Vietnam from the Perspective of the Asia Barometer Survey: Identity, Image of Foreign Nations, and Global Concerns

Kazuya Yamamoto

Introduction

Historically, Vietnam is an area that has been strongly influenced by China　culturally, politically, and economically　for thousands of years. After experiencing some modern tragedies such as the French domination, the Japanese occupation, and the Vietnam War, contemporary Vietnam was finally consolidated in 1976. It has an area of 329,000 square kilometers and a population of approximately 80 million. Most people speak Vietnamese and many are Buddhists.

Against this historical background, Vietnam is presently experiencing rapid economic growth and related political changes, which might initiate drastic social changes in the country [1]. As indicated by Table 1, in the past few years, Vietnam has witnessed a growth of more than 5.0% per year; in 2002 and 2003 in particular, the growth achieved has been more than 7.0% [2]. With economic changes being propelled, the government faces an immediate need for domestic reforms in economic institutions.

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1　The description below provided in this section is largely based on (Teramoto 2004).

2　This growth coutinues up to the present.

Many national laws have been enacted for affiliation to the WTO[3], the rearrangement and reformation of national corporations have been promoted, and investments　domestic and foreign　have been encouraged.

Table 1. Economic Growth and Globalization in Vietnam

Year	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
GDP(billion dong)	399,942	441,646	481,295	536,098	605,400
GDP real growth rate (%)	4.8	6.8	6.9	7	7.2
Export (million U.S. dollars)	11,540	14,449	15,100	16,530	20,176
Import (million U.S. dollars)	11,742	15,638	15,999	19,000	24,863
Foreign reserves (million U.S. dollars)	3,423	3,510	3,765	4,232	6,359

Source: *Ajiken World Trend,* No.114: 51

On the other hand, political reforms have also been promoted to adapt to the changing economic situations. With regard to the latest reforms, the legal status of local administrators, for example, which had been ambiguous until recently, has now been defined. Although Doimoi reforms from 1980 onward essentially promoted political reforms, occasional backward movements are observed; the party s announcement in March 2003 to spread the thought of Ho Chi Minh is an example of this.

Behind these changes and reforms in Vietnam is the influence of the phenomenon of globalization, which is presently one of the most distinctive phenomena observed worldwide. Based on the Asia Barometer Survey 2004 project, this paper describes some aspects of the Vietnamese attitude toward global/international issues. The paper proceeds in six sections. Section one details the general characteristics of respondents in the survey. Section two analyses the manner in which Vietnamese self-identity is formed: Do people identify themselves on the basis of a local, national, or global perspective? Do they have a strong sense of nationalism? Such questions will be considered in this section. In sections three and four, I

3　Vietnam has formally joined the WTO in January 2007.

discuss the Vietnamese attitude toward other countries and international organizations, respectively. Section five presents their attitude toward global issues such as environmental destruction, terrorism, and global recession. Finally, I present some concluding remarks.

Data: Composition of Respondents

The survey was conducted from October to November 2004. The methodology included door-to-door, face-to-face interviews. The sampling was conducted nationwide and a total of 800 samples was compiled. Of these, 392 were males and 408 were females. The age group of the respondents ranged from 20 to 59 years. Table 2 summarizes the characteristics of respondents.

Table 2. Composition of Samples

(TOTAL)	800		
Gender		Occupation	
Male	392	Self	40
Female	408	Employed	542
Age		No	218
20-29	221	DK	
30-39	233	Income	
40-49	241	Low	372
50-59	105	Mid	285
Education		High	143
No	40	DK	
Low	326	English	
Mid	267	Fluently/Some(Total)	132
High	167	Fluently	20
DK		Some	112
		No	647
		DK	21

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Identity Formation under Globalization

Many scholars have pointed out that people s identities national, regional, or any other focal points are always shifting. Historically, there is no evidence of nations or ethnic groups with fixed identities, even though some long-lived identities appear to be permanent (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Gellner 1983; Anderson 1983; Yamamoto 2007). In the present age of rapid global changes, this shifting nature of identities might be further accelerated.

Although long-term surveys are necessary to explicate the manner in which identities are changed and remolded, the Asia Barometer Survey is just a beginning; therefore, it is not possible to provide sufficient information on the history of identity transformations in Vietnam (or Asia). Nonetheless, the survey results reveal some characteristics of the identities of the Vietnamese people.

