difference between youth and adult, and all these results conform to the general result that the adult tend to have stronger party attachment than the youth.

**Figure 6   Strong Party Attachment, Youth vs. Adult**
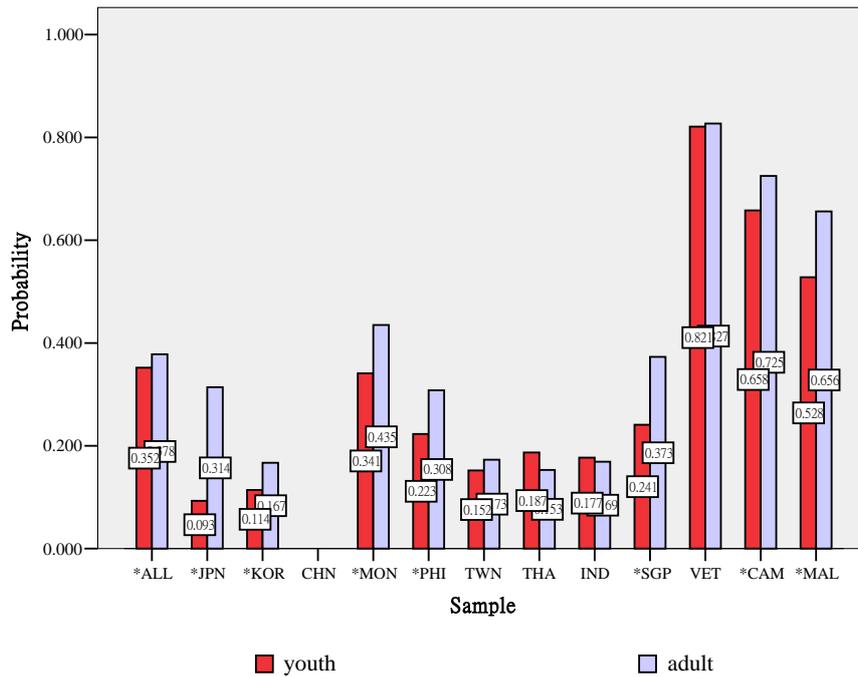
*Statistical significant at p≦0.05
Data Source: Asian Barometer

We further use the two measures of partisan attachment and apply to explain civic engagement as shown in Figure 7. Among Asian youth, those who have partisan attachment have greater chance to be interested in politics (54.1% vs. 40.9%), to follow political news (53.8% vs. 49.1%), to discuss politics with family members or friends (7.5% vs. 3.7%), and to think they are able to participate in politics (54.2% vs. 41.4%). The insignificant result appears in the question whether the respondent thinks he/she can understand politics (30.8% vs. 30.2%) and influence politics (39.1% vs. 38.3%), but the overall finding is still consistent with our theoretical expectation.

We can derive the same conclusion by using the intensity measure of partisan attachment to explain civic engagement. As Figure 8 shows, among Asian youth who have strong partisan attachment, 61.3% is interested in politics (vs. 42.2% for adult), 56.1% often follow political news (vs. 50.1% for adult), 9.8% would discuss politics with family members or friends (vs. 4.0% for adult), 56.6% think they are able to participate in politics (vs. 45.3% for adult), and 43.6% think they can influence politics (vs. 40.2%). All the above findings show that partisan attachment does positively affect the youth's psychological involvement and sense of citizen empowerment, although the difference is not significant for youth and adult in terms of discussing politics.
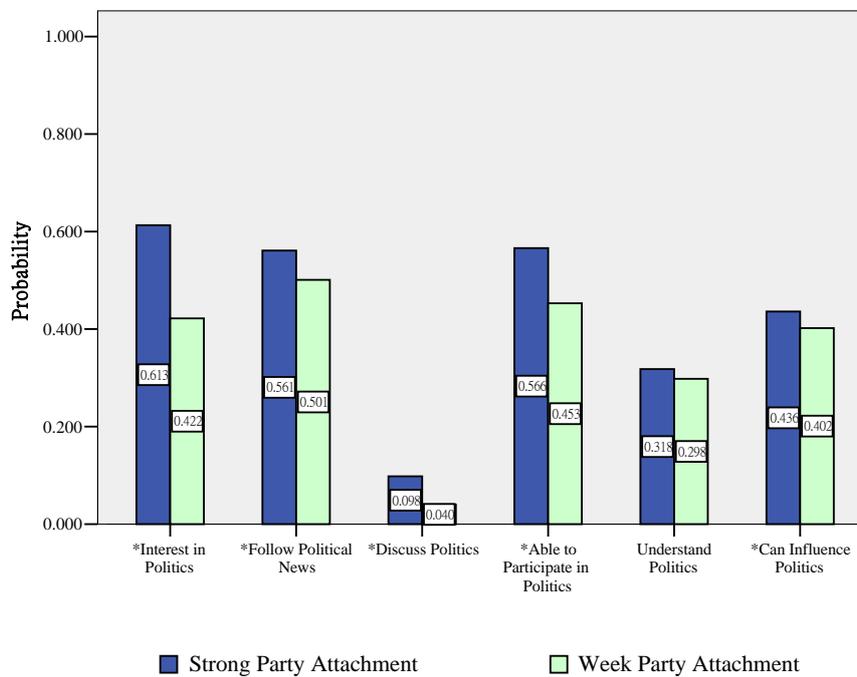
Figure 7   Asian Youth's Civic Engagement by Partisan Attachment
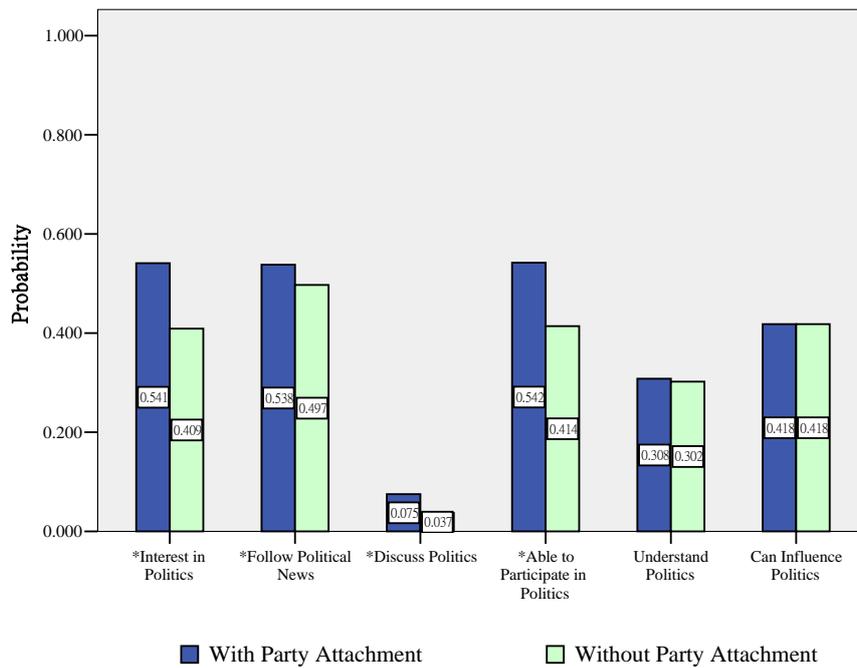
*Statistical significant at p≦0.05
Data Source: Asian Barometer

Figure 8   Asian Youth's Civic Engagement by Intensity of Partisan Attachment

*Statistical significant at p≦0.05
Data Source: Asian Barometer

Social Capital and Civic Engagement

In sociology and political science, social capital is a concept that explains why

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people can overcome their parochial, selfish, and shortsighted thinking and meanwhile dedicate to establish a long-term and reliable relationship that supports mutual help in the community. The essence of social capital comprises three key elements: social trust, membership, and social network, which work together to transcend myopia and selfishness and encourage cooperation to achieve the common goal. The conventional wisdom believes that youth tend to have less social capital due to their inexperience in social activities as well as their youth status in the life cycle (Putnam, 2000). In addition, the conventional wisdom also believes that social capital can promote civic engagement in a democracy (Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti, 1993). If a society has a high level of social capital, the cost of civic engagement becomes trivial and citizens are willing to contribute to the common good. Otherwise, citizens might consider their personal interest most and refuse to collaborate with each other.

In Asian Barometer, there are two questions for measuring social trust, three for membership, and one for social network. The two questions for social trust are "generally speaking, would you say that 'most people can be trusted' or 'that you must be very careful in dealing with people'" and "do you think most people would try to take advantage of you if they got a chance, or would they try to be fair?". Both questions have dichotomous answer sets. If people do have social trust, they should choose "most people can be trusted" and "most people try to be fair".

