

ASIAN  BAROMETER

A Comparative Survey of

DEMOCRACY, GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

Working Paper Series: No. 108

Jointly Published by

GLOBALBAROMETER™

Making Democracy Works in Divided Societies:
Global Perspective

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Globalbarometer

The Asian Barometer (ABS) is an applied research program on public opinion on political values, democracy, and governance around the region. The regional network encompasses research teams from thirteen East Asian political systems (Japan, Mongolia, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, China, the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia), and five South Asian countries (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal). Together, this regional survey network covers virtually all major political systems in the region, systems that have experienced different trajectories of regime evolution and are currently at different stages of political transition.

The ABS Working Paper Series is intended to make research result within the ABS network available to the academic community and other interested readers in preliminary form to encourage discussion and suggestions for revision before final publication. Scholars in the ABS network also devote their work to the Series with the hope that a timely dissemination of the findings of their surveys to the general public as well as the policy makers would help illuminate the public discourse on democratic reform and good governance.

The topics covered in the Series range from country-specific assessment of values change and democratic development, region-wide comparative analysis of citizen participation, popular orientation toward democracy and evaluation of quality of governance, and discussion of survey methodology and data analysis strategies.

The ABS Working Paper Series supercedes the existing East Asia Barometer Working Paper Series as the network is expanding to cover more countries in East and South Asia. Maintaining the same high standard of research methodology, the new series both incorporates the existing papers in the old series and offers newly written papers with a broader scope and more penetrating analyses.

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Polarization: A Global Perspective

Polarization defined

- The process or phenomenon of political parties and partisans gravitating toward extreme and mutually incompatible positions, beyond any willingness to compromise or capacity to find common ground.
- At an advanced stage, people are unwilling to play by the rules of the democratic game, viewing politics as an existential, “life and death” struggle.

Features of Polarization

- Zero-sum game
- Relatively evenly divided
- Political deadlock, poor governance
- Lack of mutual trust and cooperation
- At the extreme, absence or erosion of a “system of mutual security”
- Democratic disloyalty and semi-loyalty; lack of commitment to the rules of the democratic game

Polarization vs. Opposition

- Opposition and clear programmatic differences can serve democracy
- At what point does political opposition, difference, programmatic or ideological structuration cross the threshold into polarization?

Bases of Polarization

- Religion
- Ethnicity
- Class
- Ideology
- Region (territory); urban vs. rural
- Tradition vs. modernity
- Party
- Values/Interests: Democracy vs. Authoritarianism

One or more of these may overlap or fuse

Social Cleavage Theory

- Do cleavages overlap or cross-cut (Lipset)
- India's cleavages have been attenuated because there are many lines of cleavage and they cut across one another
- Are lines of cleavage fluid or frozen?
- Helps to have a significant “floating electorate” not tied to any party → median voter theorem
- Role of electoral system in structuring political identity, conflict, and incentives

What → accommodative cleavage structure, of flexible or cross-cutting cleavages?

- Membership in mixed groups
- Politically & culturally mixed residential patterns
- Politically neutral mass media, common public square
- Political culture of accommodation, compromise
- Socioeconomic development
- Limited Inequality (Scandinavia)
- Elite political choice: choices of issues, identity, & tone for political campaigns and struggle

Polarization in Competitive Authoritarian Regimes

- There is no “system of mutual security” because there is no acceptance of democratic rules of the game. The struggle is not just about competing interests and identities, but about basic values, and about *the rules of the political game*.
- Political hegemony vs. political alternation lends itself to zero-sum conceptions: Preserving the “system” vs. destroying or transforming it.
- This is why democratic challengers need to make political assurances or even a political pact with regime elites.

Major Historical Instances

- US Civil War, 1861-65 (territorial, ideological, cultural, economic)
- Weimar Republic (1919-1933): ideological
- Spanish Civil War, 1936-39 (ideological)
 - Republican vs. Nationalist: L vs. R, + class
- Failure of Nigerian 1st Republic/ civil war (ethnic)
- Indonesia 1965-66, mass killings and coup (class, ideological)
- Class conflict and coups, Brazil 1964, Greece 1967, Turkey 1971, Chile 1973,

Contemporary Cases of Polarization and Crisis In Competitive Polities

- Thailand
- Turkey
- Bangladesh
- Nigeria
- Kenya
- Venezuela
- Egypt

Former PM Thaksin and PM Yingluck Shinawatra



Former Deputy PM Suthep Thaugsuban,
Leader of the People's Democratic Reform Committee
(the opposition Yellow Shirts)



Constitutional Crisis

- National Anti-corruption Comm case against PM Yingluck: rec of impeachment must be approved by 60% of 150-member Senate (73 appointed members)
- Constitutional Court case: Could remove her directly

The Constitutional Standoff

“It no longer makes sense to attempt to explain the current political situation in Thailand by relying on legal principles. The current situation is more or less a phenomenon of raw politics whereby the rule of law is conveniently stretched and stripped to fit a political goal.”

Verapat Pariyawong

Thai Red Shirt Activist Ko Tee

“I want there to be lots of violence to put an end to all this. I’m bored by speeches. It’s time to clean the country, to get rid of the elite, all of them”

Jan 30, 2014



Jatuporn Prompan, leader of the “National United Front of Democracy against Dictatorship” (UDD), the Thai Red Shirts

“The rally [this weekend] is to prepare a systematic war against the opposing camp. The principle of the rally is to stop efforts to foil democracy,”



The Military, again



- Thai Maj-Gen Apirat Kongsompang (right), commander of the 1st Division, King's Guard
- “Les Majeste will not be tolerated”

Turkey's PM Tayyip Reccip Erdogan



Erdogan on election night, March 30, 2014

“We are the owners of this country, the people will not bow and Turkey is invincible.

Those [who revealed state secrets] who managed could flee. More can flee tomorrow. ...from now on, we'll walk into their dens. They will pay for this. How can you threaten our national security?

Dirty relations and unnamed alliances have lost today... hit with a full Ottoman slap by the nation.”

Turkey local election results

	AKP	CHP	MHP
2014 Local Elec's	45.5%	27.8%	15.3%
2011 Parl Vote	49.5%	26%	13%
2009 Local Elec's	39%	23.2%	16.1%
2004	41.6%	18.2%	16.1%

Party-Based Polarization, Intolerance

- Awami League

Led by Sheikh Hasina,, daughter of Shiekh Mujibur Rahman, founding father and first pres of Bangl

VS

- Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)

led by Khaleda Zia, daughter of Ziaur Rahman, declared the Bangladesh war of independence, presid 1975-81

Bangladesh PM Sheik Hasina Wazed



Nigeria: South vs. North

President Goodluck Jonathan

General Muhammadu Buhai



Kenya: Kikuyu vs. Luo

President Uhuru Kenyatta

former PM Raila Odinga

