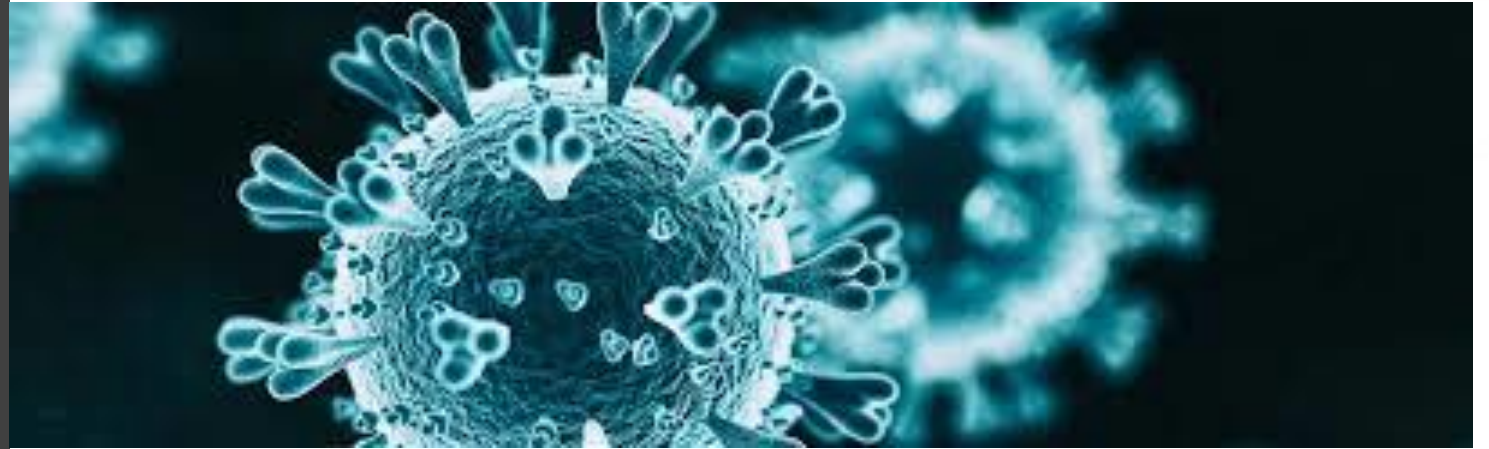


TECTONICS, TREMORS AND TEMPERS: COVID-19 AND POLITICS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

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Covid-19 and Southeast Asian Politics

Tectonics

Intertwined
Global and Local
Changes

Tremors

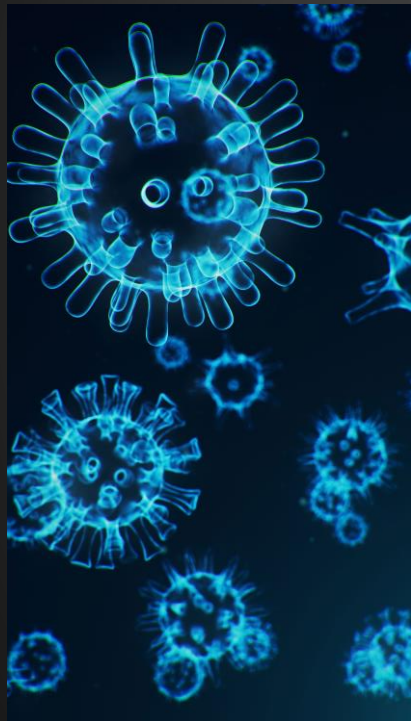
Ongoing Shifts
in Domestic and
Regional
Politics

Tempers

Political Impact
of Changes
Special
attention:
(Singapore/
Myanmar)