For the membership question, Asian Barometer asked the respondent to identify the three most important organizations or formal groups he/she belongs. If any organization or formal group is named in at least one of the three questions, the respondent will be coded as having membership. For the social network question, the question is "if you have a difficult problem to manage, are there people outside your household you can ask for help?" We dichotomize the answer set into "a lot/some" and "a few/none" categories. The former indicates greater social network and the latter suggests otherwise.

As Figure 9 indicates, only 23.8% Asian youth think that most people can be trusted, lower than Adult's 31.5%. Across 12 Asian countries, this result remains valid except for Taiwan where youth have more social trust than adult. However, most Asian countries have very low measures, ranging from 7.1% for Filipino youth to 54.4% for Chinese adult. Notice that the two communist countries, China and Vietnam, have top-two probability measures of social trust. If we apply another question to measure, we can still derive the same result. As Figure 10 presents, 51.6% Asian youth think that most people try to be fair, and Asian adult have a higher measure up to 58.1%, despite the fact that this finding is significant only in three individual countries, Mongolia, Indonesia, and Cambodia. Overall, both measures tell us that Asian youth do have less social trust than their adult counterparts.
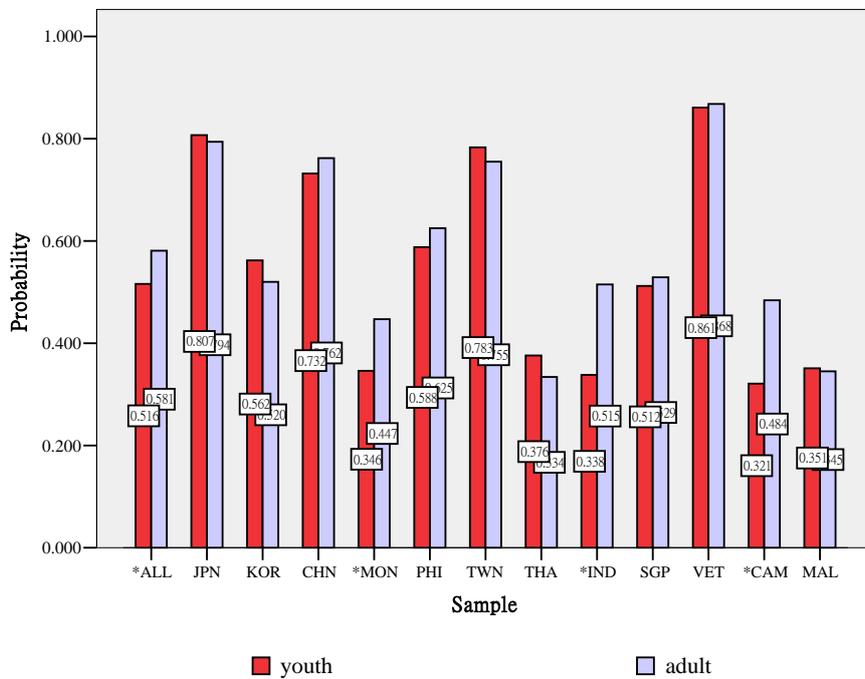
Figure 9   Most People Can be Trusted, Asian Youth vs. Adult
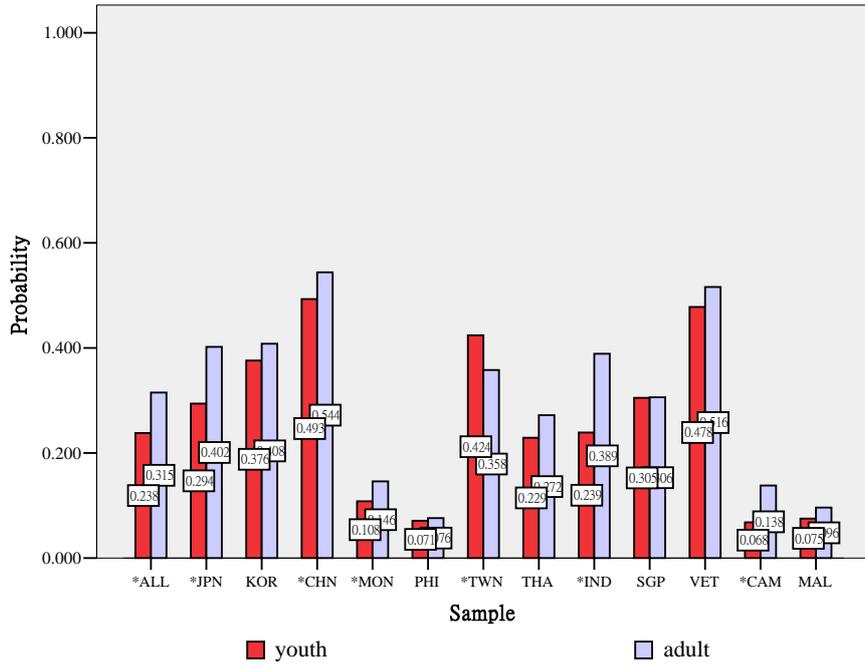
Figure 10   Most People Try to Be Fair, Asian Youth vs. Adult

In terms of membership, we can derive a consistent result for the overall and well

as individual countries from Figure 11 that Asian youth have less social capital than adult. As can be seen, 32.9% Asian youth have membership while the number climbs to 48.2% for Asian adult. In 9 of 11 available cases, youth's probability measures are all lower than adult's measure with a very significant margin, expect for Indonesia and Singapore where the figures are about the same for youth and adult. This finding is the most salient one among the four questions regarding social capital, and it also matches with the prediction based on the conventional wisdom.

Figure 11 Have Membership, Youth vs. Adult
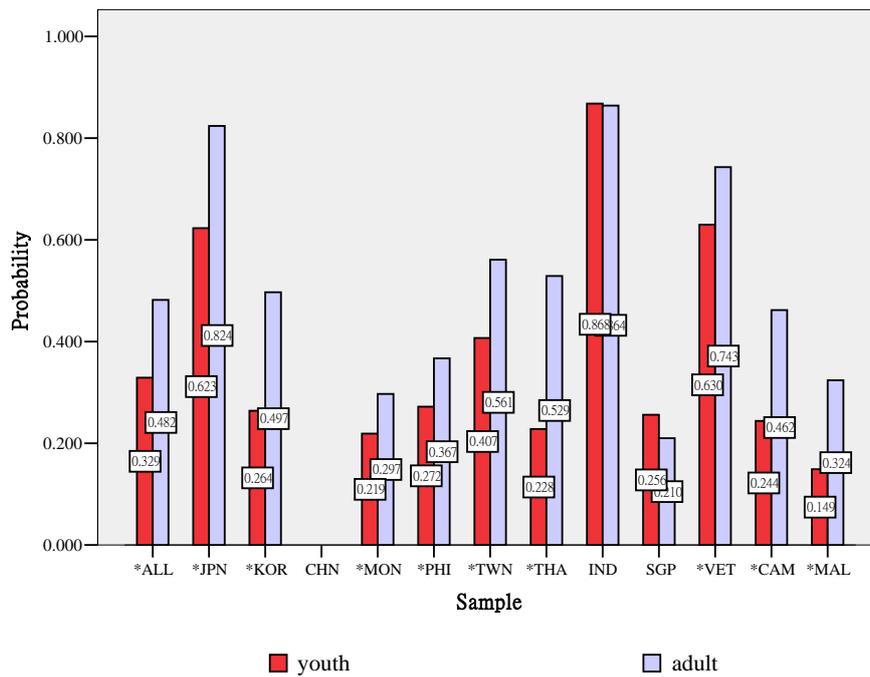
*Statistical significant at $p \leq 0.05$
Data Source: Asian Barometer

Social network is the last element associated with social capital. As Figure 12 shows, Asian youth have a greater measure of social network than adult, 44.1% vs. 41.7%. But this result only appears in another two countries, Korea and Taiwan. For the rest cases, the difference is not significant despite the fact that youth tend to have a greater point estimate than adult. This finding runs counter to the conventional wisdom that youth tend to have less social capital. In fact, this result can be easily explained with the rise of internet and the fast breakthrough in telecommunication technology. Comparing to the traditional networking, youth people have more effective ways to build up their social network, particularly in the cyberspace. If we limit the definition of social network by face to face contact, then we will seriously underestimate what computer and telecommunication technology can do to building up social relationships. In this regard, youth people have far greater advantage than

the older generations since they can spend more time on the computer and they have less difficulty in mastering application software.

