Institutional Patterns in the New Democracies of Asia: Forms, Origins and Consequences

This article analyzes the institutional patterns in eight young democracies in Asia. The analysis originates from Lijphart’s majoritarian-consensus framework. It illustrates that neither Lijphart’s two-dimensional democracy pattern, nor an alternative pattern exist in Asia. Instead, the review of possible causes for the misfit between Lijphart’s patterns of democracy and Asian realities support the criticism in the research literature regarding some of Lijphart’s main assumptions and major conclusions. Furthermore, Asian realities provide only partial support for Lijphart’s advice that the consensus option is the more attractive option for countries that designed their first democratic constitutions.

Introduction

This analysis extends Arend Lijphart’s 1999 study of the patterns of democracy in 36 countries to eight new democracies in Asia. At the core of this article are three questions: (1) how well do Lijphart’s pattern fit Asian realities? (2) What explains Asian anomalies to Lijphart’s distinction between consensus and majoritarian democracies? (3) What are the consequences for the consolidation of new democracies in the region? The article proceeds as follows. We first outline Lijphart’s approach in measuring the patterns of democracy. We then apply his research method to Asia and measure the degree to which Asian democracies fit into the majoritarian-consensus dichotomy by looking at nine variables. The next section explores possible explanations for anomalies found in the region. Finally, we discuss the relationship between majoritarian and consensus institutions, and the consolidation of democracy in Asia.

Lijphart’s Patterns of Democracy

In his studies Democracies (1984) and Patterns of Democracy (1999), Lijphart developed two ideal types of democracy: the majoritarian (or Westminster) democracy and the consensus
democracy. The main difference between the two types concerns the degree of concentration of political power among political institutions. In majoritarian institutions, power is concentrated, which allows the majority to control political decision-making. By contrast, consensus democracy diffuses political powers and maximizes the number of actors involved in decision-making. Majoritarian democracy is characterized by exclusiveness and winner-take-all competition, whereas consensus democracy facilitates inclusiveness, and power-sharing among different levels of government, political institutions, and political actors (Lijphart 1999).

Lijphart measures the degree to which democracies fit into the majoritarian or consensus model by observing ten variables.

Table 1: Variables of Majoritarian and Consensus Democracy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Majoritarian Democracy</th>
<th>Consensus Democracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Party system</td>
<td>Two-party system</td>
<td>Multiparty system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Concentration of executive power</td>
<td>Single party cabinets</td>
<td>Power sharing in broad coalition cabinets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Executive-legislative relations</td>
<td>Executive dominance</td>
<td>Balance of power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Degree of electoral disproportionality</td>
<td>Plurality or majority system with high disproportionality</td>
<td>PR system with low disproportionality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Interest group system</td>
<td>Pluralism</td>
<td>Corporatism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Degree of centralization of the state</td>
<td>Unitary-centralized</td>
<td>Federal-decentralized government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Bicameralism</td>
<td>Unicameral system</td>
<td>Strong bicameralism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Constitutional Rigidity</td>
<td>Constitutional flexibility</td>
<td>Constitutional rigidity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Judicial Review</td>
<td>Absence of judicial review</td>
<td>Strong judicial review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Central bank autonomy</td>
<td>Central bank controlled by the executive</td>
<td>Independent central bank</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Lijphart 1999.
A correlation analysis shows that these ten variables cluster in two separate dimensions (1999: 243-246). The first dimension, the executive-parties-dimension, refers to whether power is dispersed within the central government; it is composed of variables one to five. The second dimension, the federal-unitary-dimension, refers to whether power is dispersed among different political institutions, and it is composed of the remaining five variables. Lijphart observes that the correlation of the variables within the dimensions is statistically significant, while the correlation between the two dimensions is not significant. Factor analysis confirms that the variables can be divided into two encompassing and exclusive factors. According to the strength of majoritarian or consensus elements in both dimensions, Lijphart classifies democracies into four different categories: unitary majoritarian democracy, federal majoritarian democracy, unitary consensus democracy, and federal consensus democracy (1999: 243-257).

