Electoral Systems and Party Systems in East Asia

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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

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As the first article in this collection, we begin by describing the organizational structure of party systems in East Asian democracies to provide a framework for the analyses of parties and citizen political behavior that follow.

The number of East Asian regimes that can be considered to meet the basic Schumpeterian definition of democracy—that is, governments chosen via open and competitive elections—has snowballed over the past twenty years.¹ At the end of the Cold War, only Japan could claim to be an “established” East Asian democracy, but since then a new era of democratization has spread across the region.²

Major transitions from authoritarian rule toward democracy began with the popular uprising against the Marcos regime in the Philippines in 1986 and the negotiated transitions from autocratic governments in Korea and Taiwan in 1987. This trend moved on to Mongolia's first multiparty election in 1990, the resumption of civilian rule in Thailand in 1992, the UN's intervention in Cambodia in 1993, the fall of Indonesia's Suharto regime in 1998, and the international rehabilitation

of East Timor culminating in 2001. Because of these transitions, more East Asian governments today are chosen through competitive and freely contested elections than ever before.

Nonetheless, there are significant variations in the extent and timing of democratization and party system development across the region. In Northeast Asia, Korea and Taiwan appear to have joined Japan as the more consolidated East Asian democracies. It is notable that Korea, for example, showed no sign of flirting with a return to authoritarianism during the severe economic downturn of the late 1990s—and in fact elected the region's foremost democracy activist, Kim Dae-jung, to the presidency in 1997. The election of opposition leader Chen Shui-bian to Taiwan's presidency in March 2000, the island's first transfer of executive power to the opposition, was a similar watershed for Taiwan. Even Mongolia, which as a post-Soviet state appeared to enjoy few of the facilitating conditions for democracy, has now experienced five competitive elections and several peaceful democratic transfers of power.

In Southeast Asia, the Philippines stands out as the longest-established democracy, with several decades of competitive elections and constitutional (if not always trouble-free) turnovers of governing power. Thailand, too, had experienced fourteen years of competitive multiparty democracy, until the bloodless military coup of September 2006 removed Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra from power. Indonesia, with a population of some 220 million people, is East Asia's largest emerging democracy, while East Timor is the smallest, with fewer than 1 million citizens. As the recent Thai coup highlighted, despite their progress to date, it is doubtful whether any of these emerging democracies could be considered consolidated, in the sense that democracy is accepted as the "only game in town" and any reversion from it unthinkable.³

In the long-standing "semidemocracies" of Malaysia and Singapore, there have been no turnovers of power since independence, and none appears likely in the immediate future. While both of these states maintain regular and basically fraud-free elections, the fairness of the electoral process is severely compromised by heavy-handed restrictions on the rights of opposition parties to campaign openly, as well as a compliant judiciary and a progovernment press. Cambodia is a borderline member of this semidemocratic group. Since its transitional UN-administered elections in 1993, it too has yet to experience a change of government, and the elections of 1998 and (to a lesser extent) 2003 were marred by significant voting irregularities and campaign violence. What binds these nations together for analytical purposes is not that their elections are

meaningless, but rather that they have never led to a change of governing power.

Taking an inclusive approach, this article examines the electoral and party systems of the long-term democracy of Japan, the consolidating democracies of Korea and Taiwan, the emerging democracies of East Timor, Indonesia, Mongolia, Thailand, and the Philippines, and the semidemocracies of Singapore, Malaysia, and Cambodia.⁴ Collectively, this enables us to examine changes to the electoral system and party formation laws across East Asia, which also introduces the electoral context for the subsequent articles in this collection.

This article next describes the various electoral institutions used across the region, and recent reforms that have particularly increased the convergence in electoral system designs. Then, we look at the nature of the region's political parties, and the link between party systems and social structure across the region. We conclude by examining how institutional engineering has shaped the development of the region's political architecture.

Electoral Systems in East Asia

There is a great deal of variation in East Asia's systems of government. There are three clearly presidential democracies—Indonesia, Korea, and the Philippines. Of these three, the Philippines, which modelled its constitutional arrangements on those of the United States, has the longest experience with presidentialism, having introduced a presidential constitution in the 1930s. More recently, reforms in Korea and Indonesia have resulted in their transformation to full presidential democracies, via the direct election of their previously nonelected executive presidents in 1987 and 2004, respectively. In addition, three other new democracies—Mongolia, Taiwan, and East Timor—have adopted “semipresidential” systems of government, with executive power split between a directly elected president and a prime minister, both of whom have their own separate arenas of authority. All the other cases examined herein—Cambodia, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand—are parliamentary systems.