**Figure 12   Greater Social Network, Youth vs. Adult**
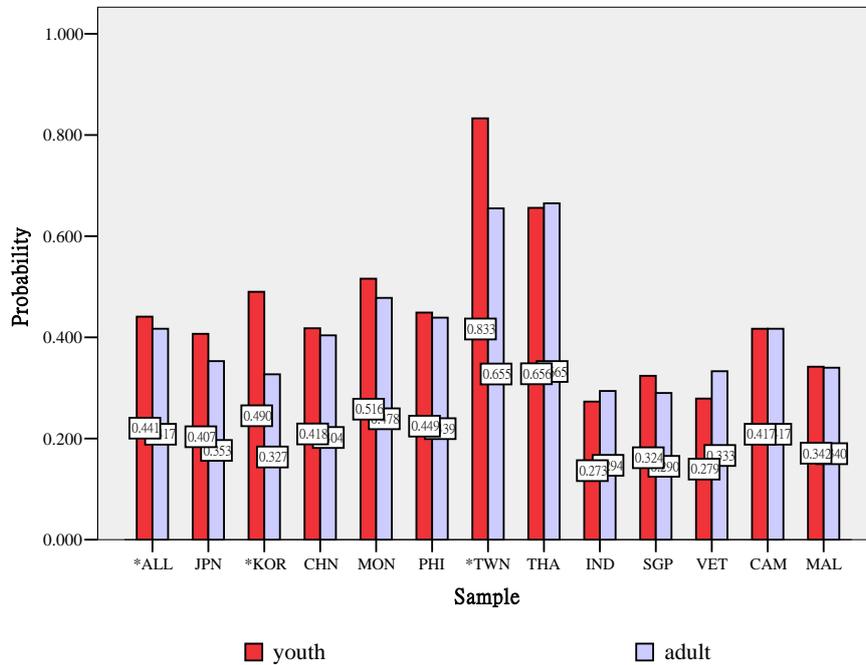
*Statistical significant at p≦0.05
Data Source: Asian Barometer

To know whether social capital would affect civic engagement, Figure 13 to 16 reports the probability measure of civic engagement conditioned by the above four questions related to social trust, membership, and social network. As Figure 13 and 14 show, generally we can conclude that Asian youth who has more social trust tend to a higher probability measure in psychological involvement in politics, but the finding about sense of citizen empowerment is weak and inconclusive. For psychological involvement in politics, we can find that those who answer "most people can be trusted" or "most people try to be fair" have a higher probability measure in following political news and discussing politics. For sense of citizen empowerment, however, the two significant findings show contradictory to each other and the majority result is non-significant. Therefore, we conclude that social trust can explain psychological involvement in politics, but not sense of citizen empowerment.

In terms of membership, as Figure 15 presents, all six findings have a higher probability measure for those who have membership, despite insignificant findings of understanding politics and influencing politics. The positive relationship between membership and psychological involvement in politics is very salient, while it is weaker for membership and sense of citizen empowerment.
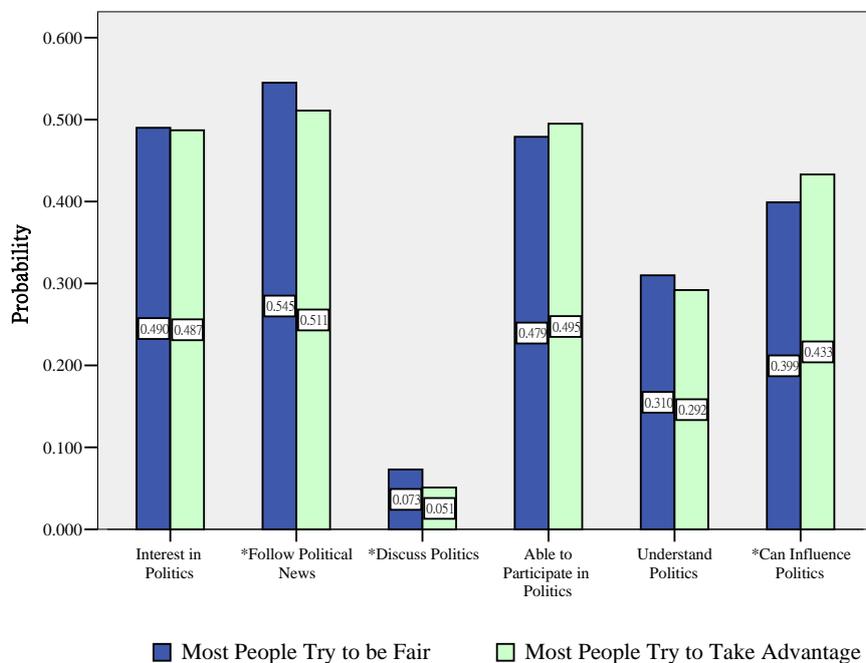
Figure 13   Civic Engagement by Social Trust (Most People Can be Trusted)
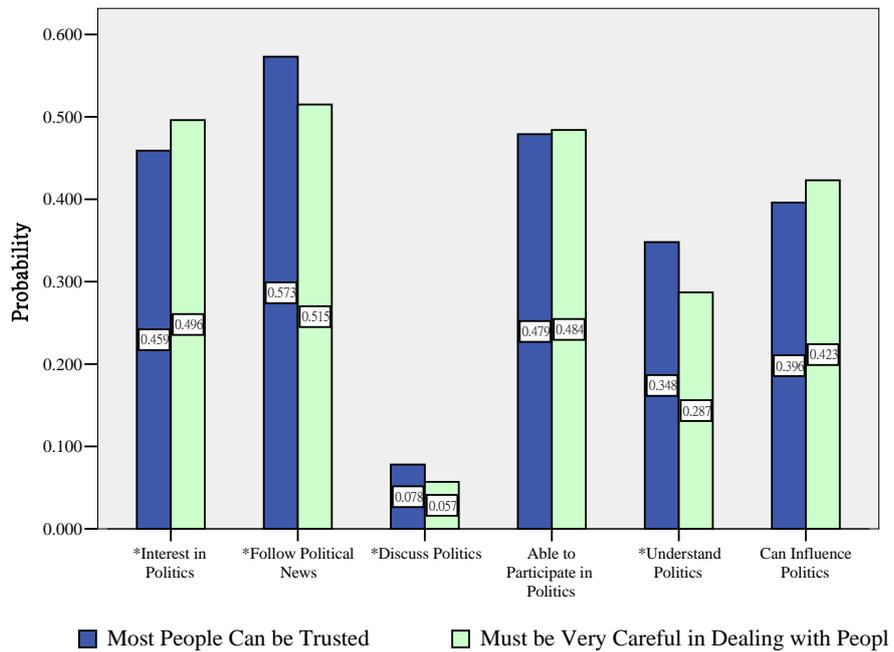
*Statistical significant at p≦0.05
Data Source: Asian Barometer

**Figure 14   Civic Engagement by Social Trust (Most People Try to be Fair)**

*Statistical significant at p≦0.05
Data Source: Asian Barometer

As to social network, we can derive the same finding from Figure 16, but the

result is strong for sense of citizen empowerment. For the three items of psychological involvement, only following political news has a significant higher measurement for those who have more social network, while the other two items are not significant. On the other hand, we find those who have more social network tend to think they are able to participate in politics and can influence politics. This shows that social network is positively related to sense of citizen empowerment.

