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A Comparative Survey of
DEMOCRACY, GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

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Electoral Participation under
Diverse Regimes in East Asia

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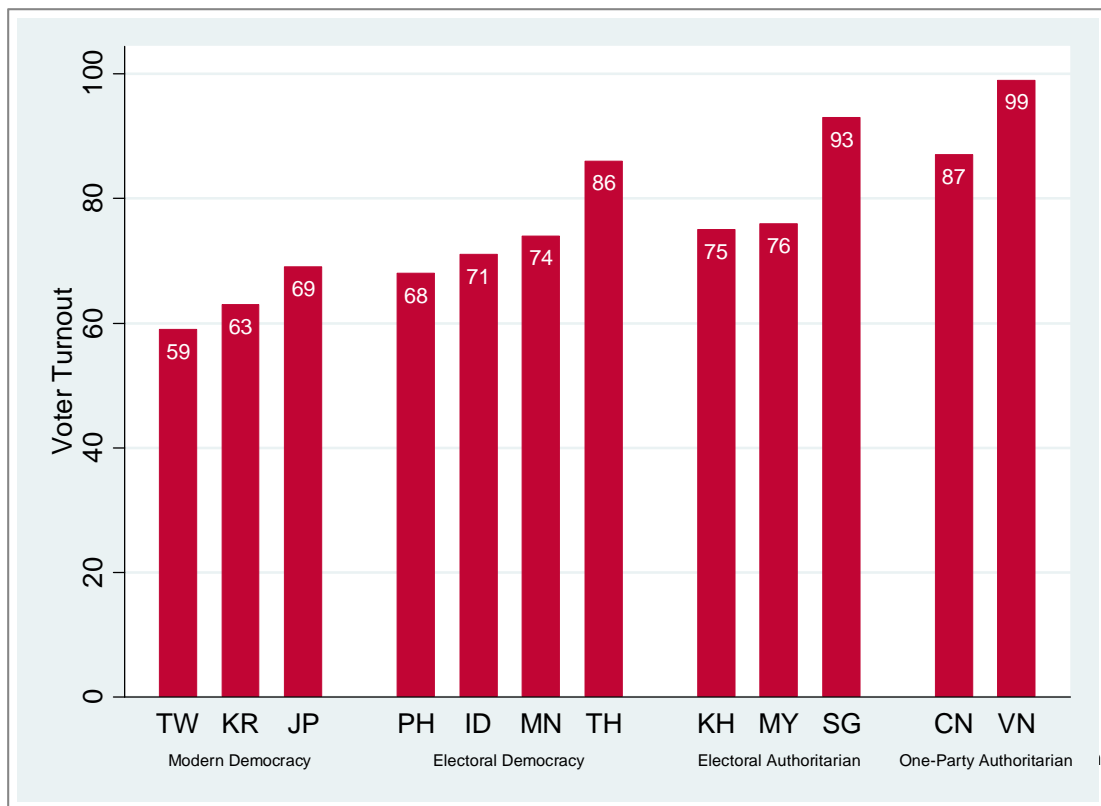
Elections are generally considered as the most essential element of democratic politics. Regular elections provide citizens not only a mechanism for popular choice of leaders and representatives who will translate citizens' wishes into public policy, but also an opportunity confirm or reserve their support for the incumbent. The mechanism thus enables the public to hold elected officials accountable for their policy decisions and outcomes. Given the importance of elections to modern democracy, citizens' participation in elections is prerequisite. Low and declining voter turnout at elections indicates the lack of citizen involvement, claiming that eroding levels of political involvement pose serious threats to democracy.

Democracy, however, does not monopolize elections. A growing number of authoritarian regimes had gradually employed the electoral mechanism, relocating themselves in the "grey zone" between liberal democracy and full-blown authoritarianism (Snyder 2006). On the one hand, regular and competitive elections are adopted as the means of selecting governments, designed to allow multi-party competition through secret ballots. On the other hand, despite the installation of competitive elections and challenge from the opposition camp, the same party remains in power for long periods of time and keeps a firm grip on every perceptible. Totalitarian regimes such as pre-communist Eastern Europe countries and China also launched limited choice election in the 1970s. Although party competition was still not allowed, voters could select among different candidates.

Due to the widespread and importance of elections, political scientists have long studied electoral turnouts and why people refrain from voting. Through the adoption of electoral mechanisms in non-democratic countries, some scholars have shifted their interests toward electoral participation in the regimes (Diamond, 2002; Geddes, 2005; Hermet, Rose, & Rouquie, 1978; Levitsky & Way, 2002; Magaloni, 2006; Schedler, 2006, 1-23). The general finding shows that despite the lack of competitiveness and fairness, elections in less democratic countries have higher electoral turnouts (Geddes 2005, Simpser 2005, Magaloni 2006, Friedgut 1979). Figure 1 demonstrates the voter turnout rate in the recent elections in East Asia, exactly fitting the observation above. In modern democracy such as Japan, Korea, and Taiwan where competitive elections

have been regularly and fairly practiced for decades, the turnout rate rarely exceeds 70%. In contrast with their advanced predecessors, although the fairness of elections is doubtful,¹ electoral democracy and authoritarian generally enjoy high turnout rates. Even though we take compulsory voting into account and remove Singapore and Thailand from the observations, the rest countries still have over 70% turnout rates.² More strikingly, in one-party authoritarian regimes such as China and Vietnam, in spite of their limited choices, more than 90% of the eligible citizens cast their ballots. Simply put, Figure 1 demonstrates a puzzle: the more competitive and fairer the elections, the less likely voters are getting to the voting booth.