Tables 3 and 4 illustrate the manner in which people form their national identity. Question 15 posed the following query:" Throughout the world many people identify themselves by their nationality. For example, Korean, Indian, etc. Do you think of yourself as being [YOURCOUNTRY'SPEOPLE], or do you not think of yourself in this way?" The answers have been compiled in Table 3.

Table 3. Identification with Nationality in Vietnam

Total (n)	Vietnamese (%)	Chinese (%)	Khmer (%)	Other (%)	Not identified with nationality (%)	Don t know (%)
800	96.3	3.4	0.1	0.1	0.1	

Question 16 queried," How proud are you of being [YOUR COUNTRY' S PEOPLE]?" Table 4 summarizes the results.

Table 3 appears to illustrate that people strongly identify themselves as a Vietnamese nation. Further, from Table 4, it appears that the Vietnamese have a strong sense of nationalism (as do people from other developing countries). However, the following survey results (Tables 5 and 6) reveal that Vietnamese identity is much more complicated than the impressions obtained from Tables 3 and 4.

Table 4. National Identification and "Nationalism" in Asian Countries

	total	Very proud	Some what proud	Not really proud	Not proud at all	Don't know
(TOTAL)	8,881	71.0	20.8	6.1	0.9	1.2
Japan	825	26.4	47.4	19.9	1.8	4.5
Cambodia	812	82.0	16.3	1.1	0.6	
Indonesia	825	85.3	12.1	2.4	0.2	
Laos	800	97.9	2.0	0.1		
Malaysia	800	72.3	22.9	3.5	0.8	0.6
Myanmar	800	79.1	18.6	1.6	0.4	0.3
Philippines	800	90.6	7.7	1.5	0.2	
Singapore	800	50.6	32.9	7.9	2.5	6.1
Thailand	800	95.2	4.7	0.1		
Vietnam	800	89.3	8.9	1.4	0.4	0.1
Korea	819	14.9	53.7	27.2	2.8	1.3

In addition to the questions concerning nationality, we also asked questions pertaining to transnational and regional identities. Question 17-1 enquired," Throughout the world, some people also see themselves as belonging to a transnational group (such as Asian, people of Chinese ethnicity, people who speak the same language or practice the same religion).Do you identify with any transnational group?" The result is presented in Table 5.

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Table 5. Transnational Identity Formation in Asian Countries

	Total	Asian	Other transnational identity	Not identified with any group	Don't know
(TOTAL)	8,881	71.2	1.7	22.4	4.7
Japan	825	26.9	1.7	61.2	10.2
Cambodia	812	99.3		0.7	
Indonesia	825	39.4	4.5	48.0	8.1
Laos	800	59.4		39.9	0.8
Malaysia	800	67.8	1.1	19.4	11.8
Myanmar	800	80.0	6.1	12.0	1.9
Philippines	800	89.0	0.1	10.8	0.1
Singapore	800	78.0	2.8	12.4	6.9
Thailand	800	87.1	0.7	8.3	3.9
Vietnam	800	92.6	0.1	6.9	0.4
Korea	819	66.1	1.1	25.4	7.4

Table 5 illustrates that the Vietnamese who responded to Question 15 by stating that they identified themselves with their nationality also identified themselves with a transnational group. Moreover, the table below (Table 6) reveals a more interesting result. Question 17-2 queried,"Some people identify themselves with a region or other local group and feel that the region or group has given them characteristics that distinguish them from other people in the country. Do you identify with any region/group?"

Table 6. Regional Identification and"Regionalism" in Vietnam

	Total	Southern Vietnamese	Central Vietnamese	Northern Vietnamese	Not identified with any region	Don't know
Vietnam	800	36.6	25.3	33.3	4.8	0.1

Table 6 indicates that people identify themselves not only on the basis of their nationality but also on the basis of their regional/local identity. The most important result shown in Table 6 is the fact that the percentage of respondents who selected the option"not identified with any region" is remarkably small (4.8%). Although the same tendency is observed in many other surveyed countries, this result is remarkably different from

those obtained in countries such as Japan or Korea (59.2% and 13.9%, respectively).