Figure 15 Civic Engagement by Membership
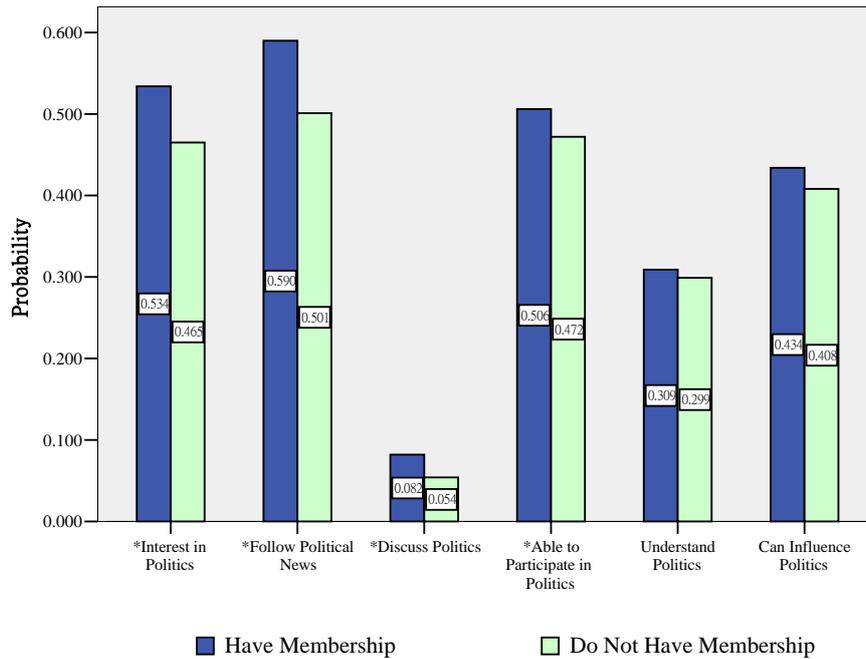
*Statistical significant at p≦0.05
Data Source: Asian Barometer

What is the big picture behind the above findings? To put it succinctly, social capital in terms of trust and membership is more consistent to explain psychological involvement, while social network better explains sense of citizen empowerment network. For trust and membership, the essence of both concepts is how I feel or position myself in the society and it is more about perception of belonging. It is more related to psychological involvement in politics because the sense of belonging represents an identity to the society, and if people have stronger perception about such a collective identity, they are more willing to participate in civic activities. On the other hand, the idea of social network is how much social resource I am capable to mobilize when I have problems. It is more about whether I can effectively influence others to help me but not just about what I want. Therefore, social network explains sense of citizen empowerment better rather than psychological involvement because the nature of the concept is about political efficacy rather than interest in politics.

Figure 16　Civic Engagement by Social Network
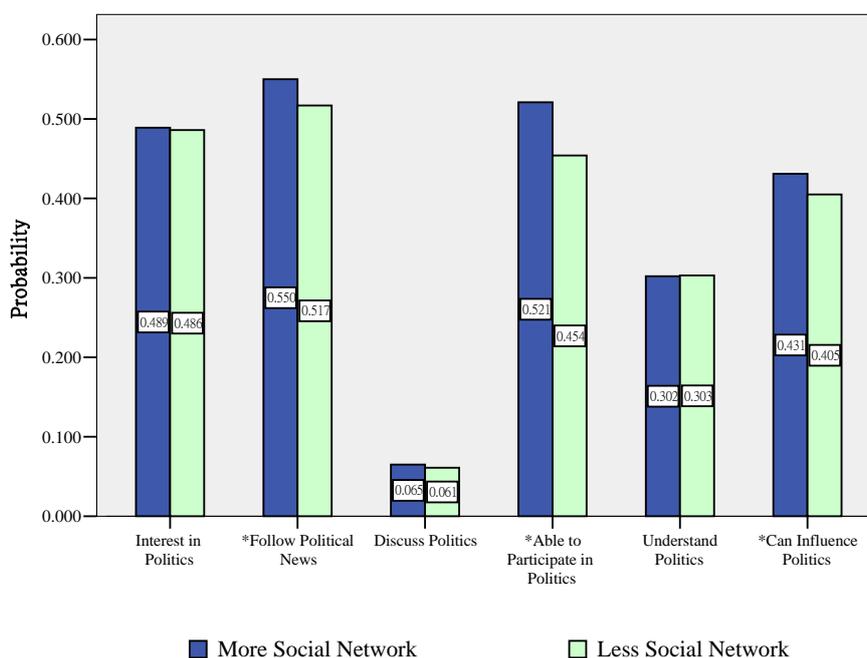
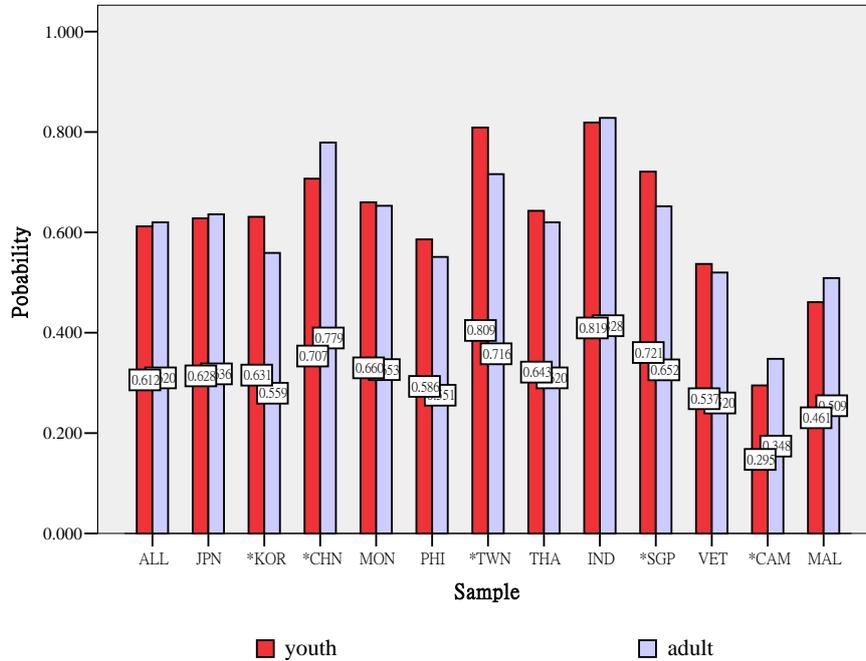
*Statistical significant at p≦0.05
Data Source: Asian Barometer

It is interesting to know whether Asian youth perceive a less or a more tolerant social environment for political engagement because a more tolerant social environment is more likely to encourage civic engagement. The result could be both ways. On one hand, the youth people might be opener to new things and have less concern about how others think. It is plausible that they perceive the society as a more tolerant environment. On the other hand, the adult people are socially educated much longer than the youth, and they might feel that they need to be socially corrected to respond such a question, or that they are more considerate in their response given their social experiences.

In Asian Barometer, we apply the question "if you had friends or co-workers whose opinions on politics differed from yours, would you have a hard time conversing with them?" to measure the concept of tolerance. We recode the answer as "more tolerant" if the respondent answers "not too hard" or "not hard at all"; otherwise, it is coded as "less tolerant". As Figure 17 presents, generally Asian youth do not differ from adult in the tolerance measure; 61.2% youth perceive a more tolerant environment and 62.0% adult have the same perception. For individual countries, the results are not consistent and the majority of the cases are insignificant. However, except in Cambodia where the tolerance measure is lower than 35% for youth and adult, in most cases people do generally perceive a tolerant social

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environment (above 50%) and this result signals a positive condition to the cultivation of social capital as well as civic engagement.

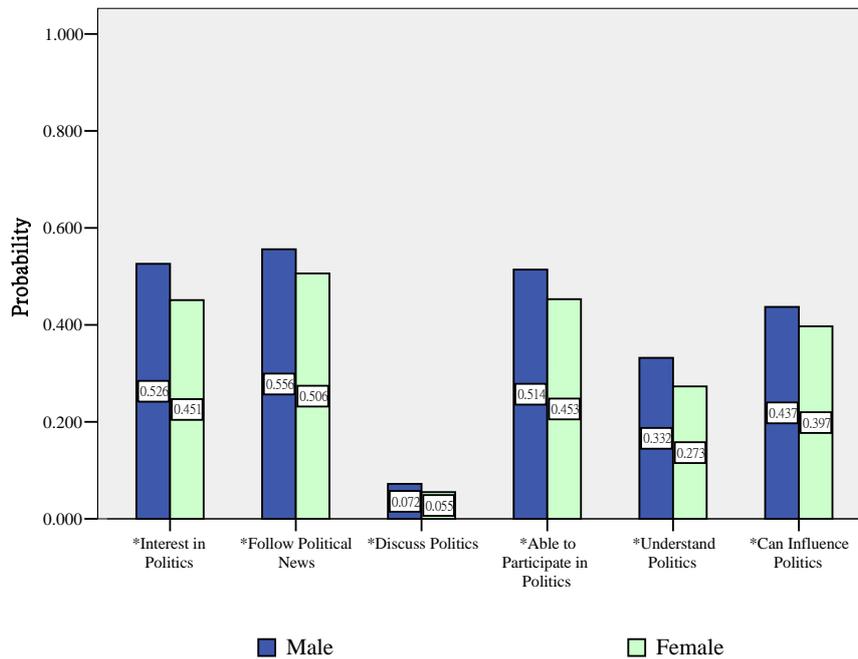**Figure 17   Social Tolerance in Asia, Youth vs. Adult**

*Statistical significant at p≦0.05
Data Source: Asian Barometer

Explaining Asian Youth's Civic Engagement

Youth's civic engagement is important for political development in the long-term perspective. As time goes by, the youth will become the main body of elites that run the government and decide the political direction. If the youth are willing to participate in politics and cultivate sense of citizen empowerment, such an early political socialization can help rejuvenate political leadership and prevent power vacuum in case of sudden political crisis. Thus, it is important to know what factors can explain the different level of youth's civic engagement. In this section, we examine five different predictors: gender, education, urban residence, family's economic status, and internet usage.

