

Quality of Life in Asia 10

Takashi Inoguchi

# Exit, Voice and Loyalty in Asia

Individual Choice under 32 Asian  
Societal Umbrellas

 Springer

# **Quality of Life in Asia**

Volume 10

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Umbrellas

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

The next four vignettes tell a story of individual choice. They show how individual choices vary and how government and individual choices can impact the outcome.

Tunisian police arrested a street vendor for selling fruits and vegetables without a government permit. Having lost his and his family's means to earning a livelihood, he committed suicide. A swirl of protests against the government gradually and steadily led to what is called the Arab Spring in North Africa and the Middle East on a very wide scale. His suicide is a protest voice opposing government policy. His voice resonated with many citizens in North Africa and the Middle East. It was individually an exit while collectively it was a voice against a regime.

A Japanese vendor in Shinjuku, Tokyo, who for many years operated without a permit, decided to close his "illegal" business. The *koban* (police box in the neighborhood) gave him a retirement gift. For many years, police allowed him to operate his stall, prodding him to change his spot from time to time as a fixed location made it an easy target for policy regulation. He sustained a livelihood for him and his family because of the decision of the local police from the *koban* to treat benignly his illegal vendor status. Individually he chose an exit option as he did not abide by the law. Yet in Japanese society, he was given a free pass of a sort to get around the situation (Imamura 2013).

A Russian farmer from Novosibirsk petitioned the President of the Russian Federation at the Kremlin in Moscow. In the Kremlin, a bureaucratic office receives these petitions and processes a large number of them on the president's behalf. The petitions are usually about a concrete and specific action that the president can benevolently resolve, if he so desires. A small number of petitioners, about 20 or so petitioners per year, decide to self-immolate outside the Kremlin gates. Despair led them to suicide. Individually it is an exit. Collectively it is an exit with callous inattention by the government (Nakamura 2005).

A Chinese peasant from Lufeng, Guandong, did not want the state to confiscate his land for infrastructure and factory development. He joined a group of citizens, criticizing the mayor for encouraging more infrastructure and industry development. A candidate of his liking won a relatively democratic rural election. Once the

new mayor started his office, the party apparatus of the provincial and central governments decided to pacify and appease the mayor by ensuring that the direction of the mayor's policy wishes overlapped with the government's policy objectives. Wang Yang, the provincial party chief of Guangdong province, who was known as a reformist and liberal, won over the new mayor so that policy goals could evolve together. It was individually and collectively a voice (Mori et al. 2012).<sup>1</sup>

As you see from the above, these snapshots of individual action range widely. The contexts and consequences of individual action differ immensely. To systematically capture the range of individual choice in a daily life context on a regional scale of Asia, I have organized the chapters as follows. Chapter 2 examines Albert Hirschmann's concept of exit, voice, and loyalty for an organization (1970) and applies it to the daily life decisions of individuals for a specific problem. The data comes from one of the questions posed in the *AsiaBarometer Survey* project (Inoguchi 2012). The survey, conducted annually from 2003 to 2008, covered a total of 29 Asian societies plus three adjacent societies. In the countries selected for each year's survey, approximately 1000 respondents in each society were interviewed face to face. The survey takes a bottom-up approach and focuses on collecting and analyzing social data of ordinary people. Chapter 3 explains the model specification used to explain the individual choice of exit, voice, and loyalty through a set of variable clusters. Chapter 4 makes an argument for why a focus on the individual in society or bottom-up approach is valuable to scholarship. Chapter 5 sets up the specific problem and the choices presented to the individual and how they can be analyzed through Hirschmann's three option framework of exit, voice, and loyalty. The responses are analyzed by region and by country. Factors that influence individual choice are also examined. Chapter 6 looks at logit regression analysis of the 29 Asian societies. Chapter 7 compares Asian and non-Asian societies in this exploration of choice and the quality of life factors that influence this choice. The chapter also acknowledges the challenges of both conducting cross-national surveys and interpreting these survey results. In the last chapter, discussion is made up the proneness of exit, voice, and loyalty in relation to the societal types drawn from factor analysis of daily life domains, aspects and styles, society by society (Inoguchi 2017). This discussion in one step forward beyond analysis of copy specific proneness to exit, voice and loyalty. Then condition is made. While further analysis relating to societal types may bring us one more step forward, largely country-specific analysis carried out in this book remain to be the basic foundation on which further analysis can be attempted.