Despite this divergence in political systems, there has been something of a convergence in electoral system design in recent years. Surprisingly congruent electoral reform patterns are evident across the East Asian region, with Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, and Thailand all choosing markedly similar “mixed-member” electoral

system models during the last decade.⁵ Under such systems, part of the legislature is elected, usually at a national level, by proportional representation, and the rest from local districts. While mixed systems have become common around the world, they are a particularly popular choice in Asia's new democracies.⁶ In sharp contrast to similar reforms in other parts of the world, most of East Asia's mixed-member systems are highly majoritarian in both design and practice, leading to quite distinctive outcomes compared with other regions.

East Asia's turn toward mixed-member systems has occurred in two different contexts. In Northeast Asia, governments have introduced mixed systems as a replacement for or supplement to the single non-transferable vote (SNTV) previously used in Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. In Southeast Asia, by contrast, mixed systems often replaced plurality or plurality-like systems, such as the block vote in Thailand and the Philippines. Both SNTV and block vote systems share a common drawback: they tend to encourage parties to put forward multiple candidates for election in the same district, thus encouraging intraparty competition. By forcing candidates from the same party to compete against each other for the same pool of voters, both systems emphasize personalistic attributes over and above those of the party.

East Asian reformers hoped that these new electoral models would undermine the institutional foundations of patronage politics and personalistic politics that the Introduction described as part of the region's electoral history. This was done by moving away from a situation where members of the same party ran against each other, privileging personal ties, toward an environment in which more stable party allegiances and programmatic strategies could emerge. Thai reformers, for instance, hoped that the 1997 shift to single-member districts would undercut the prevalence of "money politics," since local candidates would not have to rely on local agents to the same extent as they had in multi-member electorates. Reform advocates therefore argued that a change to a single-member system would reduce the impacts of vote-buying, pork-barrel politics, and corruption.⁷ In Japan, similarly, reformers hoped that electoral reform would foster the development of a two-party system and generate centripetal competition focused on policy rather than patronage.⁸

The rejection of SNTV and block vote systems therefore led to the introduction of mixed systems combining plurality and proportional elements. Korea, which adopted a parallel mixed-member system in 1963, should probably be seen as an instigator of this movement, although it was not until 2004 that the allocation of list seats became truly propor-

tional. The Philippines adopted a mixed-member model as part of its 1987 constitution, although these were not implemented until 1998. Taiwan next introduced the mixed-member option, moving to an SNTV–proportional representation (PR) combination in 1992, followed by Japan in 1994. Since then, Thailand and East Timor followed suit.

Japan's electoral reforms highlight a number of the broader political concerns felt across the region. Reformers intended the new electoral laws to reorient Japanese politics away from special interests and to foster a two-party system that would be more responsive to the interests of the median voter. In 1994, after a long debate about the political impacts of its existing electoral arrangements, Japan replaced SNTV with an overtly majoritarian form of mixed system. Under the new system, 300 of the parliament's 480 seats are elected from single-member constituencies, and the remaining 180 seats (reduced from 200 in early 2000) chosen from a regional PR list in eleven multimember districts. Unlike the mixed systems used elsewhere in Asia, the Japanese system allows candidates to transfer between tiers—a provision that enables so-called zombie candidates who lose their district contest to then “rise from the dead” on the party list.⁹

A concurrent logic has driven recent electoral reforms in Taiwan. Taiwan first adopted a mixed model for its Legislative Yuan elections in 1992, but continued to use SNTV rules to elect most of the legislature. However, the same problems of personalized and factionalized party politics that plagued Japan under SNTV also afflicted Taiwanese politics.¹⁰ In 2002, Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian advanced a similar reform to those in Japan, proposing that two-thirds of Taiwan's parliament be elected by plurality rules and the remainder from a national list. Electors have a separate vote for the district and list ballots (previously, list seats were simply allocated to parties polling more than 5 percent in proportion to their vote share at the district level). Under this new model approved in 2005, the parliament was halved in size to 113 seats; two-thirds of the seats are elected in single-member districts, 34 seats are selected from a national PR list, and 6 seats are reserved for aboriginal voters. This has brought Taiwan's electoral system design squarely into line with other East Asian democracies.¹¹

