

ASIAN  BAROMETER

A Comparative Survey of
DEMOCRACY, GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

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A Globalization Backlash?
Public Views of Immigration in East Asia

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Immigration is one of the most important policy issues of our time. It is shaping politics the world over, from the 2016 contestation over the US presidency to the United Kingdom's June Brexit vote affecting the membership of the European Union. Anti-immigration fervor has been seen to underscore the rise of right-wing political movements and growth of nationalism, especially in the West. At the same time, immigration itself has increased. The world has witnessed an unprecedented refugee crisis from 2010 onwards, involving over 60 million people. The Middle East, notably Syria, has been at the epicenter of this crisis, but it has extended to Africa, Asia and the West, influencing issues of citizenship, rights, equality and governance. More broadly, the processes of regional integration and globalization have been intertwined with the rise of immigration, as labor movement and the erosion of national boundaries have expanded in the last few decades.

Little is known, however, how immigration is affecting politics in East Asia. Regional studies to date on immigration have largely focused on the economic implications,¹ with attention to politics narrowly confined to single-country studies, such as Singapore.² The political impact of immigration on East Asia needs further analysis. With the world's largest population, Asia is in fact one of the region's with the largest flows of migrants. It is estimated by the United Nations that migration in Asia is 46.5 million.³ In real numbers this is the second largest in the world, even more than that of the North America, Middle East and Africa. Europe is the only region with larger numbers with 56.2 million migrants. East Asian migrants include a mix of migration for labor as well as political refugees, although the former is the most common pattern. At the same time, East Asia has seen a deepening of regional integration and globalization. However, this paper will show that, to date, immigration has yet to engender a similar broad public backlash in East Asia that has been so politically divisive in the West.

This paper looks at how immigration is shaping politics in East Asia. The focus is on public views of immigration and how citizens perceive immigration. This 'from below' analysis draws from the 4th wave of the Asian Barometer Survey, conducted from 2013-2015 in fourteen East Asian countries.⁴ The aim is to determine how public views of immigration are influencing the political terrain in East Asia. We begin by laying out patterns of immigration in East Asia, and

¹ See, for example: Angel Aguiar & S. Amer Ahmed, Terrie Walmsley *Labor Migration and Economic Growth in East and Southeast Asia*, The World Bank October 2013

² See, for example, Yap Mui Teng, Gillan Koh & Debbie Soon (eds.) *Migration and Integration in Singapore: Policies and Practices* (London: Routledge, 2015); Stephan Ortmann, "The Politics of Inventing National Identity," *Journal of Contemporary Asian Affairs*, 28/4: 23-46; Hong Liu "Beyond co-ethnicity: the politics of differentiating and integrating new immigrants in Singapore." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 2014 Vol. 37, No. 7, 1225-1238 and Brenda S. A. Yeoh and Theodora Lam "Immigration and Its (Dis)Contents: The Challenges of Highly Skilled Migration in Globalizing Singapore" *American Behavioral Scientist*, 2016, 1-2

³ These numbers are based on 2015 estimates by the United Nations. See: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2015). *Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by Destination and Origin* (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2015).

<http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates15.shtml>

⁴ For more information on the 4th wave see: <http://www.asianbarometer.org/survey/wave-4th-survey> Please note that China is not included in this paper as the data was not ready, and Indonesia is not included as this national team did not ask the question about immigration. There are also some gaps in the variables, as some of the national data sets were not fully coded for these missing variables when the analysis for this paper was completed.

public views of East Asia. We then explore the underlying factors that help us understand the diverse views of immigration. Here we draw on research of public views of immigration elsewhere that have identified a range of economic, social and attitudinal factors that account for views of immigration. This allows us to better understand the factors that are shaping public views of immigration across East Asia. Finally, we flesh out the impact of our findings for political trajectories for the region. As the analysis is comparative and preliminary, we begin by highlighting the broader regional findings and trends, rather than delve into specific country experiences.

A Moving and Migrating Region:

East Asia has long been known for its mass movements of people, with China at the center of this regional migration historically.⁵ In recent years, the outflow of labor from Southeast Asia, notably from the Philippines, Indonesia and Myanmar, to other regional neighbors has also transformed populations and contributed to a more integrated and diverse region.⁶

Analysts of migration have generally differentiated between out-migration and in-migration, distinguishing countries between these two patterns. Countries that send migrants, such as China, Indonesia and the Philippines, fall into the former, while those that receive migrants such as Singapore are in the latter. In reality, most countries, such as Malaysia, are both, including countries such as China, Japan and Korea. This is also the case for places such as Singapore and Indonesia. The overwhelming number of migrants in East Asia are leaving countries, notably China, the Philippines and Indonesia, usually for work abroad.

The other stark pattern that stands out in migratory patterns in East Asia has less to do with the direction of the flow, but with the numbers of migrants as a share of the general population. Drawing from 2015 data from the United Nations, Table 1 shows that two countries have large and significant shares of immigrants – Singapore and Hong Kong at estimates of 41% and 38% of the population respectively. In fact, the majority of East Asian countries have a negligible share of immigrants per their populations. Only three other countries have a considerable share of immigrants: Malaysia at 8.3%, Thailand at 5.4% and South Korea at 3.5%.