Tectonics



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Practices

Fear
Insecurity
Xenophobia
Civic
Mindedness

Political
Engagement
and Elections

Problems

Public
Health
Social
Safety Nets
Global
Economic
Crisis

Inequalities
Digital
Divide

Policy

Data/Tech
Digitization

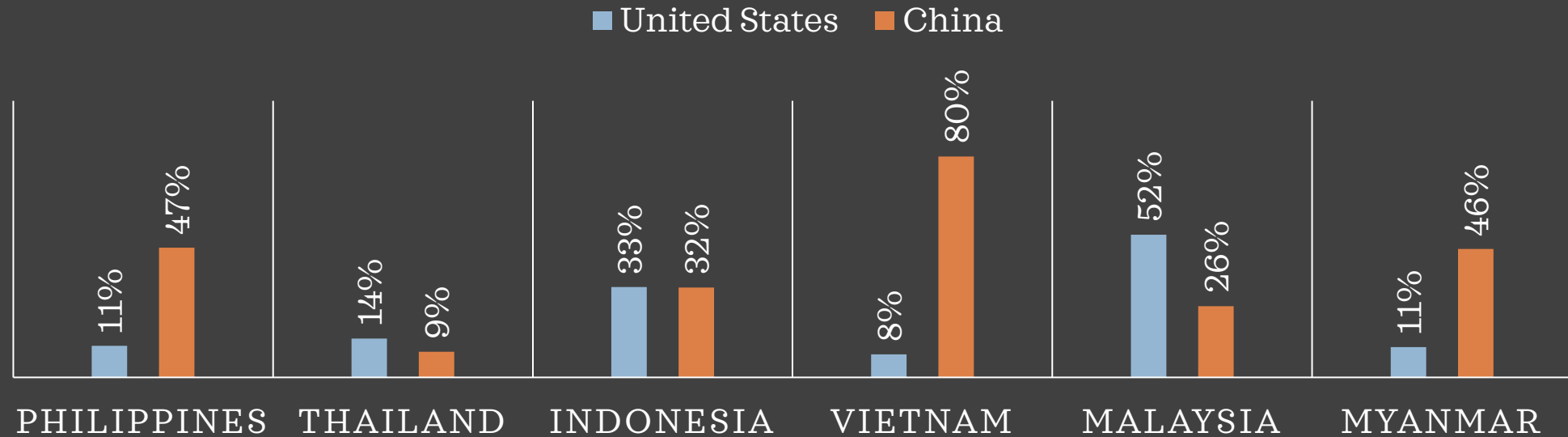
Securitization
Curb Human
Rights

Global Power Dynamics

Deglobalization

Global
Power
Vacuum

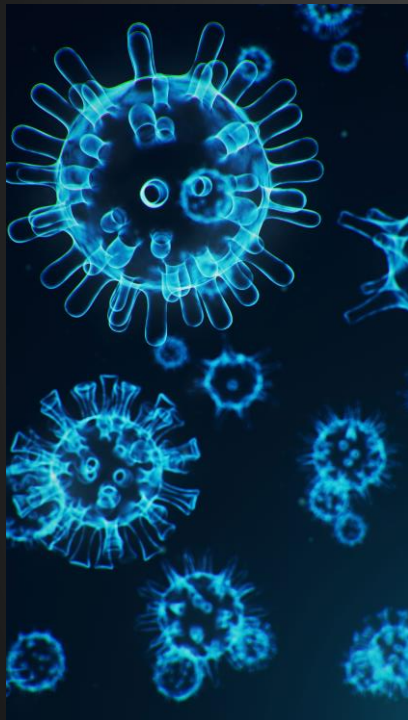
Multifaceted Global Changes



US vs China More Harm to Asia (ABS 5)