These results imply that people in Vietnam do have a national identity, but they also have both a strongly rooted regional/local identity and a transnational Asian identity. Therefore, we cannot easily conclude that the nation-building process in Vietnam has thus far been successful.

Images of Foreign Countries

The mirror image of one s self-identification would be the images of foreign countries and other international organizations. In this section, the images of foreign countries, as perceived by the Vietnamese, are considered, and in the next section, we will consider the perceived images of international/global organizations. Question 25 queried," Do you think the following countries have a good influence or a bad influence on your country? Please select the response closest to your opinion for each country listed." Figure 7 summarizes the results (see also Figure A1 provided in the appendix).

Table 7. Images of Foreign Countries in Vietnam (%)

	good	Rather good	neither	rather bad	bad	DK
China	13.4	16.9	47.8	13.4	5.1	3.5
Japan	20.4	25.1	45.6	2.3	0.6	6.0
India	7.1	11.3	67.9	2.3	0.4	11.1
USA	8.5	12.6	42.1	22.0	9.8	5.0
UK	8.0	14.5	62.0	7.0	1.3	7.3
Russia	30.1	21.9	40.5	1.9	0.3	5.4
Pakistan	1.8	3.6	64.1	9.6	3.4	17.5
South Korea	11.8	24.1	54.0	2.9	0.4	6.9
North Korea	4.6	7.9	71.8	2.5	0.4	12.9

The Vietnamese have distinctively good images of both Russia and Japan (30.1% and 20.4% respondents selected the option" good" for Russia

and Japan, respectively). China and South Korea follow (13.4% and 11.8%). However, their image of China is rather ambivalent. Although people have only good images of countries such as Russia, Japan, and South Korea, and a few of them select" rather bad" or" bad" for these countries (2.2%, 2.9%, and 3.3%, respectively), 18.5% respondents select a" rather bad" or" bad" with regard to China. This ambivalent attitude toward China appears to reflect the fact that Vietnam, as a contiguous country, has had complicated relations with China during their long historical relationship.

On the other hand, the US was observed to have a distinctively bad image among the Vietnamese. The options" rather bad" or" bad" are selected by 22.0% and 9.8% of the respondents, respectively. This survey result clearly reflects the unfortunate history of the cold (hot) war between the two countries.

Images of International/Global Organizations

Figure 1 summarizes the Vietnamese attitude toward international organizations and multinational companies operating in Vietnam (see also Table A1 provided in the appendix).

