

Hierarchy, Legitimacy, and Differentiated Voice: Cross-National Evidence from Asia

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Abstract

This study examines three questions within the Authority-Enabled Voice (AEV) framework in cross-cultural leadership and voice research. First, does individual-level authority endorsement differentiate institutional participation from protest participation across Asian societies? Second, does a normative pathway through order values transmit this relationship? Third, does a parallel legitimacy pathway through institutional trust? Using nationally representative data from 13 Asian societies (N = 22,210) in the World Values Survey Wave 7, the analysis employs pooled and multilevel regression models with cluster-robust inference, alongside 10,000-draw bootstrapped mediation tests. Across specifications, authority endorsement is not a reliable individual-level predictor of either institutional or protest participation. Neither the normative pathway nor the legitimacy pathway yields a statistically significant indirect effect: authority endorsement does not meaningfully predict order values and shows only a weak association with institutional trust, and the bootstrapped indirect effects through both mediators are negligible. The remaining empirical signal is concentrated in the evaluative component, where institutional trust exhibits a modest negative association with protest participation, particularly in multilevel specifications that account for between-country heterogeneity. Three contributions follow. First, the study establishes a boundary condition for the AEV framework by showing that hierarchical value endorsement does not operate as a direct behavioral driver, thereby placing boundary conditions on culturalist assumptions in cross-cultural leadership research. Second, it analytically distinguishes hierarchy as a generalized cultural orientation from legitimacy as an evaluative judgment about institutions, demonstrating that these constructs should not be conflated in cross-cultural voice theory. Third, it refines the AEV framework by repositioning it as a legitimacy-anchored account in which evaluative perceptions of institutional fairness, rather than normative value endorsement, more directly shape the channel through which voice is expressed. Together, these contributions shift cross-cultural leadership and voice research from direct cultural-value prediction toward a more context-sensitive, legitimacy-based explanation of participation.

Keywords: Cross-cultural leadership, Voice behavior, Institutional legitimacy

1. Introduction

Hierarchical authority and participatory engagement often coexist in Asian societies. Classical power distance theory anticipates that a stronger hierarchy dampens voice and dissent. However, the empirical evidence has been mixed. Engagement persists in structured, rule-bound forms in some hierarchical contexts when institutions are perceived as legitimate and procedurally

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credible. This obvious tension invites a more refined inquiry. Rather than asking whether hierarchy suppresses participation, a more precise question is as follows: under what conditions does the endorsement of authority relate to the form or channel through which individuals participate toward institutional engagement or adversarial protest?

This study develops and empirically evaluates the Authority-Enabled Voice (AEV) framework, an integrative perspective that re-examines the relationship between authority and participation. The framework conceptualizes authority endorsement as an individual-level value orientation toward hierarchical conformity versus independence. Following research in political and social psychology, such orientations are typically operationalized through child-rearing preferences, which capture generalized authority-related predispositions formed through early socialization (Feldman & Stenner, 1997; Stenner, 2005; Hetherington & Weiler, 2009). Authority endorsement here reflects a broad normative orientation toward hierarchy rather than support for specific leaders or institutional arrangements. Rather than treating hierarchy as inherently antithetical to voice, the AEV framework proposes that authority endorsement may shape the distinction between institutional and protest participation under particular normative and legitimacy conditions-emphasizing the channel of engagement rather than its overall activation or suppression.

Cross-cultural leadership research has long debated the hierarchy-participation link. Foundational frameworks such as Hofstede's (2001) power distance dimension and the GLOBE study (House et al., 2004) anticipate an inverse association, yet empirical findings show that this relationship is not uniformly suppressive. Hierarchical authority can coexist with participatory engagement when procedural fairness and moral legitimacy are perceived; illustrative work from China (Cheng et al., 2004) and Thailand (Komin, 1990) shows that authority structures do not preclude cooperative voice where leaders are viewed as benevolent and institutionally credible. These examples motivate broader comparative inquiry rather than implying uniform cultural patterns. Most existing scholarship, however, concentrates on leader-subordinate dynamics within organizations (Detert & Burris, 2007; Morrison, 2014; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995) and treats participation as a unified outcome rather than as two distinct forms with different institutional embeddedness. The AEV framework extends prior work by analytically distinguishing institutional from protest participation and by examining whether authority endorsement relates to these outcomes directly or indirectly through normative order values and institutional trust.

Although early cross-cultural frameworks suggest that hierarchy suppresses participation, more recent research depicts voice as context-dependent and shaped by organizational and institutional conditions (Chamberlin et al., 2017; Wilkinson et al., 2020), and as multidimensional in form (Maynes & Podsakoff, 2014; Liang et al., 2012). Perceptions of legitimacy and procedural fairness now appear to be central determinants of compliance and participation, often outweighing generalized value orientations (Tyler & Jackson, 2014; Van den Bos, 2020), and the value-behavior relationship itself is widely shown to be indirect and context-dependent (Bardi & Schwartz, 2003; Roccas et al., 2002). Cross-cultural scholarship has increasingly questioned static, aggregate-level treatments of power distance: Hofstede (1998) cautioned against conflating national-level indices with individual-level orientations, while Beugelsdijk and Welzel (2018) argue for integrating Hofstede's mapping with the modernization logic of Inglehart and Welzel into a dynamic, multilevel account of cultural change. Welzel (2021) further argues that generational shifts toward emancipative values are reshaping participation in ways that cross-

sectional culturalist models cannot easily capture. Together, these developments support measuring authority endorsement at the individual level and separating it from institutional legitimacy, rather than relying on country-level culture scores.

Recent voice and legitimacy research similarly emphasizes heterogeneity and context-dependence. Morrison's (2023) updated review highlights the multidimensional nature of voice across promotive, prohibitive, institutional, and informal channels, and Wilkinson, Barry, and Morrison (2020) call for integrating organizational-behavior and industrial-relations perspectives, arguing that channel structure and institutional design-not generalized cultural orientations-shape when and how individuals speak up. Claassen (2020) shows that public support for democracy operates through evaluative institutional judgments rather than stable value orientations, and Van den Bos (2020) likewise situates participation in evaluative legitimacy judgments. These convergent strands reinforce the present study's distinction between hierarchy as a normative orientation and legitimacy as an evaluative judgment.

The empirical analysis draws on World Values Survey Wave 7 (2017–2022) data covering 13 Asian societies-China, Japan, South Korea, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Mongolia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam (World Values Survey Association, 2022). These societies span Confucian, Buddhist, and Islamic institutional traditions and are often characterized by hierarchical relational norms (Hofstede, 2001; House et al., 2004; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). Although the empirical focus is civic participation, the theoretical logic concerns value orientations and legitimacy perceptions central to cross-cultural leadership research, and the WVS permits examination of individual-level authority-related orientations and participation behaviors across diverse institutional environments within a coherent regional context.

Within this framework, authority endorsement is analytically distinguished from two related but conceptually separate mechanisms. A normative pathway operates through the endorsement of order values-socially regulated and rule-conforming conduct-while a legitimacy pathway operates through institutional trust, capturing evaluative confidence in institutional fairness and credibility. Through these pathways, authority endorsement is examined as a potential direct and indirect predictor of institutional and protest participation (Tyler, 2006; Morrison, 2014). Consistent with the exit-voice-loyalty tradition (Hirschman, 1970), participation is treated as multidimensional rather than unidirectional.

This study contributes to cross-cultural leadership and voice research by distinguishing institutional participation from protest participation and separating hierarchical value endorsement from institutional legitimacy (Hirschman, 1970; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998; Morrison, 2014). The analysis examines whether authority endorsement serves as a meaningful behavioral indicator of differentiated civic participation within hierarchical contexts. The theoretical implications extend to hierarchical organizational settings in which legitimacy and procedural order structure patterns of voice and engagement (Detert & Burris, 2007).

Purposes of the Study

This study pursues three interrelated objectives. First, it evaluates whether authority endorsement differentiates institutional participation from protest participation across Asian societies by increasing engagement in institutional participation while reducing involvement in protest participation. Second, it assesses whether the endorsement of order values functions as a normative pathway linking authority orientation to structured, rule-bound engagement. Third, it

examines whether institutional trust operates as a parallel legitimacy mechanism through which authority endorsement shapes the choice between institutional and protest participation.