The South Korean experience of mixed systems has, until recently, represented a third approach to electoral reform in the region. Over the years, Korea has experimented with different combinations of local districts and national lists, all of them strongly majoritarian in practice. Since March 2004, of the Korean National Assembly's 299 seats, 243 are elected from single-member constituencies by plurality rules, while

the remaining 56 are allocated from a national constituency by proportional representation. Whereas previously voters received only one ballot, they now receive separate votes for the district and list seats. Since the two components are unlinked, this has only a marginal impact upon overall proportionality, but it means that smaller parties with a dispersed vote share are likely to receive some seats if they can surmount the 3 percent threshold.

Thus, divergent approaches to electoral reform have resulted in highly congruent electoral systems in these three nations. A similar conclusion applies to the Philippines and Thailand, which also implemented major electoral reforms during the 1990s. Under its 1987 constitution, the Philippines was the first Asian democracy to adopt a mixed-member system, with up to 52 seats (20 percent of the legislature) allocated to a national list. Uniquely, however, list seats in the Philippines are not open to established parties but are instead designed to represent “sectoral interests” and marginalized groups such as youth, labor, the urban poor, farmers, fishermen, and women. First used in 1998, the party list regulations restrict each group to a maximum of 3 seats. These rules have apparently generated widespread confusion, and the list seats have been dogged by problems, with less than half the winning list candidates taking up their seats after the 1998 and 2001 elections.¹² The list seats have, however, resulted in more diversity within parliament than previously, with list members of parliament (MPs) playing an increasingly prominent role in the media and on legislative committees.¹³

Like the Philippines, Thailand moved to a mixed-member majoritarian system in 1997, with 400 of the parliament’s 500 seats elected from single-member districts by plurality rules, and the remainder chosen by PR from a national list. Constituency MPs represent local districts and need to bring development opportunities to them. The list MPs are supposed to concentrate their energies on issues of national, not local, importance, and are expected to provide a wellspring of ministerial aspirants. Party list MPs who join the cabinet are replaced in parliament by the next person on the list, while district vacancies create a by-election. Consequently, elected members of the Thai cabinet come disproportionately from this relatively small group of national list MPs, rather than district representatives. Whether this mixed-member system is reinstated under the new constitution currently being drafted in Bangkok, however, remains to be seen.

Four other cases of recent democratization in Asia—Indonesia, Cambodia, Mongolia, and East Timor—also demonstrate some of the

underlying issues driving electoral reform across the region. Both Indonesia and Cambodia use straight party list PR systems, but demands for closer links between voters and their elected representatives have led to a drastic reduction in “district magnitude”—that is, the number of members elected from each electoral district. In contrast to previous years, where provincial units defined constituency boundaries, Indonesia’s 2004 elections featured a maximum of 12 members per district. This raised the threshold for electoral victory considerably and made it much more difficult for smaller parties to win seats than at previous elections.¹⁴ The overall effect—as in the other Asian cases—makes Indonesia’s current electoral arrangements considerably more majoritarian than previously.

A series of reforms in Cambodia have also lowered the proportionality of the electoral system. Prior to the 1998 elections, the electoral formula was changed to allocate seats according to the “highest average” method at the provincial level, rather than the nationwide “largest remainder” system used in 1993. This change discriminated against smaller parties. In response to calls for greater local accountability, district boundaries were also adjusted, so that over one-third of all Cambodian parliamentarians now represent single-member districts.¹⁵ As in Indonesia, these changes eliminated many small political parties, to the advantage of the larger incumbents.