Figure 1 illustrates that people have a higher level of confidence in international/global organizations: all organizations receive more than 50.0% favorable answers. This tendency can be confirmed from international comparison As shown in Figure 2 (see also Table A2 provided in the appendix), with the exception of Cambodia, the Vietnamese have a relatively higher level of confidence in international/global organizations when compared with the people in other countries.
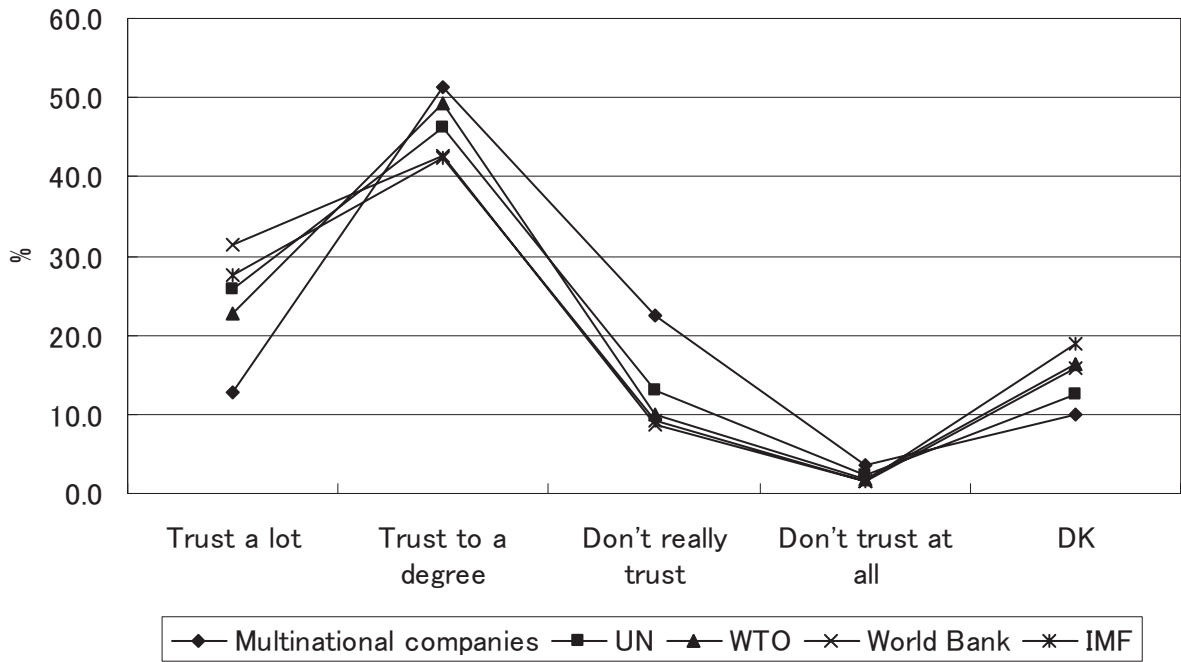
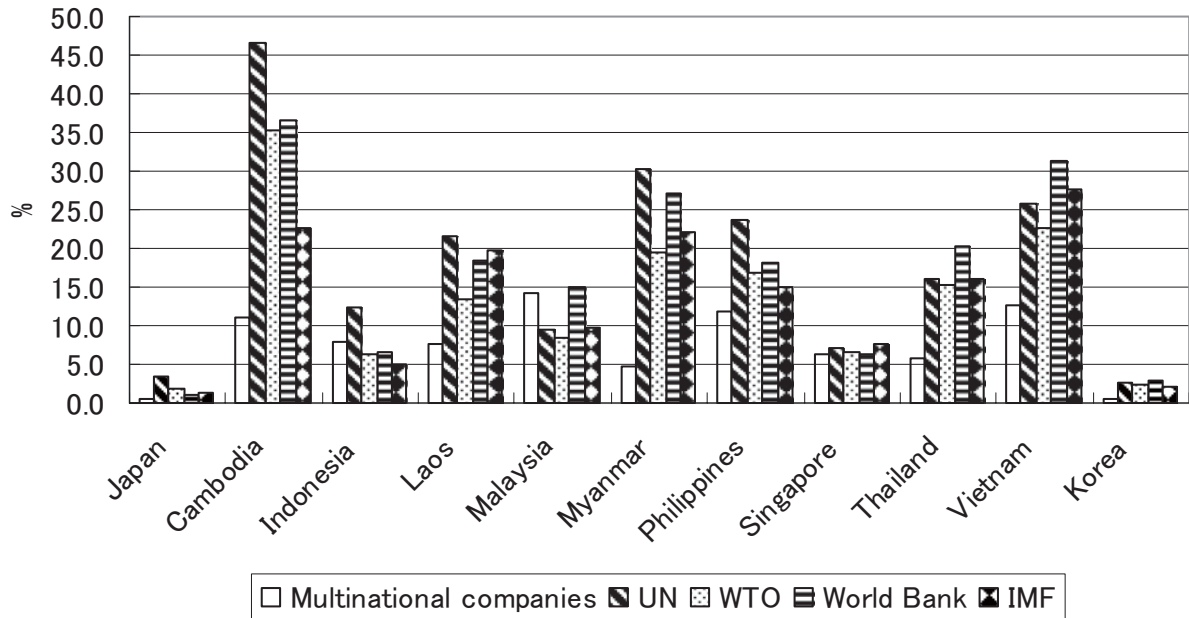Figure 1. Confidence in International/Global Organizations

Figure 2. Confidence in International/Global Organizations : International Comparison (The Percentage of "trust a lot")

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Global Issues

In this section, we will consider the type of global issues that cause anxieties among the Vietnamese. Question 24 enquired," Which, if any, of the following issues cause you great worry? Please choose all issues that cause you serious worry." Of all the issues covered by this question, Figure 3 summarizes the results of the selected issues that are most strongly associated with global changes, although it is not easy to strictly distinguish between the global issues and the others.