Collectively, these objectives clarify whether and how hierarchical value orientation's structure differentiated participation. In doing so, this study refines the AEV framework by testing its normative and legitimacy pathways within diverse hierarchical contexts.

2. Literature Review

Authority Endorsement, Institutional Participation, and Protest Participation

Cultural values shape how individuals interpret legitimate authority, evaluate fairness, and determine the appropriateness of participation (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005; Schwartz, 1992). Cross-cultural value theory-particularly Hofstede's (2001) power distance dimension and the GLOBE framework (House et al., 2004)-conceptualizes hierarchy as a normative orientation concerning the acceptance of unequal authority relations. While power distance and collectivism are analytically distinct constructs, they often partially co-occur in many Asian contexts, where social harmony, respect for authority, and normative order are emphasized within broader cultural systems (Beugelsdijk & Welzel, 2018). Hierarchical leadership may be appropriate in such contexts when it is embedded in moral expectations and procedural fairness. Paternalistic leadership theory (Cheng et al., 2004; Pellegrini & Scandura, 2008) demonstrates that authority and engagement are not inherently contradictory: when leaders are perceived as benevolent and morally legitimate, hierarchical authority can coexist with subordinate voice. These findings complicate the assumption that hierarchy uniformly suppresses participation.

However, much cross-cultural research relies on national-level aggregates (e.g., power distance scores), potentially obscuring meaningful within-country variation (Beugelsdijk & Welzel, 2018). Meta-analytic evidence (Taras et al., 2010) indicates substantial heterogeneity in value orientations within societies and differential behavioral implications across contexts. Therefore, authority-related values may operate at the individual-level rather than solely as macro-cultural descriptors. Importantly, the existing scholarship often treats participation as a unified outcome. However, voice theory provides a more differentiated perspective. Drawing on Hirschman's (1970) exit-voice-loyalty framework and subsequent developments in organizational voice research (Morrison, 2014; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998), participation can be conceptualized as channel-specific rather than binary. Individuals may express concerns through institutionally sanctioned mechanisms (institutional participation) or through more contentious and adversarial forms of action (protest participation). Distinguishing institutional participation from protest participation allows the examination of whether authority-related value orientations are associated with the form of participation rather than its mere presence or absence.

Accordingly, this study operationalizes authority endorsement at the individual-level using the WVS's child-rearing preferences. In political and social psychology, such preferences have been widely used as indicators of generalized authority-related value orientations formed through early socialization (Feldman & Stenner, 1997; Stenner, 2005; Hetherington & Weiler, 2009). This operationalization captures a proximal normative orientation toward obedience relative to independence, allowing the examination of authority endorsement as a potential differentiator of institutional versus protest participation rather than as a macro-cultural constant or a direct measure of leadership attitudes.

Selection of Mediating Mechanisms

The selection of mediating mechanisms in this study is guided by a theoretical distinction between normative and evaluative pathways. Prior research on participation and voice behavior suggests that individual actions are shaped not only by value orientations but also by normative alignment and institutional evaluations (Morrison, 2014; Tyler, 2006). Accordingly, this study organizes potential mediating mechanisms into two analytically distinct categories. The first category consists of normative mechanisms, which capture alignment with socially endorsed behavioral expectations. Within this category, order values represent preferences for rule-following, social regulation, and norm-conforming conduct. These values are theoretically grounded in conservation-oriented value frameworks (Schwartz, 1992; Sagiv & Schwartz, 2000) and reflect the moral desirability of maintaining structured social order.

The second category consists of evaluative mechanisms, which capture individuals' assessments of institutional fairness, credibility, and effectiveness. Institutional trust is widely used in political and social research as an indicator of perceived legitimacy (Tyler, 2006; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). Unlike normative orientations, which reflect generalized value commitments, evaluative mechanisms capture context-sensitive judgments regarding institutional performance. Within the AEV framework, these two categories represent the most theoretically proximal pathways through which authority endorsement may influence institutional and protest participation. The normative pathway operates through alignment with order-oriented values, while the legitimacy pathway operates through evaluative perceptions of institutional credibility. This structured approach enables the study to test theoretically grounded mechanisms, rather than relying on less theoretically motivated mediator selection.

Normative Order Values as a Mediating Pathway

Authority endorsement reflects a preference for obedience, hierarchy, and structured authority relations (Feldman & Stenner, 1997; Stenner, 2005). However, authority endorsement does not necessarily imply uniform behavioral consequences (Bardi & Schwartz, 2003; Roccas et al., 2002). One potential mechanism linking authority endorsement to institutional and protest participation lies in normative alignment with social order. In this framework, order values refer to normative preferences that emphasize social regulation, rule-following, and norm-conforming conduct. This conceptualization aligns with broader value theory, which identifies conformity, tradition, and security as components of conservation-oriented value clusters (Schwartz, 1992; Sagiv & Schwartz, 2000). These values capture the moral desirability of maintaining structured and regulated interaction rather than disrupting collective harmony. Individuals who prioritize such values may view rule-bound and procedurally regulated participation-such as petitions or lawful demonstrations-as legitimate forms of engagement. Conversely, adversarial protest may be perceived as norm-disrupting or socially destabilizing. Therefore, the normative pathway posits that authority endorsement may indirectly shape the choice between institutional and protest participation through alignment with order-oriented value commitments.

Institutional Legitimacy as a Mediating Pathway

Participation depends not only on structural authority or normative alignment but also on evaluative judgments of institutional fairness and credibility (Tyler & Jackson, 2014). Procedural legitimacy theory (Tyler, 2006) suggests that individuals are more likely to engage through

established and rule-bound channels when authorities are perceived as fair, transparent, and appropriate. Broader research on institutional trust similarly demonstrates that confidence in public institutions is associated with civic engagement and system-supportive participation (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). When legitimacy perceptions weaken, more adversarial forms of voice become more plausible (Hirschman, 1970). Therefore, institutional trust serves as an operational indicator of perceived legitimacy. Unlike authority endorsement-which captures a normative orientation toward hierarchical relations-institutional trust reflects assessments of institutional performance, fairness, and credibility. This analytical distinction is central to the proposed framework. The legitimacy pathway proposes that through institutional trust, authority endorsement may indirectly influence institutional and protest participation. When institutions are perceived as credible and procedurally fair, participation may be expressed through institutional channels. Where trust is weaker, participation in protest may be more likely.

Authority-Enabled Voice (AEV) Framework

Building on these theoretical traditions, the AEV framework integrates three strands of scholarship into a single account of differentiated participation. The framework begins with cross-cultural value theory, which conceptualizes authority endorsement as an individual-level normative orientation toward hierarchical relations rather than as an aggregate cultural constant (Hofstede, 2001; House et al., 2004). Building on this normative foundation, it draws on voice theory, which differentiates participation into distinct behavioral forms-institutional participation and protest participation-rather than treating engagement as unidimensional (Hirschman, 1970; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998; Morrison, 2014). Finally, it incorporates procedural legitimacy theory, which explains how evaluative perceptions of institutional fairness shape the choice between institutional and protest participation (Tyler, 2006; Tyler & Jackson, 2014). Taken together, these three strands allow the AEV framework to specify how authority-related value orientations may translate, through normative and evaluative mechanisms, into differentiated participatory behavior.

Within this framework, authority endorsement is not assumed to uniformly suppress participation; rather, it is conceptualized as part of a broader normative climate that may condition how individuals evaluate order and legitimacy. The model specifies two potential pathways linking authority endorsement to institutional and protest participation. First, a normative pathway operates through the endorsement of order values-defined here as normative preferences emphasizing social regulation, rule-following, and norm-conforming conduct-which may reinforce a preference for structured, rule-bound engagement. In addition to this normative channel, a parallel legitimacy pathway operates through institutional trust, which may influence whether participation occurs through institutional channels or through adversarial protest. Collectively, these two pathways specify the proximal mechanisms through which authority endorsement may translate into institutional versus protest participation.

By analytically distinguishing hierarchy from legitimacy and institutional participation from protest participation, the AEV framework reframes hierarchy as a structuring condition of participation form rather than a uniform constraint on voice. In this framing, hierarchy is treated as a generalized normative orientation that does not necessarily translate into behavior on its own, whereas institutional legitimacy is conceptualized as the more proximal evaluative mechanism through which voice is allocated between institutional and protest channels. This legitimacy-

anchored perspective guides the empirical analysis and serves as the organizing lens for the contributions developed in the Discussion.

