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Panel III
What Do They Do: Citizens' Political Participation

Non-electoral Participation: Citizen-initiated Contact and Collective Actions

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The mass always surprise the scholars of political science. The sudden collapse of the Soviet Union and the East European socialist regimes in the late 1980's called for the revision and revisit of the political theories in democratization and social mobilization. And yet, these quick review of and fix to the theories did not produce enough predicative power to foresee the occurrence of the Arab Spring in 2011. In 2011, we have witnessed uprisings erupt within hours and full revolutions reach completion within days. Several Arabic countries caved in. What is common in these two time points is that the mass has both successfully attained their demands by various types of collective actions. If any, most these actions are non-electoral.

This wave of Asian Barometer Survey (ABSIII hereafter) collected data between 2010 and 2012 (most surveys were done before the occurrence of the Arab Spring). While many have suspected that there was a spill over effect of the Arab Spring to other countries in other regions, the ABSIII cannot offer us the post event analysis as the hard evidence because of the survey time. Nonetheless, if there is an underline mega-trend going on around the world of how people participate in politics, we should be able to observe that trend in the ABSIII.

Henceforth, the purpose of this paper is to offer a preliminary analysis of non-electoral participation of people in Asian countries. This is not a paper to answer why people choose to attend non-electoral participation. It seeks to figure out that whether or not there exists any demographic trait that can best identify those who attended non-electoral participation from those who did not. The comparison in the group level will focus more on the difference between regime types. The comparison between countries is offered but is limited. The comparison between the previous wave of the ABS data (ABSII hereafter) to the ABSIII serves as a proxy to crudely gauge whether or not there does exist a mega-trend of Asian people increasingly choose to attend non-electoral participation. The non-electoral participation is defined as the collective actions of people getting together with others to raise an issue or sign a petition, attending demonstration or protest march and using force or violence of a political cause. To better observe the nuance of these actions, I will look at the changes of these three different types of actions first and then examine these actions in whole.

Table 1 summarizes the percentage of people ever got together with others to raise an issue or sign a petition. Overall, there were increasing numbers of people getting together with others to raise an issue or sign a petition. The number increases overtime in every countries except for Indonesia, Japan and Taiwan. Nonetheless, the change from the ABSII to ABSIII is only statistical significant in Singapore, Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand, Japan, Korea and Taiwan. These countries are mostly non-democracies or liberal democracies; henceforth we observe significant changes between the ABSII and ABSIII in regime type of non-democracy and liberal democracy. For electoral democracy, the change is not significant.

Table 2 summarizes the percentage of people ever attended demonstration or protest march. Overall, similar to the previous analysis in Table 1, there were in-

	$\bar{\mu}_1$ of ABSII	$\bar{\mu}_2$ of ABSIII	95% CI of $\bar{\mu}_2 - \bar{\mu}_1$
Non-Democracy	0.055	0.089	[0.025, 0.044]
Hong Kong		0.033	
China		0.049	
Singapore	0.019	0.062	[0.026, 0.061]
Vietnam	0.024	0.184	[0.135, 0.184]
Malaysia	0.115	0.196	[0.052, 0.110]
Electoral Democracy	0.042	0.043	[-0.008, 0.009]
Mongolia	0.128	0.112	[-0.042 0.010]
Philippines	0.099	0.121	[-0.003 0.047]
Thailand	0.045	0.097	[0.034 0.071]
Indonesia	0.142	0.157	[-0.009 0.041]
Cambodia		0.105	
Liberal Democracy	0.142	0.227	[0.069, 0.102]
Japan	0.273	0.370	[0.063, 0.132]
Korea	0.117	0.144	[0.0003, 0.054]
Taiwan	0.073	0.121	[0.028, 0.069]

Table 1: The percentage of people ever got together with others to raise an issue or sign a petition in different countries of three different regime types.

creasing numbers of people attending demonstration or protest march. The number increases overtime in every countries except for Indonesia, Japan and Taiwan. Nonetheless, the change from the ABSII to ABSII is only statistical significant in China, Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand and Korea. Henceforth, while these countries are mostly non-democracies, we only observe a significant change between the ABSII and ABSIII in regime type of liberal democracy. And Korea was the country that contributes the most to this change in liberal democracy. The number of people who ever attended demonstration or protest march in Korea almost double in the ABSIII.