Mongolia’s experience of electoral reform has been rather different. Since the first multiparty elections in 1990, the nation has employed a number of different electoral systems with varying political consequences. The 1990, 1992, and 1996 elections used a block vote system. In 2000, the dominant Mongolian People’s Revolutionary Party (MPRP) won an overwhelming victory in the legislature after introducing an unusual two-round runoff system, which required a plurality of 25 percent of the vote for candidates to be elected. This allowed the MPRP to secure 72 seats in the 76-member parliament with around 52 percent of the popular vote—a hugely unbalanced outcome that has stimulated further reform proposals.¹⁶

East Timor also used a mixed-member system for its founding elections in 2001. However, the East Timorese model stands apart from the region’s other mixed systems by electing most seats from the party list rather than from districts. For the August 2001 constituent assembly elections, 75 seats were elected on a nationwide basis by proportional representation, and only 13 seats (one for each district) by plurality rules. In the 2001 elections, the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (Fretilin) captured 55 of the 88 Assembly

seats, winning 43 of the 75 national seats and all of the available district seats. The Assembly then transformed itself into a legislature and passed a new constitution for the new nation, which specifies that future elections must be held by proportional representation for a much smaller parliament.

Finally, we can briefly summarize the electoral arrangements of Malaysia and Singapore. The core features of the electoral system have remained unchanged since independence in both states, but a succession of apparently technical changes have tilted the electoral playing field increasingly in favor of incumbents. Malaysia uses a standard Westminster system with plurality elections, but constituency boundaries are gerrymandered to favor rural communities, and the electoral commission is a compliant servant of the government. The government has never lost an election and, with one exception, has always held the two-thirds majority needed to amend the constitution. At the 2004 elections, the ruling Barisan Nasional coalition won over 90 percent of seats on 63 percent of the vote.

The situation is even more advantageous to the ruling party in Singapore. Today, most Singaporean MPs are elected from multimember Group Representation Constituencies each returning from four to six members. Voters choose between competing party lists rather than candidates, and the highest-polling list wins all seats in the district. Combined with heavy restraints on opposition movement and a compliant progovernment press, this “party block” system has hugely benefited Singapore’s ruling People’s Action Party (PAP), which regularly wins over 90 percent of seats in parliament. At the 2001 elections, for example, the PAP won 82 out of 84 parliamentary seats with 74 percent of the vote.

Table 1 sets out changes in East Asian electoral systems since 1990. Several reform patterns stand out when examining East Asia as a whole. First, in almost all cases, the region’s mixed-member systems are heavily weighted in favor of the district element of the system—making them operate more like straight plurality systems than mixed-member models elsewhere. In all cases bar one, the bulk of legislative seats are chosen from local districts rather than the national list. As Table 2 shows, this means that all the East Asian mixed systems (with the exception of East Timor) are highly majoritarian in practice. This directly contrasts with the international norm, where mixed systems such as Germany and New Zealand feature an equal or nearly equal split between the district and list components. East Asian states have also rejected the compensatory mechanisms used by these countries, in which list seats are allocated to

Table 1 Electoral System Changes in East Asia Since 1990

Country	Former Electoral System	New Electoral System
Cambodia	Closed-list PR (largest remainder method)	Closed-list PR (highest average method) (1998)
East Timor	—	Mixed plurality-PR (2002)
Indonesia	Closed-list PR	Open-list PR (2004)
Japan	SNTV	Mixed plurality-PR (1994)
Mongolia	Block vote	Two-round system (2000)
Philippines	Plurality/block vote	Mixed plurality-PR (1998)
South Korea	Modified plurality ^a	Mixed plurality-PR (1996/2003)
Taiwan	Mixed SNTV-PR	Mixed plurality-PR (2005)
Thailand	Block vote	Mixed plurality-PR (1997)

Notes: PR = proportional representation, SNTV = single nontransferable vote.

a. South Korea's 1988 system delivered list seats to the party that won the most seats in the district contest, assuring it an overall majority in the assembly. Since 1996, list seats have been allocated on the basis of each party's vote (rather than seat) share at the district level. In 2003, Korea adopted a standard mixed-member model, with separate votes for each tier.

produce proportionality of outcomes. Rather, every Asian mixed-member system runs the list component of elections in parallel with the district contest, but with no interchange between the two.

The limited number of proportional representation seats in most Asian nations compared with other regions can be explained in part by the desire of incumbents to minimize the threat of political fragmentation by restricting the electoral prospects of minor parties, particularly those based around ethnic or regional criteria. While smaller parties can hope to gain some representation from the list seats, overall levels of proportionality in such systems are more like those of a plurality system than a proportional one. Most East Asian nations also use vote thresholds or seat caps on the party list seats to further restrict the electoral prospects of smaller parties. The combination of these characteristics with the lack of any compensatory mechanisms and the relatively small number of proportional seats available reinforces these majoritarian tendencies.