Figure 1 Recent Electoral Turnout in East Asia



Source: IEDA, <http://www.idea.int/vt/countryview.cfm>

- a. The turnout rate in China was provided by
- b. Compulsory voting in Singapore and Thailand

¹ In Thailand, the 2006 coup was resulted from Thaksin's alleged vote buying and corruption. In Mongolia, the 2008 post-election riot also stems for the challenge of electoral fraud. In Malaysia, the 9th May, the election day of the 2013 Malaysia general election is called the “darkest day in Malaysia” due to the reported irregularities in the conduct of the election. In Philippines, a third of all Philippine cities and towns were in danger of erupting in violence and riots during elections in the 2010 election.

² Voting at Singapore's elections or parliamentary elections is compulsory for all eligible citizens. Failing to show up in the voting booth without a reasonable explanation will be fined 50 Singapore dollars (about 40 USD). In Thailand, although voting is also compulsory, there is no penalty on the violation.

The counterintuitive finding above should not be interpreted as a negative association between the competitiveness and fairness of elections and voter turnouts, but indicates the different meanings of voting in various regimes. To investigate why some people participate in elections while others do not in different regimes, in this manuscript, inheriting the legacy of political psychology and rational choice, we investigate the meaning of voting from two distinct perspectives: voting as a civic duty and voting as an instrument. From either perspective, we assert that voting provides a connection between citizens and their government. As the role elections play in the political system varies across different regimes, the logic behind voting fluctuates accordingly.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows: Section 2 reviews the two different meanings of electoral participation: A duty view from political psychology which views voting as a civic duty in modern democracy, and an instrumental view from rational choice, which considers voting as an instrument to hold government accountable. No matter from which perspective we examine the meaning of voting, both of the two theories imply the connection between electoral participation and the political system as a whole. That is, when a citizen makes a voting decision, she is aware of the meaning of her vote with regard to the political system and how the ballot might influence policy outcomes and government composition. Such a perception not only changes in responses to citizens' attitude toward politics in the individual level, but also varies across different regimes. Therefore, in addition to citizens' attitude toward the government and the political system, their perception of the competitiveness of elections in political systems, and her opinions on government accountability, we claim that regime types should matter to electoral engagement.

Section 3 sets out to discuss the meaning and characteristics of elections in four different types of political regimes: modern democracy, electoral democracy, electoral authoritarian, and one-party authoritarian. Especially, we focus on the role elections play in the political system, including their influence on government formation, whether elected legislators and the judicial system are capable of checking and balancing the executive, the fairness and competitiveness of elections, and whether elections shape the legitimacy of regulating authorities. Together with the discussion in Section 2, we assert that given the different roles of voting in the four political systems, the logic behind citizens' voting should be divergent across regime types.

In the fourth section, we apply the ABS Wave III data to examine the relationship between voting and four major explanatory variables: trust in government, regime support, vertical accountability, and horizontal accountability. The former two factors refer to the duty view from political psychology, and the latter two variables reflect the rational choice argument. An interesting observation is that, after

conducting a mixed-effect analysis, each of the four variables has a significant association with a regime. While electoral engagement in modern democracy and one-party authoritarian are respectively associated with citizens' regime support and trust in government, in electoral democracy and electoral authoritarian, it is negatively correlated with horizontal and vertical accountabilities. This finding evidences our argument that the motivation behind voters' electoral participation varies with regard to the role elections play in various political systems. The final section we offer our conclusion.

Voting as a Civic Duty

Scholars have long been considering voting as a duty of democracy. In addition to the cost and the expected benefit of voting, Downs (1957, 260) assumes that the value of voting per se, which refers to the social responsibility in return from electoral participation determine whether to get to the polls. Along with thoroughly interpreting Downs' model, Riker and Ordeshook (1968) formalize it as $R = BP - C + D$, where the famous D-term refers to the civic duty of voting.³

What does the sense of citizen duty means? Despite the deliberation above, rational choice has not clearly defined the contents of the civic obligation. Instead, this concern has been captured by political psychologists. Campbell, Gurin, and Miller (1954, 194) defined the duty of voting as "the feeling that oneself and others ought to participate in the political process" and further measure it by querying the respondents' opinion on the following statements: (1) It is not so important to vote when you know your party does not have a chance to win. (2) A good may local elections are not important enough to bother with. (3) So many other people vote in the national elections that it does not matter much to me whether I vote or not. (4) If a person does not care how an election comes out he should not vote in it. The more interviewees disagree with the statements above, the more they are aware of their citizen duty.⁴ Blais (2000, 93) further defines the duty as "the belief that not voting in a democracy is wrong". He claims that due to their strong belief in democracy, people think voting in a free and fair election is the basic democratic right, which needs to be cherished. The sense of voting obligation encourages voters to cast their ballots despite the outweighing cost of voting (Loewen and Dawes 2012). Therefore, Political psychologists argue that voting has been generally internalized as one of the foundation of democracy. The sense of duty can be derived from "complying with the "ethic of voting", from affirming allegiance to the political system or demonstrating

³ For the rest notations, R refers to the reward of voting; BP represent the product of a citizen's benefit of voting times the probability the citizen will win the election; and C indicates the inevitable cost of voting.