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<sup>1</sup>Mori Kazuko and Matsudo Yoko, eds., *Chinjo: Chugoku shakai no teihen kara* (Petition: From the Bottom of Chinese Society), Tokyo: Tohoshoten, 2012.

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## Chapter 2

# Exit, Voice, and Loyalty

Albert Hirschmann formulates individual choices in an organization or in a society as consisting of exit, voice, and loyalty. The organization can be a business organization, a political party, a non-profit civic organization, or anything. Irrespective of the nature, aim, and scope of the organization, individuals face three choices: exit, voice, and loyalty. Hirschmann's interest lies in the relationship among the three as conditions on the organizational quality of life deteriorate. The individual can get out if they don't want to stay; they can raise their hand and register constructive criticism for the betterment of the organization; or they can remain quiet while others harshly critique the organization, thus waving the flag of loyalty. As loyalty becomes a rare commodity, power shifts to those solid and loyal organizational members.

My interest is in what factors lead an individual in an Asian society to choose one of the three options of exit, voice, and loyalty. The factors that I am interested in the relation to quality-of-life components under varying Asian societal umbrellas.

The question we pose to respondents in the *AsiaBarometer Survey* interview is:

You requested a government permit. You were told to wait some time patiently. What would you do? Choose one from among the following seven choices: (1) use connections; (2) nothing can be done; (3) wait and hope that things will go well; (4) write a letter; (5) act without a permit; (6) bribe an official; (7) don't know.

The style of the question needs attention. The question assumes the context in which respondents would choose one of the seven actions. Why not adopt more straightforward questions like: Did you bribe an official? Or did you act without a permit? The most important factor for not posing these types of questions is the predominance of authoritarian politics in many of the 29 surveyed Asian societies. Respondents may not be as forthcoming and may distort their responses as saying that one bribed officials or that one operated a business without a permit, even in the form of a response to an interview, for instance, would cause severe hesitation. In many authoritarian regimes, public opinion companies are often tied to the internal security agency, thus making respondents legitimately apprehensive to answer honestly. Therefore, the direct straightforward question as adopted by the

Transparency International or some others when asking about bribes may not be appropriate in trying to attain responses not unnecessarily distorted.

The crux of the matter is whether the question posed elicits real honest responses. Here, the fundamental issue of getting responses through face-to-face interviews and getting verbal responses to an interviewee in survey research methodology comes up. My answer is that the survey research method has developed in societies where freedom of expression and democracy are reasonably solid. In an extremely authoritarian society where the phrase “open your mouth only to a dentist” is not a joke but has real meaning, survey methods require modification to suit the political reality. Nevertheless, polling has become such a popular practice in business, politics, and academic research for all kinds of society that it is difficult not to use it, even in an authoritarian political context. If that is the case, the wording of a question may as well be made to suit both free and unfree societies. And that is the choice we made in wording the question. Even when considering these restraints, responses can still be “distorted” by subtle and not so subtle changes of wording in a question.

From the Hirschmann framework of exit, voice, and loyalty, I have amalgamated four answers into two categories: “Use connections” and “bribe an official” are amalgamated into a broader voice and “nothing can be done” and “wait and hope” are amalgamated into a broader loyalty. Thus the response patterns move closer to the Hirschmann framework.

## Chapter 3

# Model Specification

To explain the individual choice of exit, voice, and loyalty, the following sets of variable clusters are examined. They are: lifestyles, exposure to globalization, trust in social institutions, assessment of government performance, and demographics. Next is a brief breakdown of what is included in each of the listed clusters.