Furthermore, Lijphart examines the relationship between democracy patterns, public policies, and the quality of democracy. Based on the findings, Lijphart claims that the consensus democracy is the “kinder and gentler” form of democracy (1999: 275). In contrast to majoritarian democracies, consensus democracies are more egalitarian, participative, and they allow for a better representation of women and minorities. Moreover, Lijphart attests to their better performance in social and environmental policies, development cooperation, and combating inflation (1999: 258-300).

In addition, Lijphart discusses the appropriateness of both models for different societies. According to Lijphart (1999: 32), the majoritarian model is suitable for countries with relatively homogenous social structures and without deep class conflicts or cultural cleavages. However, for countries with weak social integration, the consensus model is more appropriate. This is especially the case in plural societies, where a majoritarian democracy runs the risk of turning
majority rule into the tyranny of the majority. Given the propensity towards political exclusion of minorities, majoritarian democracy is only viable if political majorities alternate and if the separation between majority and minority does not lead to political polarization (1999: 32-34). Based on his findings, Lijphart’s advice to new democracies is that “The consensus option is the more attractive option for countries designing their first democratic constitutions or contemplating democratic reforms” (1999: 302).

Some scholars have called Lijphart’s framework a groundbreaking concept, “perhaps the most influential institutional text in political science during the post-war period” (Lane/Ersson 2000: 207). Nevertheless, in recent years, studies have challenged some of Lijphart’s theoretical prepositions, the operationalization of the theoretical concept, his methodology, as well as some of the empirical findings on the political performance and effectiveness of the types of democracy (Nagel 2000; Bogaards 2000; van der Kolk 2000; Taagepera 2003; Roller 2005). Some of those challenges will be further discussed in the sections below.

**Case Selection and Operationalization**

This analysis examines institutional patterns in eight newly democratic countries in East, Southeast, and Southern Asia. These eight democracies emerged during the third wave of democratization that began in 1974 (Huntington 1991). All countries have experienced a minimum of two competitive multi-party elections and were classified as (defective) democracies in the Bertelsmann Transformation Index 2006 (BTI).

Table 2: Cases and Period of Analyses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Period Analyzed</th>
<th>Form of Government</th>
<th>Regime Type (BTI 2006)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>27/02/1991 – 28/02/2005</td>
<td>Parliamentary</td>
<td>Defective Democracy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The period analyzed extends from the *founding elections* of democracy up to the end of the review period of the BTI 2006 on February 28, 2005. The only exception is Nepal, where democracy lapsed on February 1, 2005 as a result of a royalist coup against the government of Prime Minister Sher Deuba. Mass protests in April 2006 against the King’s rule marked the beginning of a second transition to democracy, which has led to general elections (2007) and the abolition of the monarchy (2008). Therefore, in the case of Nepal, the period analyzed ends on January 31, 2005.

In recent years, other Asian nations have also experienced setbacks to democracy. In Thailand, a military coup d'état occurred in September 2006 against the elected Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. However, the legislative elections that took place in December 2007 restored Thailand’s fragile democracy. Bangladesh’s elected government was ousted in January 2007 through a military-dominated provisional government. If the December 2008 election will restore parliamentary democracy has yet to be seen. Furthermore, the Philippines experienced a pronounced erosion of the democratic quality of its political system in the past couple of years (Shin/Tusalem 2009: 357-360).

Although these fragile democracies show upsetting backwards trends in democratization paths, they are included in this analysis for two reasons. First, this allows for a maximum number of
cases, which is necessary to achieve meaningful results in the statistical analysis. Second, including all eight cases in the sample increases the variance of levels and outcomes of democratization, which is a prerequisite for discussing the implications of institutional patterns for the consolidation of democracies in the region.

The eight countries considered here have been democracies for only a short time. For example, Indonesia has only six years of democratic history (1999-2005). For the remaining seven countries, the period of observation is between fourteen and seventeen years which still is considerably shorter than the average country period in Lijphart’s analysis. In this sense, this study is more a preliminary evaluation than the final word. Given the stickiness of institutions, however, it is likely the findings here will have some durability.