Diversity of views across Southeast Asia on Great Powers Pre-Covid 19

Tremors



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Global Power

US Retreat
& Decline

China Pause
Recalibration

Regional

ASEAN
Foundering

New
Regional
Pecking
Order &
Tensions

National

Governance
Watershed-
Trust in
Government

Authoritarian
Pressures
Intensify in
Crisis
Response

Intensity
Economic
Crisis &
Reform
Pressures

Societal

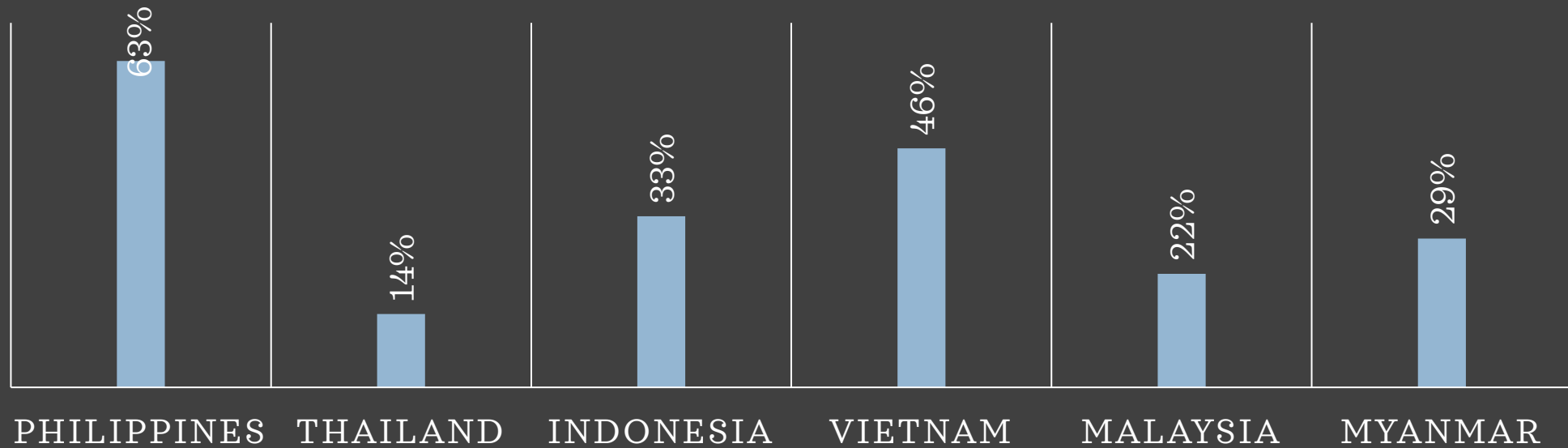
Ideological
Polarization
Xenophobia

Weakened/
Uneven
Oppositions

Oligarchic
Competition

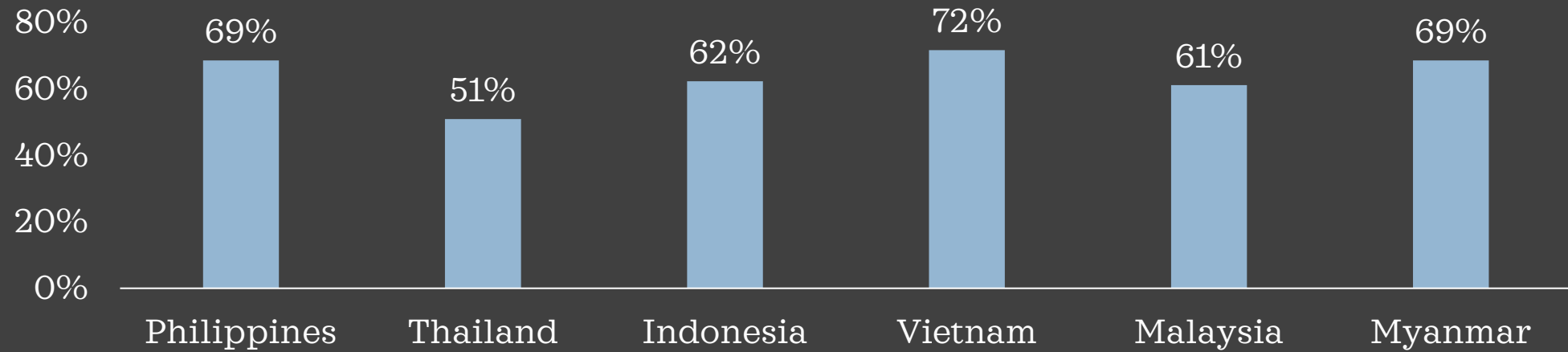
New Religious
Mobilization
and other forms
Social Protest

Regional affects of changes on Southeast Asia serious



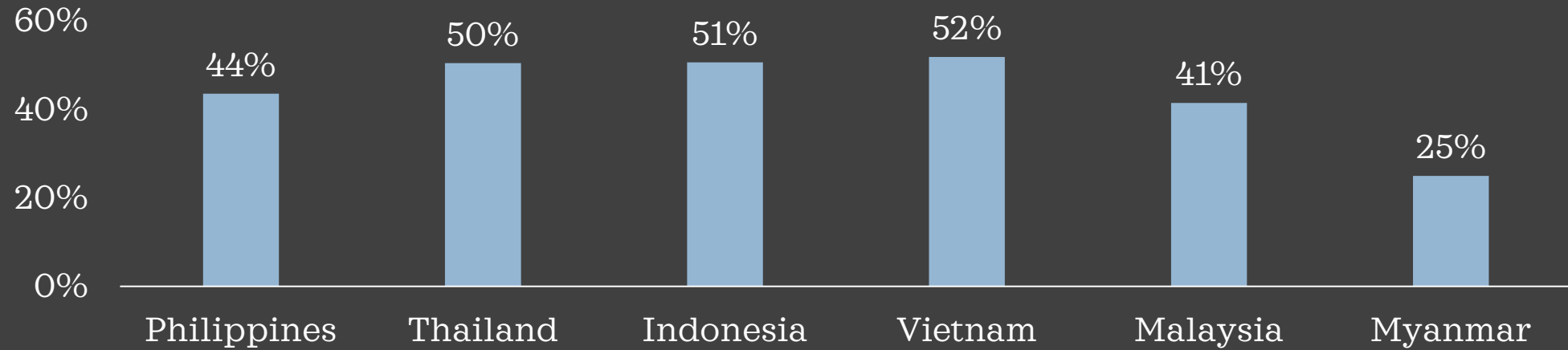
Positive Perceptions of Economy Cross National Comparison (ABS5)