Lifestyles are relevant in determining whether to choose exit, voice, or loyalty. They include: number of public utilities, home ownership, religiosity, participation in national elections, and patriotism.

Exposure to globalization includes use of Internet, living internationally (includes international friends and foreign travel), and ability to use English.

Satisfaction with aspects of daily life examines housing, friendships, standard of living, household income, health, education, job, neighbors, public safety, conditions of the environment, social welfare system, the democratic system, family life, leisure, spiritual life, your life as a whole, and happiness.

Trust in social institutions examines trust in institutions such as the central government, the army, the legal system, and the police. Assessment of government performance examines such items as duty to vote, widespread corruption, experience with bribery, and reliance on experts.

Demographics examine such items as gender, age, level of education, marital status, and income.



## Chapter 4

# Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: State-Centered Versus Society-Centered Perspective

The original formulation of the exit, voice, and loyalty problematique by Hirschmann is organization-centered. The original formulation starts with the assumption of a situational decline. That is, if an organization one belongs to starts to exhibit the symptom of organizational stagnation and decay, then how does one proceed? As he develops this formulation from organization to society and political regime, the Hirschmann formulation can be labeled a society-centered scheme or a state-centered scheme. The society-centered approach can be called the approach as seen from the bottom up, whereas the state-centered approach can be called the approach as seen from the top down. In this chapter, I attempt to contrast the society-centered and state-centered approach. Needless to say, this volume adopts a society-centered approach.

### 4.1 Most Common in Political Theory Is the State-Centric Approach to Exit, Voice, and Loyalty

That starts normally from the loss of the mandate of heaven. By the mandate of heaven is meant either the loss of popular satisfaction, or the betrayal of the king's staff, or the defeat of a king in war, or the turtle's omen as in Asia it represents cosmic order, or some other sign or development. Once the loss of the mandate of heaven occurs, a new regime takes shape. Once a regime is shaped and consolidated, a large bulk of the theory of the state stops talking about its dynamics and focuses on regime types. Aristotle has monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy as a regime type. Once a regime type is determined, society is bound to align its nature to the spirit of a regime type. Nicolo Machiavelli notes two regime types: monarchy and republics. He focuses on monarchy whose sustenance depends on two components of a monarch's characteristics: virtue and fortune. By virtue is meant a monarch's moral power and by fortune is meant a monarch's luck or ability to grasp

an opportunity once it arises. The decay and fall of a monarchy is explained by the combination of virtue and fortune. Machiavelli's eye never focuses on the grassroots level. After all, most states were monarchies at the time of his writing.

Modern democratic philosophers like John Locke and Jean-Jacque Rousseau start from individual citizens. Once they are awakened and form a majority, a democratic regime takes shape. The problem is how the aggregation of individual citizens' preferences is carried out. The interactions among individual citizens are not the focus of much attention. Modern democratic theorists like Robert Dahl are not that different. What Dahl is interested in is whether the three prerequisites of becoming democratic is more or less satisfied: freedom, tolerance, and trust. Freedom of expression needs to be fully respected. Tolerance must be assured when individual citizens' preference configuration requires some sort of aggregation. Even if aggregated collective will differs from one's own will, tolerance is a must as those out of power must trust those in power. Dahl was content with framing the nature of democracy in conceptual terms and not very interested in the interactions among individual citizens and competition among social groups sustaining a democratic state.

Marxist or post-Marxist state theorists concentrate on how the state's capitalist characteristics shape key features of capitalist democratic states. Class conflicts, ideological appeals, hegemony, multitudes are often discussed. Once regime types are determined, or once the state adopts its Marxist or post-Marxist requirements, the state is fixated by their regime type.

In other words, the state-centered perspective has dominated political theory since ancient times. Even after opinion polling has become a routine method of analyzing individual citizens' preferences in business, politics, and media, the state-centered perspective has dominated even in most democracies.