Despite their marked similarities, it is important to emphasize the different motivations that lay behind these various reforms. In Thailand, the party list seats are supposed to produce high-quality candidates who may not be suited to the cut and thrust of electoral campaigning, and thus to strengthen the party system. In Japan, the motive was to lower the value of the heavily weighted rural seats that unduly encouraged pork-barrel politics and to encourage a move toward two-party politics. The reasoning in South Korea and Taiwan was similar to Japan's, but with one important addition. Regionalism is a problem in

Table 2 Mixed-Member Electoral Systems in East Asia

Country	District Seats	District System	List Seats	List System	Total Seats
Japan	300	Plurality	180	List PR	480
Korea	243	Plurality	56	List PR	299
Taiwan	73	Plurality	34	List PR	113 ^a
Thailand	400	Plurality	100	List PR	500
Philippines	209	Plurality	up to 53	List PR, with 3-seat limit	262
East Timor	13	Plurality	75	List PR	88

Note: a. Includes six additional seats reserved for aboriginal minorities.

both countries, especially in South Korea, and so the party list is elected on a nationwide basis, encouraging parties to pitch their policy messages to a national audience rather than concentrate on a regional one. In the Philippines, the core problem has long been the domination of politics by traditional elites, and the party list system is therefore only open to disadvantaged groups. Nonetheless, a common thread across all cases appears to be the desire to strengthen party systems and reduce incentives for clientelism and corruption.

Party Systems in East Asia

How have these various electoral reforms affected the region's party systems? As noted in the Introduction, analysts traditionally saw many of these nations as lacking the kind of broad-based, institutionalized, programmatic political parties necessary for democracy to work effectively. With a few exceptions such as the KMT in Taiwan or the LDP in Japan, the region's parties have typically been described as inchoate, organizationally thin, and possessing only shallow roots in society.¹⁷ One reason is the diverse cultural makeup of many East Asian states, which encourages weak and fragmented party systems. For instance, since its return to democracy in 1986, the Philippines has suffered from the consequences of a weak party system: transient and personalized parties, clientelistic and elite-dominated politics, and an ongoing crisis of underdevelopment.¹⁸ Democracy in Indonesia has also been hampered recurrently by the consequences of party fragmentation—both in recent years and during the country's initial democratic interlude—when shifting coalitions of secular, Islamic, nationalist, communal, and

regional parties led to six changes of government in seven years.¹⁹ The fragmentation and fluidity of these party systems also appear in the public's weak attachment to parties in most of these nations (see article by Emile C. J. Sheng in this volume).

Problems of weak parties can also afflict relatively unstratified societies. For instance, although Thai-speaking Buddhists comprise over 90 percent of the population, Thailand has had a highly unstable democratic system, with frequent changes of governing coalitions, small parties holding larger ones to ransom under the threat of withdrawing support, and no government lasting the full length of its parliamentary term.²⁰ This political fragmentation exacerbated underlying problems of vote buying and corruption: since the outcome of the elections was usually unclear, and all governments were coalitions of five or more parties, money became an essential lubricant for politicians and those seeking political favors. As Duncan McCargo put it, "the electoral system had become a massive exercise in benefit-sharing, the slicing up of a cake which grew larger and more sumptuous with each election. Most of the eating, however, was done by elites."²¹

Even in highly homogeneous societies such as Korea, regional cleavages have strongly influenced the nature of political parties and hence political development. For instance, because most Korean parties continue to be associated with distinct territorial strongholds, "regionalism is the key mobilizing element on which politicians base their appeal and to which the voters respond."²² Such regionalism tends to encourage personalized political parties focused on sectoral rather than national interests, to the detriment of the country as a whole. Thus, Ahn Chung-Si and Jaung Hoon lament how "the legacy of authoritarian rule, regional cleavages, and the lack of institutionalization of political parties has blocked Korea's path towards a mature democracy."²³

To illustrate this relationship, Figure 1 examines the correlation between the number of political parties and social diversity across East Asia's electoral democracies. Social diversity is measured by Fearon's index of ethnic and cultural fragmentation, which indicates the probability of two randomly drawn citizens within a country being members of different ethnic or cultural groups. The index of ethnic heterogeneity ranges from 0 (completely homogeneous) to 1 (completely heterogeneous).²⁴ Party fragmentation is measured by the mean "effective" numbers of parliamentary parties for all elections held in the country.²⁵

