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Abstracts

Electoral Systems and Party Systems in East Asia

Benjamin Reilly

Over the past two decades, numerous East Asian states have undergone transitions to democracy. One of the most distinctive aspects of democratization has been the way East Asian democracies have sought to manage political change by institutional innovations that aim to influence the development of the region's party systems. These reforms have typically tried to promote more centrist and stable politics by encouraging fewer, and hence larger, political parties. The result is an increasing evolution of the region's electoral and party system constellations toward more majoritarian elections and, in some cases, nascent two-party systems.

KEYWORDS: democracy, electoral systems, political parties, Asia-Pacific

The Patterns of Party Polarization in East Asia

Russell J. Dalton and Aiji Tanaka

The alignment of parties within a party system shapes the nature of electoral competition, the process of representation, and potentially the legitimacy of the system. This article describes the distribution of parties and the levels of party polarization in the party systems of East Asian democracies. We examine the public's perceptions of party positions on a left-right scale to map the pattern of party competition. The evidence is based on two waves of surveys from the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems. We describe considerable variation in the polarization of Asian party systems, which has direct implications for the clarity of party choice and the behavior of voters. We conclude with a discussion of the implications of our findings.

KEYWORDS: polarization, left-right, political parties, spatial models

Social Structure and Party Support in the East Asian Democracies

Ian McAllister

A stable and effective party system depends on consistent and enduring support from social groups. Using the Lipset-Rokkan paradigm as a point of departure, this article tests the relationship between social structure and party support in four East Asian democracies (Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, and Taiwan) and two Western democracies (Australia and New Zealand) using the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems. Using Australia and New Zealand as a reference point, the results show that the four Lipset-Rokkan social cleavages are only loosely related to party support in the four East Asian nations, mainly through center-periphery and urban-rural divisions. The absence of an owner-worker cleavage is explained by the suppression of labor-based parties in these countries. More generally, the results suggest the importance of the socializing experiences associated with the democratic transitions in each of the four newer democracies.

KEYWORDS: political parties, voting, social cleavages, democratization

Value Cleavages, Issues, and Partisanship in East Asia

Aie-Rie Lee

This article examines how the social transformation in many East Asian democracies is altering the value priorities of their publics, and how these values are affecting party choice. Our analyses are based on the newest wave of the World Values Survey. We find that the emergence of an authoritarian-libertarian value cleavage is clearly associated with level of development, but these values emerge well before what prior research indicated. In addition, we show that party loyalty among the East Asian citizenry is shaped by a mix of social values, economic issues, left-right ideology, distrust in governmental institutions, and proclivities to engage in protest activities.

KEYWORDS: value change, authoritarian, libertarian, economic voting, partisanship, voting

Partisanship in East Asia

Emile C. J. Sheng

This article compares partisanship across East Asian nations, with four indicators reflecting different dimensions of the concept. Across these indicators, partisanship in East Asian nations was found to be relatively weak compared with most Western democracies, reflecting the less institutionalized nature of their party systems. This could be caused by insufficient time to develop partisanship through mechanisms such as electoral experience and parental socialization. Further breakdowns of income, gender, age groups, and educational levels of partisans showed that more advanced democracies share a relatively uniform pattern across demographics, while young democracies in East Asia showed a more skewed distribution of partisan identifiers, unevenly distributed across income and gender groups. This pattern suggests partisanship is likely to start its development from certain segments of the population and then spread into other segments of the society as a party system becomes more institutionalized.

KEYWORDS: party identification, partisan strength, East Asia

Partisanship and Citizen Politics in East Asia

Yun-han Chu and Min-hua Huang

This article assesses the relative importance of partisanship in explaining level of citizens' political engagement within a multivariate framework. In particular, we examine if the relative worth of partisan attachment in explaining civic engagement differs systematically between East Asian emerging democracies and established democracies. We find that partisanship in East Asia exerts just as much influence on citizens' engagement in politics as in established democracies. The global trend in which interest associations and social movements are becoming vigorous competitors to parties for the opportunity to represent and mobilize citizens in democratic process has also spread to East Asia.

KEYWORDS: partisanship, political participation, East Asian democracy, citizen politics

Partisanship and Democratization

Doh Chull Shin and Rollin F. Tusalem

How do attachments to political parties among the mass publics of East Asia affect the process of democratization in the region? Analyses of the East Asia Barometer surveys reveal that partisanship motivates East Asians to endorse the democratic performance of their political system and embrace democracy as the best possible system of government. These findings accord, by and large, with the socialization, cognitive dissonance, and rational choice theories of partisanship.

KEYWORDS: cognitive dissonance, democratization, East Asians, partisanship, rational choice, and socialization