Table 3 summarizes the percentage of people ever used force or violence for a political cause. Overall, similar to the previous two analyses, there were increasing numbers of people using force or violence for a political cause. The number increases overtime in every countries except for Indonesia, Japan and Taiwan. Nonetheless, the change

	$\bar{\mu}_1$ of ABSII	$\bar{\mu}_2$ of ABSIII	95% CI of $\bar{\mu}_2 - \bar{\mu}_1$
Non-Democracy	0.015	0.035	[0.015, 0.025]
Hong Kong		0.043	
China	0.012	0.031	[0.013, 0.026]
Singapore	0.009	0.014	[-0.004, 0.014]
Vietnam	0.007	0.025	[0.008, 0.029]
Malaysia	0.040	0.062	[0.005, 0.040]
Electoral Democracy	0.056	0.059	[-0.005, 0.011]
Mongolia	0.063	0.064	[-0.019, 0.020]
Philippines	0.070	0.079	[-0.012, 0.030]
Thailand	0.032	0.065	[0.017, 0.048]
Indonesia	0.064	0.061	[-0.020, 0.014]
Cambodia		0.026	
Liberal Democracy	0.042	0.043	[-0.008, 0.009]
Japan	0.027	0.023	[-0.016, 0.007]
Korea	0.029	0.054	[0.009, 0.041]
Taiwan	0.061	0.057	[-0.020, 0.012]

Table 2: The percentage of people ever attended demonstration or protest march in different countries of three different regime types.

from the ABSII to ABSII is only statistical significant in Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia. As for the regime type, the changes are only significant under non-democracy and electoral democracy.

Table 4 demonstrated the percentage of people taking non-electoral participation. Overall, there were increasing number of people taking non-electoral participation. The changes are significant in all three regime types. However, in Mongolia, Indonesia and Korea, the change is trivial. Mongolia is the only country where the number of people taking non-electoral participation decreases in the ABSIII, though the decrease is insignificant.

Figure 1 visually displays the changes of people taking non-electoral participation between the ABSII and ABSIII. Every country except Mongolia was experiencing an increasing of people taking actions of non-electoral participation. Among those

	$\bar{\mu}_1$ of ABSII	$\bar{\mu}_2$ of ABSIII	95% CI of $\bar{\mu}_2 - \bar{\mu}_1$
Non-Democracy	0.009	0.022	[0.008, 0.018]
Hong Kong		0.002	
China			
Singapore	0.007	0.011	[-0.004, 0.012]
Vietnam	0.008	0.035	[0.015, 0.039]
Malaysia	0.012	0.039	[0.014 0.039]
Electoral Democracy	0.014	0.019	[0.001, 0.010]
Mongolia	0.007	0.006	[-0.008, 0.005]
Philippines	0.028	0.040	[-0.002, 0.027]
Thailand	0.020	0.019	[-0.010, 0.010]
Indonesia	0.003	0.023	[0.012, 0.028]
Cambodia		0.007	
Liberal Democracy	0.004	0.005	[-0.001, 0.004]
Japan	0.004	0.003	[-0.005, 0.004]
Korea	0.006	0.011	[-0.002, 0.012]
Taiwan	0.002	0.003	[-0.003, 0.004]

Table 3: The percentage of people ever used force or violence for a political cause in different countries of different regime types