As Figure 1 shows, there is considerable variation in both phenomena across East Asia. At one end, culturally diverse societies such as Indonesia feature relatively fragmented party systems. This is no surprise:

Figure 1 Political Parties and Social Diversity in East Asia

because political parties in theory represent the political expression of underlying societal cleavages, we would expect that more fragmented societies tend to have more fragmented party systems too.²⁶ The comparative literature on democratization maintains that more diverse societies tend to produce more fragmented party systems.²⁷ While this pattern is also evident in other nations, the overall relationship between the two factors in East Asia is not strong, with an R-square of just 0.12.

One reason for this pattern is that the countries with the smallest number of effective parties are not the most socially homogeneous states (such as Japan or Korea), but rather the semidemocracies of Singapore and Malaysia, which feature one-party dominant systems sustained by restrictions on opposition parties. In addition, in states such as Korea, social cleavages are not based around ethnolinguistic variables but around other issues such as regionalism, which are not captured by this measure, while social cleavages in cases such as Taiwan are relevant to the extent that they reflect deeper political divisions over national identity.²⁸

In sum, while there is a positive relationship between party numbers and social diversity, it appears mediated by other factors. One of these factors is the institutional rules of the game within which the formation and operation of political parties take place. As well as the electoral reforms described above, a number of East Asian governments have introduced new laws regarding the formation, composition, and funding of political parties. In Indonesia, for example, new party registration laws discourage regionally based parties from competing in elections, and revised arrangements for presidential elections require successful candidates to gain cross-regional support.²⁹ Under the 1997 constitution, Thailand required parties to maintain membership and branch networks in each of the country's five main regions, which must also be "equitably represented" on Senate candidate lists.³⁰ Similar cross-national thresholds on party formation exist in the Philippines: new parties must have regional offices in at least nine of the country's sixteen regions and must gain support in more than half of the cities and provinces where their candidates run.³¹ But can measures such as these really influence the way political parties and party systems develop?

One way of gaining traction on this question is to look at changes in the party systems over time. As Table 3 shows, there has been a sharp reduction in party fragmentation across the region in recent years. In cases such as Thailand, this change has been dramatic: there, the effective number of parties declined by almost 50 percent, from an average of 7.2 in the ten-year period from 1986 to 1996 to 3.8 at the 2001 elections held under the new constitution, and just 1.65 in 2005. In Indonesia, the absolute number of parties dropped from 48 in 1999 to 24 parties at the 2004 poll—again, a 50 percent decline over one parliamentary term—although the effective number of parliamentary parties actually rose, from 5.4 in 1999 to 8.3 in 2004, as votes were spread more evenly across the large parties. In Japan, the mixed-member majoritarian electoral reforms have steadily decreased the effective party numbers—from an average of 3.7 effective parties over the postwar period to an average of 2.9 parties for the three elections since the 1994 reforms—a 20 percent decline over nine years.³² Mongolia, too, has seen a marked shift in recent years toward two-party politics compared with the lopsided outcomes of the past, with an ENP in 2004 of 2.01.

Asian reformers have often invoked the image of the stable and cohesive two-party systems of Britain and the United States when advocating political change.³³ Based on the changes in the effective number of parliamentary parties, a number of East Asian polities appear to be in a process of transformation toward becoming embryonic two-party

Table 3 Changes in the Effective Numbers of Political Parties

Country	Effective Number of Political Parties (all elections)	Effective Number of Political Parties (most recent election)
Indonesia, 1999–2005	6.85	8.30 (2004)
Thailand, 1992–2005	5.03	1.65 (2005)
East Timor, 2001–2005	2.42	2.42 (2001)
Cambodia, 1993–2005	2.36	2.29 (2003)
Malaysia, 1957–2005	1.57	1.22 (2004)
Mongolia, 1992–2004	1.31	2.01 (2004)
Philippines, 1986–2005	4.90	3.48 (2004)
Taiwan, 1992–2005	2.56	2.18 (2004)
Korea, 1988–2005	2.83	2.36 (2004)
Singapore, 1968–2005	1.03	1.05 (2001)
Japan, 1949–2005	3.43	2.40 (2003)

systems. This trend is particularly apparent in Japan, Mongolia, Taiwan, and Korea, each of which has seen increasing party system consolidation. Mongolia today appears to be closest to a true two-party system, with both the MPRP and the main opposition party, the Motherland Democracy Coalition, winning an almost equal number of seats in the 2004 elections, and with virtually no other parties represented.