⁵ See, for example, Jijiao Zhang, Howard Duncan eds. *Migration in China and Asia Experience and Policy* Springer Dordrecht Heidelberg New York London, 2014

⁶ See, for example, discussion in Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung and European Union *Migration and Integration: Common Challenges and Responses from Europe and Asia* (Singapore: Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung and European Union, 2014)

Table 1: Population Flows in East Asian Countries⁷

	Estimated Population	Estimated Percentage of Immigrants	Estimated Number of Immigrants	No of outgoing Immigrants
Mongolia	3,000,000	0.6	17,200	56,750
China	1,376,000,000	0.1	845,000	64,380,000
Hong Kong	7,234,800	38	2,804,000	732,400
South Korea	50,800,000	3.5	1,797,000	2,309,000
Taiwan	23,510,000	2.1	500,000	1800,000
Malaysia	30,300,000	8.3	2,470,000	1,540,000
Myanmar	53,900,000	0.2	103,000	2,529,000
Cambodia	15,600,000	0.5	78,000	1,042,000
Thailand	68,000,000	5.4	3,721,000	483,900
Indonesia	257,600,000	0.1	295,000	2,059,000
Philippines	100,700,000	0.2	213,000	4,094,000
Vietnam	93,400,000	0.1	68,200	2,037,000
Singapore	5,535,000	41	2,323,000	239,000

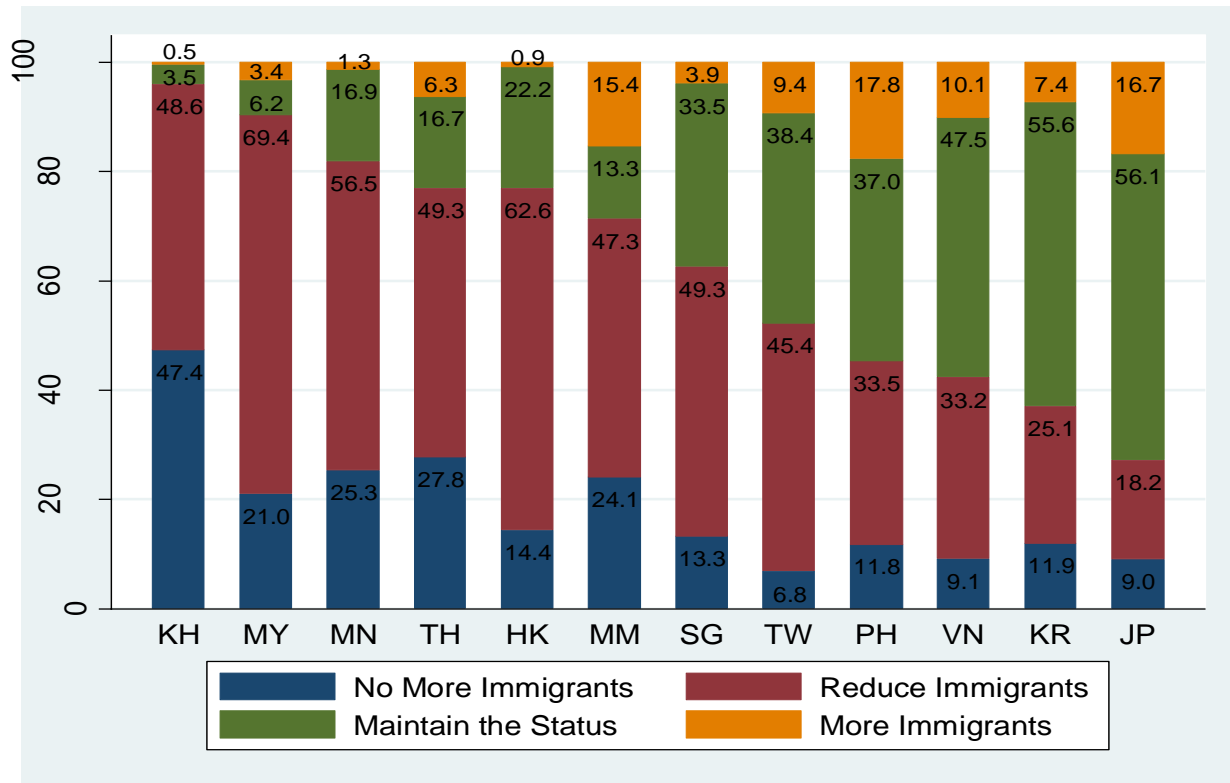
Given the numbers of migrants, we would expect the strongest political response from citizens in the countries where immigration is the largest share of the population. This is not the case. The ABS asked citizens their position of immigrants coming into their country. Respondents were asked whether immigrants should be increased, the status quo maintained, a reduction of immigrants should be introduced or immigration should be stopped altogether. Results are details in Figure 1 below. Generally, most countries in East Asia oppose more open immigration. Of the twelve countries analyzed below, seven of them include a majority of those who oppose immigration. Taiwanese are evenly split over the issue. Only the Philippines, Vietnam, Korea and Japan favor immigration or maintaining the status quo. These results also show that Southeast Asian countries are the most anti-immigration, especially Cambodia, Malaysia and Thailand. These countries have moderate or low shares of immigrants, but have been rapidly developing. Only Mongolia, with less than 1% share of immigrants, is among the Northeast Asian countries opposed to immigration. It is also another developing country. In fact, the

⁷ This graph is based on three sources: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2015). Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by Destination and Origin (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2015).

<http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates15.shtml>; the International Office of Migration: <http://www.iom.int/countries/> statistics and United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2013) World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision. <https://esa.un.org/migmgprofiles/indicators/files> listed by country.

countries that have the highest shares of immigrants, Hong Kong and Singapore, are quite divided over immigration, although majorities in both states are opposed to immigration. Those actually in favor of increases in immigration in East Asia is rather small, with only the Philippines, Japan and Myanmar having sizeable shares of support for increased immigration at 18%, 17% and 15% respectively.