As shown in Figure 3, many Vietnamese are concerned about terrorism, environmental destruction, and wars and conflicts. This result shows that the Vietnamese share almost the same concerns about global issues with pepole in other coutries (see also Table A3 provided in the appendix).
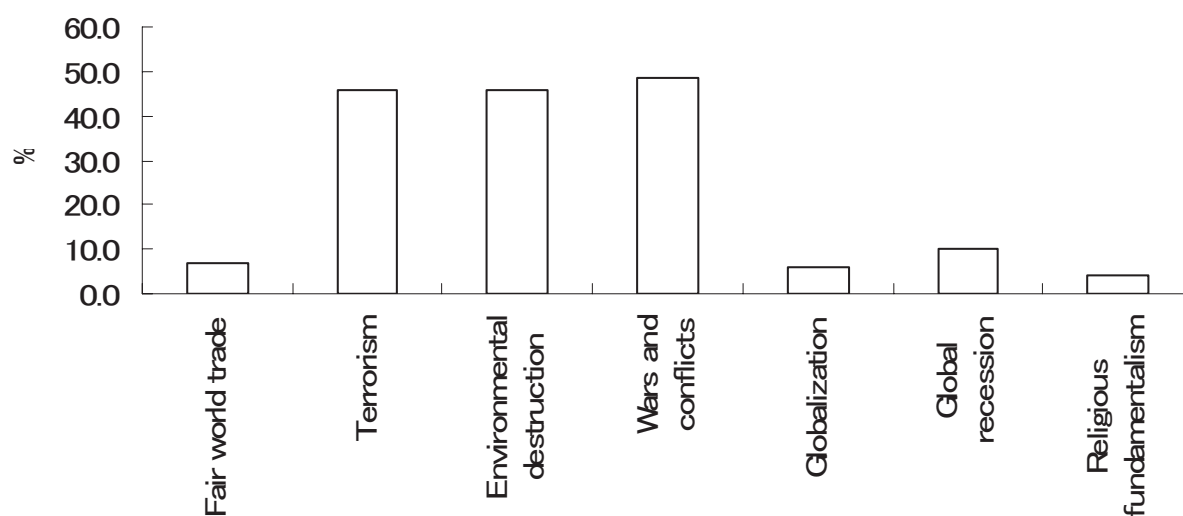

Figure 3. Great Worries in the Age of Globalization

With respect to environmental destruction, a notable difference is observed between the Vietnamese and the people of other countries. More specifically, Question 3 inquired," To what extent, if at all, do the following types of pollution have a negative effect on your daily life?" Figure 4 shows the percentage of those who responded by selecting the option" very
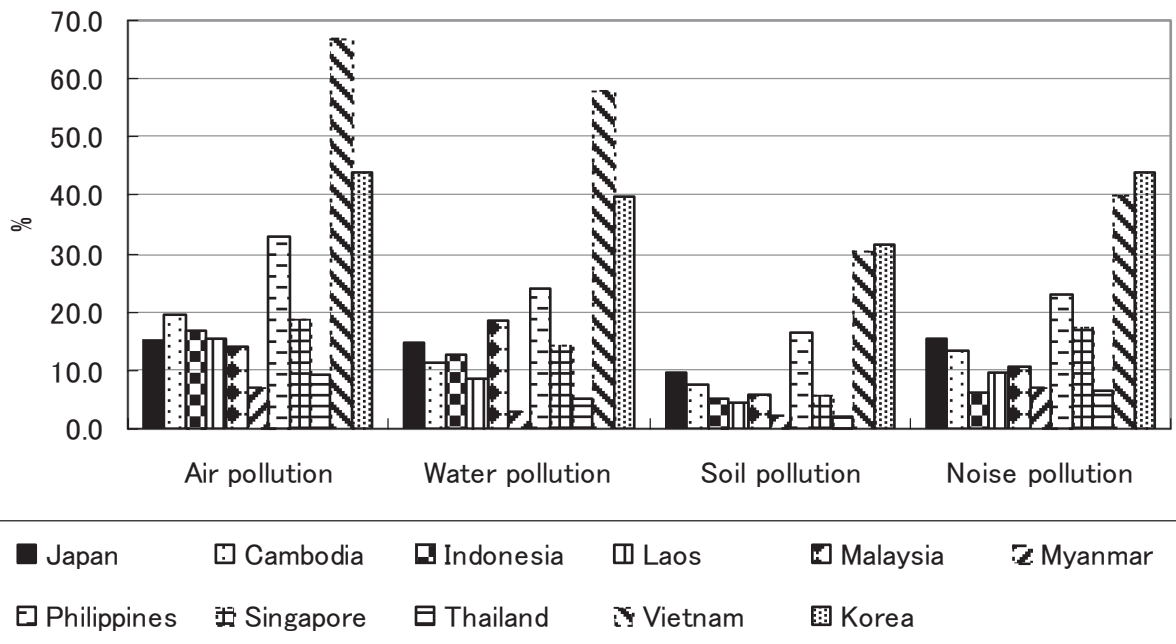
Figure 4. Worries about Pollution in Daily Life (The Percentage of "very negative effect")