Conclusion

What are the broader implications of East Asia's shift toward more majoritarian democracy? Political scientists have believed that plurality-like electoral rules will, over time, encourage the development of two large, aggregative parties.³⁴ In a two-party system, the most successful parties will tend to be those that command the middle ground. As a consequence, office-seeking candidates in such systems need to adopt policies that appeal to the broadest possible array of interests, avoiding extreme positions and focusing instead on widely shared demands: for example, the need for economic growth, competent bureaucracy, clean government, and so on. Thus, in theory, majoritarian parliamentary elections and two-party systems should produce centripetal politics focused on the political center and characterized by stable and predictable majority rule (also see article by Russell J. Dalton and Aiji Tanaka in this volume). These tendencies are reinforced in those nations that have also adopted direct elections for president, which similarly promotes

majoritarian politics. However, party consolidation may also lessen the representation of diverse social groups as the number of party options decreases, which is discussed in the article by Ian McAllister.

These factors are likely to have important longer-term impacts on political development. Analysts of democratization increasingly argue that the optimum conditions for democratic consolidation included a “settled and aggregative” party system in which “one or two broadly-based, centrist parties fight for the middle ground.”³⁵ Political economists also extol the virtues of settled, aggregative party systems for generating public goods, social welfare, and economic development. Stephan Haggard, for instance, has consistently argued that a system of two large parties or coalitions is the most propitious arrangement for democratic durability during periods of economic adjustment, while fragmented or polarized party systems represent a major barrier to achieving economic reform.³⁶

The potential emergence in many Asian countries of nascent two-party systems in what were previously either one-party autocracies or unstable multiparty democracies thus has important developmental implications, particularly if the changing institutional environment encourages stronger and more programmatic parties with stable roots in society. As such, East Asia’s shift toward not just majoritarian political *systems* but also increasingly majoritarian political *outcomes* is likely to have profound longer-term consequences for the region’s governance, with the emergence of what appears to be a distinctive model of electoral democracy.³⁷

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Notes

1. See Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (New York: Harper, 1947), 269.

2. See Arend Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

3. This is the definition suggested by Adam Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

4. However, we should also note that the articles on citizen attitudes and electoral behavior in the rest of this collection exclude the semidemocracies and focus on the democratic polities that are included in each of the three major public opinion surveys of East Asia.

5. For excellent recent surveys of Asian electoral systems, see Aurel Croissant, Gabriele Bruns, and Marei John, eds., *Electoral Politics in South-east and East Asia* (Singapore: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2002); Allen Hicken and Yuko Kasuya, "A Guide to the Constitutional Structures and Electoral Systems of East, South and Southeast Asia," *Electoral Studies* 22 (2003): 121–151; and Dieter Nohlen, Florian Grotz, and Christof Hartmann, eds., *Elections in Asia and the Pacific*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

6. Also see Andrew Reynolds, Ben Reilly, and Andrew Ellis, *Electoral System Design* (Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2005).

7. Surin Maisrirod, "Political Reform and the New Thai Electoral System." In John Fuh-sheng Hsieh and David Newman, eds., *How Asia Votes* (New York: Chatham House, 2002), p. 196.

8. Takayuki Sakamoto, "Explaining Electoral Reform: Japan Versus Italy and New Zealand," *Party Politics* 5, no. 4 (1999): 431–432.

9. Ellis S. Krauss and Robert Pekkanen, "Explaining Party Adaptation to Electoral Reform: The Discreet Charm of the LDP?" *Journal of Japanese Studies* 30, no. 1 (2004): 7.

10. John Fuh-sheng Hsieh, "The SNTV System and Its Political Implications." In Hung-Mao Tien, ed., *Taiwan's Electoral Politics and Democratic Transition* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1996).

11. See Jih-wen Lin, "Party Realignment and the Demise of SNTV in East Asia," unpublished paper, Institute of Political Science, Academia Sinica, Taiwan (2005).