⁴ However, Blais argues these questions do not directly measure the extent of a sense of duty. See Blais (2000, 94) for details.

one's own efficacy, from expressing a partisan preference, or even from the act of deciding or going to the polls." (Blais and Young 2000, 40). The more a citizen supports for the democratic regime, the more likely she will get to the booth.

The logic behind the sense of citizen duty implies the self-recognition of the connection between citizens and the political system. That is, while a citizen make a decision of voting, in addition to the benefit she might receive from voting, the probability that the vote might alter the electoral outcome and the cost of getting to the booth, she also links herself with the political system and consider the meaning of voting to democracy. For citizens who view the right to vote in a free and fair election as the most basic democratic right, and believe living in such a democratic society is better than in a non-democratic one, they would cherish the right to vote and feel guilty if they fail to vote (Blais 2000, 93). Güth and Hannelore's experiment (1997) also finds that a majority of experimentees would not trade their voting right at the maximal price of DM 200. The result makes them conclude that the individual right of voting appears to be something precious.

In other words, the sense of voting duty represents the fundamental support for democracy. The more the voter views voting as her indispensable responsibility, the more likely she will get to the polls. Numerous empirical studies have proven the influence of civic duty on electoral participation. Blais reviews survey data from Canada, Britain, France, and the United States, concluding that a majority of citizens in these democratic countries view voting as a duty (Blais 2000, 94). In addition, scholars also find that trust in political institutions also has a positive association with electoral participation (Fraser 1970). Cox (2003) studies the declining electoral participation in the EU parliamentary elections and national elections. She finds that the voting turnout in the 1999 European parliament election has a significant association with citizens' general confidence in political institutions. Moreover, the study further shows that voting turnout is significantly associated with a difference in parliamentary trust levels.

Voting as Instrument

In addition to the civic duty, voting is also considered as a means for holding electoral officials accountable for their behavior, policies, and policy outcomes. Regular and contested elections not only provide citizens a mechanism to select their representatives and government, but also simultaneously offer them a means to hold elected officials accountable for their actions. Once officials are elected, they have to keep their electoral platform and public preference policy in mind in order to be reelected in the future elections (Dahl 1961, 164). Voters generally evaluate the performance of the elected officials. If they are satisfied with the official, they will

reward him with their votes. Contrarily, if his performance is beyond their expectation, they might vote against him. Failing to fulfill their campaign promises and wrongdoings all put their reelection chances at risk. Therefore, Riker (1982) defines voting as "the notion that voting permits the rejection of candidates or officials who have offended so many voters that they cannot win an election". Empirical evidence from the studies of economic voting supports the ration choice argument. Scholars general agree that poor government performance in national economy is highly associated with the decline in their electoral support (Feldman 1984; Fiorina 1978; 1983; Kiewiet and Rivers 1984; Lewis-Beck 1988; Markus 1988; Nadeau and Lewis-Beck 2001; Powell and Whitten 1993).

The electoral accountability assertion above rests on a premise: the identifiability of responsibility. In order to punish or reward the incumbents with their ballots, citizens need to know who should be responsible for the policy outcomes. If voters can hardly identify who is in charge of the policy, they might not be able to vote against the incumbent. The clarity of responsibility might be blurred by government structure, say, divided government. If the authority of policy making is shared among several parties or factions, then it is hard to identify who should be responsible for the policy failure. Thus, an opposition legislature often becomes an alibi of a failure president (Linz 1994). Similarly, political scientists also consider that it is less likely to hold an incumbent president accountable in his second term.

To sum up, voting provides a mechanism that connects individuals with the democracy. Whenever a voter casts her ballot, she consciously links herself with the political system. For those who view voting as a civic duty, they realize the voting is an indispensable right in modern democracy. Attending to the voting booth shows their support for democracy. For those who utilize their ballots as an instrument to hold electoral officials accountable for their policy outcomes, they are also capable of clarifying the responsibility in order to punish or reward the incumbent.

While most scholars have intensively focused on voting in modern democracy, elections in less democratic, semi-democratic, pseudo-democratic, and even one-party authoritarianism have not yet been studied sufficiently. Given the discussion above, it is reasonable to argue that when less democratic and authoritarian regimes install the electoral mechanism and allow their citizens, more or less, to engage in politics, the voting decision inevitably reflects citizens' perceptions of the political system and the role voting plays in the system. Hence, voting could have different meanings in different types of political regimes. The institutional context of elections further shapes political actors' goals and strategies (Thelen and Steinmo 1992, 6). In the following section we first roughly classify 12 Asian countries into four groups: modern democracy, electoral democracy, electoral authoritarian, and one-party authoritarian

along with the extent to which voting can influence the politics. We then investigate the characteristics of their political systems from four perspectives: vertical accountability, horizontal accountability, elections, and civil liberties.