Conceptual Framework

The AEV framework offers a differentiated account of institutional and protest participation within hierarchical contexts. Instead of assuming that hierarchy uniformly suppresses voice, the framework conceptualizes authority endorsement as a cultural orientation that may channel participation toward either institutional or protest forms depending on normative alignment and legitimacy perceptions. Under this perspective, hierarchy may not necessarily eliminate participation; rather, it conditions the form of participation. In hierarchical and relational contexts, the endorsement of hierarchy may coexist with engagement, particularly when participation is perceived as normatively appropriate and institutionally legitimate. The AEV framework distinguishes between two participation outcomes-institutional participation and protest participation-and specifies mechanisms through which the choice between them may be structured by authority endorsement.

The first pathway operates through normative alignment with the social order. Authority endorsement reflects a preference for obedience, hierarchy, and structured conduct. Individuals who prioritize such values may be more likely to view rule-bound and procedurally regulated participation-such as petitions or lawful demonstrations-as legitimate forms of expression. Conversely, adversarial protest may be perceived as norm-disrupting or socially destabilizing. Thus, order values represent a potential normative pathway through which authority endorsement shapes preferences for structured versus disruptive engagement. The second pathway operates through evaluative perceptions of institutional legitimacy. Authority endorsement may influence how individuals assess the credibility and effectiveness of formal institutions. Individuals may be more inclined to express their voice within institutional channels and less inclined toward confrontational protest when institutions are perceived as legitimate. Therefore, institutional trust represents a legitimacy-based mechanism that may differentiate institutional participation from protest participation.

Together, these pathways position authority endorsement as part of a broader normative climate within which decision-making occurs. Participation is a behavior embedded in moral expectations and institutional credibility. The AEV framework integrates insights from cross-cultural leadership and participation research to reframe hierarchy as a potential structuring condition of voice. Although tested in civic contexts, the theoretical logic extends to hierarchical organizations in which legitimacy and procedural order shape voice and dissent patterns.

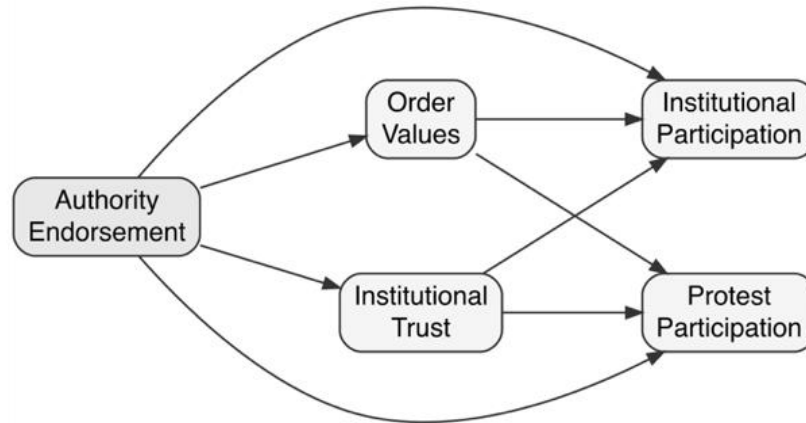


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the AEV model.

Authority endorsement is expected to influence institutional participation and protest participation directly and indirectly through normative order values and institutional trust. The framework focuses on differentiating institutional participation from protest participation rather than on overall activation or suppression of participation.

Hypothesis Development

Authority Endorsement and Participation Outcomes

Cross-cultural and leadership theories generally predict that hierarchical value orientations are associated with reduced voice and participation, particularly in high power-distance contexts (Hofstede, 2001; House et al., 2004). These expectations are theoretically well established but remain empirically open, especially in cross-national settings where value–behavior linkages are often attenuated. From this perspective, individuals who endorse obedience over independence may be less likely to engage in adversarial forms of participation such as protest, while remaining engaged through institutionally sanctioned channels. However, empirical findings have been mixed. Recent research suggests that hierarchical orientations do not uniformly suppress participation but may instead shape how participation is expressed. Building on this perspective, the present study examines whether authority endorsement differentiates institutional participation from protest participation rather than suppressing participation altogether.

H1a. Authority endorsement is expected to be negatively associated with protest participation.

H1b. Authority endorsement is expected to be positively associated with institutional participation.

Normative Pathway: Order Values

Order values are expected to channel authority endorsement toward institutional participation through a mechanism of normative compatibility. Schwartz’s (1992) conservation-values framework and its extension (Sagiv & Schwartz, 2000) argue that value systems emphasizing social order, conformity, and tradition generate preferences for behaviors that uphold existing normative structures. Institutional forms of participation—such as signing petitions or joining lawful demonstrations—are therefore attractive because they are rule-bound, procedurally regulated, and sanctioned by the institutional order. Authoritarianism research advances a parallel argument: individuals socialized toward obedience and norm consistency tend to favor actions that preserve social stability, aligning with institutional rather than contentious channels (Feldman &

Stenner, 1997; Stenner, 2005). Accordingly, authority endorsement is expected to increase order values, which in turn are expected to increase institutional participation, yielding a positive indirect effect.

The same logic implies the opposite prediction for protest participation. Adversarial protest-such as boycotts, unofficial strikes, and confrontational demonstrations-is often perceived as norm-disrupting and potentially destabilizing. Individuals who prioritize conservation and order values are therefore likely to regard such actions as normatively inappropriate, even when underlying grievances are shared (Schwartz, 1992; Sagiv & Schwartz, 2000). Consistent with this view, Stenner's (2005) authoritarian-dynamic model suggests that order-oriented individuals respond to perceived normative threat by opposing rather than joining collective dissent, and similar patterns are reported by Hetherington and Weiler (2009). Accordingly, order values are expected to suppress protest participation, producing a negative indirect effect of authority endorsement on protest via order values. This prediction reflects a distinct behavioral logic: the same orientation that legitimizes institutional channels simultaneously delegitimizes adversarial ones.

H2a. Order values are expected to mediate the relationship between authority endorsement and (i) institutional participation positively and (ii) protest participation negatively.

Legitimacy Pathway: Institutional Trust

Institutional trust is expected to channel authority endorsement toward institutional participation through an evaluative legitimacy mechanism distinct from normative compatibility. Procedural legitimacy theory (Tyler, 2006; Tyler & Jackson, 2014) argues that when individuals perceive institutions as fair, competent, and responsive, they are more likely to engage through the channels those institutions provide, including voting, petitioning, and lawful demonstration. To the extent that authority endorsement covaries with confidence in government, parliament, and the civil service, it should indirectly increase institutional participation via higher institutional trust. The expected indirect effect is therefore positive. Importantly, this pathway does not depend on shared order values; individuals may engage institutionally even with low normative conformity, provided institutional trust is high. This justifies modeling the legitimacy pathway alongside, rather than as a proxy for, the normative pathway.

Institutional trust is also expected to be negatively associated with protest participation, for reasons distinct from those in the normative pathway. Hirschman's (1970) exit-voice-loyalty framework suggests that high confidence in institutional channels directs voice through those channels, whereas declining trust reallocates voice toward non-institutional or contentious forms. Procedural justice research extends this logic by identifying perceived institutional unfairness as a key antecedent of protest and, in extreme cases, radicalization (Van den Bos, 2020). Accordingly, if authority endorsement is associated with institutional trust, it should indirectly reduce protest participation via trust, yielding a negative indirect effect. Although both the order and trust pathways predict a negative association with protest, they reflect distinct mechanisms-normative incompatibility versus evaluative satisfaction-which the empirical design seeks to distinguish.

H2b. Institutional trust is expected to mediate the relationship between authority endorsement and (i) institutional participation positively and (ii) protest participation negatively.

To evaluate these propositions, the study adopts a regression-based modeling strategy that emphasizes conceptual transparency and robustness under limited country-level clustering.

3. Methodology

This study adopts a cross-sectional, theory-testing research design using nationally representative survey data. The methodological approach is quantitative and multilevel in orientation, aimed at evaluating the direct and indirect pathways specified in the AEV framework. Progressive regression modeling, multilevel random-intercept specifications, cluster-robust inference, and bootstrapped mediation were combined to assess both the differentiation of institutional from protest participation and the proposed transmission mechanisms.

