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# Civic Solidarity: Civicness and Willingness to Pay for the Poor in Vietnam

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**Abstract** What makes people more willing to pay for fighting hunger and poverty, to give to charity, and to transfer a portion of their incomes to poorest regions? In this paper, I argue that the active participation in civic life that nurtures civicness in one's mind reinforces the habits of the heart and instills a sense of solidarity and empathy toward less fortunate co-members of the community, thereby shaping preferences over social issues in favor of redistributive policies. By analyzing the 2017 Vietnam Provincial Governance and Public Administration Performance Index individual-level survey dataset, the paper shows that eight indicators of civicness of respondents, individually as well as collectively, prove strongly significant in explaining the variation in their willingness to pay for the poor in Vietnam.

**Keywords** civicness.civic solidarity.preference over redistribution.willingness to give

## Introduction

What makes people more willing to pay for fighting hunger and poverty, to give to charity, and to transfer a portion of their incomes to poorest regions? Sources of citizen support for redistributive efforts aimed at helping the poor have received a great deal of scholarly attention

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(e.g., Piketty 1995; Kumlin and Svallfors 2007; Bergh and Bjørnskov 2011; Córdova 2011; Fong 2011; Yamamura 2012; Daniele and Gyes 2015). If only narrow self-interest is what drives people's attitudes toward such targeted income transfers, then the would-be net tax payers who are relatively richer than the median income earner would not be in supportive of such redistribution (Meltzer and Richard 1981). There is ample evidence to the contrary, however. People seem willing to pay a tax to help the poor despite the fact that they themselves would not be direct beneficiaries (e.g., Gilens 1999; Alesina et al. 2004; Kumlin and Svallfors 2007). What then can explain the relatively well-to-do's willingness to give to the poor? What sorts of characteristics at the individual level are associated with one's attitude in favor of redistribution?

In this paper, I argue that the active participation in civic life that nurtures civicness in one's mind reinforces the "habits of the heart" (Tocqueville 1969) and instills a sense of solidarity and empathy toward less fortunate co-members of the community, thereby shaping preferences over social issues in favor of redistributive policies. On the one hand, citizens who engage in community activities and involve in public affairs tend to develop a sense of trust in others as well as in public institutions. This then helps them surmount the cynicism often associated with policies supporting the poor due to concerns about free-riding of others and public corruption. On the other hand, civic-mined people are also more likely to be bound by cooperative social norms, norms of reciprocity in particular, which enable them to act altruistically in the short term in the expectation of eventual self-interests. As trust and norms of reciprocity further instill a mind-set of solidarity and a feeling of sympathy toward others residing beyond one's immediate neighborhood, those who lead a civic life are more inclined to support pro-poor, redistributive policies even at their own expense. In short, as a sign of "civic virtue" (Walzer 1980), there is an element of civic solidarity, the spirit of companionship with others in difficulty that is engendered and reinforced by her active civic engagement.

To demonstrate my claim, I analyze the 2017 Vietnam Provincial Governance and Public Administration Performance Index (PAPI) individual-level survey dataset (CECODES & VFF-CRT 2017), which includes questions about respondents' willingness to pay some percentage of their incomes for the poor as well as a battery of questions relating to their civic engagement. The statistical analysis shows that eight indicators of civicness of respondents, individually as well as collectively, prove strongly significant in explaining the variation in their willingness to pay for the poor in Vietnam.

The paper is organized as follows. After introduction, I will elaborate on the theory linking individuals' civic characteristics to their propensity to support income transfers to the poor. A section describing the data and the results of regression analysis will follow. Last, discussions of the implications of the findings will conclude the paper.

## Civicness, Trust, and Support for Redistribution

The literature on the welfare state has identified trust as a key non-material source of public support for redistributive tax-and-transfer policy. Two kinds of trust matter in shaping one's preferences over welfare provision: trust in others, or social trust, and trust in public institutions, or political trust. First, social trust, also referred to as interpersonal trust, is one's expectation of

"honest and cooperative behavior ⋯ on the part of other members of community" (Fukuyama 1995, 26). Trusting in fellow citizens underpins one's willingness to contribute to a common good of society, such as eradicating poverty and hunger. For it helps alleviate her concerns over others' opportunistic behaviors, such as free riding, tax evasion, and cheating that can undermine the chances of achieving the common cause of reducing poverty (Bergh and Bjørnskov 2011; Daniele and Geys 2015). Furthermore, interpersonal trust, which rests on the principles of equality and solidarity (Seligman 1997; Uslaner 2002), enables trusting individuals to interact with others with a sense of mutual respect, reinforcing over time feelings of sympathy and solidarity as well as other-regarding preferences (Córdova 2011).