Variation views on economy pre-Covid, but low levels challenges economic performance legitimacy



TRUST LEADERSHIP DO RIGHT (ABS5)

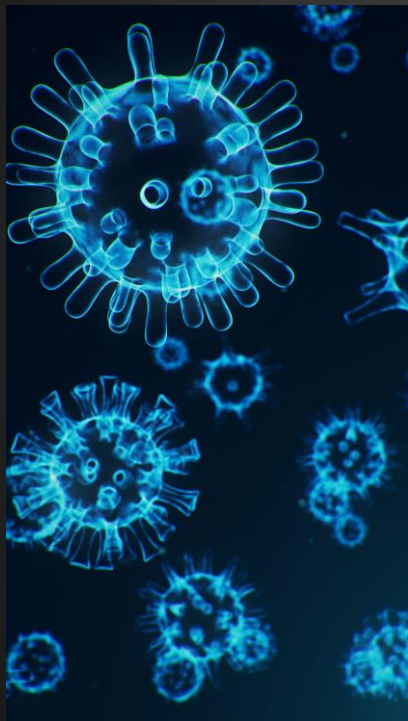
High levels trust in leadership, but this will be tested in Covid-19



UNFAIR INCOME DISTRIBUTION (ABS5)

Perceptions of inequality show societies divided about inequality

Tempers



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Global

Difficulties
Managing
Global
Vacuum
and
Intensified
US-China
rivalry

Managing
New High
Levels of
Uncertainty

National

Tests for
Incumbents
& Militaries

Oligarchic
Competition
Weakened
Leadership

Economic
Crisis
Depth and
Scope
Crucial

Societal

Emergence
New Third
Forces
around -
Competence

Persistent
Polarization w/
Democratic De-
consolidation

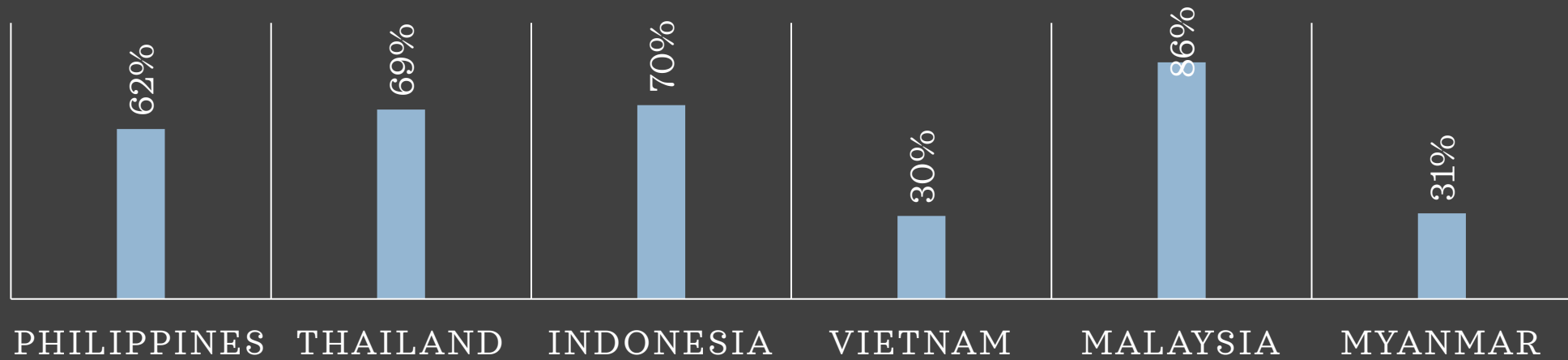
Politicization
Anger and
Xenophobia

Regional

ASEAN
Movement
People
Tensions
and impact
Economics

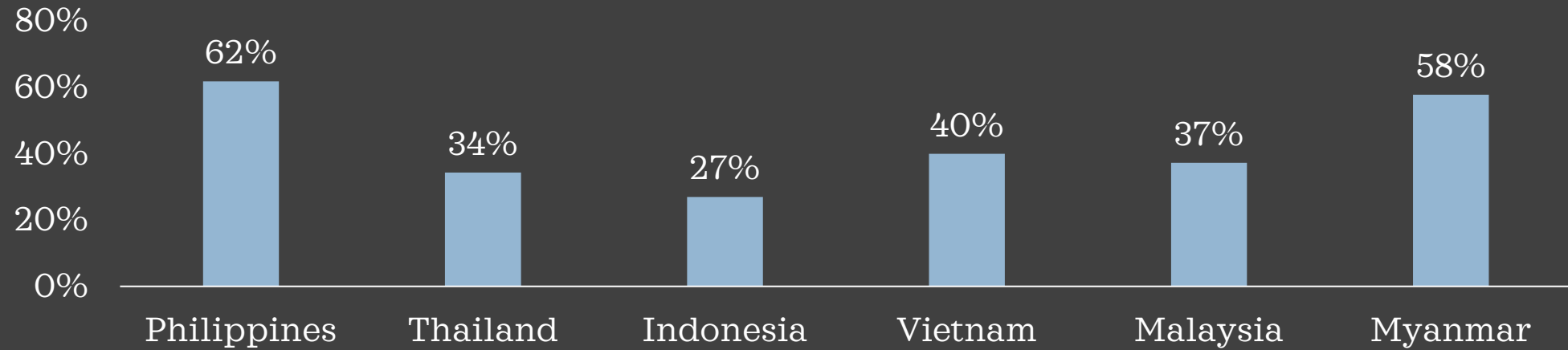
ASEAN
Movement
Goods &
Trade

Multi-levels contestation



OPPOSITION TO IMMIGRANTS CROSS NATIONAL COMPARISON (ABS5)

Immigration source disgruntlement in many societies pre-Covid 19



CITIZENS NOT PREPARED DEMOCRACY (ABS5)

Negative views of preparedness for democracy significant cohorts across region

Myanmar 2020

Covid 19 Effects and Myanmar Election: Early Observations

- A) Shaping timing and form of election campaign
- B) Rise of military (Polarization on role military shown in 2020 ABS report)
<http://www.asianbarometer.org/survey/myanmar-asian-barometer-survey>
- C) Rise of ethnic conflict/distraction of Covid-19
- D) NLD victory based current projections but dependent on ASSK (not party)- incumbent advantage strong, change in campaign. Weakened opposition USDP. New election processes disadvantage ethnic parties.
- E) China factor and Facebook targeted 'technology' in campaign.

Singapore 2020