Election in Democracy

Despite the dispute about its definition, scholars generally agree with three prerequisites of modern democracy: competitive elections, institutionalized political system, and the rule of laws. In advanced democratic countries, free, fair and competitive elections are regally held in order to elect legislators and to shape the executive branch. The jurisdiction, functions, and political power of political institutes are generally designated by laws and regulations in order to protect people from government infringement of life, liberty and property. Last, but absolutely not the least, in modern democracy, laws are legislated by directly elected legislators. The discussion above highlights two restraints on the overweening power of the executive. The first limitation refers to citizens' control over the government formation through elections, which enable the electorate to regularly evaluate the incumbents and to remove unpopular elected officials from the office. The second constraint is the institutionalization of political institutes, which clearly divide the central government into several branches, each with separate and independent powers. Without the two credible restraints on the overweening executive, Schedler, Diamond, and Plattner (1999, 2) assert that democracy tends to remain shallow, corrupt, vulnerable to plebiscitarian styles of rule, and incapable of maintaining good quality of governance.

Clearly, the two constraints above directly or indirectly link to public approval. Nevertheless, not all democratic counties equip themselves with the two functions. Some newly established democracies meet the basic requirement of democracy by generally holding free, fair, and competitive elections and protecting civil liberty. In term of the quality of governance, however, they are far behind consolidated democracy. In the fledging democracy, government leaders act a paternal role, empowered to do what they think is best for the people. They do not necessarily fulfill their campaign promises, nor constrained by other institutions such as courts and the legislature. Election is their only goal. In order to be reelected, politicians establish strong patron-client relations with their constituency electorate. Each level of elections has long been controlled by local politicians and factions. Voters trade their votes for material gains and policy favors and elected officials receive kickbacks from their "constituency services". Legislators habitually abuse political power and intervene in the policy making process to favor their personal interests. Due to the lack of institutionalization of and sanctions between political institutes, rent-seeking activities such as corruption, bribe-taking, pork-delivering are widespread in every

level of government. Thus although the government is nominally elected by the electorate and entitled by the constitution, the quality of governance deteriorates and the risk of authoritarian reversal exists. O'Donnell (1994) classifies these fledging democratic countries as delegated democracy, to distinguish it from institutionalized and consolidated representative democracy.

Elections in Electoral Authoritarian

Like democratic regimes, electoral authoritarian also employs electoral systems. However, unlike their democratic counterparts, elections in the authoritarian countries serve to the dominance parties. The authoritarian government uses elections to co-opt the opposition (Beaulieu 2006, Gandhi and Reuter 2008), to identify the base of their support and opposition strongholds (Ames 1970, Magaloni 2006, Brownlee 2007), to reduce the risk of violent removal from the office (Cox 2008), and to establish legitimacy at home or abroad (Waterbury 1999, Schedler 2006, 13). Although elections and some democratic procedural norms are regularly held in electoral authoritarian regimes, power-holders can determine the rules of political competition. The incumbent party routinely abuses government authority, harasses opposition candidates and their supporters, and maneuver electoral rules in favor of its dominance without employing a high degree of coercion.

For instance, in Malaysia, elections are regularly held as specified by the country's constitution. Voting franchise has also been generally granted to eligible citizens and balloting has been secret. However, in order to entrench itself in power, the dominant United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) uses its power to design laws and amend the Constitution to protect the regime from significant political challenge. While allowing opposition parties and associations to form and gather support, at the same time, the UMNO government has put limits on these activities. Opposition parties, though able to win some parliamentary seats, have been prevented systematically from winning enough to form new federal government. Security legislation and harassment tactics constrain their mobilizing activities prior to general elections. The Internal Security Act (ISA), which allows for indefinite detention without trial, has been applied to deal with leaders of opposition parties and social associations. The Societies Act requires every association to get permission for its establishment (Jesudason 2008). A severe malapportionment of districts and gerrymandering produce great electoral disproportionality (Case 1997). The opposition's 40%-45% popular votes only turn out to be 20%-30% seats in the *Dewan Rakyat*.

Similarly, in Singapore, although the basic civil liberties and rights are clearly protected by the Constitution, the Internal Security Act (ISA) allows for detention

without charges or trial for an indefinite period, muffling the opposition and dissatisfaction with the People's Action Party (PAP) government in the name of political stability. Moreover, in order to secure its monopoly on dominance, PAP accused opposition politicians, including J. B. Jeyaretnam, who firstly broke the PAP monopoly of the Parliament in 1981, and the President and candidates of the opposition parties. The special electoral system, Group Representation Constituencies (GRC) is also systematically advantageous to the PAP (Hill and Lian 1995, 127).⁵ In order to maximize its seat share, since 1997 the government not only has reduced the number of single member districts, but also has raised the electoral barriers by increasing the electoral deposits. Moreover, the PAP has gradually increased the district magnitude from 3 to 6 since 1988. The highly disproportional electoral outcomes of the GRC discourage the opposition parties as well as their voters. For instance, in the 2011, the opposite parties totally garnered 40% of votes, but only 6 out of 87 seats. To bar the opposition from the parliament, the PAP consistently manipulates the electoral rules.