Second, "political trust" or trust in public institutions is also an important aspect of the trust that fosters citizens' support for redistributive public policies (Hetherington 1998). Successful provision of a public good not only requires overcoming the dilemma of collective action among citizens. It also presupposes the existence of impartial and effective public authority, which regulates and coordinates the production and distribution of public goods. Without it, citizens' willingness to contribute would be undermined as they suspect that their contributions will not be used properly. Perceived procedural justice, or citizens' trust in the fairness and effectiveness of public institutions, therefore, constitutes an essential element in shaping one's attitude toward welfare policies (Rothstein 1998; Rothstein et al. 2012; Svallfors 2013).

While trust is a "cognitive dimension" of social capital, which has the attitudinal and behavioral implications noted above, it itself is nurtured in one's mind over time as she gets involved in social networks and participation, the "structural dimensions" of social capital (Uphoff 2000). Thus, without denying the possibility that a high level of trust inclines one to participate in civic activities, I argue that active civic engagement and political participation instill in the participants' minds trust, both in others and in public authority, thereby making them more likely to support redistributive public policies.

First, social trust can arise from norms of reciprocity, the development of which is likely to be encouraged by the repeated social exchange embedded within dense networks of civic engagement (Granovetter 1985; Putnam 1993). Reciprocity refers to "a continuing relationship of exchange" with "mutual expectations that a benefit granted now should be repaid in the future" (Putnam 1993, 172). Critically, reciprocity enables self-interested people to embrace solidarity as it is "made up of a series of acts each of which is short-run altruistic ⋯ but which together typically make every participant better off" (Taylor 1982, 29). Thus, where norms of reciprocity prevail, acts of opportunism are effectively restrained, promoting interpersonal trust among the members of the community (Becchetti et al. 2008). At the same time, as Bowles and Gintis (2000) argue, a generalized form of reciprocity applies to large scale redistribution such that it can lead taxpayers to prefer redistribution. In particular, wealthy people bound by norms of reciprocity tend to be willing to support those in need, "provided that others would do the same for them if necessary" (Fong 2001, 226).

Second, civic engagement within dense social networks not only leads, mainly by fostering norms of reciprocity, social trust to be instilled in people's minds; active participation in public affairs also helps participants to develop a sense of political efficacy, and thus, trust in public authority. Active participation in public affairs enlightens citizens and instills in their minds important values, such as the obligations of citizenship as well as "interest in public issues and devotion to public causes," "the key signs of the civic virtue" (Walzer 1980, 64). It, in other

words, nurtures a "virtuous, public-spirited citizenry" (Putnam 1993, 87), who recognize and pursue the public good. Better informed of public issues and better equipped to participate in public affairs, such public-spirited citizens are less likely to feel alienated, much less to feel impotent. The more actively participate in self-governing public deliberations, the more they feel efficacious. As public-minded citizens take charge of the common issues of their community, trust in public institutions grows in their minds over time (Krishna 2007).

The argument is summarized in Figure 1. Those who are more actively involved in civic engagement and in public affairs are likely to have higher levels of trust in others and in public authority, thereby expressing a greater willingness to support public policies for helping the poor. In what follows below, I will test whether a higher level of civicness is associated with a more willingness to give to the poor.

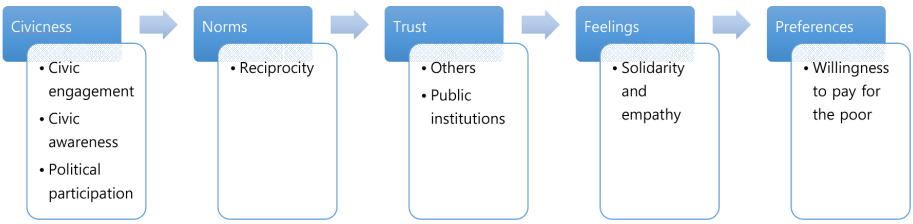


**Fig. 1** Relationships between Civicness, Trust, and Willingness to Pay for the Poor

## Empirical Analysis

For empirical analysis, I used the original individual-level dataset of the 2017 PAPI survey. The 2017 survey includes questions that ask respondents whether they would be willing to pay for the poor. Each respondent was randomly assigned to answer one of the following three questions: 1) whether to pay for fighting hunger and poverty; 2) whether to pay to transfer to poor provinces; or 3) whether to give to charity. Then each respondent was also randomly asked to pay for the given purpose one of the following percentages of his or her income: 1) one percent; 2) three percent; or 3) five percent.