As Figure 18 shows, among Asian youth, 52.6% males are interested in politics, 55.6% males often follow political news, 7.2% males often discuss politics with family member and friends, 51.4% males think they are able to participate in politics, 33.2% males think they can understand politics, and 43.7% males think they can influence politics. In all of these six questions, males have significantly higher measures than females. Apparently, the civic engagement of male Asian youth is more active than female Asian youth.

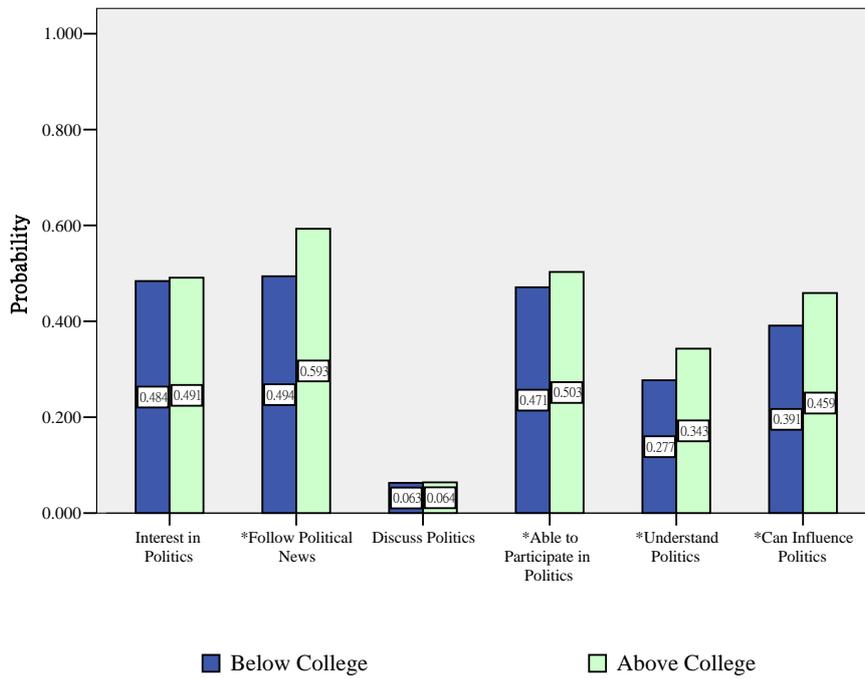**Figure 18   Asian Youth's Civic Engagement by Gender**

In terms of education, we dichotomize the original scale into a binary variable "below college" and "college or above". Among Asian youth whose education is "college or above", we found that generally they all have a higher level of civic engagement than those whose education is "below college". Specifically, this finding is more salient in sense of citizen empowerment, in which all the three questions shows significant results. For instance, 50.3% more educated youth (college or above) think they are able to participate in politics, while 47.1% less educated youth think so. The probability measures of understanding politics are 34.3% for more educated youth and 27.7% for less educated youth. In terms of influencing politics, 45.9% more educated people youth said they are capable and 39.1% less educated said so. The finding is psychological involvement is much weaker, the only significant difference appears in the question of following political news, in which 59.3% more educated respond they often follow politics but the number drops to 49.4% for those are less educated. Overall, education is a powerful factor related to civic engagement. The higher the education, the more active the civic engagement.

Urban residence is another factor in previous literature that might associate with civic engagement. The conventional wisdom believes that urban residents tend to have higher civic engagement because the modernized living environment would provide more access to civic activities, and the mechanism of political socialization is
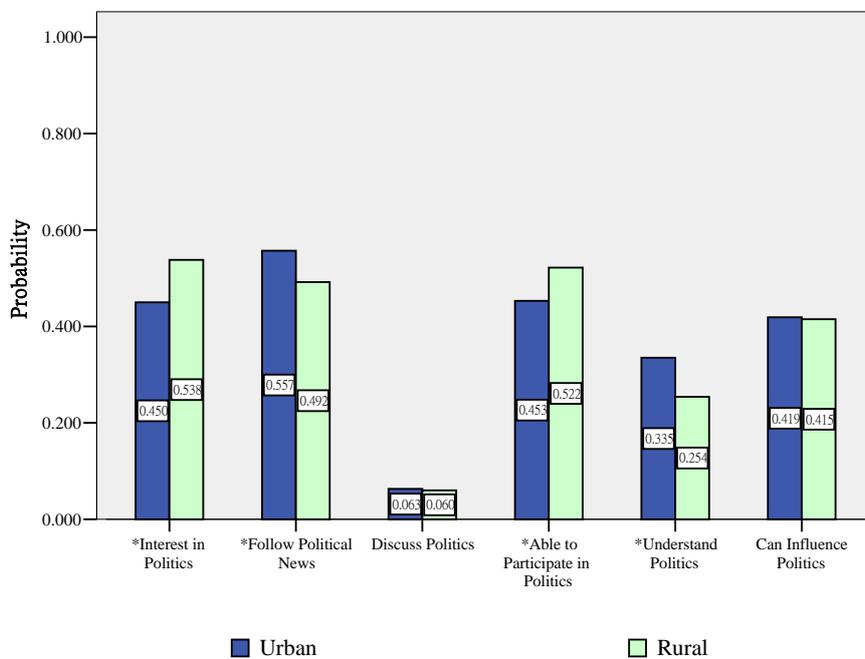
Figure 19   Asian Youth's Civic Engagement by Education

*Statistical significant at p≦0.05
Data Source: Asian Barometer

Figure 20   Asian Youth's Civic Engagement by Urban Residence

*Statistical significant at p≦0.05
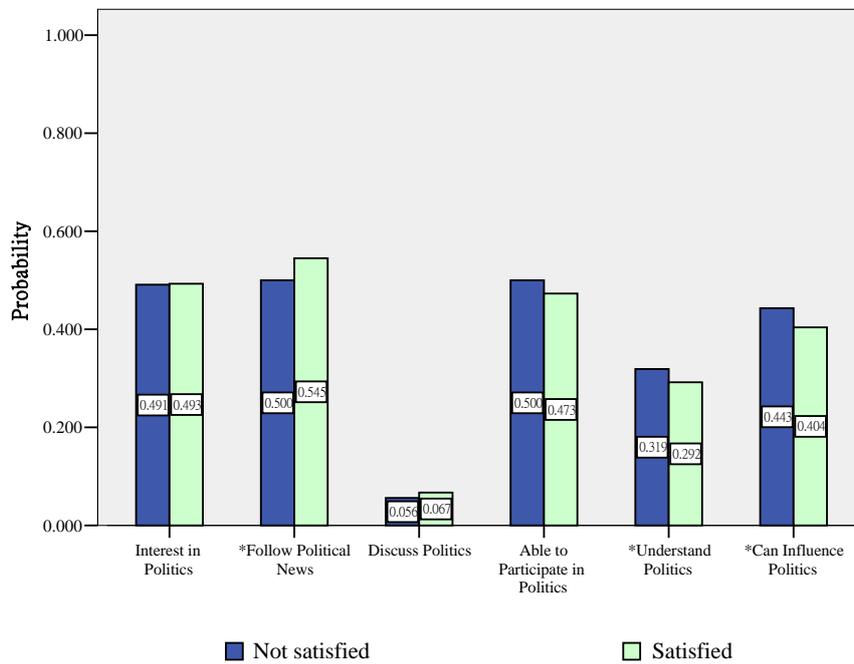Data Source: Asian Barometer

much stronger and leaning toward more concern about politics (Milbrath, 1965). However, as Figure 20 shows, the results are mixed and urban residents are not necessarily prone to have more psychological involvement in politics, nor prone to have more sense of citizen empowerment. How can we explain such mixed findings? Examining the results more closely, we found that urban residents tend to have less interest in politics (45.0% vs. 53.8%) and tend not to think they are able to participate in politics (45.3% vs. 52.2%). Paradoxically, they follow political news more often than rural residents (55.7% vs. 49.2%) and more of them think they can understand politics (33.5% vs. 25.4%). In other words, among Asian youth, when urban residents are asked self-expressive questions (interest in politics and able to participate in politics), they seem more reluctant to say they concern politics subjectively. Nonetheless, when factual questions are asked, the responses of urban residents bounce back to the normal level since these questions reflect objective facts and have less political denotation.