negative effect" (see also Table A4 provided in the appendix).

As shown in Figure 4, among all surveyed countries, the Vietnamese experience remarkably strong dissatisfaction with the environment in their daily lives. Although it cannot be said for certain, it is likely that this dissatisfaction causes them to be conscious of the risks of global environmental destruction.

Conclusion

This paper explores three aspects of the survey results under globalization. First, it illustrates the manner in which the Vietnamese form self-identities. While they are observed to have a strong national identity, they also have a regional/local identity and a transnational identity such as that of being an Asian. As indicated earlier, it is significant that the percentage of those who selected the option "not identified with any region" in Question 17-2 is small. This implies that regional/local identities have taken root in people s identities and that national integration in Vietnam

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has never been completely realized.

Second, this study examines the images of foreign countries and international organizations in Vietnam. The survey results show that while people have good images of countries such as Russia, Japan, China, and South Korea, they have a bad image of the US. In addition, people exhibit ambivalent feelings toward China; the results indicate that people have a bad as well as a good image of China. These images appear to reflect the history between Vietnam and the other countries.

Third, this paper considers the global concerns of the Vietnamese. The survey results indicate that people are concerned about problems such as terrorism, environmental destruction, and wars and conflicts. Although the responses in Vietnam are almost the same as those in other countries, the concern of the Vietnamese regarding environmental pollutions (Q3) is remarkably higher than that of others; therefore, this daily concern might be the reason for the large percentage of Vietnamese who are concerned about global environmental destruction.

Some of the sensitive questions (e.g., those on ethnicity, religion, or politics) were not included in the survey conducted in Vietnam. For example, Question 27 inquired," How well do you think the [YOURCOUNTRY SPEOPLE] government is dealing with [e.g. ethnic conflicts]?" However, this question was not included in Vietnam. the Asia Barometer Survey is a very promising project. I expect to witness a day when we can seek answers to any question throughout these countries and when completely comparative studies will be possible to deepen our understanding of the subject considered in this paper.

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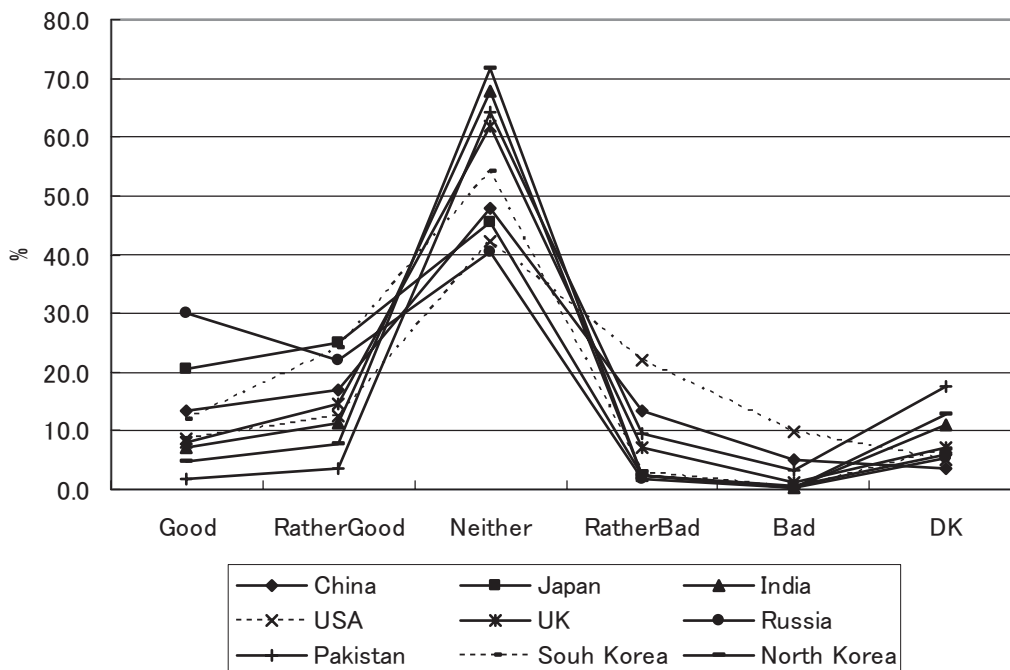
Appendix