In some countries, constitutional amendments occurred during the period of study. In Mongolia, Taiwan and Indonesia, the institutional changes were to a moderate extent, which allows us to employ an average measure for the entire period for certain indicators. However in Thailand, a new constitution was adopted in October 1997. This was considered by many observers to be the turning point of the nation’s transition to a liberal democracy (McCargo 2002). The 1997 constitution introduced, among other things, a new electoral system, altered the structure of bicameralism, strengthened the position of the prime minister vis-à-vis the parliament, and established a constitutional court. Therefore, we split the analysis of Thailand into two separate periods (see Table 2).

Finally, this study slightly modifies Lijphart’s approach because of data availability for the variable of interest groups system. Lijphart’s measure of the degree of pluralism or corporatism is based on Alan Siaroff’s index of interest group pluralism (Siaroff 1998). For democracies that are not included in Siaroff’s study, Lijphart measures pluralism on the basis of judgments
expressed by country and area experts (Lijphart 1999: 178). In contrast to the well-established democracies in Lijphart’s study, in most of the Asian democracies reliable data to measure interest group pluralism is not available. Therefore this variable is excluded from this study. The remaining nine variables are operationalized as follows (see Table 3):

**Table 3: Variables and Measurement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Measurement</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Party system</td>
<td>Average index of the effective number of parties in the first/only chamber of the national legislature. The formula is ENP = 1/(∑s²); s² = squaring each political party’s share of seats in the parliament (Laakso/Taagepaara 1979)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Concentration of executive power</td>
<td>Combined (percentage) average of the lifespan of minimal winning-single party cabinets during the period of analysis (Lijphart 1999: 109ff). Presidential and semi-presidential systems are analyzed as to whether the entire cabinet is from the same political party as the president, whether the cabinet’s members are drawn from multiple parties, or whether the cabinet is a genuine coalition. Provided that the cabinet posts are filled by only the party of the president or (in the case of Mongolia, and parliamentary systems) the party of the Prime Minister, a cabinet will be classified as a single-party cabinet. If other parties participate in the government, cabinets are counted according to the seated proportions of the parties as either minimal winning cabinets or as other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Executive-legislative relations</td>
<td>Average cabinet duration in months during the period analyzed (1999: 112ff.). Cabinet duration in parliamentary systems such as Thailand, Nepal, and Bangladesh is measured based on four criteria for the termination of a cabinet—change in party composition, prime ministership, coalitional status, and new elections. In presidential and semi-presidential systems, a cabinet ends after every presidential election, the end of a presidential term, any change in party composition and coalitional status.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Degree of electoral disproportionality</td>
<td>Averaged Gallagher index of disproportionality. The index involves taking the square root of half the sum of the squares of the difference between percent of vote and percent of seats (as whole numbers) for each of the political parties. The index ranges from 0 to 100. The lower the index value, the lower the disproportionality and vice versa (Gallagher 1991). In this study, “other parties” as a whole category are excluded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Degree of centralization of the state</td>
<td>Federalism-decentralization index, proposed by Lijphart. Countries are measured on a scale from 1.0 to 5.0, with 1.0 representing unitary-centralized states and 5.0 indicating federal-decentralized countries (Lijphart 1999: 188ff.).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 6. Bicameralism | Lijphart’s index of bicameralism ranging from 4.0 (strong bicameralism, including symmetrical distribution
Institutional patterns in Asia

In the following section, we measure nine of Lijphart’s variables as they pertain to Asia. First, we analyze the variables in the executive-parties dimension. The following section measures the five variables of the federal-unitary dimension. Finally, we determine whether Lijphart’s pattern of democracy fits the reality of new democracies in Asia.

