
Abstract

The Political Roles of China's Democratic Institutions: Agents, Remonstrators and Representatives, and Collaboration between Democratic Institutions

Tomoki Kamo

Since the beginning of the 1990s, local people's congresses (LPC) have become increasingly active as local legislative institutions in China. Recent discussions show that LPCs have changed from serving as rubber stamps to being iron stamps. Based on an analysis of bills submitted to the Yangzhou Municipal People's Congresses, we find that congress delegates have increasingly represented the interests and demands of the geographic areas from which they have been elected, and that local people's congresses have become places where people can present and coordinate various competing interests. However, another entity for political participation in China's authoritarian regime, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), has been understudied. This paper also analyzes the proposals submitted to the Yangzhou Municipal Committee of the CPPCC. It finds that the CPPCC has collaborated with delegates of the Yangzhou Municipal People's Congress (MPC). It particularly focuses on a case where an economic development plan that the Yangzhou Municipal Party Committee drafted was revised. It finds that delegates of the Yangzhou MPC represented the interests of their constituencies, which are based on geographically determined electoral areas, while members of the CPPCC represented interest groups that were formed on the basis of local business communities. It argues that LPCs and the local committees of the CPPCC have become venues for people to present and coordinate various competing interests within the local community.

Abstract

Survival of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party Regime: Co-optation of the People through the National Assembly and Elections

Norihiko Yamada

Over the past ten years, the study of authoritarian regimes has shown considerable interest in how nominally democratic institutions, such as legislatures, political parties, and elections, play an important role in the survival of these regimes. Democratic institutions under such regimes are not mere window-dressing, but they can be important tools for regime survival. However, previous studies are based on “multi-party” and “competitive elections,” but one party dictatorships, such as exist in China, Vietnam, and Laos, have not attracted much attention or been the subject of much empirical analysis. This article, by choosing Laos as an example, argues that even though there are no explicit or potential threats to the regime, the Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP) uses the legislature and elections as tools to ensure the regime's survival. Whereas the LPRP already maintains a solid system of rule in Lao society, it has established a mechanism for soaking up public opinion in the National Assembly since the mid-2000s in a way that corresponds to an expanding variety of socio-economic problems. The LPRP also uses elections to bolster this mechanism by changing the attributes of candidates in order to address changing public needs. This argument is supported by empirical analysis of the past five elections. The LPRP links the National Assembly with elections as a tool to garner public support for the regime. Even though the functions of the legislature and of the elections are different from those of other authoritarian regimes, the article shows that even nominal institutions in a one party dictatorship can play an important role in a regime's survival.

Abstract

The Parliament and Consensus Building under the Suharto Regime in Indonesia

Ayako Masuhara

This paper focuses on the relationship between the Indonesian government and Islamic groups from the early 1970s until the mid-1980s during the authoritarian Suharto regime. I analyze the process of deliberation on the *1974 Marriage Bill* at the People's Representative Council (DPR), *the resolutions regarding P 4 and Aliran kepercayaan* at the general session of the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) in 1978, and the *1985 Mass Organization Bill* at the DPR, and I discuss how the relationship between the government and Islamic groups changed from mutual antagonism to harmony. One of the reasons for this change is the role of *musyawarah-mufakat* (consultation and consensus) within and outside the DPR. In the process of deliberation on the 1974 Marriage Bill, the Islamic party (PPP) and Islamic groups excluded the government party, Golkar, from *musyawarah* (consultation). In the process of deliberation on resolutions regarding *P 4* and *Aliran kepercayaan* in 1978, the PPP and Islamic groups were excluded from *musyawarah*. However, in the process of deliberation on the 1985 Mass Organization Bill, *musyawarah-mufakat* played an important role in building a consensus between the government and Islamic groups concerning the problem of the five pillars of the state's philosophy, the Pancasila, being the only principle for all mass organizations in Indonesia. After the bill was passed, almost all Islamic organizations accepted Pancasila as the only principle for their organizations because they were allowed to maintain their Islamic identity in their platforms under the law. After this, relations between the government and Islamic groups became harmonious.

Abstract

“Political Reform from Above” under a Non-Democratic Regime: Party/Electoral System Reforms and Their Consequences in Mexico, 1960-1980

Shin Toyoda

Scholars seem to have reached a consensus that dictators use authoritarian elections and challenges from both insiders within the regime and outsiders who are opposed to the dictatorship. More specifically, previous studies list four beneficial functions that political institutions may play: (1) authoritarian elections can be an information gathering device, (2) authoritarian elections can serve to trap outside opposition, (3) authoritarian elections can transmit a public signal of the dictator's' strength to elites within the regime, and (4) an authoritarian political party can act as a power-sharing device between a dictator and a nation's elites. The aim of this paper is to argue that authoritarian political institutions cannot fulfill these functions simultaneously, since the first two functions hinder proper working of the third and fourth, and vice versa. Although dictators who want to obtain information and divide the outside opposition need to make elections competitive to some extent, having competitive elections makes it difficult for a dictator either to send a public signal of a regime's strength or to discipline regime insiders. To demonstrate that these four functions are indeed contradictory, this paper analyzes the process of institutional change in Mexico from 1960 to 1980, when the Institutional Revolutionary Party was the hegemonic authoritarian party. Historical analysis based on newly available archive sources clearly shows that successive dictators in Mexico recognized that there exists a dilemma; increased electoral competitiveness enables the dictator to collect information and divide the outside opposition, but keeping elites within the party in line then becomes more difficult. This finding is important in accounting for the causes and consequences of institutional design under dictatorships.

Abstract

The Limitations on Building a Dominant Party: Russia and Ukraine from a Comparative Perspective

Atsushi Ogushi

This article discusses the reasons why the task of building a dominant party is successful in some countries but unsuccessful in others by analyzing the cases of Russia and the Ukraine. Although the Kremlin was able to establish a dominant party (United Russia), the Ukrainian central government has so far been unable to do so. The article argues that the key to understanding this difference is the two countries' different policies with regard to gubernatorial appointments. In Russia, where regional governors are influential actors within a federal system, the Kremlin succeeded in creating a dominant party by co-opting these governors under a single organization. Elections in Russia under this system serve the Kremlin as 'tests' of governors' mobilizing power and loyalty. By contrast, the unitary structure of the Ukraine state made it easy for presidents to appoint people loyal to them to key positions in the various regions, and this threatened the power of the regions, whose elites organized themselves against the centre, which has led finally to rampant clan politics. This argument suggests that the formation of a dominant party in an authoritarian state with competitive elections and a type of presidentialism that is based on patron-client networks, as in Russia and Ukraine, depends on a subtle balance between the centre and the regions, which means that central authorities will be unable to sustain a dominant party if they seriously interfere with regional interests.