Figure A1. Images of Foreign Countries in Vietnam

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Table A1. Confidence in International/Global Organizations (%)

	Trust a lot	Trust to a degree	Don t really trust	Don t trust a tall	Don t know
Multinational companies	12.8	51.4	22.4	3.5	10.0
The UN	25.8	46.3	13.0	2.4	12.6
WTO	22.6	49.3	10.0	1.8	16.4
The World Bank	31.4	42.6	8.8	1.5	15.8
IMF	27.6	42.5	9.3	1.6	19.0

Table A2. Confidence in International/Global Organizations (International Comparison) (%): Answered as "Trust a lot"

	Multinational companies	UN	WTO	World Bank	IMF
Japan	0.6	3.4	1.9	1.0	1.3
Cambodia	11.1	46.7	35.2	36.7	22.5
Indonesia	7.8	12.4	6.4	6.5	5.0
Laos	7.6	21.6	13.5	18.5	19.8
Malaysia	14.1	9.5	8.4	14.9	9.8
Myanmar	4.8	30.3	19.4	27.1	22.0
Philippines	12.0	23.6	16.8	18.0	15.0
Singapore	6.4	7.0	6.6	6.4	7.6
Thailand	5.9	16.0	15.1	20.3	16.0
Vietnam	12.8	25.8	22.6	31.4	27.6
Korea	0.6	2.7	2.4	2.8	2.1

Table A3. Great Worries in the Age of Globalization (International Comparison) (%)

	Fair world trade	Terrorism	Environmental destruction	Wars and conflicts	Globalization	Global recession	Religious fundamentalism
Japan	4.0	49.6	51.4	53.6	3.4	19.9	6.4
Cambodia	2.1	50.2	47.8	63.1	7.1	15.0	11.2
Indonesia	3.0	33.1	20.3	19.0	3.7	3.0	6.7
Laos	9.3	53.0	26.8	27.5	10.4	15.9	5.4
Malaysia	4.1	52.9	25.3	43.5	7.3	19.0	9.3
Myanmar	2.8	39.0	16.9	42.9	2.6	13.3	16.4
Philippines	11.0	57.5	37.2	40.3	13.2	7.6	10.5
Singapore	4.0	55.6	13.0	34.3	6.9	17.5	10.0
Thailand	3.0	23.5	15.8	9.1	1.2	10.6	4.1
Vietnam	6.8	45.9	46.0	48.6	6.0	9.9	4.0
Korea	4.8	15.5	36.0	13.8	2.9	27.2	4.3

Table A4. Worries about Pollution in Daily Life (%):
Answered as "very negative effect"

	Air pollution	Water pollution	Soil pollution	Noise pollution
Japan	15.0	14.7	9.7	15.3
Cambodia	19.7	11.2	7.5	13.4
Indonesia	16.7	12.7	5.2	6.2
Laos	15.4	8.6	4.4	9.5
Malaysia	14.0	18.5	5.8	10.8
Myanmar	7.4	3.3	2.5	7.4
Philippines	32.9	24.1	16.6	23.1
Singapore	18.9	14.3	5.9	17.5
Thailand	9.3	5.2	1.9	6.6
Vietnam	66.8	58.1	30.4	40.0
Korea	44.0	39.7	31.5	44.1