Executive-parties dimension

1) Effective number of parliamentary parties. On this first variable, Asia tends to be highly diverse. As measured by Laakso and Taagepera’s effective number of parties index, Indonesia, Thailand (1992-1997), and the Philippines have greater numbers of parties in their parliaments than the other Asian democracies. Although there is a declining trend over time, these party systems are highly fragmented with a two party dominance (Indonesia) or a power balance between the major political parties (Thailand). The party system in the Philippines evolved from
an extremely fragmented (1987) into a moderately fragmented multiparty system with two

Table 4: Executive-parties dimension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parliamentary Parties</th>
<th>Effective Number of Parliamentary Parties</th>
<th>Minimal Winning One-Party Cabinets (%)</th>
<th>Index of Executive Dominance (in years)</th>
<th>Index of Disproportionality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>14.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>6.30</td>
<td>8.95</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>3.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongolia</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>82.0</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>20.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>61.8</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>12.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>5.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>78.8</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>8.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>80.9</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>5.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand 1</td>
<td>5.60</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>3.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand 2</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>11.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Authors’ calculation. Data were gathered from Golder (2005), psephos (2009), Keesing’s World Archive; Dormels (2006); Chambers (2008); nepalresearch (2009).

Bangladesh, Nepal, South Korea, and Taiwan have moderately fragmented multiparty systems with an average of between two-and-a-half and three parties. These party systems are characterized by the competition between two main parties or party blocks. The smallest number of effective parties is found in Mongolia and Thailand (since 2001). In Thailand, the rise of the Thai Rak Thai (TRT) party of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra to political hegemony in the late 1990s, has caused a sharp decline in the number of parliamentary parties (Hicken 2009). Despite the very low number of effective parties in Mongolia, the country’s party system is not a predominant-party system as discussed by Sartori (1976: 192f.), since no particular party consistently wins a winning majority of parliamentary seats (Moestrup/Ganzorig 2007).
2) Concentration of executive power. On measures of cabinet type, Taiwan, South Korea, and Mongolia are on the majoritarian end of the scale with a high degree of concentration of executive power in the form of single-party cabinets. Since it is common for Nepal and Bangladesh to have minimal winning cabinets, those nations are roughly in the middle of the table, while the Philippines, Thailand, and Indonesia tend to disperse power within the executive. These countries consistently have oversized multiparty coalitions or grand coalition cabinets. In Indonesia, the *National Unity* cabinet of President Wahid (1999-2001); the *Rainbow Coalition* of President Megawati (2001-2004); and the *United Indonesia Cabinet* of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (since 2004) all belonged to the type of oversized cabinets. The Philippines also had instances of presidents forming oversized cabinets. Unlike in Indonesia, in the Philippines these coalitions are formed as election alliances of political groupings before national elections (Ufen 2008: 334). Until 2001, Thai cabinets almost always belonged to the type of oversized cabinets, which were composed of more than five parties. Although the number of parties declined with the 2001 election, oversized coalitions continued to govern until February 2005 (Chambers 2006).

3) Index of executive dominance. In his analysis, Lijphart (1999:12ff.) employs the length of the average cabinet duration in months as an indicator of executive dominance. Some scholars criticize this measure, claiming that cabinet duration is not an appropriate indicator for measuring the patterns of dominance and balance of power between both institutions (Taagepera 2003; Fortin 2008). Although Lijphart agrees that his indicator can give "a completely wrong impression of the degree of executive dominance (1999: 134), we use it because of the lack of a satisfactory alternative measurement."
Compared to other Asian nations, Bangladesh and the Philippines experience a high degree of cabinet durability. For Bangladesh, the index value correctly indicates a strong degree of executive dominance (Mollah 2008), whereas executive power in the Philippines is much weaker in reality than the index value suggests. In fact, presidents in the Philippines face numerous constitutional and de facto limitations which considerably constrain the executive power (Rüland et al. 2005: 226-242).

The parliamentary systems in Thailand and Nepal, as well as presidentialism in Indonesia, are characterized by rather short-lived cabinets, which indicate a rough balance of power between parliament and the executive. In Nepal and Thailand (until 1997), the cabinet’s weakness vis-à-vis the parliament is to some extent a consequence of intraparty factionalism and the weak cohesion of the political parties (Lawoti 2007; Chambers 2008). However after the 1997 constitutional amendment, and the 2001 legislative election in particular, the balance of power between the executive and the legislature in Thailand changed in favor of the executive, which meant that the administration of Prime Minister Thaksin (2001-2006) can be classified as a case of strong executive dominance (Chambers 2006).