Elections in One-Party Authoritarian

Like electoral authoritarian regimes, one-party authoritarians install elections for maintaining their dictatorship. Elections not only may help communist party leaders distribute political offices and its accompanying spoils to most popular members, but also encourage each member to buy and mobilize voters (Lust-Okar 2006, Blaydes 2008), and hence consolidate the patron-client relationship. In addition, elections provide national-level rulers with information about the loyalty and competence of their own party cadres (Birney 2007). In some contexts, authoritarian elections appear to promote policy congruence between citizens and public officials and voter efficacy. By installing elections, the dictators can further signal to domestic and international audiences that the regime is based on popular will (Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009). China introduced a new election law in 1979 which mandated open nominations, secret ballots, more than one candidate, and direct elections to local people's congresses (Shi 1997, 34-41), but the grassroot elections are as yet an ineffective arena for political influence (Kuan and Lau 2002, 300). Between 1980 and 1983, the post-Mao government further replaced communes with township governments, which are governed by directly elected village committees. In Vietnam, National Assembly elections have been regularly held since 1987 and deputies are directly elected by ordinary citizens.

In the one-party authoritarian regime, the installation of the electoral mechanism

⁵ In GRC candidates come together to stand for elections to Parliament as a group and each voter casts a ballot for a team of candidates, and not for individual candidates.

strengthens the communist party legitimacy among the public at large (Nathan 2003; O'Brien and Li 2000), shaping a unanimous popularity of the regime (Shi 1999). To consolidate their dominance, despite the installation of regular electoral mechanism, the authoritarian contests are limited in choices. Although the electoral law regulates that the number of candidates in each precinct must be one and a half to two times the number of deputies to be elected, it rejected free electoral competition associated with "bourgeois democracy," forbidding the formation of political parties. Therefore, local party leaders quickly regained control of the electoral process and satellite party members and non-party members are worked out in advance and in turn elected (McCormick 1990, 134-135). In other words, the electorate can only choose among different communist members.⁶ Furthermore, since elected rural officials cannot challenge central government policy, citizens are clearly aware that their votes have no influence on central policy and personnel.

Similarly, in Vietnam, although voters are allowed to directly elect their deputies and the government decentralizes the candidate nomination procedure, the elections remain under the Communist Party of Vietnam's (CPV) control. Candidate nomination takes place at the provincial level and is controlled by the electoral committees, which are staffed by leading party and government leaders in the province (Gainsborough 2005, 60). Because the freedom of association is banned, voters can only choose among CPV members and weak independents sanctioned by the electoral committee. National politicians, party central committee members, provincial party secretaries, and members of the military and police were always reelected. Although independents have been recruited into the National Assembly since the 1997 election, in general they can hardly compete with communist candidates.⁷

⁶ Shi (1999, 1118) calls it semi-competition.

⁷ In 2002, 51 out of 498 independents were elected in the National Assembly. However, less than five independents were elected in the following elections.

Table 1 The Comparison of Voting in Different Types of Political Regimes

	Modern Democracy	Electoral Democracy	Electoral Authoritarian	One-party Authoritarian
Executive	Elected from Direct Election	Elected from Direct Election	Elected from Direct Election	Party controlled
Legislature	Elected from Direct Election	Elected from Direct Election	Elected from Direct Election	Party controlled
Check and Balance	Institutionalized	Non-Institutionalized	No	No
The Role of Voting in Political System	Source of Legitimacy	Source of Legitimacy	Cosmetic	Policy tool
Characteristics of Elections	Regular, Competitive, Free, and Fair	Regular, Competitive, free, and fair with minor problems	Non-competitive	Limited choices
Scope of Elections	National	National	National	Limited to Village Election

Table 1 summarizes the discussion above and compares the role of elections in four different regimes. In consolidated democracy where elections provide legitimacy for the government. Citizens are empowered to select their ideal politicians and to remove unpopular ones from the office through free, fair, and competitive elections. The elected representatives and judges play a deterrent role in checking and balancing the executive power. Given the importance of their ballots to the political system, voters tend to view electoral participation as a civic duty for supporting democracy.

In contrast with elections in modern democracy, in electoral democracy although electoral losers oftentimes challenge electoral outcomes, the electoral procedure is generally free and fair. Through democratic elections, the electorate remains capable of choosing their representatives and government leaders. However, due to the low level of institutionalization, electoral officials can hardly be held accountable by the parliament, the judicial system, and even citizens. Political elites exercise power on behalf of themselves instead of the citizens, and are less capable of checking and balancing the executive branch. Therefore, no matter which parties win the office, corruption remains widespread and the government still performances poorly.

Table 2 Government Performance of South East Asia Countries

	Electoral Democracy			Electoral Authoritarian	
	Philippine	Thailand	Indonesia	Singapore	Malaysia
GDP Growth	7.6	7.8	6.2	14.8	7.2
CPI	2.4	3.5	2.8	9.3	4.4
Civil Liberties	3	4	3	4	4
Political Rights	4	5	2	5	4

Unlike electoral democracy, electoral authoritarians generally have better government performance. Table 2 shows that in terms of controlling corruption and accelerating economic growth, electoral authoritarian countries generally perform better than electoral democracies. However, despite allowing the opposition to run for election, the authoritarian government has put strict constraints on civil liberties and political rights. In addition, the dominant party manipulates the electoral rules, making the opposition compete with the incumbent on an uneven battlefield. Citizens can neither hold elected officials accountable for their behavior and policy outcomes nor remove them from the office. Therefore, in contrast with other factors, in soft electoral authoritarian, the lack of vertical accountability should concern the electorate the most.