## **4.2 The Society-Centered Perspective Has not Been Highlighted at Least in Political Theory**

Anthropological, sociological, and linguistic approaches have been dominant. Some noted examples of society-centered perspectives in political science are briefly summarized here: James Scott investigates the hill tribes in Southeast Asia (2010); Takeshi Matsui examines Afghanistan, and Baluchistan (2011); Itsuro Nakamura writes about deep Siberia (2005); and I examine twenty-nine Asian societies (2015 and 2017a).

Scott in his book, *The Art of Not Being Governed* (2010), gives us a very articulate study of a society-centered perspective with dense empirical illustrations that detail the history of upland Southeast Asian communities in their refusal to be governed through tax, war, and institutions. Scott posits their refusal to be governed in the conventional philosophical context of Thomas Hobbes' justification of leaving the state of nature for the yearning of the state. Scott argues that upland

Southeast Asian peoples want to depart from the state that taxes people, enslaves people for war, and constrains people with laws and institutions.

Matsui provides us with another anthropological study of a society-centered perspective but this time with detailed empirical descriptions of the Pushtun societies in Afghanistan and Baluchistan, Pakistan. Like upland Southeast Asian tribal peoples, Pushtuns do not like being constrained by tax, war, and state institutions. Unlike upland Southeast Asian tribes, Pushtuns form a majority in Afghanistan but the state in Kabul is dominated by a mixture of invaders/occupiers and collaborators from within the country. To abide by the traditional way of doing things, Pushtuns find it expedient to have distance from Kabul, sticking to the tribal principle of distrusting outsiders and trusting insiders in the most extreme, strict form and practice. For instance, Matsui was welcomed in a most lavish form when he visited a Pushtun tribe, and yet at night fully armed men were placed outside his tent. Whether it was meant as a cautious measure against him or a deterrence against a possible onslaught from outside was difficult to assess. Perhaps it was a combination of both reasons.

Nakamura, the third noted author of this section, gives us an anthropological description and analysis of Siberian life. In Siberia, the population is sparse. The climate is harsh. In the community, everyone knows each other but still at an adequate distance. Nature is serene and beautiful. Air and water are the purest while plants and animals live their lives without much outside intrusions. In a 2016 survey result on happiness in Russia, many were surprised that 87% of respondents in Tuva, a tiny autonomous republic in the middle of Siberia, registered either very happy or happy!

For my work in this area (2015 and 2017a, b), my writings represent what is most likely the first society-centered typology of Asian societies through a systematic, scientific, and evidence-based approach. Using factor-analysis of people's daily life satisfaction, I (2015 and 2017a) construct five types of Asian societies. In my second writing, the illustrations and justifications of the validity of such research is particularly strong.

This study of exit, voice, and loyalty in Asia represents a line of study on society-centered and evidence-based approaches as applied to 32 societies in broader Asia, including three of Asia's neighbors, that is, Russia, Australia, and the United States.

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# Chapter 5

## Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: A Profile

### 5.1 A Profile of the 32 Societies on Exit, Voice, and Loyalty

We pose the question:

You have requested permission from an agency. What would you do when a bureaucrat replies to you, wait patiently?

1. Use connections
2. Nothing can be done
3. Wait and hope patiently
4. Write a letter
5. Act without a permit
6. Bribe an official
7. Don't know

The task of the analysis is to list the 32 societies according to the most popular responses and then interpret these choices.

#### 1. Use Connections

The societies that have the highest selection of this response were the Philippines, Nepal, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Russia, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, and Bangladesh. The societies that have the lowest rate of response for this selection include the Maldives, Hong Kong, Japan, Brunei, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, and Pakistan. It is interesting to find India, the United States, China, South Korea, and Australia in the intermediate group. After all, “use connections” is a vague and not well-defined phrase. The meaning of the word and its consequent action can vary widely from country to country.