Table 1 reports the descriptive statistics of these questions, which I use as the dependent variables. Regardless the purposes of transfer, about 71 percent of respondents said that they would be willing to pay on average, with more than 78 percent willing to pay one percent of their incomes. When asked to pay three or five percent, however, the percentages decline rather sharply to 69 percent and 67 percent, respectively. Disaggregated into different purposes, the shares of those who said yes do not differ greatly with a partial exception of the case of transferring to poor provinces. For that purpose, about 73 percent said yes on average, about two percent points higher than for the other purposes, and about 72 percent responded positively for giving away three percent of their incomes, which is about four percentage points higher.

To measure respondents' levels of civicness, I constructed eight indicators of civic engagement and political participation. Table 2 provides the summary statistics of the composite index of civicness as well as each of the eight individual indicators.

**Table 1** Descriptive Statistics of the Dependent Variable

| | Willingness to pay | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1% | 3% | 5% | Combined |
| Observations | 4,523 | 4,410 | 4,518 | 13,451 |
| Mean | 0.78 | 0.69 | 0.67 | 0.71 |
| Std. Dev. | 0.42 | 0.46 | 0.47 | 0.45 |
| | Fight poverty | | | |
| | 1% | 3% | 5% | Combined |
| Observations | 1,446 | 1,450 | 1,514 | 4,410 |
| Mean | 0.78 | 0.68 | 0.67 | 0.71 |
| Std. Dev. | 0.41 | 0.47 | 0.47 | 0.45 |
| | Transfer to poor provinces | | | |
| | 1% | 3% | 5% | Combined |
| Observations | 1,594 | 1,485 | 1,504 | 4,583 |
| Mean | 0.78 | 0.72 | 0.68 | 0.73 |
| Std. Dev. | 0.42 | 0.45 | 0.47 | 0.45 |
| | Charity | | | |
| | 1% | 3% | 5% | Combined |
| Observations | 1,483 | 1,475 | 1,500 | 4,458 |
| Mean | 0.77 | 0.68 | 0.66 | 0.71 |
| Std. Dev. | 0.42 | 0.47 | 0.47 | 0.46 |

**Table 2** Descriptive Statistics of the Independent Variable

| | Composite index | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Civicness | | | |
| Observations | 14,097 | | | |
| Mean | 0.37 | | | |
| Std. Dev. | 0.22 | | | |
| | Civicness components | | | |
| | Know LAI | Mass orgs | Contribute | Proactive |
| Observations | 13,832 | 14,097 | 13,090 | 13,983 |
| Mean | 0.11 | 0.54 | 0.47 | 0.27 |
| Std. Dev. | 0.32 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.44 |
| | Contact gov | Meet reps | Vote | Read news |
| Observations | 14,038 | 8,778 | 10,678 | 14,097 |
| Mean | 0.32 | 0.48 | 0.82 | 0.37 |
| Std. Dev. | 0.47 | 0.5 | 0.38 | 0.48 |

First, for civic engagement, three indicators are used: 1) whether they were a member of a mass organization other than the Communist Party (Mass orgs); 2) whether they contributed their time and efforts to constructing public buildings (Contribute); 3) whether they proactively tried to solve public issues by making a proposal to authorities, by lodging a complaint, or by denouncing public agencies (Proactive). While 54 percent of the respondents participated in one or more mass organizations, about 47 percent said that they contributed to a communal work of their communities. Yet only 27 percent proactively pursued civic goals. Second, to

measure levels of civic awareness of public affairs, I also used two indicators: 1) whether they were aware of the Law on Access to Information (Know LAI); and 2) whether they read, listened, or watched news (Read news). Only about 37 percent said that they followed up news about public affairs on a regular basis. Even a lower percentage of people, eleven percent, turned out to know about the Law on Access to Information. Third, three indicators are used to capture levels of political participation: 1) whether they voted (Vote); 2) whether they met with their representatives (Meet reps); and 3) whether they contacted public officials, either village head, commune People's Committee, People's Council, or a mass organization (Contact gov). More than 80 percent of people reported that they voted in the last national or local elections; but less than a half said that they participated in a meeting with People's Council representatives, and about a third declared that they contacted public officials. The composite index, Civicness, created by simply taking the average of the eight indicators, ranges from zero to one, and has the mean of 0.37.