In one-party authoritarian regimes, due to the lack of freedom of association, the opposition does not even exist. Elections are generally viewed as an instrument the authoritarian government applies to implement logistically political decisions throughout the realm, instead of a source of legitimacy. McCormick (1998) studies citizens' attitude toward the new local elections in China and Vietnam. While many respondents expressed generally support for people's congresses in principle, he also finds the elections did not provide a meaningful link between voters and candidates in either country (McCormick 1998, 135). In other words, although the new elections provide limited choices and competitiveness, citizens realize that the legitimacy of the communist government does not come from their ballots. Therefore, voting in one-party authoritarian regimes should be viewed as citizens' short term support for the government.

Empirical Test and Data Analysis

To examine the different meanings of voting in diverse political regimes, we use the Asian Barometer Survey Wave III data. The selection of East Asia countries as our research target has two advantages: First, this region contains all four different types of regimes mentioned above. Japan, Korea, and Taiwan are classified as consolidated democracy. The Mongolia, Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia belong to electoral democracy. Electoral Authoritarian includes Singapore, Cambodia, and Malaysia. China and Vietnam are defined as one-party communist authoritarian. Second, while the country diversity needs to be taken into account, the regional homogeneity in historical and cultural backgrounds is also considerable. For instance, Japan, Taiwan, Korea, Hong Kong, Mongolia, China, Singapore and Vietnam are generally defined as Confucian Asia (Inoguchi and Shi 2009). The Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, Singapore, Cambodia, and Malaysia also share similar colonial and historical experience.

[1] Dependent Variable:

Different from previous research on voting decisions which analyzes whether respondents vote in the recent election (e.g. Landry, Davis, and Wang 2010; Shi 1999; Matsusaka and Palda 1999; Green and Shachar 2000), in this paper to inspect the various meanings of voting in different regime types, we use the question which asks interviewees to think of whether he/she voted or not ever since you became eligible for voting and apply the response as the dependent variable. Respondents are required to choose among the four alternatives based the frequency of their electoral participation: [1] Hardly ever votes (habitual nonvoting), [2] Voted in some elections (causal voting), [3] Voted in most elections (serious voting), [4] Voted in every elections (habitual voting).⁸ Because the decision of voting or nonvoting in a single-shot election usually varies due to diverse exogenous factors such as weather, distance to the voting booth, registration, personal concerns, etc., we claim that examining habitual voting behavior from a long-term perspective provides a more meaningful and consistent measure of electoral participation.

[2] Independent Variables:

In this paper, we investigate how citizens' trust in government and regime support, their perception of vertical and that of horizontal accountability in their country associate with their habitual voting behavior. The first two factors refer to the civic duty argument and the last two variables are associated with the instrument argument.

a. Specific and Diffuse Support:

To explain the low approval rating but consolidated and functional political system of modern democracies, Easton (1965) classifies political support into two types along with its objects: specific support and diffuse support. According to Easton, specific support indicates the support for government or authority, including officeholders, politicians, and political organizations. It generally stems from the satisfaction with the incumbent government's performance, including honesty and other ethical qualities of public officials, their ability and efficiency, the correctness of their policy decisions, and their policy outcomes (Stokes 1962:64). Because it is based on citizens' evaluation of the incumbent, specific support is short-term, conditional, and fluctuated.

In contrast with specific support, diffuse support refers to the universal, less conditional, long-term, and more consistent belief toward the general political system or the regime (Almond and Verba 1965, 63; Easton 1975, 444). It can be viewed as

⁸ The classification is introduced from Fowler (2006).

general trust that the system can consistently provide satisfying outcomes, or be defined as the legitimacy of political regimes. Therefore, social grievance might not have the same degree of gravity for a political system as for the incumbent government. In spite of widespread discontent with the government, citizens might remain faithful to the political system. In other word, unlike interest-based specific support, regime support is more ideology-based.

Given the discussion above, we measure specific support for the incumbent government by ask interviewees to reply how much trust they have in the national government. As to the measure of their diffuse support for the regime, we apply six questions which relate to respondents opinions on their political system: [1] Over the long run, our system of government is capable of solving the problems our country faces; [2] In general, I am proud of our system of government; [3] A system like ours, even if it runs into problems, deserves the people's support; [4] I would rather live under our system of government than any other that I can think of; [5] Compared with other systems in the world, would you say our system of government should be replaced, needs major change, needs minor change, or works fine as it is? [6] We can generally trust the people who run our government to do what is right.

b. Vertical Accountability:

Vertical Accountability refers to the mechanism through which citizens can hold their electoral officials and government accountable for their behavior and policy. The existence of vertical accountability is preconditioned on the doctrines of democracy, that is, citizens can exercise their participatory right to choose the rulers, and they can freely express their opinions and demands. Therefore, in most democratic countries, vertical accountability generally indicates, but does not limit to, free, fair and competitive elections which allow citizens to punish or reward incumbents by voting for or against them (Schedler, Diamond, and Plattner, 1999, 3). In addition to electoral competition, media and civil association can also act as accounting agencies that provide necessary information for citizens to evaluate government performance if government does not sanction the contents (Schedler 1999, 17-18).