Figure 1. Public Views toward Immigration Policy in East Asia



Understanding Views of Immigration: Theoretical Approaches from Other Regions

What accounts for this variation in East Asian views of immigration? The ABS allows us to look more systematically at factors that may help us understand this variation among citizens and, to a lesser extent, among countries. The study of the relationship between views of immigration and the public has been a rich area of research. Beginning in the 1990s, with California’s Proposition 187 over immigration in 1994, to more recent debates over refugees and immigration in Europe, scholars from a variety of disciplines have been studying underlying factors accounting for public views of immigration.

Broadly there are four approaches to understand underlying public views of immigration. The first emphasizes the economy, namely the relationship between an individual and the economy. Individuals who are seen to be economically disadvantaged by immigration in the labor market,

usually low-skill labor or those in services or agriculture, are seen to oppose immigration.⁸ Migration is seen to go against their individual economic interests. A parallel dimension of this approach involves perceptions of performance in the economy.⁹ Those that perceive the economy performing positively favor immigration, as this is not a threat to their jobs and is seen by some as a catalyst for further economic growth. Findings adopting this interest-oriented approach have generally confirmed these relationships, but more nuanced studies have shown considerable variation according to employment patterns and the structure of labor market, as well as noting that migration involves both low and high-skilled labor, thus making these analyses more complex.¹⁰ There has also been a debate over the emphasis over perceptions of general economic conditions versus a prioritization of personal experience (interest and threat). The emphasis on general conditions, also highlights perceptions of security in their conception of threat, as in some contexts migrants are seen to be associated with rising crime.¹¹

Rather than focus on economic or personal security and interests, other scholarship stresses the effects of ascribed background characteristics, such as age, gender and race, and socio-economic factors such as income and education. This is in line with long-standing public opinion research that prioritize these descriptive categories. Race in particular has been highlighted in studies in the United States, with whites opposing non-white immigration.¹² Older citizens have been seen to be more resistant to immigration. Higher income and greater education, by contrast, have been associated with favoring immigration.¹³

Sociologists studying public opinion of immigration place more emphasis on group dynamics, believing that views of immigration stem from how a particular group is threatened and interacts with another. This ‘group-threat’ approach traces how one community relates to another, in the use of stereotypes, perceived discrimination and in the level of quotidian ties. According to this third approach, communities compete over valuable but limited resources—such as status, values, and power as well as resources such as access to jobs, housing, and schools.¹⁴ Conflict

⁸ K. F. Scheve, & Slaughter, M. J. (2001). Labor market competition and individual preferences over immigration policy. *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 83, 133-145.

⁹ T. J. Espenshade, & Hempstead, K. (1996). Contemporary American attitudes toward US immigration. *International Migration Review*, 30, 535-570

¹⁰ See, for example, I. Tucci, (2005). *Explaining attitudes towards immigration: New pieces to the puzzle*. Discussion Papers, No. 484. Berlin: DIW (German Institute for Economic Research) Berlin.

¹¹ See, for example, John Hagan, Alberto Palloni, “Sociological Criminology and the Mythology of Hispanic Immigration and Crime,” *Social Problems*, (November 1999) 617-632, Brian Bell, Francesco Fasani, and Stephen Machin. "Crime and immigration: Evidence from large immigrant waves." *Review of Economics and Statistics* 21, no. 3 (2013): 1278-1290 and M. G. Yeager, (1997). Immigrants and criminality: A cross-national review. *Criminal Justice Abstracts*, 29, 143-171.

¹² See C. R. Chandler, C. R., & Tsai, Y. M. (2001). Social factors influencing immigration attitudes: An analysis of data from the General Social Survey. *The Social Science Journal*, 38, 177-188 and Gary P. Freeman, Randall Hansen and David L. Leal (eds). *Immigration and Public Opinion in Liberal (Routledge Research in Comparative Politics*. (New York: Routledge, 2012)

¹³ See T. J. Espenshade, & Hempstead, K. (1996) above and M. Coenders, Lubbers, M., & Scheepers, P. (2013). Resistance to immigrants and asylum seekers in the European union: Cross-national comparisons of public opinion. In G. P. Freeman, R. Hansen & D. L. Leal (Eds.), *Immigration and public opinion in liberal democracies*. (New York, NY: Routledge) 21-50

¹⁴ See, for example, M. W. Giles, & Evans, A. S. (1985). External threat, perceived threat, and group identity. *Social Science Quarterly*, 66, 50-66.

can arise between groups when a zero-sum situation is perceived or when divisions are reinforced by negative stereotyping. Considerable research has also gone into assessing the impact of the size and composition of immigrant communities and how migrant minorities relate with majorities and other minorities.¹⁵ In recent years, attention has focused on Muslims in Europe, with earlier studies on Latinos in the United States.¹⁶

Research has also found that political attitudes matter, with those deemed more politically conservative less supportive of immigration.¹⁷ Rather than put the emphasis on interaction, this approach stresses the underlying values of citizens. This involves views of politics generally, as well as perceptions of political changes taking place. One of those changes involves reactions to regional integration and globalization. Scholars have also isolated partisan affiliation as a factor associated with immigration, although this is usually a product of other factors as citizens with their views of immigration lean toward parties with similar positions. Attention to the impact of political attitudes and relationships has not received the same level of attention as other factors.

A Model for Understanding Views of Immigration in East Asia

In examining views of immigration in East Asia, we build on each of these four approaches – economic/security interests, socio-economic backgrounds, group dynamics, and political attitudes. We draw from the rich array of questions in the ABS, and find that East Asians are indeed similar to citizens elsewhere, in that a variety of factors are associated with public views of immigration, economic, social and attitudinal.