	$\bar{\mu}_1$ of ABSII	$\bar{\mu}_2$ of ABSIII	95% CI of $\bar{\mu}_2 - \bar{\mu}_1$
Non-Democracy	0.03	0.08	[0.05, 0.06]
Hong Kong		0.05	
China	0.01	0.06	[0.04, 0.05]
Singapore	0.01	0.05	[0.02, 0.05]
Vietnam	0.03	0.15	[0.10, 0.15]
Malaysia	0.11	0.16	[0.02, 0.07]
Electoral Democracy	0.09	0.13	[0.03, 0.05]
Mongolia	0.14	0.13	[-0.04, 0.02]
Philippines	0.10	0.12	[0.00, 0.05]
Thailand	0.04	0.10	[0.04, 0.08]
Indonesia	0.15	0.17	[-0.01, 0.04]
Cambodia		0.12	
Liberal Democracy	0.15	0.22	[0.06, 0.09]
Japan	0.25	0.36	[0.07, 0.14]
Korea	0.12	0.12	[-0.02, 0.03]
Taiwan	0.10	0.14	[0.01, 0.06]

Table 4: The percentage of people taking non-electoral participation in different countries of different regime types
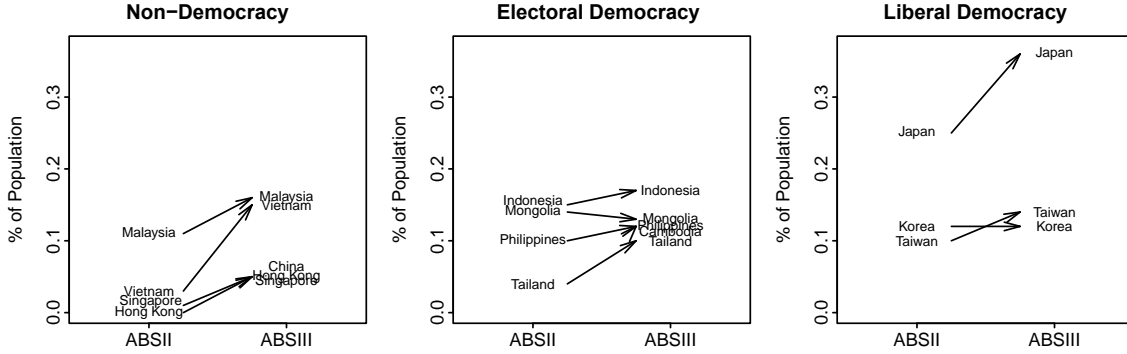
Figure 1: Plots of the changes of people taking non-electoral participation between the ABSII and ABSIII

countries, Vietnam of the non-democracies, Thailand of the electoral democracies, and Japan of the liberal democracies all experienced a great upwards leap. Nonetheless, each has attained the peaks differently. Japan had greater numbers of people raised an issue and signed a petition in the ABSIII than it did in the ABSII. Vietnam had much more people using force or violence for a political cause in the ABSIII than it did in the ABSII. The increase in both actions of raising an issue and signing a petition, and attending demonstration and protest march has attributed to the change in Thailand. Notably, merging these three non-electoral participation in one masks a great deal of variation between countries and regime types. Henceforth, to further explore who chose to take non-electoral participation and why and to take into account of both the country variation and regime type variation, a logistic regression with intercepts varying by country and regime type is used for this purpose.

The basic setup of the logistic regression with varying intercepts is as follow:

$$\Pr(y = 1) = \text{logit}^{-1}\left(\alpha + \gamma_k^{\text{country}} + \gamma_r^{\text{regime}} + \boldsymbol{\beta}\mathbf{X} + \epsilon\right), \text{ for } k = 1, \ldots, 13, \quad r = 1, 2, 3$$

I include several demographic variables as the predictors such as male, household income, education level, and age. I also choose some altitudinal variables such as whether or not a respondent voted in the last national election, whether or not a respondent ever did some campaign activities[1], how much did the respondent interest in politics and the frequency of a respondent in using internet. The formal three variables are used to measure how politically active a respondent is; and hence if he is very active, he should be more likely to attend non-electoral participation. The variable that measures the frequency of a respondent in using internet is included to reflect the fact that many collective actions that took place in recent years were initiated by twitter or other web-based social network platform. Someone who uses internet frequently is presumably more easily exposed to twitter-like initiated activities and thus more likely to attend non-electoral participation. Table 5 displays the regression results of the ABSII and ABSIII. The variable name with "z." prefix indicates that such a variable is rescaled by subtracting its means and dividing by 2 standard deviations.[2] This facilitates the interpretation of and comparison between regression coefficients.