Research Design Justification

This study adopts a cross-sectional, theory-testing research design using nationally representative survey data. This design is appropriate for the study's primary objective, which is to evaluate whether authority endorsement functions as a meaningful predictor of institutional and protest participation at the individual level across diverse institutional contexts. A cross-sectional approach allows for the examination of associations between value orientations, institutional perceptions, and participation behaviors within a large, cross-national sample. Given the study's focus on testing theoretically specified relationships rather than establishing causal direction, this design provides sufficient analytical leverage to assess whether the proposed mechanisms receive empirical support.

Moreover, the use of World Values Survey data enables the analysis of individual-level variation within and across countries, which is essential for distinguishing value-based explanations from contextual heterogeneity. The multilevel and cluster-robust modeling strategies further strengthen inference by accounting for nested data structures and cross-national variation. While longitudinal or experimental designs would be required to establish causal ordering, the present design is well suited for evaluating the plausibility of the proposed theoretical relationships in a comparative setting.

Data Source

This study draws on data from 13 Asian societies included in the WVS Wave 7 (2017–2022), coordinated by the World Values Survey Association (World Values Survey Association, 2022): Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Mongolia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, and Vietnam.

The WVS is a long-running cross-national survey program that has been conducted in multiple waves since the late 1980s to measure social, cultural, and political values across diverse societies. Data are collected in each participating country using nationally representative, probability-based samples of adult residents (typically aged 18 and above). Sampling generally follows multistage, stratified procedures implemented by accredited local research institutes using standardized questionnaires and harmonized fieldwork protocols under the WVS Association's coordination. Wave 7 includes more than 95,000 respondents from 66 countries. This analysis restricts the sample to the 13 aforementioned Asian societies. After the listwise deletion of key

variables and the exclusion of cases with invalid sampling weights, the final analytical sample consisted of 22,210 respondents.

Post-stratification weights provided by the WVS were applied to all analyses to adjust for demographic imbalances. Cross-national weights were normalized prior to estimation to ensure regional comparability. Because respondents are pooled across multiple national contexts, continuous predictors and outcomes were standardized (z-scores) within each country prior to pooled estimation. Within-country standardization centers variables at the national mean and rescales them by the country-specific standard deviation, ensuring that coefficients reflect deviations from respondents' national contexts rather than absolute cross-national scale differences. Between-country heterogeneity is further addressed through cluster-robust standard errors and multilevel robustness checks with random intercepts by country. The WVS includes widely used and internationally standardized measures of child-rearing values, institutional trust, and civic participation, making it well suited for examining the relationships between authority-related value orientations, legitimacy perceptions, and the distinction between institutional and protest participation.

Measures

Authority Endorsement. Authority endorsement was derived from the WVS (Wave 7) child-rearing values battery, in which respondents indicate qualities they consider important for children to learn at home. Two items-obedience (Q17) and independence (Q8)-each coded as a binary indicator (1 = selected; 0 = not selected) were used. Authority endorsement was operationalized as a difference score (obedience – independence), yielding a three-level index ranging from –1 (selected independence but not obedience), 0 (selected both or neither), to +1 (selected obedience but not independence). This measure captures a generalized value orientation toward hierarchical conformity relative to autonomy rather than an endorsement of a specific leader or institutional arrangement. It reflects a normative predisposition shaped through socialization rather than a judgment of context-specific legitimacy. For regression analyses, the index was modeled under a linear specification and standardized (z-scores) within each country before pooled estimation. Within-country standardization isolates individual-level variation and reduces heterogeneity in cross-national response styles.

Normative Order Values. Normative order values-defined as preferences emphasizing social regulation, rule-following, and norm-conforming conduct-were measured using the child-rearing item “good manners” (Q7), coded as a binary indicator (1 = selected; 0 = not selected). This item captures the endorsement of socially regulated and norm-consistent behavior and represents the AEV framework's proposed normative pathway. Although binary mediators can be estimated using logistic models, ordinary least squares linear probability modeling was retained to maintain mediation consistency and ensure coefficient comparability across equations (MacKinnon, 2008). Cluster-robust inference was applied throughout the study. Supplementary analyses using logistic estimation yielded substantively equivalent results. For descriptive purposes, order values were reported as proportions and were not standardized.

Institutional Trust. Institutional trust was operationalized as the mean of three items measuring confidence in government (Q71), parliament (Q73), and the civil service (Q74). These items were recorded on four-point scales and reverse-coded such that higher values indicate greater institutional trust. The composite demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha =$

0.82). The index was standardized within each country before pooled regression estimation. In the AEV framework, institutional trust represents the evaluative legitimacy pathway, capturing confidence in formal institutions.

Participation. Participation was measured using binary behavioral indicators. (1 = done; 0 = otherwise). Institutional participation was defined as the mean of signing a petition (Q209) and participating in a lawful demonstration (Q211). Protest participation was constructed as the mean of boycotts (Q210) and unofficial strikes (Q212).

Both institutional and protest participation are treated as active behavioral expressions of voice; the distinction reflects differences in channel and institutional embeddedness rather than activity level. Each index ranges from 0 to 1 and reflects the proportion of participation behaviors reported within the respective channels. Both indices were standardized within countries prior to pooled regression analysis. This operationalization distinguishes structured, institutionally bounded engagement from more adversarial forms of collective action.

All variables were coded in accordance with the official WVS Wave 7 codebook. Negative values indicating missing or inapplicable responses were treated as missing and excluded from the analysis.

Analytical Strategy

The empirical analysis follows a sequential modeling strategy designed to evaluate the direct and indirect pathways proposed by the AEV framework while accounting for the data's nested structure (individuals within countries; $k = 13$). The strategy prioritizes conceptual transparency and statistically robust inference under a limited number of higher-level clusters.

Descriptive statistics were first computed by country to document cross-national variation in authority endorsement, order values, institutional trust, and participation outcomes. Continuous variables were standardized (z-scores) within countries before pooled estimation. Within-country standardization isolates individual-level variation from cross-national scale differences and response-style heterogeneity, ensuring that coefficients reflect deviations from country-specific baselines rather than between-country contrasts (Enders & Tofghi, 2007).

Second, direct and progressive regression models were used to evaluate the association between authority endorsement and participation outcomes. Model 1 included only authority endorsement. Model 2 added order values, and Model 3 further incorporated institutional trust. This stepwise specification allows the assessment of whether the coefficient on authority endorsement changes substantively with the inclusion of the proposed mediators. Attenuation toward zero is consistent with mediation, whereas stability indicates the absence of indirect transmission.

To account for clustering, mixed-effects regression models with random intercepts for countries were estimated. Institutional and protest participation were separately modeled. Fixed effects were estimated using maximum likelihood, and Satterthwaite-adjusted degrees of freedom were used for statistical inference (Kuznetsova et al., 2017). Parallel weighted OLS models with country-clustered CR2 robust standard errors were estimated to strengthen inference under a small number of clusters (Pustejovsky & Tipton, 2018).

Third, mediation was evaluated using a regression-based coefficient decomposition approach (MacKinnon, 2008). Separate first-stage models were used to estimate the effect of authority endorsement on each proposed mediator (order values and institutional trust). The full

outcome models then simultaneously included both mediators. The indirect effects were computed as the product of the coefficients ($a \times b$ paths). Indirect effects were evaluated using cluster-based parametric bootstrapping (10,000 replications) at the country-level to obtain reliable inference under clustered data, preserving within-country dependence structures (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). Evidence of mediation would require indirect effect estimates whose 95% confidence intervals exclude zero. All statistical analyses were conducted using R (version 4.3.2; R Core Team, 2023) with the lme4, lmerTest, and clubSandwich packages.

Ethical Considerations

This secondary analysis of publicly available WVS data was exempt from approval by the institutional review board because it involved the analysis of de-identified, publicly accessible datasets.

4. Results

Table 1 summarizes the weighted descriptive statistics for the 13 Asian societies included in the sample. Institutional and protest participation are indices ranging from 0 to 1, capturing the proportion of respondents who reported petitioning or lawful demonstrations and boycotts or strikes, respectively. Authority endorsement is computed as the difference between obedience and independence preferences (range: -1 to $+1$), with positive values indicating greater emphasis on obedience and negative values indicating greater emphasis on independence. Order is reported as the proportion of respondents who selected “good manners” as an important child quality. Institutional trust is the reverse-coded mean of the three confidence items, with higher values (range: 1–4) indicating greater trust. All descriptive statistics are reported in the original metric; only the regression analyses based on the prepared analytic dataset are standardized.