Table 2: Analytical Model

Variable	Expected Relationship
<i>Economic Interest</i>	
Perceptions of Economy	Positive Perceptions, Support Immigration
Employment Sector	Low Status/Service and Agriculture, Oppose Immigration
Perceptions of Security	Positive Perceptions, Support Immigration
<i>Social Conditions</i>	
Ethnic Minority/Majority	Ethnic Majority Oppose Immigration
Social Trust	High Social Trust, Support Immigration
Perceptions of Income/Ethnic Equality	High Perceptions of Equality, Support Immigration
<i>Background</i>	
Age	Younger Support Immigration
Gender	Men Support Immigration

¹⁵ See, for example, L. Quillian, L. (1996). Group threat and regional change in attitudes toward African-Americans. *American Journal of Sociology*, 102, 816-860. M. Semyonov, Rajman, R., Tov, A. Y., & Schmidt, P. (2004). Population size, perceived threat, and exclusion: A multiple-indicators analysis of attitudes toward foreigners in Germany. *Social Science Research*, 33, 681-701 and P. Scheepers, Gijsberts, M., & Coenders, M. (2002). Ethnic exclusionism in European countries. Public opposition to civil rights for legal migrants as a response to perceived ethnic threat. *European Sociological Review*, 18, 17-34.

¹⁶ Heeju Shin, David L. Leal, Christopher G. Ellison, “Sources of Support for Immigration Restriction: Economics, Politics, or Anti-Latino Bias? *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 2015, Vol. 37(4) 459–481

¹⁷ Reference needed.

Income	Higher Incomes Support Immigration
Rural-Urban	Urbanites Support Immigration
Education	Higher Education Support Immigration
Social Status	Higher Social Status Support Immigration
<i>Attitudinal</i>	
Views of Globalization (Imports/Engagement Outside and Defense Way of Life)	Support Globalization, Support Immigration
Support for Democracy	Support Democracy, Support Immigration
Authoritarian/Democratic Values	High Democratic Values, Support Immigration
Partisanship	Support Party that Supports Immigration

To study the impact of different factors associated with immigration we develop a multi-logit regression statistical model to assess what accounts for variation among East Asians. Each of the four approaches and expected outcomes are captured in the model detailed in Table 2.¹⁸ To evaluate economic interest, we combine general perceptions of the economic and security, with personal experience. In looking at social factors and group dynamics, we examine the impact of majority/minority status (differentiating for societies that have larger and smaller minorities), and include perceptions of social trust and both income and ethnic inequality (with the latter being a proxy for perceived discrimination). We include a wide range of background variables, including the usual socio-economic characteristics, but bring in urbanization and perceived social status, two variables that are seen as important in the East Asian context. To measure political attitudes, we include views of globalization, support for democracy and authoritarian/democratic values, expecting to find those more resistant and conservative more opposed to immigration. Finally, we include partisanship to assess whether political affiliation and loyalties matter. This model, detailed above, allows us to focus on variation among individual East Asians, as opposed to country differences.

East Asians and Immigration Findings: Complex but Important Relationships

It should come as no surprise that East Asians follow global trends elsewhere in their attitudes toward immigration, but, at the same time, there are uniquely East Asian relationships.

Here are the key findings:¹⁹

Economic performance perceptions do matter in the region as a whole in expected ways, as those who see the economy positively favor immigration to a greater extent than do not. Economic performance however plays less of a role in shaping attitudes in most of the specific countries. Only in the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia do economic perceptions interact with views of immigration.

¹⁸ For a detailed breakdown of the questions, please see Appendix 2.
¹⁹ For a detailed breakdown of the statistical results by country, please see Appendix 1.

Economic interests, as measured by occupation, also emerge significant in our understanding of views of immigration, although not consistently across the region. Overall in East Asia, we find that in contrast with professionals both skilled occupations – skilled agricultural workers, technical and professionals - and low skilled in services oppose immigration. We see considerable variation in the relationship between the labor market and views of immigration by country. For example, in Japan low skilled workers, clerks, and unemployed favor immigration. While in Malaysia, associate professionals and technicians oppose immigration. The relationship is inconsistent and points to the need for further research on the nature of the labor market and immigration patterns in specific countries. For now, however, there is no clear relationship between job market threat and views of immigration.

While specific job threats might not be that impactful in shaping views of immigration in East Asia, perceptions of income equality are significant, with those perceiving income equality in support of more open immigration. This is true in the region as a whole (except Vietnam), as well as in Hong Kong, Mongolia, Korea, and Cambodia. Research on East Asia has shown that equality is an important political priority,²⁰ and this comes out in how citizens view immigration. This finding corresponds to that on views of security as well, where East Asians who feel more secure support more open immigration. This is notably significant in Taiwan and Vietnam.

This strong relationship does not necessarily extend to ethnic equality, however. Perceived ethnic equality is associated with support for immigration in only a few countries. This emerges in Cambodia and Myanmar, two places where immigration has been ethnicized. Ethnic migrants are considered as pariahs. Migrants are perceived to be the ethnic minority communities of Vietnamese and Muslims/Rohingyas, respectively. The findings here suggest that those Cambodians and Myanmar that perceive ethnic equality are less opposed to immigration. In Japan, those that do not perceive ethnic equality oppose immigration, a puzzling finding in need of further study.