**Results of Regression Analysis**

To test the hypothesis that citizens with higher levels of civicness are more willing to give to the poor, I run a number of logistic regressions with a host of control variables. First, I used two sorts of economic variables to control for one's ability to pay: 1) objective income levels (low, low-mid, mid-high, and high income); and 2) subjective evaluations of economic conditions. For the latter (Economic condition), I combined the self-evaluations of how good the current economic condition is, how much better it is today compared to five years ago, and how much better it will be in five years compared to today. To facilitate the comparison of the effects that it and the main independent variable have on the dependent variables, I standardized it so that it varies from zero to one as does Civicness. Second, to account for respondents' public bias, two indicators are included: 1) whether they themselves hold a public office; and 2) whether they are a member of the Communist Party. Third, to capture and control for respondents' perception of public corruption, the extent to which they believe government officials use public funds for private purposes is also included. Finally, key demographic characteristics that deem relevant to preferences over redistributive policies are controlled for, including education level, urban or rural residency, age, sex, and whether they belong to an ethnic minority.

Table 3 reports the results of the logistic regressions with the aggregated willingness to pay as the dependent variable regressed on the composite Civicness index along with other control variables. Separate regressions were run for the three different percentages at which their incomes would be given up.

As a whole, the models explain a great deal of the variation in the respondents' willingness to pay with most variables registering significance in at least one of the models. Specifically, as people get older, they tend to be less willing to give to the poor while men are more willing than women to pay one or three percent, if not more, of their incomes. Also, more educated people show a greater willingness to share to help the poor; so are people residing in rural areas as opposed to urban areas. Party members are more willing to give up to three percent than non-party members while those who believe government officials use public funds for their own purposes tend to exhibit reservations about redistributive public policies.

**Table 3** Civicness and Willingness to Pay

| | (1)<br>1% | (2)<br>3% | (3)<br>5% |
|---|---|---|---|
| Civicness | 2.14 | 1.34 | 1.27 |
| | (0.25)*** | (0.21)*** | (0.19)*** |
| Economic condition | 2.26 | 1.89 | 1.96 |
| | (0.29)*** | (0.25)*** | (0.24)*** |
| Public office | 0.08 | 0.12 | 0.21 |
| | (0.26) | (0.20) | (0.19) |
| Party member | 0.37 | 0.41 | 0.02 |
| | (0.19)* | (0.16)** | (0.14) |
| Perceived corruption | -0.05 | -0.16 | -0.11 |
| | (0.07) | (0.07)** | (0.06)* |
| Urban resident | -0.07 | -0.13 | -0.22 |
| | (0.12) | (0.10) | (0.10)** |
| Education | 0.13 | 0.03 | 0.05 |
| | (0.03)*** | (0.03) | (0.02)** |
| Low-mid income | -0.15 | 0.17 | 0.05 |
| | (0.13) | (0.12) | (0.12) |
| Mid-high income | 0.04 | 0.06 | 0.07 |
| | (0.15) | (0.13) | (0.13) |
| High income | 0.08 | 0.43 | 0.03 |
| | (0.14) | (0.12)*** | (0.12) |
| Female | -0.21 | -0.22 | 0.02 |
| | (0.09)** | (0.08)*** | (0.08) |
| Age | -0.02 | -0.02 | -0.01 |
| | (0.00)*** | (0.00)*** | (0.00)*** |
| Minorities | 0.09 | 0.21 | -0.02 |
| | (0.26) | (0.24) | (0.23) |
| Constant | -0.73 | -0.05 | -0.33 |
| | (0.40)* | -0.35 | -0.34 |
| Observations | 3,671 | 3,617 | 3,705 |

*Note:* Logistic regressions with standard errors in parenthesis. Results for nine dummies for occupation fields and 62 dummies for provinces are dropped for space reason.
* $p < 0.10$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$.

Civicness and the subjective economic conditions are the two variables whose effects on the likelihood of being willing to pay are greatest. Figure 2 depicts and compares the changes in the probability of the willingness to pay as the two variables increase from zero to one. The effects of Civicness are comparable to those of Economic condition especially if only one percent of income is what is asked for. For both variables, as they rise from zero to one, the probability that the respondent would say yes increases from about 0.5 to about 0.9, an almost 80 percent increase. As expected, when greater percentages of income are required, the effects of both variables on the probability of positive response decline. Yet, the degree to which the independent variable's effects on the willingness are reduced is greater for Civicness than for Economic condition. For the former, its effects decrease by 37 to 41 percent, whereas for the