12. R. J. May, "Elections in the Philippines, May 2001," *Electoral Studies* 21, no. 4 (2002): 673–680.

13. Steven Rood, "Elections as Complicated and Important Events in the Philippines." In Hsieh and Newman, eds., *How Asia Votes*, p. 152.

14. Stephen Sherlock, "Consolidation and Change: The Indonesian Parliament After the 2004 Elections" (Canberra: Centre for Democratic Institutions, 2004), p. 4.

15. At the time of writing there were eight single-member constituencies in Cambodia, up from six in 1993.

16. See Reynolds, Reilly, and Ellis, *Electoral System Design*, p. 27.

17. See the article by Yun-han Chu and Min-hua Huang in this special issue.

18. Paul D. Hutchcroft and Joel Rocamora, "Strong Demands and Weak Institutions: The Origins and Evolution of the Democratic Deficit in the Philippines," *Journal of East Asian Studies* 3 (2003): 259–292.

19. This provided the pretext for the declaration of martial law by Sukarno in 1957. See R. William Liddle, "Coercion, Co-optation, and the Management of Ethnic Relations in Indonesia." In Michael E. Brown and Sumit Ganguly, eds., *Government Policies and Ethnic Relations in the Asia-Pacific* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997).

20. David Murray, "Thailand's Recent Electoral Reforms," *Electoral Studies* 17, no. 4 (1998): 527.

21. Duncan McCargo, "Introduction: Understanding Political Reform in Thailand." In Duncan McCargo, ed., *Reforming Thai Politics* (Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, 2002), p. 7.

22. Ahn Chung-si and Jaung Hoon, "South Korea." In Ian Marsh, Jean Blondel, and Takashi Inoguchi, eds., *Democracy, Governance and Economic Performance* (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 1999), p. 152.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 162.

24. James D. Fearon, "Ethnic and Cultural Diversity by Country," *Journal of Economic Growth* 8 (2003): 195–222. As with all such exercises, Fearon's index includes some questionable classifications: the majority population in the Philippines, for instance, is categorized as "lowland Christian Malays," which effectively elides many salient subnational ethnolinguistic cleavages. I therefore recalculated the Philippines measure using data from Asian-Pacific Cultural Center, *A Handbook of Asian-Pacific Countries and Regions* (Taipei: Asian-Pacific Cultural Center, 1995).

25. The effective number of parties is the inverse of the sum of the squared proportions of the vote or the seats of all parties. For n parties, and for p_i representing the proportion of seats won by party i ,

$$ENP = \frac{1}{\sum^n p_i^2}$$

See Markku Laakso and Rein Taagepera, "Effective Number of Parties," *Comparative Political Studies* 12 (1979): 3–27.

26. Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments: An Introduction." In Lipset and Rokkan, eds., *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives* (New York: Free Press, 1967).

27. G. Bingham Powell, *Contemporary Democracies* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), p. 84.

28. In addition, the calculation of the number of parties also has an impact. In Malaysia, for example, the Barisan Nasional is counted as one party, in line with electoral statistics, rather than as the 14-party coalition that contested the 1999 elections.

29. Benjamin Reilly, "Political Parties and Political Engineering in the Asia-Pacific Region," *Asia Pacific Issues: Analysis from the East-West Center* 71 (December 2003): 1–8.
30. Constitution, Art. 99 and Electoral Law, Art. 35.
31. Christof Hartmann, Graham Hassall, and Soliman M. Santos Jr., "Philippines." In Nohlen, Grotz, and Hartmann, eds., *Elections in Asia and the Pacific*, p. 195.
32. My thanks to Yusaku Horiuchi for these Japanese data.
33. See Sakamoto, "Explaining Electoral Reform," pp. 431–432.
34. The classic statement of this is Maurice Duverger, *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State* (New York: Wiley, 1954).
35. Larry Diamond, "Toward Democratic Consolidation." In Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner, eds., *The Global Resurgence of Democracy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 239.
36. See Stephan Haggard and Steven B. Webb, *Voting for Reform: Democracy, Political Liberalization and Economic Adjustment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Stephan Haggard and Robert Kaufman, *The Political Economy of Democratic Transitions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).
37. See Benjamin Reilly, *Democracy and Diversity: Political Engineering in the Asia-Pacific* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).