To measure citizens' perception of the extent of vertical accountability in their country, we ask respondents about their opinions on the following three statements: [1] People have the power to change a government they don't like; [2] Between elections, the people can hold the government responsible for its actions; and [3] How often do government officials withhold important information from the public view? The more interviewees agree with the first two statements and transparency of government information, the higher the degree of vertical accountability.

c. Horizontal Accountability:

In contrast with vertical accountability which relies on citizens' control over

government, horizontal accountability refers to the check and balance among state agencies. It especially refers to the institutionalized and legalized power of political institutions that is capable of routinely monitoring, sanctioning, or even impeaching other institutions' abuse of political power or wrongdoings (O'Donnell 1999, 29). Traditionally, horizontal accountability indicates the constitutional specification of the check and balance between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. However, it also includes other institutions such as the electoral commission, the independent commission against corruption, constitutional courts, etc.

The ABS survey designs two questions to measure the extent of horizontal accountability from citizens' perspective: [1] To what extent is the legislature capable of keeping government leaders in check? [2] When government leaders break the laws, there is nothing the court can do. The more respondents perceive that the legislature and the court can oversee the executive's unlawful behavior, the higher the extent of horizontal accountability. Thus, we incorporate respondents' replies on the two questions with factor analysis to generate a measure for the horizontal accountability.

d. Control Variables:

In addition to the independent variables, we further introduce respondents' perception freedom of speech and association, the extent of their commitment to political traditionalism, their political interests, and their non-electoral participation in protest, petition, and other self-help activities in to the model. We also include demographic factors such as gender, age, household income level, social status, urban-rural residency.

[3] Model and Results

Given the model specified above, to examine the various meanings of voting in different regimes, we classify the data into four groups along with the regime type of Asian countries. Moreover, in order to deal with the heterogeneity between different countries, we incorporate with the data with mixed effect model. The statistical results of four different regimes are posted on Table 3.

We first examine the meaning of voting in Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. As demonstrated in Table 3, among the four explanatory variables, only regime support has a positive association with respondents' habitual voting behavior, that is, the more citizens support for the democratic system, the more likely they will engage in voting, *ceteris paribus*. This finding is coincident with Blais (2000), which views voting as a civic duty. As emphasized above, free, fair, and competitive elections are the origin of the legitimacy of modern democracy. Living in the democratic system, citizens generally acknowledge the importance of voting to the system. Thus, for those who cherish the voting right and identify with democracy, they view voting as an

indispensable right, willing to fulfill their democratic obligation.

While the same statistical model is applied to analyze voting in electoral democracy, the coefficients of the four explanatory variables present a different story: All other things being equal, only horizontal accountability has a significant, but negative association with voting in Mongolia, Philippines, Thailand, and Indonesia. That is, the more people perceive that the legislative and judicial branches cannot sanction executive branch's wrongdoings, the more likely they get to the voting booth. This finding reflects the instrumental view of voting. In electoral democracy, although elections allow voters to remove unpopular government, nevertheless, due to the lack of check and balance to the executive, corruption, power abuse, and poor government performance deteriorate the quality of democracy. Therefore, for those concerned with the government's unlawful behavior, they are more likely to express their worries by electoral participation.

Table 3 also shows a negative association between the extent of vertical accountability and voting in electoral authoritarian regimes. Namely, the more citizens think they cannot hold government accountable, the more likely they will participate in elections. As discussed above, electoral authoritarian features unfair electoral competition, the absence of freedom of association and speech, and government sanction over mass media. Citizens not only have no chance to hold government accountable for their policy by removing them from the office, but also lack the required information to evaluate the incumbent party. Being aware of the deficiency of vertical accountability, voters concerned with unfair elections and the absence of liberal right might drive them to vote against the incumbent party and to express their discontent. Contrarily, for those consistently supporting for the incumbent authoritarians, expecting the electoral success of the incumbent party without tough challenge, they are less likely to vote.

The last regime investigated in Table 3 is one-party authoritarian. Controlling for other variables, the estimated coefficients show that only trust in government is positively correlated with electoral participation. In one-party authoritarian states, since elections neither allow dissenters to participate in the competition, nor select representatives who can influence decision-making and policy outcomes, the electoral mechanism only serves as a policy tool which allows the communist party to recruit popular party members, to thoroughly penetrate society, and to provide an universal admired image. Knowing their votes neither influence policy outcomes, nor provide legitimacy to the regime, voters simply cast their ballots to show their support for the incumbent government.