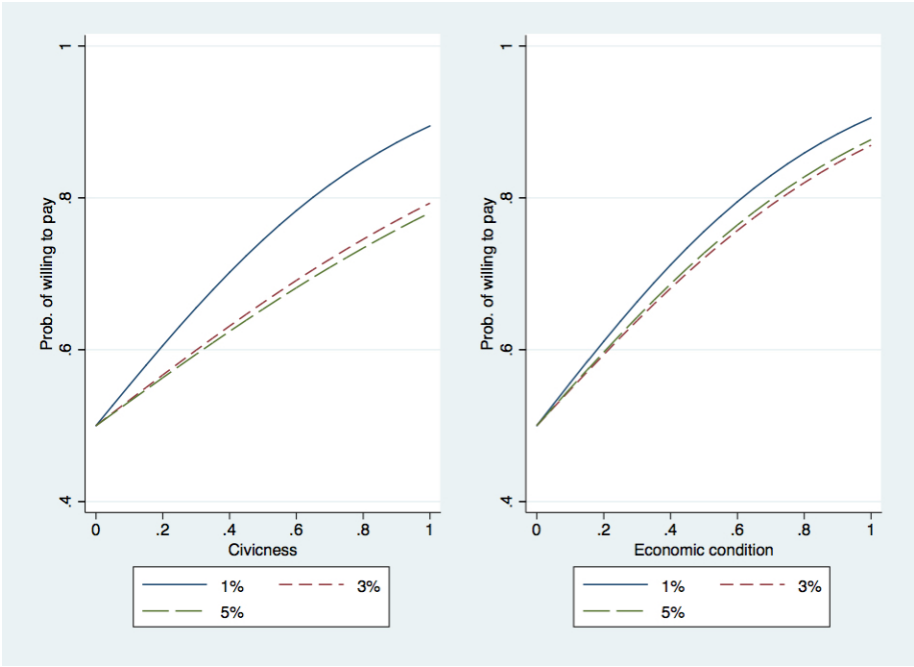


**Fig. 2** Civicness and the Probability of Willingness to Pay

latter they drop only by 13 to 16 percent. It implies that the willingness driven by civic solidarity seems as strong as that led by one's good economic situations so long as the required income transfers are as small as one percent of income, but the former is subject to a steeper depreciation than the latter once more than the minimal percentage of income is asked to give away.

Table 4 provides the results of the three separate regressions with specific purposes of transfer: 1) to fight hunger and poverty; 2) to transfer to poorer provinces; and 3) to give to the charity. If we limit ourselves to the case when only one percent of income is asked for, different pictures emerge across different purposes. When the purpose of the giving is to fight poverty, the effect of Civicness is even greater than that of Economic condition; its effect is 1.2 times higher than the latter. By contrast, when the purpose is to transfer to poor provinces, the former is much smaller compared the latter, only 60 percent. For the purpose of charity giving, there is no difference in effects between the two variables. And Civicness' effects by themselves vary in such order: largest for fighting poverty, next for giving to charity, and smallest for transferring to poor provinces.

Interestingly however, the effects of Civicness decline more rapidly for fighting poverty than for other purposes as greater percentages of income are requested. Indeed, it is for the purpose of transferring to poor provinces that Civicness' effects are the greatest when three or five percent of income is asked to give away. Figure 3 compares changes in the probability of willingness to give with increases in percentages of income transfer across the three different purposes.

**Table 4** Effects of Civicness by Different Purposes

| | Fight poverty | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) |
| | 1% | 3% | 5% |
| Civicness | 2.88 | 1.04 | 1.05 |
| | (0.49)*** | (0.39)*** | (0.36)*** |
| Economic condition | 2.37 | 2.24 | 2.74 |
| | (0.54)*** | (0.46)*** | (0.45)*** |
| Constant | -1.19 | -0.01 | -1.38 |
| | (0.80) | (0.62) | (0.61)** |
| Observations | 1,107 | 1,167 | 1,252 |
| | Transfer to poor provinces | | |
| | (4) | (5) | (6) |
| | 1% | 3% | 5% |
| Civicness | 1.72 | 1.8 | 1.61 |
| | (0.43)*** | (0.40)*** | (0.36)*** |
| Economic condition | 2.91 | 1.63 | 1.46 |
| | (0.52)*** | (0.48)*** | (0.43)*** |
| Constant | -0.49 | 0.08 | 0.27 |
| | (0.69) | (0.65) | (0.62) |
| Observations | 1,239 | 1,190 | 1,201 |
| | Charity | | |
| | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| | 1% | 3% | 5% |
| Civicness | 2.26 | 1.45 | 1.18 |
| | (0.44)*** | (0.38)*** | (0.34)*** |
| Economic condition | 2.24 | 1.91 | 1.83 |
| | (0.54)*** | (0.44)*** | (0.44)*** |
| Constant | -1.13 | -0.29 | -0.17 |
| | (0.74) | (0.63) | (0.60) |
| Observations | 1,144 | 1,224 | 1,232 |

*Note:* Logistic regressions with standard errors in parenthesis. Results for control variables as well as for nine dummies for occupation fields and 62 dummies for provinces are dropped for space reason.* $p < 0.10$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$.