In a nutshell, using a completed case analysis, we ended up with only 3967 observations in the ABSII and 13805 in the ABSIII. The difference is non trivial but the gap might simply because such a measure of non-electoral participation is not well implemented in the ABSII. Henceforth, I will focus the interpretation of regression result on the ABSIII. Where needed, I will make comparison between the ABSII and ABSIII. With such a few observations in the ABSII, the regression lacks

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1. This binary variable is a composite one created by merging several variables. The person is account for doing some campaign activities if he ever attended a campaign meeting or rally, tried to persuade others to vote for a certain candidate or party, and helped out or worked for a party or candidate running in the election.

2. Andrew Gelman, "Scaling regression inputs by dividing by two standard deviations," 27 (2008): 2865–2873.

Table 5: regression

	ABSIII		ABSII	
	Coef	SE	Coef	SE
Intercept	−2.43	(0.23)	−2.99	(0.57)
Male	0.11	(0.05)	−0.004	(0.10)
z.household income	0.13	(0.06)	0.20	(0.12)
z.education	0.34	(0.07)	0.23	(0.14)
z.age	−0.05	(0.07)	0.05	(0.13)
Voted in national election	0.10	(0.08)	0.14	(0.15)
Did campaign activities	0.62	(0.06)	0.67	(0.12)
z.Interested in politics	0.41	(0.06)	0.44	(0.12)
z.Freq. of using internet	0.20	(0.07)	−0.12	(0.12)
Variance in country	0.28		1.07	
Variance in regime type	0.07		0.61	
Num. of Observation	13805		3967	

enough explanatory power and hence most regression coefficients are not statistically significant.

In the ABSIII, most variables are statistically significantly predicting the likelihood of a person attending non-electoral participation. Whether or not a respondent ever voted in a national election does not yield a significant result. Likewise, age is also not a very good predictor which indicates that either age is not linearly associated with people's attending non-electoral participation or there is simply no age effect. A male respondent is 2.5% more likely than a female to participate such activities. One standard deviate increase in a respondent household income will result in 3% increase in probability for him to attend such a activities. One standard deviate increase in a respondent education level also result in 8.5% increase in probability for him to participate such actions. If a respondent ever engaged in campaign activities, he is 15% more likely to participate in non-electoral actions than others who did not. This is the most powerful predictor among others in terms of predicting the outcome. One standard deviation increasing in a respondent interest in politics increases 10% of
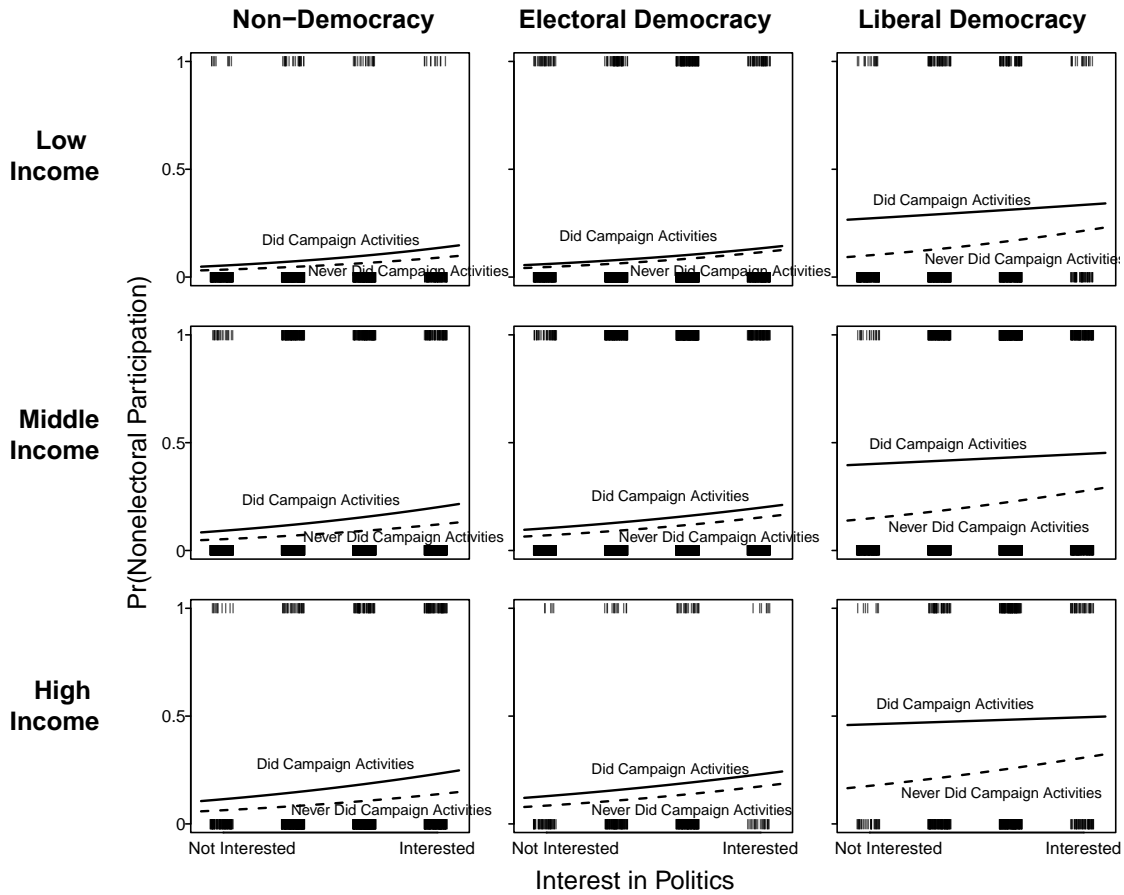
Figure 2: Plots of an effect of interaction between household income and people's interest in politics on the likelihood of people attending non-electoral participation, varying by country and regime type.