If there is one country in East Asia where ethnic politics has reigned supreme in defining political views, it is Malaysia.²¹ While perceptions of ethnic equality is not relevant, minority status does influence views. Ethnic minorities (Chinese and Indians in particular) favor immigration, which given their status historically as migrants is understandable. What is unexpected is the view of the ethnic majority, largely Malays, who are more ambivalent about immigration. In recent decades, most of the immigrants into Malaysia have been Muslims, many from similar ethnic backgrounds as Malays from Indonesia and the Philippines. This perhaps explains the lack of strong views among the Malay majority, despite the fact that the incumbent government led by the Malay ethnonationalist party the United Malays National Organization continues to use racialized anti-immigrant discourse against the Chinese and Indian minorities.

²⁰ Yun-han Chu, Larry Diamond, Andrew J. Nathan, and Doh Chul Shin, eds., *How East Asians View Democracy*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010)

²¹ Bridget Welsh, Kai-Ping Huang and Tan Seng Keat, *Embracing Democracy: Political Attitudes in Malaysia (Asian Barometer Survey Report)* (Petaling Jaya: SIRD, Forthcoming 2016).

In the region as a whole, majority status also is significant, with those in the majority opposing immigration. This emerged important but was statistically insignificant in the Taiwan, Singapore, and Malaysia.

Another factor that emerges as significant in understanding varied views of immigration among the East Asian public is social trust. East Asians who have higher levels of social trust, support immigration. This factor was important in many of the specific East Asian countries as well, namely Mongolia, Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore and Malaysia. Social relationships, whether involving trust, ethnic status or perceptions of equality, emerged as impactful in shaping views of immigration in East Asia. In fact, social variables explained more of the variation of views of immigration than economic concerns.

It is thus not surprising that East Asian backgrounds were also an important part of variation of views toward immigration. Perhaps the most important socio-economic factor was education. East Asians with more education, favored immigration. Education was less impactful in shaping views within countries, with the exceptions of Japan, Taiwan, Malaysia and Myanmar.

Along with education, the rural-urban divide was significant, with urbanites favoring immigration as expected. This mattered for the region as a whole, as well as in Korea, Mongolia, Vietnam, Thailand and the Taiwan – countries where there remains an important rural-urban divide. In Thailand, for example, rural-urban divisions have been repeatedly highlighted as divisive, and we can see that this extends to views of immigration policy with the rural communities more resistant to the Thai government's pro-cheap foreign labor approach.

Age emerges significant as well, although in unexpected and inconsistent ways. For the region as a whole, older East Asians favored immigration, in contrast to patterns found in other parts of the world. This was also the case for Hong Kongers. This was not a pattern found in other individual countries, however. In fact, the findings revealed that older people opposed immigration in Taiwan and Vietnam. The reasons for this could have to do with the history of immigration in these countries, where migration affected the political landscape. In Vietnam, for example, migrants were believed to be Chinese, and there were repeated efforts to remove them. Different generations appear to view immigration differently in some parts of East Asia.

While gender did not prove to be important for the region as a whole, it matters in a few specific countries – Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, Myanmar and Vietnam. In all of these countries women oppose immigration more than men. Newspaper accounts have recorded incidents where maids and other female migrants have 'stolen husbands' and this has in some cases shaped the national psyche in popular culture. Further research, however, is needed to study how gender shapes perceptions of immigration.

While background factors are part of the fabric of understanding public views of immigration, we also find that political attitudes are so as well. Views of globalization are consistency and broadly important in understanding views of immigration. The ABS asked three different questions – how engaged are citizens with the outside world (follow major events),

whether the national way of life should be defended and finally, whether imports should be limited. All three questions emerged significant. There was perhaps the closest association between views of immigration and resistance to imports from abroad. Not only was this important in East Asia as a whole, it resonated in Japan, Hong Kong, Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia and Myanmar (the overwhelming majority of the countries studied). If anything, this shows consistency in the attitudes of East Asians, as those who opposed immigration also opposed import of foreign goods. The other views also proved important, with East Asians who advocated for defending the local way of life, opposing immigration. This was the case in Japan, Korea, and Myanmar as well. Interestingly in Hong Kong and Cambodia, those who were opposed to defending the way of life favored immigration. Those engaged in following events were more in favor of immigration, as was the case for the region as a whole and in Korea, Singapore and Myanmar. Views of globalization were understandably linked to attitudes toward immigration.

Political attitudes more generally also were linked to views of immigration, although here is perhaps were the findings most contrasted with expectations. The argument generally has been those that support more democracy would in fact support immigrations, as this is connected with liberal outlooks. In fact, this was not found in East Asia. Support for democracy was not significant across the region as a whole, it did however connect to views of immigration in individual countries. In Japan, the expected relationship was found, with Japanese more in favor of democracy favoring more open immigration, Yet, in other countries, namely Korea, Mongolia, Vietnam, Singapore, and Cambodia, those favoring authoritarianism were more in favor of immigration. Politically conservative East Asians in many countries in the region favored immigration. This can be in part explained by party affiliation, as this also mattered in many of the same countries – Japan, Philippines, Thailand, Singapore, and Cambodia. In the latter two, the conservative more authoritarian governments have clear policies favoring immigration. This is not consistent however, as the link between political conservatives and more open immigration merits further study. A particular area needed of attention are specific government's positions on immigration.