Participation patterns. Institutional participation is highest in Mongolia (0.32) and Japan (0.29), followed by Malaysia (0.21) and India (0.19). In contrast, Vietnam (0.02), China (0.04), and Bangladesh (0.06) exhibit comparatively low levels of involvement in structured, institutionally sanctioned activities. Protest participation shows a different distribution: India (0.15) and Mongolia (0.14) report the highest shares of respondents participating in boycotts or strikes, whereas Singapore (0.01) and Vietnam (0.01) record the lowest levels. These figures indicate that institutional and protest participation do not move uniformly across societies, suggesting that distinct institutional and political contexts shape different forms of civic engagement. Some societies (e.g., Mongolia) exhibit relatively high levels of both institutional and protest participation, whereas others (e.g., Vietnam) show consistently low engagement across both forms.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics by Country

Country	N	Inst. Part.	Protest Part.	Authority	Order	Trust
Bangladesh	1,196	0.06	0.03	-0.18	0.98	3.00
China	3,016	0.04	0.03	-0.72	0.84	3.28
India	1,668	0.19	0.15	-0.36	0.80	2.95
Indonesia	3,180	0.09	0.03	-0.22	0.84	2.88
Japan	1,237	0.29	0.03	-0.59	0.84	2.35
Malaysia	1,312	0.21	0.08	-0.42	0.82	2.51
Mongolia	1,603	0.32	0.14	-0.29	0.74	2.28
Pakistan	1,974	0.09	0.06	0.28	0.60	2.60
Philippines	1,200	0.11	0.03	-0.20	0.86	2.99
Singapore	1,992	0.09	0.01	-0.39	0.79	2.92
South Korea	1,245	0.14	0.03	-0.55	0.74	2.33
Thailand	1,399	0.11	0.07	-0.25	0.80	2.60
Vietnam	1,188	0.02	0.01	0.14	0.72	3.18

Note. Weighted descriptive statistics are reported in the original metric. Institutional and protest participation are indices ranging from 0 to 1, capturing the proportion of respondents who reported petitioning or lawful demonstrations and boycotts or strikes, respectively. Authority endorsement ranges from -1 to +1 and is computed as the difference between the share of respondents prioritizing obedience and the share prioritizing independence as a desirable child quality. Order is the proportion of respondents who selected “good manners” as an important child quality. Institutional trust is the reverse-coded mean of three confidence items (range: 1–4), with higher values indicating greater trust. Standardization (z-scoring) is applied only in the regression analyses.

To better understand these participation patterns, it is useful to examine the underlying value orientations and perceptions of institutional legitimacy across countries.

Value orientations. Authority endorsement varies substantially across countries. Pakistan (0.28) and Vietnam (0.14) exhibit stronger endorsement of obedience over independence, whereas China (-0.72), Japan (-0.59) and South Korea (-0.55) score well below zero, indicating a stronger preference for independence. Order values are generally high, ranging from 0.60 in Pakistan to 0.98 in Bangladesh, suggesting widespread support for norm-conforming behavior as a desirable quality for children across the region.

Institutional trust. Trust in formal institutions also varies markedly. China (3.28) and Vietnam (3.18) report the highest levels of institutional trust, followed by Bangladesh (3.00) and the Philippines (2.99). In contrast, Mongolia (2.28), Japan (2.35), and South Korea (2.33) show comparatively lower levels of trust, although scores across all countries remain above the midpoint of the 1–4 scale, indicating generally moderate levels of institutional confidence across the region.

Overall, these descriptive statistics highlight substantial cross-national heterogeneity in civic participation, value orientations, and institutional trust. Mongolia and Japan stand out for relatively high institutional participation, whereas India and Mongolia lead in protest participation. Although order values are broadly endorsed across all societies, authority preferences and

institutional trust levels vary considerably, underscoring the importance of contextual factors in shaping patterns of civic engagement.

Table 2 OLS Regression Results for Direct and Progressive Models of Authority Endorsement on Civic Participation

Outcome	Term	Model 1: AE only	Model 2: + ORDER	Model 3: + ORDER + TRUST
Institutional participation (INST_z)	Intercept	-0.000 (0.002) p = 0.842	0.011 (0.028) p = 0.711	0.011 (0.028) p = 0.712
	AUTH_z	-0.013 (0.009) p = 0.169	-0.013 (0.009) p = 0.173	-0.013 (0.009) p = 0.173
	ORDER_raw	-	-0.014 (0.034) p = 0.697	-0.014 (0.034) p = 0.697
	TRUST_z	-	-	-0.001 (0.022) p = 0.951
Protest participation (PROT_z)	Intercept	-0.001 (0.004), p = 0.832	0.021 (0.032), p = 0.524	0.021 (0.032), p = 0.527
	AUTH_z	-0.002 (0.009), p = 0.806	-0.002 (0.009), p = 0.833	-0.002 (0.009), p = 0.800
	ORDER_raw	-	-0.027 (0.039), p = 0.499	-0.027 (0.039), p = 0.503
	TRUST_z	-	-	-0.017 (0.018), p = 0.385

Note. Unstandardized coefficients with standard errors are in parentheses. AUTH_z = standardized authority endorsement; ORDER_raw = endorsement of good manners as a child quality; TRUST_z = standardized institutional trust. Significance: *** p < 0.001, ** p < 0.01, * p < 0.05, † p < 0.10. No coefficient in this OLS specification reaches conventional significance.

Table 2 presents the pooled OLS regression results. The study then reports the corresponding mixed-effects estimates (Table 3), bootstrapped indirect effects (Table 4), and a country-level random-intercept robustness check (Table 5). Across pooled specifications the AEV indirect pathways are statistically null; the multilevel robustness model recovers one substantive signal - a small but reliable negative association between institutional trust and protest participation - that is otherwise absorbed by between-country heterogeneity. Hypothesis labels are referenced where each table speaks to a specific prediction. For institutional participation (INST_z), Model 1 shows a negative but statistically insignificant association between authority endorsement and participation ($\beta = -0.013$, $SE = 0.009$, $p = 0.169$). In Model 2, after introducing order values, the coefficient for authority endorsement remains virtually unchanged ($\beta = -0.013$, $p = 0.173$).

Order values are not significantly associated with institutional participation ($\beta = -0.014$, $SE = 0.034$, $p = 0.697$). In Model 3, adding institutional trust does not materially alter the results: authority endorsement remains non-significant ($\beta = -0.013$, $p = 0.173$), and neither order values ($\beta = -0.014$, $p = 0.697$) nor institutional trust ($\beta = -0.001$, $SE = 0.022$, $p = 0.951$) significantly predict institutional participation. The authority coefficient's stability across all three models provides no evidence of mediation in the institutional channel.

For protest participation (PROT_z), Model 1 indicates no association between authority endorsement and protest behavior ($\beta = -0.002$, $SE = 0.009$, $p = 0.806$). This near-zero estimate remains substantively unchanged in Models 2 ($\beta = -0.002$, $p = 0.833$) and Model 3 ($\beta = -0.002$, $p = 0.800$). Order values are negatively but not significantly related to protest participation ($\beta = -0.027$, $p \approx 0.50$), and institutional trust does not reach statistical significance in this pooled OLS specification ($\beta = -0.017$, $SE = 0.018$, $p = 0.385$). The coefficient on authority endorsement is small, statistically indistinguishable from zero, and highly stable across progressively specified models for both outcomes. These results provide no support for a direct or mediated relationship between authority endorsement and either institutional or protest participation in the pooled OLS analysis. Accordingly, the expectations outlined in H1a and H1b are not supported by the empirical results.