If this interpretation is correct, the avoidance of self-expression in political interest and efficacy for urban residents among Asian youth reveals that politics is regarded as something negative in urban areas. Thus, people do not want to be thought that they are associated with politics, especially from their own expression, while they do follow politics and understand politics. The latter findings are more close to our theoretical expectation, but the former two findings are confounded with other factors, and hence, drive the results inconsistent.

Past studies of democracy suggest that people are more likely to be politically mobilized when the country runs into trouble or difficulty (Huntington, 1968). The conventional wisdom also believes that people tend to more cognitively mobilized when they are dissatisfied with economy or politics. In Asian Barometer, we apply the question "does the total income of your household allow you to satisfactorily cover your needs?" to capture whether people are satisfied or not with their family's economic status. If the answer is "cover the need well" or "cover the need alright", we recode it as satisfied; otherwise, it is coded as not satisfied. As Figure 21 presents, in terms of psychological involvement in politics, Asian youth who are satisfied with their family's economic status are more likely to follow political news than those who are dissatisfied (54.5% vs. 50.0%). Together with the other two non-significant results in "interested in politics" and "discuss politics", apparently family's economic status is not inverse related to psychological involvement in politics. However, we do find some supporting evidence in terms of sense of citizen empowerment. For instance, Asian youth who are dissatisfied with family's economic status are more likely to think that they understand politics (31.9% vs. 29.2%) and that they can influence politics (44.3% vs. 40.4%). Overall, family's economic status can explain civic

engagement, but only in terms of citizen empowerment.

Figure 21   Asian Youth's Civic Engagement by Family's Economic Status
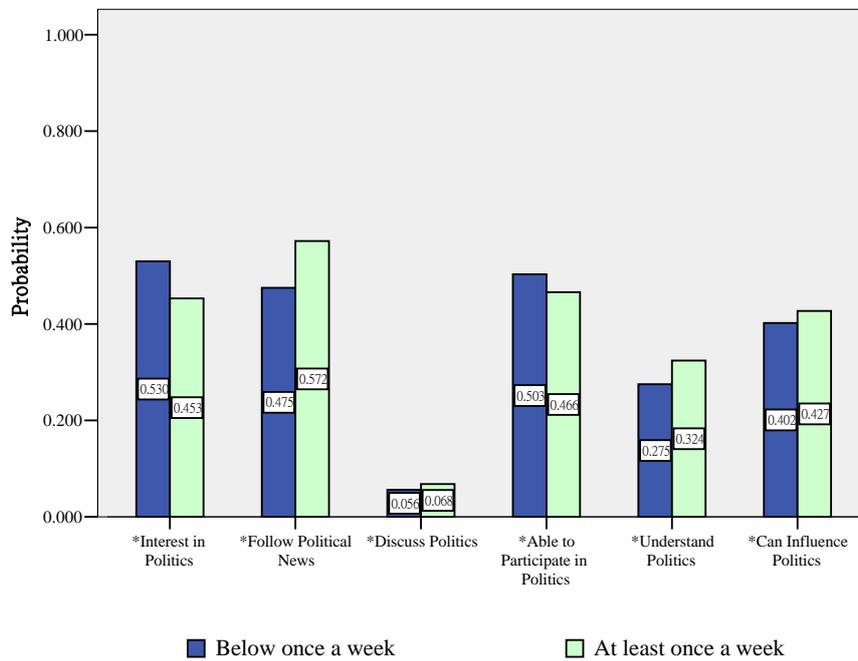

*Statistical significant at p≦0.05
Data Source: Asian Barometer

The rise of internet rapidly changes the way how people connect to each other. Its rise started in late 1980s and nowadays has replaced many traditional way of communication. Especially for the youth people, they grew up in the internet era and now they become the main users. As a powerful tool of information transmission, dissemination, and gathering, internet allows its user to acquire massive information with nearly no entry barrier. Therefore, we expect to see internet usage positively related to civic engagement since more usage represents getting more political information that can increase people's interest and efficacy in politics (Loader, 2007).

As Figure 22 shows, all the six items have significant findings, despite the fact that the magnitude of the probability difference in some cases is very limited. More importantly, these findings display the same evidence as we found in urban residence. For the two questions that ask for self-expression of political interest and efficacy, Asian youth who have more internet usage have less interest in politics (45.3% vs. 53.0%) and tend not to think they are able to participate in politics (46.6% vs. 50.3%). However, for other factual and evaluate questions, internet usage is positively related to psychological involvement in politics as well as sense of citizen empowerment. This result suggests that internet usage does positively associate with civic engagement generally, but such a result might not hold when we adopt the

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measurement that involves with self-expressive questions.

Figure 22   Asian Youth's Civic Engagement by Internet Usage

*Statistical significant at $p \leqq 0.05$
Data Source: Asian Barometer

Table 1   The Factor Related to Civic Engagement among Asian Youth

Psychological Involvement in Politics	Sense of Citizen Empowerment
Male	Male
More Educated (less significant)	More Educated (more significant)
Urban (not for the self-expressive item)	Urban (not for the self-expressive item)
More Satisfied (less significant)	Less Satisfied (more significant)
More Internet Usage (not for the self-expressive item)	More Internet Usage (not for the self-expressive item)

Note: All the findings summarized from the results presented in Figure 18-22.

We can summarize all the findings of the five variables we examine in this section in Table 1. For both psychological involvement in politics and sense of citizen empowerment, they are associated with Asian youth who is male, more educated, living in urban areas, and has more internet usage. For family's economic status, psychological involvement in politics is positively associated but sense of citizen empowerment is negative associated. There is one caveat for the above summary. When self-expressive questions are applied, the conclusion does not stand with regard

to urban residence and internet usage.

Implication for Satisfaction with and Support for Democratic and Demand for Political Change

Most of the Asian countries are experiencing rapid changes in their economic, political, and social development. While many of them are not democracy yet, it is no doubt we can foresee significant change in the political aspect. Our earlier discussion has shown that youth civic engagement is important for the prospect of Asian democracy, because the youth today will become the elite in the next decades or so. It is very revealing if we can understand what implication youth's civic engagement brings to satisfaction with and support for democracy, as well as demand for political change.

In the following analysis, we organize the findings by six questions of civic engagement. For each question, we simultaneously present the findings of three political variables. In terms of measurement, we dichotomize the answers and recode them into a positive or negative variable according to variable labels. We apply to the following question to measure three political variables:

1. Satisfaction with Democracy: "On the whole, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way democracy works in your country" (satisfied vs. not satisfied)
2. Support for Democracy (Perferability): if the respondent answers "Democracy is always preferable to any other kind of government", we recode the answer as preferable (support) for democracy; otherwise, the answer is recoded as not preferable (not support).
3. Demand for Political Change: "Compared with other systems in the world, would you say our system of government works fine as it is, needs minor change, needs major change, or should be replaced?" (major change/replaced vs. works fine/minor change).

As Figure 23 presents, Asian youth who express more interest in politics tend to be more satisfied with and support for democracy, but do not differ from those who express less interest in terms demand for political change. Specifically, 68.6% and 62.2% Asian youth who are more interested in politics satisfy and support for democracy, higher than 64.2% and 56.6% for those who are less interested in politics, respectively.