To complicate the relationship between political attitudes and immigration we find contrasts. In the region as a whole, we found those that believed in diversity actually supported immigration. This was the case in Japan specifically. Yet in Hong Kong, Thailand, Malaysia, Myanmar and Cambodia, the opposite was the case, with those in favor of diversity, favoring less open immigration. The picture further is more complex when taking account of the role of moral leaders, another factor that shapes views. Here the regional relationship was as expected, with those opposing centralized leadership in decision-making opposing immigration. This was found in Thailand and Myanmar. Yet, in places like Mongolia, Singapore, and Vietnam those favoring centralized leadership, opposed immigration. This points to dynamics within these polities, as this can be seen as more of a reflection against the more authoritarian governments in this place and their policies, rather than perhaps immigration per se. The findings on political attitudes highlight the need for more specific country analyses, despite emerging important in the region as a whole.

Discussion: Implications and Further Study

This preliminary study points to three preliminary conclusions in our understanding of views of immigration in East Asia. First, views of immigration are shaped by a complex array of factors, economic perceptions, social conditions, background characteristics and political attitudes. We find that economic interests in the labor market and job threats are not as significant as other social and political factors, such as social trust and views of globalization. We also find that political outlooks vis-à-vis democracy and democratic political attitudes do not consistently explain immigration. The complexity is not just in the range of factors underlying views of immigration but in their consistency across the region.

If there is an area where we can offer a region-wide conclusion, it is perhaps in the area of globalization. Here there was wide breadth among East Asians in that views of globalization were tied to views of immigration. These views were especially strong with the commonalities over calls to limits imports. Yet, while similar anti-globalization views were held, they have yet to move into an anti-immigration backlash that has become evident in the West, especially in Europe. What the findings point to are latent anti-globalization views connected to immigration in East Asia.

Finally, the specific country context does matter. This is where the inconsistencies are best explored in further analysis. This is also where we witness specific dynamics. In the case of Singapore, for example, the politicizations of immigration helps us understand the partisan findings and why political liberals are more opposed to immigration, against what would appear as an ideological norm. Those more liberal are opposing Singapore's authoritarian government. In Malaysia, the ethnic narrative emerges in accounting for ethnic minority views of immigration, a finding evident in Cambodia and Myanmar as well, although to a lesser extent.

As we look to East Asia's political trajectory in relationship to public views of immigration, for now, it would appear that immigration is not a critical divide and political catalyst in the region as a whole. While most East Asians oppose immigration, this has not moved into shaping the political narrative and cleavages, except openly in Singapore and to a lesser extent more quietly elsewhere, e.g. Hong Kong and Myanmar. Immigration has clearly not yet evoked a globalization backlash and is not yet a driver in East Asian politics. The region's expanding economy as a whole, and policy environment favoring immigration by powerful incumbents suggests this is likely to be the path in the near future. Regional integration in East Asia is also noticeably slower than that of Europe, as well, thus not inducing strong counter-reactions to immigration. Yet, at the same time, given the strong expected relationships found that echo findings elsewhere where reactions did occur, the ABS findings suggest that immigration cannot be ruled out as a major issue shaping regional and country-specific political dynamics in the future.

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Appendix 1: Statistical Analysis of Findings

DV Immigration Policy [Close→Open]	Overall	Japan	Hong Kong	Korea	Mongolia
Economic Interest					
Evaluation of National Economy [Low→High]	0.05*** 3.77	0.028 0.571	0.033 0.655	-0.049 -1.367	0.046 1.198
Occupation (Base: Professionals)					
Unemployed	-0.012 -0.575	0.264** 2.423[1]			0.021 0.212
Technicians and associate professionals	-0.035* -1.92	0.16 1.57			-0.089 -0.924[3]
Clerks	0.02 1.461	0.136* 1.72[6]			0.02 0.465
Service workers and shop and market sales workers	-0.006 -0.412	0.143* 1.844[5]			0.015 0.261
Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	-0.046** -2.689	0.064 1.177			-0.034 -0.79
Craft and related trades workers	0.033** 2.374	0.066 0.955			0.032 0.655
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	0.024* 1.763	0.122* 1.905			-0.075 -1.495[5]
Security [Low→High]	0.048*** 3.719	-0.037 -0.8	-0.071 -1.434	0.039 1.096	-0.053 -1.346
Social Conditions					
Ethnic Majority					
over 5%	-0.003 -0.192				
over 20%	0.014 0.893				
over 50%	-0.198*** -11.254			0.049 1.476	0.071* 1.834[6]
Social Trust [Low→High]	0.1*** 7.827	0.126** 2.597[9]	0.092* 1.815[7]	0.178*** 4.911[2]	0.071* 1.874[6]
Income Equality [Low→High]	0.033** 2.15	-0.01 -0.178	0.119** 2.044[5]	0.066* 1.727[8]	0.083** 2.1[4]
Ethnic Equality [Low→High]	-0.012 -0.796	-0.093* -1.668	0.086 1.497[8]	0.012 0.309	0.052 1.321
Demographic Backgrounds					
Age	0.029** 2.107	0.021 0.36	0.253*** 4.532[2]	-0.001 -0.027	-0.043 -1.081
Gender	-0.018 -1.368	-0.096* -1.829	-0.128** -2.604[3]	0.02 0.575	0.015 0.402
Household income	-0.004 -0.275	0.044 0.809	-0.069 -1.266	-0.014 -0.353	-0.04 -0.85