Next, instead of using the composite index, I fit the models with each of the components of the index one by one to gauge their relative contributions. As reported in Table 5, while all of the eight components are significant at least at the 0.10 level, there is a great deal of variance in the magnitudes of the estimated effects of the components, ranging from 0.21 to 0.79. Know LAI has the largest effect, followed by Mass organizations, Contribute, Proactive, and Contact government. If a response changes from no to yes to any of these, the probability of being willing to pay would increase from about 0.5 to at least 0.6, about a 20 percent increase. Meet representatives follows closely, leading to a probability increase from 0.5 to about 0.58. Vote and Read news, while still significant, are least related to the probability of respondents' saying yes to paying one percent of their income.

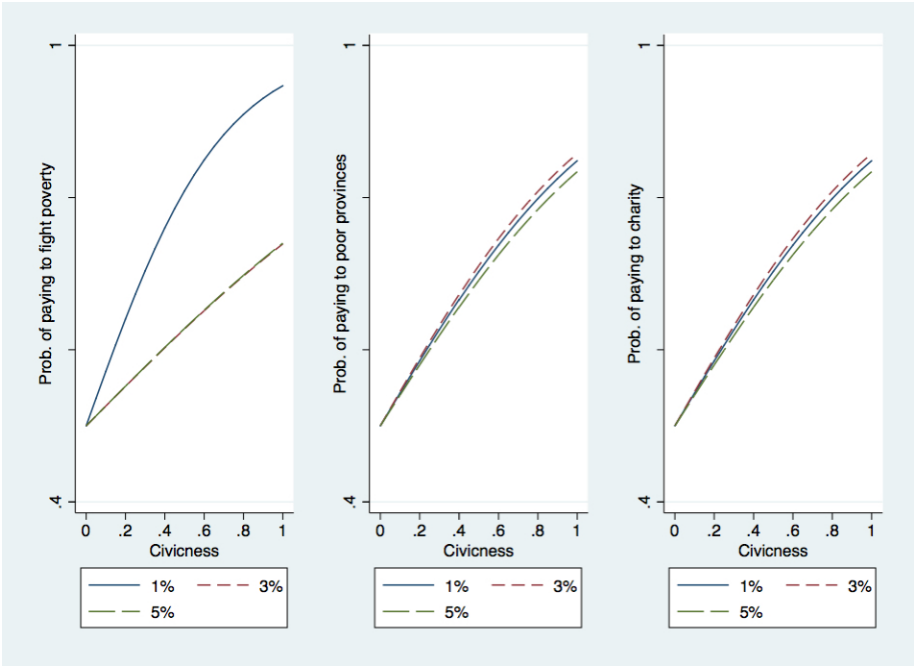


**Fig. 3** Impacts of Civicness Across Different Purposes

**Table 5** Effects of Different Aspects of Civicness on Willingness to Pay 1%

| | (1) Know LAI | (2) Mass orgs | (3) Contribute | (4) Proactive |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Civicness component | 0.79 | 0.55 | 0.54 | 0.5 |
| | (0.20)*** | (0.10)*** | (0.10)*** | (0.12)*** |
| Economic condition | 2.46 | 2.46 | 2.47 | 2.47 |
| | (0.28)*** | (0.28)*** | (0.29)*** | (0.28)*** |
| Constant | -0.57 | -0.9 | -1 | -0.65 |
| | (0.41) | (0.40)** | (0.42)** | (0.40) |
| Observations | 3,606 | 3,671 | 3,483 | 3,653 |
| | (5) Contact govt | (6) Meet reps | (7) Vote | (8) Read news |
| Civicness component | 0.43 | 0.35 | 0.23 | 0.21 |
| | (0.10)*** | (0.12)*** | (0.14)* | (0.10)** |
| Economic condition | 2.49 | 2.33 | 2.41 | 2.5 |
| | (0.28)*** | (0.39)*** | (0.32)*** | (0.28)*** |
| Constant | -0.77 | 0.28 | -0.15 | -0.67 |
| | (0.40)* | (0.54) | (0.48) | (0.40)* |
| Observations | 3,662 | 2,456 | 2,912 | 3,671 |

*Note:* Logistic regressions with standard errors in parenthesis. Results for control variables as well as for nine dummies for occupation fields and 62 dummies for provinces are dropped for space reason. * $p < 0.10$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$.

Figure 4 shows those changes in the probability as the value of each component increases from zero to one. Know LAI, the component with the largest effect, leads the probability to increase from 0.5 to nearly 0.7.

