

Review of: "Free Speech Regimes and Democratic Cooperation"

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The article examines a highly debatable and relevant topic that affect policymaking and society in the years after 2008. The case studies in the paper cover a subfield that is less discussed in most works, focused on human rights – the balance between free speech and censorship in Asia. There is a growing body of literature about the political and cultural cleavages, emerging from the rightist and leftist camps within the discourse regimes. However, the most essential contribution of such topic would be that such cleavages generate domestic confrontation in all societies, regardless of their government's form or political regime.

The contributions of the author stand as follows:

1. The article is well-structured, clearly organized, and easy-to-read. The author is very familiar with the topic which is evident from his treatment of the terminology in his work. The variables are operationalized according to the purposes of the article and methodologically, they serve the author's basic arguments. Most importantly, the author successfully strikes the balance in introducing the different points of view regarding the debate among the analyzed movements.
2. The literature review and the authors used in the work are completely relevant to the topic. The paper combines some classical interpreters like Snyder and Dahl with emerged scholar who presently analyze that field. Thus, the author has a stable and plausible starting point of his insights.
3. The authors also draw some parallels between the ideological debate in the U.S., Europe, and Asia. I find such comparison quite innovative because it sheds light on the emerging dilemma about rightist/leftist confrontation, being equally provocative for counties with various political cultures and historical traditions. Also, this article raises a particularly important issue – do the analyzed debate offer a new "melting pot" for reconciliation of the cleavage or rather – provoke further confrontations that could have detrimental effects for the legal procedures and policymaking in most democracies/hybrid regimes.

I believe that this paper could serve as a plausible starting point to a larger, empirical study on free speech balance and democratic dialogue in Asia for two reasons. First, the liberal wave that hit the U.S. and Europe under the Obama administration triggered a couple of right-wing sentiments and provoked a debate that turned some European states (such as Hungary, which was one of the strongest proponents of the anti-Russian camp) into openly pro-conservative and pro-Russian regimes. The same logic applies to Republicans, who did not vote for Trump and still resist his involvement in the forthcoming Presidential election. It would be interesting to see how this debate affect Asian societies who held the inheritance of millennial historical cultures. Second, a future study (book chapter or article) to broaden the author's

perspective could include a foreign policy dimension. For example, how the supporters of LGBT rights in South Korea and Japan and their presence in popular culture (movies, etc.) affect the public opinion of Koreans and Japanese people toward the West? Do they perceive such values as “western” and do they see in them an attempt to “westernize” the Asian societies? Do some state policies (as the Chinese for example) originate from the efforts of CPC to limit the effects of Western values and replace them with more conservative ideological segments in addition to socialist with Chinese characteristics – i.e., Confucian philosophy, Taoist cultivation (the latter heavily inspire the new generation of Chinese film productions). And finally – are the conservatives willing to side or rather – to reconcile when facing such cleavage (Nippon Kaigi, opponents of Sunshine policy, etc). For example, the incumbent President of Republic of Korea Yoon Suk-yeol has a far more balanced view on relations with President Xi Jinping than his predecessor. In conclusion, my sincere gratitude to the Professor Yi for touching such a sensitive and at the same time – relevant topic that will for sure provoke a further debate among the academic circles in Asia – and, I hope, in the West.