Rural-Urban	0.182*** 12.848	-0.007 -0.159	-0.07 -1.367	0.083** 2.335[5]	0.171*** 3.824[1]
Edu	0.129*** 8.484	0.166** 3.05[3]	0.01 0.185	0.066 1.387[8]	0.07 1.531[8]
Social status	0.02 1.472	0.068 1.337	-0.071 -1.434	0.05 1.349	-0.06 -1.457
Attitudinal					
Limit Import [Agree→Disagree] (q168) open markets favor of immigration	0.163*** 12.155	0.092* 1.827	0.265*** 5.084[1]	0.091** 2.344[4]	0.055 1.428
Follow Major Event (q166)	0.038** 2.743	0.043 0.865	-0.083 -1.568[9]	0.196*** 5.353[1]	0.038 1.002
Defend our way of life (q167) [Agree→Disagree]	0.035** 2.697	0.128** 2.574[8]	-0.105** -2.103[6]	0.121** 3.019[3]	0.119** 3.098[2]
Support for Authoritarian -> Democracy (q141)	-0.016 -1.31	0.182*** 3.847[2]	-0.07 -1.367	-0.068* -1.885[7]	-0.065* -1.678[10]
Authoritarian values [Low→High]					
Certain ideas should be allowed (q159)	-0.05*** -3.494	-0.13** -2.59[7]	0.126** 2.407[4]	-0.013 -0.345	-0.011 -0.268
Morally upright political leaders decide everything. (q163)	-0.039** -2.775	-0.036 -0.721	0.031 0.555	-0.056 -1.534	0.069* 1.782[9]
Partisanship					
Missing	0.092*** 6.392	0.002 0.041	0.013 0.201	0.081* 1.946[6]	0.006 0.149
Vote for Losers	-0.02 -1.455	0.106** 2.04	-0.027 -0.414	0.013 0.345	-0.033 -0.855
Cut_1	1.082774	.9099576	.5632041	2.51316	1.108778
Cut_2	2.457501	1.727603	2.543065	3.460604	2.758457
Cut_3	3.674357	3.557354	4.446133	5.37264	4.148011
N	8,503	633	591	1049	943

- a. The numbers in each cell represent the standardized coefficient, the t-value statistics, and the number in Parentheses indicate the rank order of the standardized coefficients across all explanatory variables.

DV Immigration Policy [Close→Open]	Philippines	Taiwan	Thailand	Singapore	Vietnam
Economic Interest					
Evaluation of National Economy [Low→High]	0.116** 3.339[1]	0.023 0.661	-0.041 -0.633	0.128** 2.242[8]	0 0
Occupation					
Unemployed	0.036 0.62	-0.02 -0.327	-0.017 -0.246	0.172 1.056[5]	0.022 0.502
Technicians and associate professionals	0.042 0.809	0.008 0.131	-0.181** -2.436[5]	0.123 0.693[9]	-0.03 -0.749
Clerks	0.07* 1.925[1]	-0.047 -1.128	-0.168** -2.305[6]	0.064 0.581	0.059 1.441[7]
Service workers and shop and market sales workers	0.065 1.585[3]	-0.02 -0.418	-0.049 -0.807	0.025 0.283	0.039 1.049
Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	0.024 0.693	-0.048 -1.273	0.105 1.4[10]	0.07 1.162	0.043 0.932
Craft and related trades workers	0.054 1.353[6]	-0.072* -1.651[7]	0.032 0.541		0.057 1.367[9]
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	0.044 1.143	0.042** -1.029	-0.029 -0.451	0.035 0.487	-0.05 -1.197
Security [Low→High]	0.021 0.633	0.058* 1.776[10]	-0.022 -0.344	-0.011 -0.198	0.051 1.392[10]
Social Conditions					
Ethnic Majority					
over 5%	0.001 0.024	-0.043 -0.49		-0.176 -1.076[4]	
over 20%	0.037 0.806				
over 50%		-0.109 -1.241[4]	-0.015 -0.239	-0.201 -1.239[2]	0.043 1.139
Social Trust [Low→High]	0.03 0.868	0.1** 2.957[5]	0.062 0.955	0.107* 1.839	-0.003 -0.081
Income Equality [Low→High]	0.013 0.324	-0.011 -0.299	0.018 0.258	0.003 0.044	-0.081** -2.058[3]
Ethnic Equality [Low→High]	0.049 1.255[9]	0.044 1.185	-0.008 -0.112	0.076 1.147	0.043 1.114
Demographic Backgrounds					
Age	-0.05 -1.382[8]	-0.155*** -4.051[2]	-0.05 -0.693	0.064 1.096	-0.073* -1.857[4]
Gender	-0.057 -1.606[5]	-0.111** -3.383[3]	-0.089 -1.506	-0.026 -0.463	0.012 0.299
Household income	0.012 0.317	0.015 0.406	-0.061 -0.754	0.03 0.458	0.044 1.08
Rural-Urban	0.019 0.527	0.08** 2.352[6]	0.25** 2.727[1]	-0.011 -0.198	0.115** 3.004[2]
Edu	0.026	0.064*	0.084	0.036	-0.012

	0.682	1.789[8]	1.009	0.561	-0.297
Social status	0.014	0.041	0.109	0.159**	0.058
	0.397	1.218	1.614[9]	2.64[7]	1.576[8]
Attitudinal					
Limit Import [Agree→Disagree]	0.003	0.202***	0.189**	-0.027	0.151***
	0.083	5.95[1]	2.822[3]	-0.473	3.946[1]
Follow Major Event	0.018	-0.034	0.088	0.162**	-0.017
	0.511	-1.01	1.436	2.736[6]	-0.461
Defend our way of life	-0.014	0.047	-0.011	0.042	0.031
[Agree→Disagree]	-0.389	1.486	-0.175	0.737	0.817
Support for Authoritarian -> Democracy	0.003	0.028	-0.014	-0.112**	-0.067*
	0.093	0.86	-0.225	-1.994[10]	-1.85[5]
Authoritarian values [Low→High]					
Certain ideas should be allowed	-0.051	0.013	0.142**	-0.004	0.033
	-1.46[7]	0.361	2.243[7]	-0.059	0.884
Morally upright political leaders decide everything.	-0.045	0.009	-0.184**	0.185**	0.063*
	-1.314[0]	0.251	-2.896[4]	3.083[3]	1.696[6]
Partisanship					
Missing	0.009	0.062*	-0.236**	0.057	
	0.251	1.688[9]	-3.175[2]	0.964	
Vote for Losers	-0.059*	0.004	-0.121*	-0.251***	
	-1.706[4]	0.11	-1.695[8]	-4.162[1]	
Cut_1	-.685	-.402	-.256	2.005	.235
Cut_2	.408	1.333	1.349	3.514	1.431
Cut_3	1.497	2.727	2.649	5.121	2.995
N	1,085	1,246	410	426	966