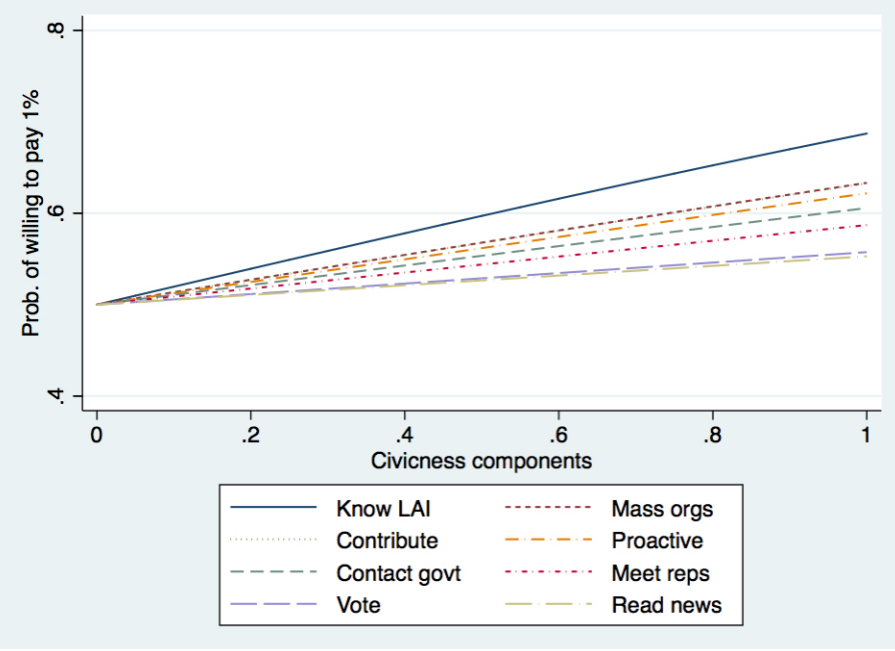


**Fig. 4** Civicness Components' Effects on Willingness to Pay

## Robustness Tests

I performed additional tests to address the issue of endogeneity, or the possibility that some unobservable characteristics may lead both to higher levels of civicness and to a greater willingness to pay for the poor. First, I split the sample into three sub-samples according to the lengths of current residence: 1) people with residence of 12 years or less (less than the 10th percentile); 2) people with residence of 57 years or more (greater than the 90th percentile); and 3) people with residence between 12 and 57 years. If there is a certain unusual individual trait that make one both more (or less) civic and willing to pay, and if that trait is more likely to be present among those who moved relatively recently or those who have lived very long, then results of those sub-samples should look quite different from those of the full sample. Table 6 reports the results.

It turns out that for those who have lived only less than 12 years or lived longer than 57 years, the effects of Civicness are 1.4 to 2.2 times greater than the average, suggesting that those relatively new and old residents may have some unusual characteristics that make them both prone to civicness and to willingness to pay. What is assuring, in this regard, is the fact that the subsample that excludes those residents produces somewhat weaker, yet equally significant effects for Civicness.

**Table 6** Subsets of Respondents by the Lengths of Residence

| | Residents 12 years or less only | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) |
| | 1% | 3% | 5% |
| Civicness | 3.08 | 2.37 | 2.09 |
| | (1.09)*** | (0.96)** | (0.95)** |
| Economic condition | 0.28 | 1.97 | 2.77 |
| | (1.28) | (1.18)* | (1.24)** |
| Constant | -0.53 | -1.61 | 1.12 |
| | (1.64) | (1.57) | (1.51) |
| Observations | 253 | 280 | 277 |
| | Residents 57 years or more only | | |
| | (4) | (5) | (6) |
| | 1% | 3% | 5% |
| Civicness | 4.61 | 1.59 | 1.67 |
| | (1.03)*** | (0.82)* | (0.70)** |
| Economic condition | 3.06 | 2.37 | 2.19 |
| | (1.08)*** | (0.84)*** | (0.80)*** |
| Constant | -1.24 | 4.9 | -0.6 |
| | (2.26) | (2.58)* | (2.38) |
| Observations | 286 | 351 | 323 |
| | Residents more than 12 years, less than 57 years | | |
| | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| | 1% | 3% | 5% |
| Civicness | 1.97 | 1.26 | 1.25 |
| | (0.27)*** | (0.23)*** | (0.21)*** |
| Economic condition | 2.55 | 2.14 | 1.94 |
| | (0.32)*** | (0.28)*** | (0.26)*** |
| Constant | -0.93 | -0.12 | -0.28 |
| | (0.46)* | (0.39) | (0.37) |
| Observations | 2,963 | 2,941 | 3,049 |

*Note:* Logistic regressions with standard errors in parenthesis. Results for control variables as well as for nine dummies for occupation fields and 62 dummies for provinces are dropped for space reason.* $p < 0.10$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$.