A slightly different result appears in Figure 24 when we analyze how often Asian youth follow political news. Those who often follow political news tend to be more

Figure 23   All Dependent Variables by Interest in Politics among Asian Youth
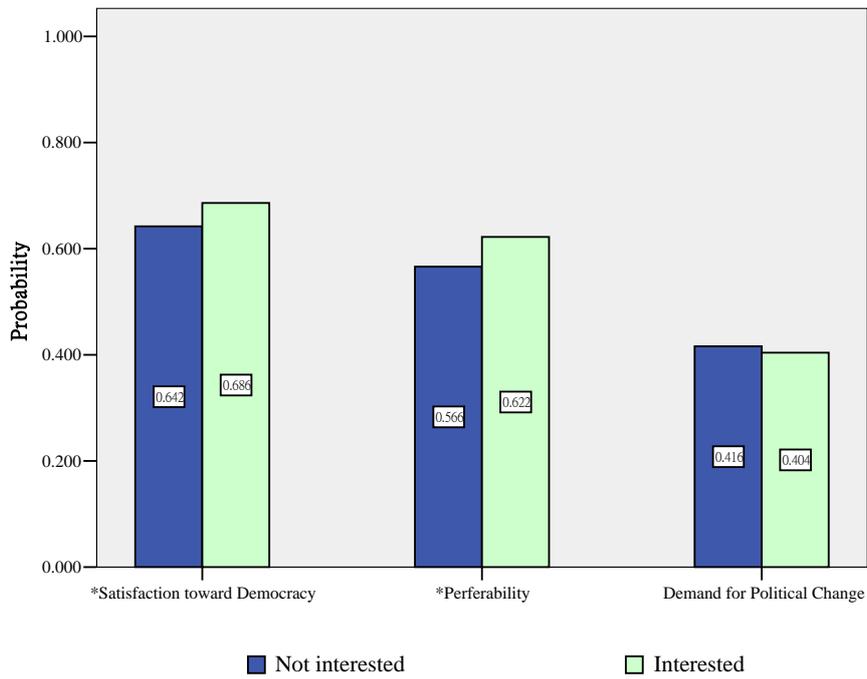
*Statistical significant at p≦0.05
Data Source: Asian Barometer

Figure 24   All Dependent Variables by "Follow Political News" among Asian Youth
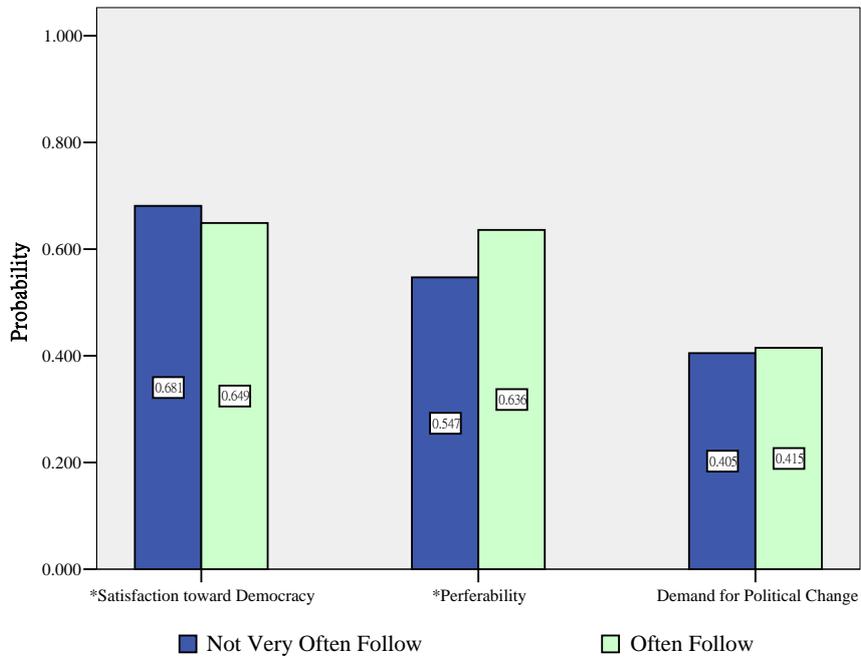
*Statistical significant at p≦0.05
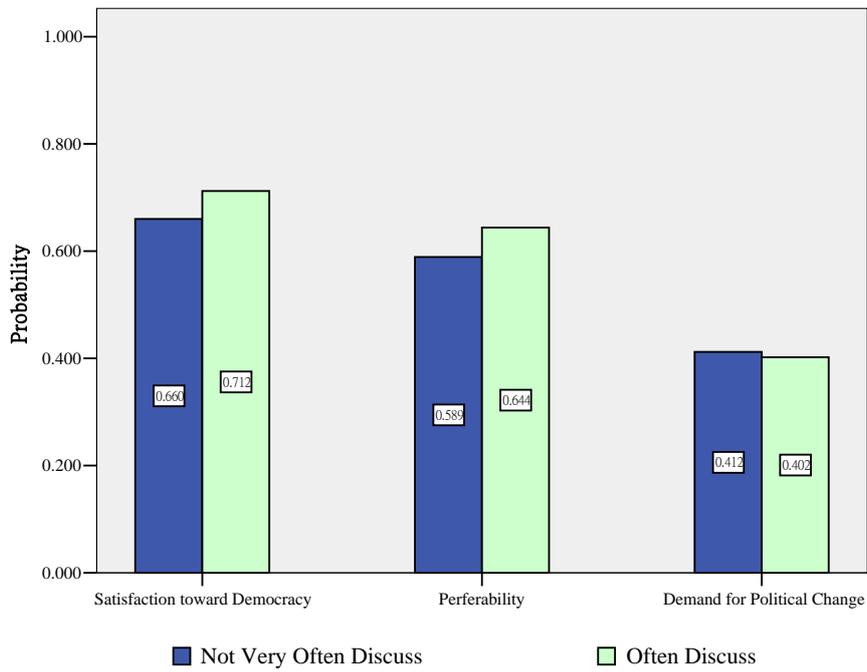Data Source: Asian Barometer

supportive of democracy (63.6% vs. 54.7). This finding is consistent with what we found for interest in politics. However, those who often follow politics are less satisfied with democracy (64.9% vs. 68.1%), and this contrasts with our previous finding that people tend to satisfy with democracy if they are more interested in politics.

How can we resolve the two contradictory findings? In some sense, we need to discuss the nature of the questions. Satisfaction with democracy is an evaluative question about whether people satisfy with the current democratic condition. Support for democracy, on the other hand, is a more about subjective preference of political systems. When the subjective question (support for democracy) is asked, Asian youth who have more psychological involvement in politics are consistently more supportive of democracy than those who have less psychological involvement. When the evaluative question (satisfaction with democracy) is asked, we found Asian youth's attitude is pending on different indictors of psychological involvement. Interest in politics is a self-expressive question and hence the positive relation to satisfaction with democracy might reflect their positive thinking toward democracy instead of actual assessment. However, following political news is more about a factual question, and thus we found people who often follow political news tend to be more critical than those who less often follow political news. In sum, Asian youth who has more psychological involvement in politics tend to support democracy more. But we cannot find consistent findings about satisfaction toward democracy and demand for political change.

Despite the fact that the magnitude of probability difference is not very small, due to the small sample, all the results are not significant when we apply "discussing politics" as the explanatory variable. As Figure 25 presents, we can find the same results as in the question of interest in politics: Asian youth who often discuss politics with family members or friends are more satisfied with (71.2% vs. 66.0%) and more supportive of (64.4% vs. 58.9) democracy. But given the statistical non-significance, we cannot make any conclusion about these two results. A similar situation also happens when we use "able to participation in politics". As Figure 26 shows, the margin of probability difference is much smaller and thus statistically no significant result can be concluded.

For other two indicators of sense of citizen empowerment, as Figure 27 and 28 make evidence, Asian youth are less satisfied with democracy if they think they can understand politics (61.2% vs. 67.9%) or can influence politics (61.4% vs. 69.7%). Both show the criticalness for those who have stronger sense of citizen empowerment. Such criticalness also appears in support for democracy for those who can understand democracy. Comparing to those who think they cannot understand politics, the