- a. The numbers in each cell represent the standardized coefficient, the t-value statistics, and the number in Parentheses indicate the rank order of the standardized coefficients across all explanatory variables.

DV Immigration Policy [Close→Open]	Cambodia	Malaysia	Myanmar
Economic Interest			
Evaluation of National Economy [Low→High]	0.041 1.055	0.113** 2.651	-0.043 -1.133
Occupation			
Unemployed	-0.081 -1.282[8]	-0.025 -0.51	
Technicians and associate professionals	-0.076 -1.455	-0.094** -2.062[6]	
Clerks	-0.022 -0.583	-0.054 -1.338	
Service workers and shop and market sales workers	-0.118* -1.787[3]	-0.031 -0.751	
Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	-0.13 -1.578[2]	-0.061 -1.537[10]	
Craft and related trades workers	-0.046 -0.892	0.006 0.148	
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	-0.079* -1.771[9]	-0.007 -0.176	
Security [Low→High]	0.046 1.217	-0.045 -1.119	-0.03 -0.758
Social Conditions			
Ethnic Majority			
over 5%		0.16** 3.385[2]	-0.005 -0.115
over 20%		0.214** 3.326[1]	
over 50%	-0.013 -0.359	-0.005 -0.084	0.008 0.168
Social Trust [Low→High]	-0.008 -0.222	0.089** 2.287[7]	0.054 1.456
Income Equality [Low→High]	0.09** 2.2[6]	0.046 1.002	-0.021 -0.415
Ethnic Equality [Low→High]	0.092** 2.254[5]	-0.037 -0.802	0.088* 1.727[5]
Demographic Backgrounds			
Age	-0.067 -1.611	-0.023 -0.488	0.037 0.977
Gender	0.059 1.437	-0.071* -1.764[9]	-0.074** -2.018[6]
Household income	0.037 0.903	0.096** 2.131[5]	0.061 1.551[9]
Rural-Urban	0.055 1.367	-0.035 -0.818	-0.055 -1.462
Edu	-0.062 -1.414	0.079* 1.702[8]	0.094** 2.276[3]
Social status	-0.042	-0.025	-0.02

	-1.085	-0.657	-0.546
Attitudinal			
Limit Import [Agree→Disagree]	0.189*** 5.049[1]	0.054 1.313	-0.174*** -4.405[1]
Follow Major Event	0.012 0.293	0.026 0.665	0.115** 2.792[2]
Defend our way of life [Agree→Disagree]	-0.071* -1.88	0.06 1.442	0.073* 1.89[8]
Support for Authoritarian -> Democracy	-0.071* -1.956	-0.045 -1.167	-0.058 -1.59[10]
Authoritarian values [Low→High]			
Certain ideas should be allowed	0.084** 2.158[7]	0.142*** 3.564[3]	0.074* 1.875[6]
Morally upright political leaders decide everything.	-0.023 -0.589	-0.011 -0.276	-0.091** -2.35[4]
Partisanship			
Missing	-0.012 -0.295	-0.005 -0.101	0.051 1.135
Vote for Losers	-0.114** -2.735[4]	-0.031 -0.715	0.019 0.424
Cut_1	.644	.323	-.895
Cut_2	2.529	2.57	.367
Cut_3	3.403	3.105	.849
N	1124	1020	954

Appendix 2: Understanding the Variables

A. Economic evaluations

How would you rate the overall economic condition of our country today?

B. Globalization

How closely do you follow major events in foreign countries / the world?

Our country should defend our way of life instead of becoming more and more like other countries.

We should protect our farmers and workers by limiting the import of foreign goods.”

C. Ethnicity

What's your racial (ethnic) background? Response categories to be designed by local teams

(Note: If the respondent is born to a mixed family, we ask the father's side.)

D. Social Trust

General Speaking, would you agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the statement that “most people are trustworthy”?

How much trust do you have in Other people you interact with? [For Myanmar]

E. Equality

I. Ethnicity Equality

All citizens from different ethnic communities in [Country X] are treated equally by the government.

II. Income Equality

Rich and poor people are treated equally by the government.

F. Voting Choices

Which parties (or candidates for president if it was presidential race) did you vote for in the most recent national election?

G. Security

Generally speaking, how safe is living in this city/ town/ village?

H. Preference for Democracy and Authoritarian Values

Which of the following statements comes closest to your own opinion?

- (1) Under some circumstances, an authoritarian government can be preferable to a democratic one
- (2) For people like me, it does not matter whether we have a democratic or a nondemocratic regime
- (3) Democracy is always preferable to any other kind of government

The government should decide whether certain ideas should be allowed to be discussed in society.

If we have political leaders who are morally upright, we can let them decide everything.