#### 2. Nothing Can Be Done

The societies rating this choice as the highest consists of Brunei, Hong Kong, Pakistan, Japan, Taiwan, China, Bangladesh, and South Korea. The group of societies with the lowest rating of this response consists of Laos, Nepal,

Uzbekistan, the United States, Vietnam, Australia, Cambodia, and Singapore. The intermediate group consists of Indonesia, Mongolia, Malaysia, Thailand, Afghanistan, Russia, the Philippines, and India. It is interesting to note that the United States, Australia, Singapore, Cambodia, Vietnam, Nepal, Laos, and Uzbekistan register the lowest frequency for this response. New settler societies where a large percentage of people move constantly seem to register “nothing can be done” far less frequently.

### 3. Wait Patiently and Hope

The countries that rated this option the most, include Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, South Korea, the Maldives, Bhutan, and Laos. It is not surprising that five countries in this group belong to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Two key features of the ASEAN countries are: (1) they register between 5 and 8% in annual growth, and (2) their regimes tend to be authoritarian. These two features allow people to respond to the question with some benignancy and generosity. The lowest group in this category consists of Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Nepal, Russia, Afghanistan, the United States, the Philippines, and Bangladesh. This group is mixed in terms of regime type: both authoritarian regimes and democratic regimes (the United States and the Philippines) are represented. The intermediate group for this response consists of Japan, Taiwan, Cambodia, Mongol, India, China, Singapore, Australia, Hong Kong, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan.

### 4. Write A Letter

The societies that select this option the most consist of Australia, Singapore, the Maldives, Nepal, Laos, the United States, Hong Kong, China, and India. Except for Laos and China, all those in this grouping used to be a British colony, including the United States. “Writing a letter” is some sort of inherited tradition in Asia, especially for former British colonies. The group that least favored this option consists of Vietnam, Turkmenistan, Indonesia, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Afghanistan, and South Korea. All or most of these countries are former colonies of Russia and Japan. Indonesia was a Dutch colony and was briefly occupied by Japan.

### 5. Act Without A Permit

The societies that select this category the most consist of Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Taiwan, Russia, Japan, and Kazakhstan. What is the common thread that runs through them? Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, and parts of Russia are Islamic. Former Soviet Union members are Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan. Taiwan was a former Japanese colony. It is noteworthy that Taiwan and Japan belong to this group. The group of societies that select this option the least, include Brunei, Singapore, Laos, Thailand, the Maldives, Nepal, Malaysia, and Vietnam. Six of the ASEAN members, the Maldives and Nepal have broadly authoritarian regimes with Laos and Vietnam being led by communist parties. For the group that least favored this option, to act without a permit is widely regarded as outrageous or at least very uncommon. The intermediate group

consists of Hong Kong, the Philippines, the United States, Indonesia, China, Australia, South Korea, India, Tajikistan, and Bangladesh. Although the percentages of respondents are either small or very small, the responses to this option illuminate the spot of freedom in fragmented and segmented society.

#### 6. Bribe An Official

The group to most frequently select this option consists of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Kyrgyzstan, and Sri Lanka. From this list, one may conclude that the more bribe-lenient societies are found in Central Asia and South Asia. It is true to a certain extent. However, it is important to not forget that in rigorous authoritarian societies with effective oppressive mechanisms, societies tend to not register this response to the question because they know that the ever-present monitoring system does not encourage such a response. Candidly selecting such a response can be dangerous. Many polling companies or organizations in authoritarian regimes are closely linked with internal security organizations. The lowest response to this choice, includes Brunei, Singapore, the Maldives, Hong Kong, Japan, the United States, Taiwan, and Malaysia. The intermediate group consists of Australia, Thailand, South Korea, Indonesia, the Philippines, Pakistan, China, Vietnam, Russia, Afghanistan, and India.

#### 7. Don't Know

For this response, the societies that favored this option the most are Turkmenistan, Russia, the United States, Afghanistan, Japan, Pakistan, Brunei, Bhutan, and Singapore. Those respondents who believe that the phrase "open your mouth only for the dentist" tend to choose "don't know" as a response. Or one could interpret that choosing one out of seven options is too difficult. Some respondents may say that the definitions of bribing and using connections are often blurred in real situations. Some others may say that without a little more context-specific details, it is easier to select "don't know." The lowest rating of this choice, include Cambodia, Thailand, Nepal, Laos, the Philippines, China, Bangladesh, Hong Kong, India, and Vietnam.