Among other things, the low index of executive dominance in Indonesia reflects the enormous political instability in the years 1999 to 2001. Nevertheless, the indicator value still reflects the existing balance of power between parliament and the government. Since the transition to democracy, the submissive legislature of the authoritarian New Order regime of President Suharto (1966-1998) has evolved into a competitive parliament, which actively constrains the decision making authority of the president, and forces him to adopt an inclusive style of governance (Ziegenhain 2008). In view of the weakness of the presidents’ parties vis-à-vis their coalition partners, as well as the very low degree of aggregation of the party system in the ‘hung
parliaments,’ neither stable cabinets nor executive dominance are in the cards (Croissant 2006: 350).

Higher levels of cabinet durability correlate with volatile forms of executive-legislative relations in Taiwan, South Korea, and Mongolia. In all three democracies, the political system is characterized by two distinct scenarios. In the case of a divided government, when the presidents of South Korea and Taiwan do not enjoy the support from the parliament’s majority, mutual blockades and legislative gridlocks are frequent. When this occurs, both systems are characterized by the inability to “cohabitate” (Wu 2007; Croissant 2003). If, however, symmetric political majorities fill the presidency and the majority of seats in parliament, the government dominates vis-à-vis the legislature. In Mongolia, both scenarios correspond with the single-party cabinets of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party, the former ruling communist party (executive dominance), and fragile multiparty or grand coalition cabinets, in which the weak coherence of the coalition reinforces problems of legislative coordination among the ruling majority in parliament (Moestrup/Ganzorig 2007: 192).

4) Electoral Disproportionality. Most Asian countries have plurality or mixed-member majoritarian electoral systems. Indonesia is the only country which uses proportional representation (closed list PR system in 1999, and open list PR in 2004). South Korea, the Philippines, and Thailand (1997 - 2007) have mixed-member majoritarian systems which combine a party list component with single member constituency (SMC) plurality. From 1992 until 2004, Taiwan had a plurality system composed of SMCs and single non-transferable vote in multi member constituencies, with an additional national constituency. Nepal, Bangladesh, and Mongolia have applied the plurality system in SMCs (Reilly 2006). As demonstrated in Table 4, Thailand (1992-97), Indonesia, Taiwan, and the Philippines have election systems with
a relatively low vote-seat deviation. The electoral system in South Korea, Thailand (2001-05), and Nepal exhibit a moderate degree of disproportionality, while the SMC plurality systems in Bangladesh and Mongolia are the least proportional systems.

Federal-Unitary Dimension

5) The degree of centralization. With regard to the fifth variable, all of the Asian countries fall on the majoritarian end of the scale. All are unitary systems and most are quite centralized. Though most have retreated from authoritarian centralization by introducing decentralization schemes in the past two decades, only the Philippines and Indonesia have devolved real decision-making authority (Nickson et al. 2008).

Table 5: Federal-Unitary Dimension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Federalism [1.0 – 5.0]</th>
<th>Bicameralism [1.0 – 4.0]</th>
<th>Constitutional rigidity [1.0 – 4.0]</th>
<th>Judicial review [1.0 – 4.0]</th>
<th>Central bank autonomy [0.0 – 1.0]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongolia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand 2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data were gathered from each country’s constitution and the following sources: Ahmed (2006), Ginsburg (2003), Harding (2007), Rüland et al. (2005), Stith (1996), Stockmann (2007), Nickson et al. (2008), and Zhang (2005).