**Figure 25　All Dependent Variables by "Discuss Politics"
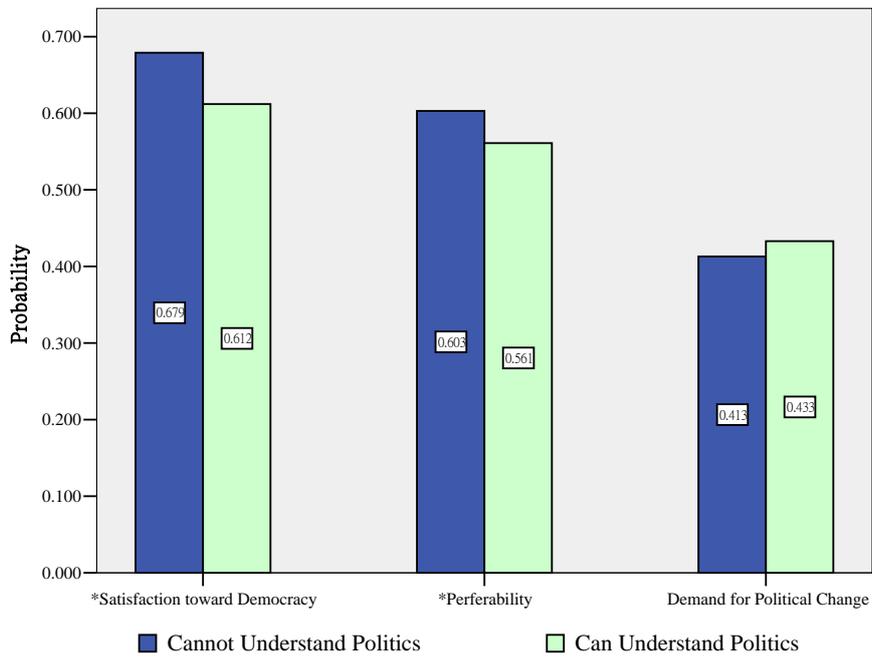among Asian Youth**

*Statistical significant at p≦0.05
Data Source: Asian Barometer

**Figure 26　All Dependent Variables by "Able to Participate
in Politics" among Asian Youth**
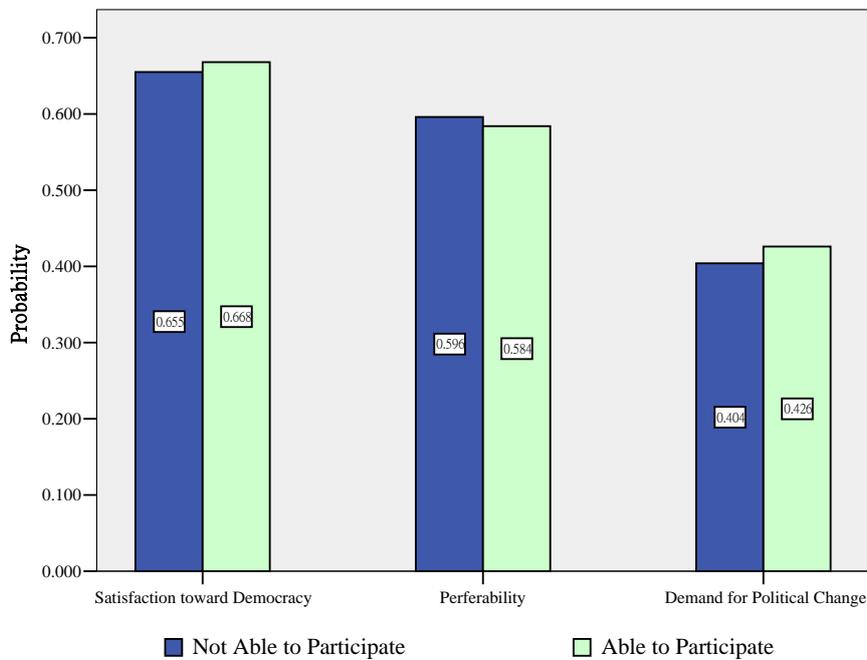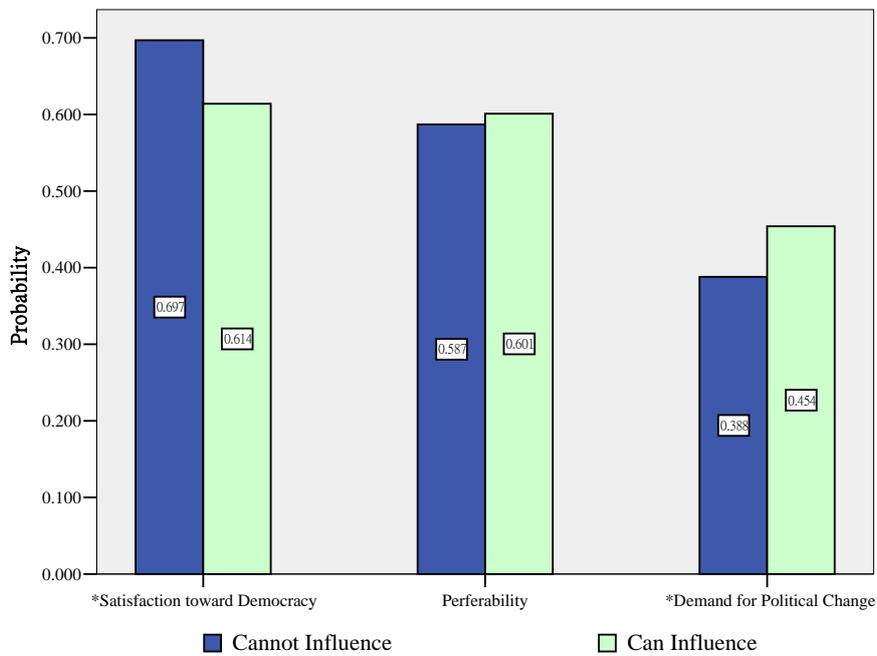

*Statistical significant at p≦0.05
Data Source: Asian Barometer

Figure 27　All Dependent Variables by "Understand Politics"
among Asian Youth

*Statistical significant at p≦0.05
Data Source: Asian Barometer

Figure 28　All Dependent Variables by "Can Influence Politics"
among Asian Youth

*Statistical significant at p≦0.05
Data Source: Asian Barometer

probability measure of perferability is 56.1% versus 60.3%, short of nearly 4%. The finding in demand for political change also tell the story. For Asian youth who think they can influence politics, 45.5% believe a dramatic change is necessary, and only 38.8% believe so for those who don't think they can influence politics.

What can we conclude for sense of citizen empowerment and the three political variables? A succinct conclusion is that stronger sense of citizen empowerment in Asian youth tends to be associated with less satisfaction with democracy, less support toward democracy, and more demand in political change. These critical attitudes reflect the progressive nature of citizen empowerment, which is the motor head that drives for future political reform and development.

Conclusion

The major finding in this paper is twofold: first, Asian youth tend to be less interested in politics but they have stronger sense of citizen empowerment; second, Asian youth generally have less party attachment in magnitude of the identity, and they also have less social capital in terms of trust and membership. If our goal focuses on promoting democratic citizenship and political change, we have to overcome two adverse facts: (1) Asian youth's psychological involvement is not very high, only about 50% and (2) they score relatively lower than adult in those factors that can increase psychological involvement, such as partisan attachment and social capital. In other words, provided that we can increase Asian youth's party attachment, to elevate their trust toward the society in general, and to encourage them to participate in social activities, Asian youth's psychological involvement in politics might be growing and that will help cultivation of democratic citizenship. In fact, our empirical evidence show that more psychological involvement is related to support for democracy. The increase of partisan attachment and social capital comes together to strengthen psychological involvement in politics, and eventually, these conditions can foster solid support for democracy and better democratic citizenship.

We also notice that whether Asian youth think they can influence politics matters to the demand of political change. When Asian youth think they can influence politics, they tend to ask for greater political change. Our analysis indicates that Asian youth's sense of citizen empowerment in terms of influencing politic is even lower than the number of psychological involvement, around 40%. Hence, how to increase the sense of citizen empowerment and then catalyze political change becomes a pressing issue in many Asian countries. As our empirical findings suggest, stronger party attachment and greater social network can bring up sense of citizen empowerment, which in turn raise youth's expectation toward politics and lead to the greater demand of political change.

Asian youth's civic engagement is found lower in females and those who are less educated, living in rural areas, and seldom use the internet. These factors are very informative for policy makers to identify how to increase civic engagement, such as raising young female student's interest in major political events or improving the internet infrastructure to cover rural areas, etc. Given that the probability measures for all six indicators of civic engagement ranges from 10% to 60%, there is still plenty of room to grow. Thus, we propose two policy recommendations:

First, more resources can be spent on holding international activities with regard to the participation of transnational civil network and international public affairs. These activities can be designed to focus on the topic of major political events and invite multinational youth participants for mutual exchange in ideas and opinions. To increase publicity and elevate news highlight, the host institute can invite high-profile guest speakers to address the importance of the convention topic and attract youth participant's interest in democratic citizenship. As we know from this paper, Asian youth have less psychological involvement is not because of the lack of information. But rather it is more about the fact that Asian youth do not pay attention to political news, events, and activities. If we can create an attractive event and do the publicity well, this will help raising the youth's interest to the convention topic and achieve the goals of political communication.

Second, providing assistance to establish internet infrastructure and increasing internet penetration rate are also important to increase youth's interest in civic engagement. As we know, internet provides missive information and promotes interpersonal contact. It is the most powerful channel to organize groups and initiate a collective action for all purposes. Therefore, if Asian youth all can have a low-cost access to internet without censorship, the internet will exercise its powerful communication function in spreading ideas and transmitting information, including political related news or opinions. The internet is also a powerful mobilization tool that makes a large-scale mass movement possible in a very short time. In many aspects like information acquisition and transmission, interpersonal communication, opinion exchange, and mass mobilization, the internet has become an indispensible media for Asian youth to gain interest and access to the civic activities. Thus, we believe that the availability and freedom of the cyberspace is vital to promote Asian youth's civic engagement for now and the future.

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