Covid 19 Effects and Singapore Election: Observations

- A) Timing and form election – New E-election.
Advantages incumbent party.
- B) Lee Hsien Loong's's Exit Election and 4G
Leadership Test
- C) Preliminary views lean toward prioritizing
competency over democracy, strong nationalist
sentiments.
- D) Weak opposition – Problem of cooperation
despite new entrants in contest
- E) Real problems Singapore faces are post election –
PAP elite competition and economy (resistance to
reform)



Conclusions

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Reflections: Will there be political change?

- **Political Change:** Weakened incumbents but not necessarily in immediate elections. Militaries under greater scrutiny/tests.
- Pressures short term more at elite levels – weak non-trusted leaders vulnerable
- Intensity of economic crisis and governance competency shape the political fall out medium term
- Inclusive policy approaches and governance provide best political protection against political costs of Covid-19
- **Authoritarian trend:** Negative impact on democracy, but trends and problems authoritarianism were pre-Covid 19 – only accentuated. Incumbency and crisis response (health and safety nets) arguably more important than political system per se. Democracy more in threat when system not working.
- **Nature of politics:** Changing citizen relationship with government, new forms of mobilization and engagement. No longer ‘government knows best’. New forms of elections.
- Social pressures point to both more civic-mindedness/demands for accountability. Responses also tied to fear and anger. Risks further polarization real.
- **Managing uncertainty:** Floundering regional institutions and inward governments have no global leadership to follow. Greater burden to adopt own solutions , adapt and readjust. Reinforces nationalist pressures and strains governments.