## 5.2 Subregional Profiles

### 5.2.1 *East Asia: China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea, and Japan*

All five societies register four major responses: use connections, nothing can be done, wait patiently and hope, and write a letter. Hong Kong and Japan register a lower response rate to the "use connection" option than the other three societies. Similarly, Hong Kong and Japan register the lowest response rate to "bribe an

official” option. Of the five societies, Hong Kong registers the highest response to the question by selecting “write a letter.” Hong Kong appears to follow the former British colonial way. Japan appears to be less influenced by the Chinese *guanxi* (relations) practice than other Sinic societies. The option of “act without a permit” registers the highest choice for Japan, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. It makes sense that these three societies enjoy a fairly high degree of freedom. In this regard, South Korean respondents appear to be somewhat inhibited from choosing “bribe an official” response by their rigid Confucian interpretation of Confucian morals.

### ***5.2.2 Southeast Asia: Cambodia, the Philippines, Laos, Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, Brunei, and Indonesia***

Two small societies, Brunei and Singapore, fairly frequently chose the “don’t know” response. They are not only authoritarian but also reasonably effective in monitoring dissenters and dissidents. There are no less authoritarian societies in Southeast Asia than Brunei and Singapore. Two societies, Cambodia and Laos chose equally a trio of options: use connections, wait patiently and hope, and write a letter. Indonesia, Thailand, and Malaysia most frequently select the option of “wait patiently and hope,” suggesting that the regimes are fairly authoritarian and yet citizens are adept to answering “correctly.” Vietnam wears two faces as reflected in the fairly solid response choice: the solidly authoritarian face prompting the response “wait patiently and hope” and the second face of a *guanxi*-like response “use connections”.

### ***5.2.3 South Asia: Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and the Maldives***

The Maldives is a small society with a fairly effective authoritarian regime, prompting a trio of responses: wait patiently and hope, write a letter, and nothing can be done. The South Asian pattern is the four-way response: use connections, wait patiently and hope, write a letter, and nothing can be done. The quartet set of responses is universal in South Asia. The option “bribe and official” is a less popular choice and the option “don’t know” is more frequently selected, in particular, where effective authoritarian monitoring and measures are the norm, as in Pakistan and Bhutan.



### **5.2.4 *Central Asia: Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Mongolia***

Kazakhstan represents Central Asia in the quintet response: use connections, nothing can be done, wait patiently and hope, write a letter, and bribe an official. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Mongolia belong to the quintet school. Tajikistan registers the most frequent selection of “bribe an official,” whereas Afghanistan registers the least frequent selection of “bribe an official.” Turkmenistan is an exception to this quintet rule of Central Asia: it represents the largest contingent of respondents to select the option “don’t know,” suggesting its authoritarian nature is solid.

### **5.2.5 *Russia, Australia, and the United States***

Australia and the United States register fairly similar response patterns: write a letter, wait patiently and hope, and use connections. Australian respondents select “use connections” less frequently than those in the United States. Respondents in the United States fairly frequently chose the option “don’t know.” Russian respondents select “use connections” very frequently and “write a letter” less frequently than those in Australia and the United States. Another notable difference is that Russians fairly frequently select “bribe an official” and “act without a permit,” especially in comparison to data on the United States and Australia.

## **5.3 *Exit, Broader Voice, Bureaucratic Voice, Broader Loyalty, and Don’t Know***

Voice and loyalty are not easy to distinguish from each other. Bribing an official and using connections also share the quality of not being easily distinguishable from each other. When these similar options are considered together, they are called a broader voice. The decision to “write a letter” is called a bureaucratic voice. And for those who choose to “wait patiently and hope,” this is called broader loyalty.

### **5.3.1 *Exit (Act Without a Permit)***

The group of societies to most frequently make this choice consists of Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Taiwan, Russia, Japan, and Kazakhstan.