Table 3 Mixed-effects regression results for the mediator and full models

Model	Term	β	SE	t	df	p
ORDER_raw ~ AUTH_z	(Intercept)	0.800	0.025	32.477	11.37	<0.001***
	AUTH_z	0.011	0.009	1.217	11.36	0.248
TRUST_z ~ AUTH_z	(Intercept)	0.004	0.006	0.617	11.37	0.549
	AUTH_z	-0.024	0.012	-1.927	11.36	0.079†
INST_z ~ AUTH_z + ORDER + TRUST	AUTH_z	-0.013	0.009	-1.455	11.36	0.173
	ORDER_raw	-0.014	0.034	-0.400	10.76	0.697
	TRUST_z	-0.001	0.022	-0.063	11.41	0.951
PROT_z ~ AUTH_z + ORDER + TRUST	AUTH_z	-0.002	0.009	-0.259	11.36	0.800
	ORDER_raw	-0.027	0.039	-0.693	10.76	0.503
	TRUST_z	-0.017	0.018	-0.904	11.41	0.385

Note. Mixed-effects models with respondents nested within countries. Satterthwaite-adjusted degrees of freedom. Significance: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, † $p < 0.10$.

Table 3 presents mixed-effects regression estimates for the proposed mediation structure, including first-stage models predicting the mediators (ORDER_raw and TRUST_z) and full models predicting participation outcomes while accounting for country-level clustering. In the first-stage model predicting order values, authority endorsement is not a significant predictor ($\beta = 0.011$, $SE = 0.009$, $t(11.36) = 1.217$, $p = 0.248$). The model predicting institutional trust shows a negative but marginal association with authority endorsement ($\beta = -0.024$, $SE = 0.012$, $t(11.36) =$

−1.927, $p = 0.079$); although this effect does not reach conventional significance, its direction suggests that stronger authority endorsement is weakly associated with lower institutional trust rather than reinforcing legitimacy perceptions.

The full mixed-effects models for INST_z and PROT_z (lower panel of Table 3) reproduce the pooled OLS estimates closely, with the same coefficient signs and magnitudes; none of authority endorsement, order values, or institutional trust reaches significance under the country-level Satterthwaite degrees of freedom used here. The first-stage estimates therefore do not propagate to either participation outcome via either mediator, providing no support for H2a or H2b in this specification.

Table 4. Bootstrapped Indirect Effects of Authority Endorsement on Civic Participation

Indirect Effect	Point Estimate	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
<i>Institutional Participation (INST_z)</i>			
AUTH → ORDER → INST	−0.000157	−0.001676	0.000444
AUTH → TRUST → INST	0.000032	−0.000942	0.001405
<i>Protest Participation (PROT_z)</i>			
AUTH → ORDER → PROT	−0.000307	−0.002464	0.000164
AUTH → TRUST → PROT	0.000393	−0.000289	0.002265

Note. Estimated indirect effects via parametric bootstrapping (10,000 replications). Confidence intervals that include zero indicate non-significance.

Table 4 presents bootstrapped estimates of the indirect effects of authority endorsement on civic participation through the two proposed mediators: order values and institutional trust. Indirect effects were computed using parametric bootstrapping with 10,000 replications, and 95% confidence intervals were used to assess statistical significance. For institutional participation (INST_z), the indirect effect through order values (AUTH → ORDER → INST) is extremely small in magnitude (point estimate = −0.000157), and the 95% confidence interval (−0.001676, 0.000444) includes zero. Similarly, the indirect effect through institutional trust (AUTH → TRUST → INST) is near zero (point estimate = 0.000032), with a confidence interval spanning zero (−0.000942, 0.001405). These findings indicate no statistically significant mediated effect of authority endorsement on institutional participation through either pathway. For protest participation (PROT_z), the indirect effect via order values (AUTH → ORDER → PROT) is negligible (point estimate = −0.000307), with a CI crossing zero (−0.002464, 0.000164). The indirect effect of institutional trust (AUTH → TRUST → PROT) is also small (point estimate = 0.000393), and its confidence interval (−0.000289, 0.002265) includes zero. All indirect effects across both participation outcomes are substantively trivial and statistically indistinguishable from zero. Together with the null first-stage estimates in Table 3, these bootstrapped results provide no empirical support for H2a (mediation through order values) or H2b (mediation through institutional trust).

To assess whether the main findings are sensitive to unobserved between-country heterogeneity, the full specification - authority endorsement, order values, and institutional trust - was re-estimated with random intercepts at the country-level. The resulting fixed-effects estimates

are reported in Table 5. For institutional participation (INST_z), none of the three predictors reaches conventional significance. Authority endorsement approaches the threshold once clustering is modeled ($\beta = -0.013$, $SE = 0.007$, $t = -1.880$, $p = 0.060$), while order values ($\beta = -0.014$, $SE = 0.017$, $p = 0.413$) and institutional trust ($\beta = -0.001$, $SE = 0.007$, $p = 0.837$) remain null. The direction and magnitude of these coefficients track those reported in earlier pooled specifications, so the substantive conclusion for institutional participation is unchanged.

For protest participation (PROT_z), authority endorsement ($\beta = -0.002$, $SE = 0.007$, $p = 0.718$) and order values ($\beta = -0.027$, $SE = 0.017$, $p = 0.111$) are again non-significant. Institutional trust, by contrast, reaches statistical significance in this specification ($\beta = -0.017$, $SE = 0.007$, $t = -2.467$, $p = 0.014$), indicating a small but reliable negative association between institutional trust and protest participation once country-level heterogeneity is explicitly modeled. Overall, the multilevel models confirm the robustness of the null findings for authority endorsement and order values, while surfacing one substantive signal that is partially obscured in the pooled estimates: the trust–protest link. This pattern is consistent with procedural-legitimacy and exit–voice–loyalty accounts, in which declining confidence in institutions is associated with a higher likelihood of non-institutional voice.

Table 5 Multilevel Random-Intercept Robustness Models

Outcome	Term	β	SE	t	p
Institutional participation (INST_z)	AUTH_z	-0.013	0.007	-1.880	0.060†
	ORDER_raw	-0.014	0.017	-0.818	0.413
	TRUST_z	-0.001	0.007	-0.205	0.837
Protest participation (PROT_z)	AUTH_z	-0.002	0.007	-0.361	0.718
	ORDER_raw	-0.027	0.017	-1.593	0.111
	TRUST_z	-0.017	0.007	-2.467	0.014*

Note. Random intercepts are specified at the country-level. Significance: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, † $p < 0.10$.

The apparent discrepancy between Table 3 and Table 5 reflects differences in inferential conventions rather than model specification. Both models estimate identical fixed effects with country-level random intercepts. The mixed-effects models in Table 3 use Satterthwaite-adjusted degrees of freedom, which are bounded by the number of countries ($df \approx 11$). This approach is appropriately conservative for between-country contrasts but reduces statistical power for within-country effects. In contrast, the random-intercept models in Table 5 use observation-level degrees of freedom, the more conventional choice when inference targets the within-country slope of an individual-level predictor. Under this specification, institutional trust is significantly and negatively associated with protest participation ($\beta = -0.017$, $SE = 0.007$, $p = 0.014$), whereas authority endorsement and order values remain non-significant across both outcomes. Substantive conclusions are therefore consistent across both inferential approaches.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study addressed three research questions concerning the Authority-Enabled Voice (AEV) framework across 13 Asian societies: whether individual-level authority endorsement directly predicts institutional and protest participation (RQ1), whether order values and institutional trust function as mediating mechanisms linking authority endorsement to participation (RQ2), and whether these patterns replicate once country-level heterogeneity is explicitly modeled (RQ3). The pooled cross-national evidence yields a clear and analytically useful asymmetry: the normative pathway from authority endorsement through value internalization carries little behavioral weight, whereas the evaluative pathway running through institutional legitimacy does - particularly for protest participation under multilevel specifications.

Summary of Findings: RQ-to-Finding Map. RQ1 is not supported by the empirical results. Authority endorsement shows no statistically reliable direct association with either institutional participation ($\beta = -0.013$, $SE = 0.007$, $p = 0.060$) or protest participation ($\beta = -0.002$, $SE = 0.007$, $p = 0.718$) once country-level clustering is modeled. The coefficients are small and stable across pooled OLS and multilevel specifications. RQ2 likewise shows no evidence of mediation. Bootstrapped indirect effects of authority endorsement via order values were negligible for both institutional and protest participation; indirect effects through institutional trust were similarly null on both outcomes. The hypothesized mediating mechanisms (H2a, H2b) - framed in the revised manuscript as expected mediating mechanisms rather than asserted ones - are not supported by the data. RQ3 yields the only positive empirical signal in the framework: in the random-intercept model, institutional trust is reliably and negatively associated with protest participation ($\beta = -0.017$, $SE = 0.007$, $t = -2.467$, $p = 0.014$), even though authority endorsement and order values remain non-significant. This pattern is consistent with procedural-legitimacy and exit-voice-loyalty accounts, in which declining confidence in institutions raises the likelihood of non-institutional voice.