likelihood for him to take part in such actions. One standard deviation increasing in a respondent's frequency of using internet increase 5% of likelihood for him to attend non-electoral participation. Such an effect is not significant in the ABSII, showing that a twitter-like initiations might indeed a phenomenon of just a recent invention. Finally, there are more variances between country. The variation between regime type is trivial.

Next, utilizing the results obtained from Table 5, I construct a model with an interaction between household income and people's interest in politics and allow this

effect varies in country and regime type levels. Figure 2 illustrates this result. First of all, the difference between non-democracies and electoral democracies is trivial. However, liberal democracies show quite different patterns from the other two regime types. Household income level does not yield much of difference between each level. Yet, there is a minimal effect showing that a respondent is more likely to participate in non-electoral actions if his family income is of a higher level.

Richer respondents who did campaign activities is more likely than those who did not to attend non-electoral participation. Such an effect is also trivial though. A respondent, who resided in non-democratic and electoral democratic countries, would be more likely to take non-electoral actions if he is more interested in politics. Nonetheless, for a respondent who resided in liberal democratic countries, he is less likely to take non-electoral actions if his interest in politics increases. The effect of respondents' interest in politics is trivial and insignificant.

Finally, whether or not a respondent did campaign activities is indeed a significant predictor only for those who resided in liberal democratic countries. For those who resided in non-democracies and electoral democracies, conducting campaign activities does not translate into significantly more attendance of non-electoral participation. One reason to account for this regime variation might be the very nature of the regime. For one thing, the election is more real, meaningful and competitive in liberal democracies and hence the campaign activities are more effective and required more involvement.

Several points to conclude this paper. First, there is more variation between country than between regime type. Secondly, the very nature of the regime type reflects on the choice of non-electoral participation. Thirdly, male, rich and highly educated people are more likely to take part in non-electoral participation; age, on the other hand, does not matter much. Fourthly, a politically active person is for sure

more likely to attend non-electoral actions. Fifthly, an internetholic is more likely to attend such actions in recent years as the ways of gathering people are now more web-based. Last but not the least, more efforts needed to be done to unravel the reasons why people attended non-electoral participation. This paper once more serves only a preliminary analysis. A more theoretically driven model should be adopted to be able to provide meaning answers to such a question.