Second, I used the instrumental variables method to take into account the factors that affect the levels of Civicness. Civicness was instrumented by urban residency, years in residence, holding a public office, gender, minorities, permanent residency, and income levels. As shown in Table 7, the effects of Civicness in the main equations remain largely intact.

**Table 7** Instrumental Variables Regressions

| | | (1) 1% | (2) 3% | (3) 5% |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Willingness to pay | Civicness | 1.71 | 1.82 | 1.22 |
| | | (0.56)*** | (0.45)*** | (0.48)** |
| | Economic condition | 1.16 | 0.97 | 1.08 |
| | | (0.21)*** | (0.19)*** | (0.18)*** |
| | Party member | 0.15 | 0.18 | -0.06 |
| | | (0.09) | (0.09)** | (0.08) |
| | Perceived corruption | -0.02 | -0.08 | -0.07 |
| | | (0.04) | (0.04)** | (0.04)** |
| | Urban resident | 0 | -0.08 | -0.14 |
| | | (0.06) | (0.06) | (0.06)** |
| | Education | 0.06 | -0.01 | 0 |
| | | (0.02)*** | (0.02) | (0.02) |
| | Age | -0.01 | -0.02 | -0.01 |
| | | (0.00)*** | (0.00)*** | (0.00)*** |
| | Constant | -0.37 | 0.03 | -0.06 |
| | | (0.22)* | (0.20) | (0.20) |
| Civicness | Economic condition | 0.2 | 0.21 | 0.2 |
| | | (0.02)*** | (0.02)*** | (0.02)*** |
| | Party member | -0.01 | 0.02 | 0.01 |
| | | (0.01) | (0.01)* | (0.01) |
| | Perceived corruption | -0.01 | 0 | 0.01 |
| | | (0.01) | (0.01) | (0.01)* |
| | Urban resident | -0.02 | -0.01 | -0.02 |
| | | (0.01)* | (0.01) | (0.01)** |
| | Education | 0.03 | 0.03 | 0.03 |
| | | (0.00)*** | (0.00)*** | (0.00)*** |
| | Age | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | (0.00)*** | (0.00)*** | (0.00)*** |
| | Years in residence | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | (0.00) | (0.00)*** | (0.00) |
| | Public office | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.11 |
| | | (0.01)*** | (0.01)*** | (0.02)*** |
| | Female | -0.06 | -0.06 | -0.06 |
| | | (0.01)*** | (0.01)*** | (0.01)*** |
| | Minorities | 0.05 | 0.07 | 0.04 |
| | | (0.02)*** | (0.02)*** | (0.02)* |
| | Permanent residency | 0.06 | 0.03 | 0.05 |
| | | (0.03)** | (0.03) | (0.03)* |
| | Low-mid income | -0.01 | -0.02 | 0.02 |
| | | (0.01) | (0.01)** | (0.01) |
| | Mid-high income | -0.02 | 0 | 0.01 |
| | | (0.01)** | (0.01) | (0.01) |
| | High income | -0.01 | -0.01 | 0 |
| | | (0.01) | (0.01) | (0.01) |
| | Constant | -0.1 | -0.08 | -0.01 |
| | | (0.04) | (0.04)** | (0.04)** |
| athrho | Constant | -0.1 | -0.21 | -0.1 |
| | | (0.12) | (0.10)** | (0.10) |
| lnsigma | Constant | -1.67 | -1.65 | -1.61 |
| | | (0.01)*** | (0.01)*** | (0.01)*** |
| Observations | | 3,659 | 3,598 | 3,688 |

*Note:* Maximum likelihood IV estimations with standard errors in parenthesis. Results for nine dummies for occupation fields and 62 dummies for provinces are dropped for space reason. * $p < 0.10$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$.

## Conclusion

This paper argues that those who actively participate in civic affairs are more likely to support pro-poor public policies as civic engagement and political participation bound participants to norms of reciprocity and help them develop trust in others and public authority as well as a sense of empathy. Given the limited scope of questions in the survey and the cross-sectional nature of the dataset, I was able neither to test every aspect of the theory nor to unequivocally show that civicness causes willingness to help the poor. Nonetheless, all in all, the statistical analysis taken together with additional robust tests provides strong support for the main argument of the paper.

Two lines of future study seem promising. First, given the plausible evidence from Vietnam, it is worthwhile to extend this study to other cases to see if civic solidarity works in different social, cultural, and political contexts and to examine socio-political factors that might affect the extent to which civicness leads to solidarity across different cases. Second, it is worth exploring political roles that civicness plays both at the individual level and at the aggregate level. In particular, it would be interesting to investigate whether those localities---communes and wards---where civic engagement levels are higher, outperform less civic areas in terms of governance performance as well as economic development.

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