Overall, the RQ-to-finding map points to a single substantive conclusion: in this regional sample, participation behavior is more proximally structured by evaluative judgments of institutional legitimacy than by generalized hierarchical value orientations. The normative leg of the AEV framework - authority endorsement and the order values theorized to cultivate - does not translate into measurable participation differences at the individual level. The evaluative leg does, but only on the protest side and only when country-level heterogeneity is modeled. The framework's theoretical scaffolding therefore survives as a diagnostic device for separating these two legs, even as its specific behavioral predictions for the normative leg are not borne out.

The primary contribution of the study lies in this analytical separation. Much of the prior literature on authority orientations and political behavior in Asian contexts treats hierarchical value endorsement and institutional legitimacy as overlapping or interchangeable predictors of participation. The present results show that they are empirically distinguishable and behaviorally non-equivalent: hierarchical value endorsement is, in this sample, behaviorally limited at the individual level, while institutional trust carries a small but reliable signal for non-institutional voice. This challenges the common assumption that authority-oriented value socialization is itself a direct behavioral driver of participation choices and suggests that the action is in legitimacy evaluations rather than in standing dispositions toward authority.

A secondary contribution is methodological. By estimating the same model under pooled OLS and random-intercept multilevel specifications, and by reporting bootstrapped indirect effects

for both candidate mediators, the study clarifies that the trust–protest association is robust to country-level clustering whereas the value-based pathway is not rescued by it. This pattern bounds the AEV framework’s generalization claims and identifies institutional trust - not internalized order values - as the more promising mediator for future cross-national work on participation in hierarchical contexts.

Comparison with Prior Research

The first finding-that authority endorsement does not significantly predict either institutional or protest participation across pooled, multilevel, or bootstrapped specifications-runs against predictions derived from Hofstede's (2001) power distance framework and the GLOBE project (House et al., 2004), both of which expect hierarchical value orientations to suppress voice. Using individual-level data from 13 Asian societies, the study finds authority endorsement is neither a reliable positive predictor of institutional participation nor a reliable negative predictor of protest. This is consistent with Taras, Kirkman, and Steel's (2010) meta-analytic evidence that Hofstede's dimensions explain only modest behavioral variance and mask substantial within-society heterogeneity, and with contemporary voice research treating participation as context-dependent rather than as a direct expression of generalized cultural orientations (Chamberlin et al., 2017; Wilkinson et al., 2020). The contribution is to show that the expected relationship fails to emerge even at the individual level-the level at which value theory expects behavioral translation to occur.

The second finding-that order values do not transmit authority endorsement into differentiated participation-challenges strict applications of Schwartz's (1992) conservation-values framework and Sagiv and Schwartz's (2000) work, which predict that endorsement of obedience and hierarchy travels through conformity norms into participation choices. It is also at odds with the authoritarianism literature (Feldman & Stenner, 1997; Stenner, 2005; Hetherington & Weiler, 2009), in which order-oriented child-rearing values are treated as proximal drivers of political behavior. Instead, the result aligns with work showing that the value–behavior relationship is typically weak, indirect, and moderated by situational relevance (Bardi & Schwartz, 2003; Roccas et al., 2002). The finding therefore extends rather than refutes value theory: even normative orientations conceptually close to the behavior of interest do not function as automatic mediators of participation.

The third finding-that institutional trust shows a modest but more consistent negative association with protest participation-is broadly consistent with Hirschman's (1970) exit–voice–loyalty logic, with procedural legitimacy theory (Tyler, 2006; Tyler & Jackson, 2014), with Van den Bos's (2020) procedural justice framework, and with Inglehart and Welzel's (2005) observation that institutional confidence shapes civic engagement. The qualification is one of magnitude: although the direction supports the legitimacy pathway, the small effect size indicates that institutional trust alone does not account for protest dynamics in this pooled sample-consistent with multidimensional voice perspectives (Maynes & Podsakoff, 2014; Liang et al., 2012) in which institutional and protest participation are driven by distinct antecedents rather than by a single overarching mechanism.

Taken together, these comparisons position the study as an empirical counterweight to the strong culturalist tradition equating hierarchical value orientations with systematic voice suppression. The findings push back against direct-effect interpretations of Hofstede (2001) and

the GLOBE framework (House et al., 2004), align with newer context-sensitive voice and legitimacy research (Chamberlin et al., 2017; Wilkinson et al., 2020; Tyler & Jackson, 2014; Van den Bos, 2020), and qualify value-based accounts of participation (Bardi & Schwartz, 2003; Roccas et al., 2002) by showing that even theoretically proximal normative mediators do not carry the behavioral weight that cross-cultural theory often ascribes to them. The study thereby clarifies what authority endorsement can and cannot explain at the individual level and underscores the need to distinguish hierarchy as a normative orientation from legitimacy as an evaluative judgment.

Generalizability

The first boundary condition is regional scope. The 13 Asian societies analyzed span East Asia (China, Japan, South Korea, Mongolia), Southeast Asia (Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam), and South Asia (Bangladesh, India, Pakistan), and cover Confucian, Buddhist, Islamic, and Hindu relational traditions. This coverage strengthens conceptual coherence but does not license inference to non-Asian contexts. In low-power-distance, high-civic-liberty settings such as Scandinavia, authority endorsement may show weaker or qualitatively different links to participation, since institutional channels are broadly normalized and protest is comparatively low-cost. In more restrictive contexts-parts of the Middle East, Central Asia, or post-conflict states-the trust-protest association may operate differently, with protest constrained by legal or coercive factors rather than by normative legitimacy. Hybrid regimes in Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa combine hierarchical norms with distinct institutional-performance patterns and may yield different authority-legitimacy-participation configurations. Replication using WVS data from additional regions, paired with cross-level modeling of country-level institutional quality, civic freedoms, and regime type, is therefore needed before generalizing beyond the Asian cases analyzed here.

The second boundary condition concerns measurement. Authority endorsement was operationalized as an obedience-versus-independence difference score in child-rearing preferences (Feldman & Stenner, 1997; Stenner, 2005), rather than through direct deference self-reports or national-level power-distance indices (Hofstede, 2001; House et al., 2004), and is not directly comparable to leader- or organization-focused measures used in paternalistic leadership research (Cheng et al., 2004; Pellegrini & Scandura, 2008). Institutional trust was a three-item composite (government, parliament, civil service), narrower than full trust batteries and distinct from the supervisor- or organization-level trust constructs typical in voice research (Morrison, 2014). Participation was captured through binary indicators of four behaviors-petitions, lawful demonstrations, boycotts, and unofficial strikes-rather than comprehensive voice or civic-engagement scales (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998; Liang et al., 2012; Maynes & Podsakoff, 2014). These choices align the analysis with WVS-based political behavior research but limit direct comparability with management and organizational behavior studies relying on more granular, multi-item instruments. Replication using latent authority measures, expanded trust batteries, and validated voice scales is needed to assess whether the observed null patterns reflect a substantive absence of the theorized effects or differences in measurement.

Together, these conditions delimit rather than invalidate the contribution. Within the 13 Asian societies analyzed and using WVS-based operationalizations, the Authority-Enabled Voice framework does not receive empirical support as a direct individual-level mechanism channeling

hierarchical value endorsement into differentiated voice. Extending the framework to other regions and to alternative measurement traditions-especially in cross-cultural management, organizational voice, and procedural justice research-will clarify whether the limited behavioral reach observed here is a regionally or measurement-bounded artifact or a broader empirical regularity; either outcome would be theoretically informative. These findings refine the AEV framework by repositioning it from a direct behavioral model to a contextual interpretive framework: participation is more strongly conditioned by evaluative perceptions of institutional legitimacy than by generalized value orientations-an asymmetry indicating that participation is more proximally structured by institutional judgments than by hierarchical norms. This reframing supports a more nuanced understanding of participation in hierarchical contexts.