We further investigate how other control variables are associated with voting in different regimes. First of all, Table 3 shows that political competition is positively

associated with voting attendance. Although in electoral Singapore, Malaysia, Cambodia, China and Vietnam where electoral rules are generally disadvantageous to the opposition, the more voters perceive that elections provide real choices and all candidates race on the even field, the more likely they will participate in elections. This finding matches Shi (1999) and Landry, Davis, and Wang (2010), which assert that the perception of competition as choice between candidates is sufficient to engage voters. In addition, we also can find that respondents' interests in politics are positively associated with their habitual voting in most countries, except China and Vietnam. This finding strengthens the conventional studies on voting in authoritarian regimes which assert that high electoral turnout results from coercion and mobilization, instead of citizens' political interests (Friedgut 1979, 116-118). To pursue an image of unanimous support for the communist party, electoral officials mobilized voters to get to the ballot booth (Shi 1999, 1134). Finally, Table 3 also shows that in contrast with youngsters and urban residents, the aged citizens and rural citizens are generally more likely to engage in voting.

Conclusion

While the adoption of elections in authoritarian has gradually drawn attention of political scientists, the understanding of electoral participation in less democratic countries remains far behind the studies of voting in modern democracy. Due to the lack of understanding of elections in non-democratic regime, while some scholars are optimistic and view the elections in non-democratic regimes as a big step toward democratization (O'Brien and Li 2000; Shi 1999), others hold back (e.g. Landry, Davis and Wang 2010; Zhong and Chen 2002) or even considers them as a means of buttressing the dominance of authoritarian regimes (Gandhi and Przeworski 2006, 21; Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009; McCormick 1998).

However, elections vary remarkably across countries and different types of regime. The extent to which varying political structure affects voting behavior remains largely unexplored. Thus, this manuscript sets out to explore the logic behind electoral participation in four different types of regimes. We find that voting not only evinces citizens' attitudes toward politics, but also reflect their concerns with regard to the political system. In modern democracy, the statistical results show that support for the democratic regime has a positive association with voting. In other words, in advance democracy, the sense of civic duty plays a determinant role on voting decisions. However, this factor does not appear to be significant in other three types of regimes. In electoral democracy, citizens' concern about the absence of checks and balances on executive powers drives them to go to the voting booth. In electoral authoritarian, the perception of the lack of vertical accountability encourages the

electorate to cast their ballots. Finally, the statistics shows that in one-party states only citizens' support for the government has a positive association with voting.

Our study provides at least three contributions to the studies of voting behavior. First, we assert that either from the political psychology perspective or from the rational choice perspective, voting links an individual citizen with the political system. The findings strengthen the neo-intuitionism and evidences that the macro-level institutional factor matters to the micro-level voting behavior. Second, by providing a cross-regime comparison, this study helps us neutrally investigate the meaning of voting in authoritarian regimes. In addition, our paper shows that support for the democratic political system is the major incentive that encourages voters to cast their ballot in modern democracy. Last, but not the least, as stated above, the motivation behind electoral participation in one-party states does not stem from diffuse regime support, but from the short-term support for the government. In other words, citizens are aware that those cosmetic elections are not associated with either government formation or regime legitimacy. Given this finding, it is still too early to predict the democratization of China and Vietnam. Instead, the high turnout rate should be considered as the popularity of the authoritarian communist party.

Table 3 The Analysis of the Meaning of Voting in Diverse Political Regime

	Modern Democracy	Electoral Democracy	Electoral Authoritarian	One-Party Authoritarian
Trust in Government	0.004 0.02	-0.008 0.014	-0.011 0.03	0.181*** 0.044
Regime Support	0.055*** 0.019	0.021 0.014	0.012 0.032	-0.007 0.05
Vertical Accountability	-0.012 0.028	-0.012 0.022	-0.074* 0.042	0.023 0.031
Horizontal Accountability	-0.013 0.024	-0.052*** 0.018	-0.031 0.033	-0.018 0.048
Political Competition	0.104*** 0.027	0.116*** 0.021	0.143*** 0.04	0.237*** 0.028
Freedom	-0.016 0.02	-0.008 0.016	-0.002 0.028	0.15*** 0.04
Political Traditionalism	-0.01 0.052	0.1*** 0.04	0.116 0.074	-0.005 0.104
Political Interest	0.237*** 0.023	0.064*** 0.02	0.096*** 0.036	-0.005 0.051
Political Efficacy	-0.006 0.016	0.003 0.012	-0.04* 0.023	0.078** 0.035
Non-Electoral Participation	0.192*** 0.038	0.01 0.037	0.194*** 0.059	0.022 0.069
Gender	0.039 0.025	0.011 0.022	0.007 0.042	0.106** 0.049
Age	0.021*** 0.001	0.013*** 0.001	0.042*** 0.002	0.015*** 0.002
Education	-0.001 0.008	0.024*** 0.005	0.031*** 0.011	0.02 0.014
Income	0.009 0.011	-0.023** 0.011	0.01 0.019	-0.023 0.019
Social Status	0.03*** 0.008	0.009 0.006	-0.012 0.011	0.018 0.013
Urban-Rural	0.175*** 0.036	0.25*** 0.026	0.213*** 0.055	0.208*** 0.052
Constant	0.906*** 0.235	1.915*** 0.169	0.134 0.311	-0.043 0.366
N	3610	4275	2360	1947
Countries	Japan, Korea, Taiwan	Mongolia, Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia	Singapore, Cambodia, Malaysia	China, Vietnam

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