In conclusion, this study refines the AEV framework by clarifying the limited behavioral reach of hierarchical value endorsement while reinforcing the analytical importance of legitimacy distinctions. Within this regional cross-sectional sample, authority endorsement neither systematically enables structured engagement nor directly suppresses individual protest. Future research should incorporate subgroup comparisons, cross-level institutional indicators, longitudinal designs, and explicit modeling of reciprocal dynamics to determine when and under what institutional conditions authority orientations become behaviorally consequential.

6. Implications

This study contributes to cross-cultural leadership and participation research by clarifying the explanatory scope of hierarchical value orientations in shaping civic engagement. Authority endorsement-operationalized through child-rearing preferences reflecting generalized socialization toward obedience versus independence-does not demonstrate robust direct or mediated effects on institutional or protest participation in the pooled Asian sample. These findings suggest that such value orientations function more as background normative dispositions than as proximate behavioral determinants.

The use of child-rearing values is consistent with a long tradition in political and social psychology that treats these preferences as indicators of enduring authority-related predispositions formed through early socialization (Feldman & Stenner, 1997; Stenner, 2005; Hetherington & Weiler, 2009). Similarly, broader value theory demonstrates that core value orientations guide attitudes and behavior across life domains, including work and organizational contexts (Schwartz, 1992; Sagiv & Schwartz, 2000). In this framework, authority endorsement is conceptualized as a generalized normative orientation rather than a context-specific workplace attitude. Therefore, the present findings delimit-not dismiss-the behavioral reach of such orientations in predicting differentiated participation.

The results also underscore the analytical importance of distinguishing hierarchical value endorsement from institutional legitimacy. Although institutional trust does not emerge as uniformly strong across all specifications, its directional association with protest participation appears to be more stable than that of authority endorsement. This pattern suggests that evaluative judgments regarding institutional credibility and procedural fairness may play a more immediate role than generalized endorsement of obedience or hierarchy in shaping contentious participation. Hierarchy may define a normative climate, but legitimacy evaluations appear to be more closely tied to the choice between institutional and protest participation. Therefore, the findings challenge the common assumption that authority-oriented cultures mechanically suppress or funnel voice.

This study demonstrates that authority endorsement alone does not reliably differentiate institutional from protest participation at the individual level, once hierarchical value endorsement is empirically separated from institutional legitimacy. The contribution lies not in reaffirming the importance of procedural fairness but in delimiting the behavioral reach of hierarchy within societies that are frequently characterized as uniformly authority-driven.

These findings caution against attributing voice patterns primarily to macro-cultural constructs, such as power distance, within business administration and organizational behavior. Acceptance of hierarchy at the cultural level does not reliably predict whether individuals speak up, remain silent, or engage through institutional versus protest participation. Rather than treating hierarchical norms as direct behavioral determinants, models that distinguish normative authority endorsement from evaluative perceptions of institutional legitimacy may benefit researchers. The results suggest that assessments of transparency, procedural fairness, institutional responsiveness, and psychological safety (Tyler, 2006; Morrison, 2014) are more proximally related to the choice between institutional and protest participation than the generalized endorsement of obedience. Hierarchy may define a background normative climate, but legitimacy perceptions appear to be more immediately tied to whether and how individuals engage.

From a practical standpoint, leaders in hierarchical environments should not assume that only appeals to authority norms will structure participation. Instead, they should recognize that employees navigate between formal voice channels (e.g., suggestion systems and grievance procedures) and informal or adversarial responses (e.g., silence, withdrawal, or collective dissent) by extending this logic to organizational settings. The present findings suggest that authority-oriented norms do not inherently suppress voice but may influence how individuals evaluate the appropriateness and credibility of available channels. Employees may be more likely to engage through formal mechanisms where organizational procedures are perceived as fair, transparent, and responsive. Conversely, even individuals with relatively high authority endorsement may disengage from institutional channels or seek alternative forms of expression in low-legitimacy environments. Institutional design-particularly the credibility and procedural integrity of institutional channels-may be more consequential in sustaining constructive engagement. Although the present analysis is situated in civic participation, the broader implication is that legitimacy mechanisms are likely to shape voice dynamics within hierarchical organizational systems, rather than hierarchical value endorsement alone. Future research should directly test these mechanisms at the employee and organizational levels to examine how institutional design conditions shape the choice between the two participation channels.

7. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

First, the analysis is cross-sectional. All variables are observed at a single time point, which precludes assessment of temporal ordering, causal direction, or potential feedback among authority endorsement, legitimacy perceptions, and participation behavior. Although the analysis employs multilevel random-intercept models, CR2 small-sample corrections, and country-level cluster bootstrapping ($k = 13$) to strengthen statistical precision, the findings remain correlational. Authority endorsement and order values derived from child-rearing preferences reflect relatively stable normative orientations shaped through long-term socialization, whereas institutional trust represents evaluative perceptions of contemporary institutional performance and may be more context-sensitive. Reciprocal or context-dependent dynamics across these constructs cannot be

ruled out. Longitudinal, panel, or quasi-experimental research would provide stronger tests of directionality, cross-level interaction, and feedback processes.

Second, authority endorsement was operationalized as a difference score between obedience and independence. Although theoretically grounded, this specification may compress multidimensional authority orientations into a single index. Individuals may simultaneously value obedience and autonomy across different domains, and a difference score cannot fully capture such complexity. Future research should employ multi-item latent constructs, separately model component values, and incorporate more proximal indicators of perceived authority legitimacy, procedural justice, or moral leadership to strengthen construct validity. Third, the normative mediator relied on a single binary indicator of order values. This measure may reflect a broadly shared cultural background rather than meaningful individual-level variation given the high prevalence of endorsement across societies. More differentiated indicators-such as rule orientation, moral traditionalism, harmony values, or norm compliance attitudes-may provide more sensitive tests of the proposed normative pathway.

Fourth, the focus on the 13 Asian societies enhances conceptual coherence but limits external generalizability. The authority-participation relationship may operate differently in institutional environments characterized by lower power distance, stronger civil liberties, or higher institutional accountability. Cross-level designs incorporating country-level indicators-such as civic freedoms, institutional quality, governance capacity, and regulatory fairness-would clarify whether authority functions primarily as an individual orientation or as a macro-level cultural climate shaping participation. Extending the analysis to a global sample would help assess whether the limited behavioral role of authority endorsement observed here reflects a region-specific pattern or a more general empirical regularity. Such extensions would also allow for the examination of cross-regional variation in the relative importance of hierarchical value orientations and institutional legitimacy.

Fifth, the empirical context centers on civic participation rather than workplace voice. Although the theoretical implications extend to organizational behavior, direct tests using employee- or firm-level data are required. Future studies should examine whether perceptions of procedural legitimacy within organizations-rather than generalized authority values-better explain employees' choice among formal reporting systems, suggestion mechanisms, whistleblowing, or collective dissent in hierarchical workplaces.

Sixth, the analysis does not explicitly model within-country demographic heterogeneity. Individual characteristics, such as age, education, and socioeconomic status, may be associated with participation patterns and authority-related values. For example, older individuals may be less likely to engage in protest activities while exhibiting different value orientations than younger cohorts. As a result, part of the observed cross-national variation may reflect underlying demographic composition rather than purely attitudinal differences. Future research should incorporate more fine-grained individual-level controls and subgroup analyses to more precisely disentangle these effects.

Taken together, these limitations highlight a broader research agenda: understanding how hierarchical value orientations interact with institutional context and legitimacy perceptions across levels of analysis. Rather than treating authority as uniformly suppressive or enabling, future research should investigate when, where, and under what institutional conditions authority becomes behaviorally consequential.

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Appendix

Appendix 1 Survey Year by Country (WVS Wave 7)

Country	Survey Year
Bangladesh	2018
China	2018
India	2023
Indonesia	2018
Japan	2019
Malaysia	2018
Mongolia	2020
Pakistan	2018
Philippines	2019
Singapore	2020
South Korea	2018
Thailand	2018
Vietnam	2020

Note. The data from the WVS Wave 7 were collected between 2017 and 2022 (with India fieldwork extending into 2023). Each country in the analytic sample is observed in a single survey year, indicating that the dataset is cross-sectional rather than longitudinal. Consequently, year variation reflects differences in survey timing across countries rather than within-country temporal dynamics. Therefore, including year fixed effects would be inappropriate, as year is not independent of country-level variation. The analysis accounts for cross-national heterogeneity through country clustering and weighting.