6) Bicameralism. South Korea, Bangladesh, and Mongolia (since 1992) have a unicameral system, while the other countries have a second chamber. The Senate in the Philippines has
powers equal to the House of Representatives, with members of both houses elected directly. The 24 senators are elected in a nationwide constituency by plurality. In Thailand, before 1997, the appointed Senate functioned as a powerful instrument for the civil bureaucracy and the military to check the political process in the directly elected House of Representatives. The constitutional reform of 1997 introduced direct elections for the upper house. At the same time, the Senate’s influence was significantly reduced, although it remained some control and nomination powers. In the remaining three countries, the second chamber is quite weak. Until the 2000 constitutional amendment, the Taiwanese legislature consisted of two constitutional organs: the Legislative Yuan and the National Assembly. However, the powers of the National Assembly were already weakened in the 1990s, and in June 2005, it was dissolved. In Indonesia, the People’s Consultative Assembly elected the president and had the right to amend the constitution, but it did not participate in the legislative process. With the introduction of the popular election of the president in 2004, the Assembly lost most of its relevance. In the same year, a second regional chamber, the Dewan Perwakilan Daerah (DPD), was established to represent the provinces in national politics. The DPD, however, can only advise the first chamber on regional matters, but it does not have any power in other policy areas. Until 2007, the bicameral system in Nepal consisted of a directly elected lower house as well as the National Assembly. Due to its weak legislative powers, as well as the fact that representatives of political parties in the upper house were nominated in proportion to the parties’ seat share in the lower house, the National Assembly only had a marginal role in the parliamentary arena.

7) Constitutional rigidity. Most Asian countries have opted for constitutions that are difficult to amend. Out of the nine cases studied, no country allows a plurality of parliament to amend the constitution, but four countries require supermajorities greater than two-thirds majorities of
parliament. In Mongolia and Taiwan (until 2005), amending the constitution requires a three-fourths majority of all members of the parliament and the National Assembly, respectively. In South Korea the approval of two-thirds of the members of the parliament and a plurality of the popular vote in a referendum is required. In Nepal, constitutional amendments must be approved by two-thirds majorities of the members in both houses of the parliaments. Rules for constitutional amendments in Bangladesh and in the Philippines are more complex. In Bangladesh, a two-thirds parliamentary majority can, in most cases, amend the constitution. In some cases, approval by a plurality of the popular vote in a referendum is also required. In the Philippines, a three-fourths majority is required in congress as well as an ordinary majority in a referendum, or provided a constitutional convention is called in, a plurality of votes in a referendum. In Indonesia, an ordinary majority in the MPR can amend the constitution, while in Thailand the plurality of the members of both houses of the parliaments is required.

8) Judicial Review. All countries in the region have judicial review to oversee legislative majorities. South Korea (since 1988), Taiwan (1947), Mongolia (1992), and Indonesia (2003) have constitutional courts specifically to resolve constitutional questions. Bangladesh, Nepal, and the Philippines have adopted the American form of decentralized judicial review with a Supreme Court at the top of the judicial system. Formal provisions of review and the actual performance of the courts indicate that South Korea, Nepal, and the Philippines have strong judicial review. For example, between February 1989 and February 2005 the Constitutional Court of South Korea declared a total of 142 parliamentary laws to be fully or partially unconstitutional (Constitutional Court of Korea 2009). Furthermore, the Supreme Court of the Philippines has frequently overruled parliamentary legislation and executive orders (Bakker 1997). In addition, Nepal’s Supreme Court is one of the strongest courts in the region in terms of
formal provisions and has often placed limits on the other branches of government (Stith 1996; Lawoti 2007). Although not as strong as in these countries, Taiwan and Mongolia also have courts that are not hesitant to overrule parliamentary majorities or executive decisions (Ginsburg 2003; Moestrup/Ganzorig 2007). Whether Indonesia’s relatively young constitutional court can play a similar role in the future has yet to be seen. By contrast, the courts in Thailand and Bangladesh appear to be more subservient to the legislature and the executive. Initially, Thailand’s new constitutional court appeared to be determined to actively review administration and parliament following its introduction in 1998. Within a couple of years, however, the government of Prime Minister Thaksin successfully managed to place limits on judicial review and bring the court in line with its own policies (Harding 2007).

9) Finally, regarding central bank independence, there is a wide variation among the cases. Central bank autonomy is the weakest in Bangladesh, Thailand, and Nepal. In South Korea, the Philippines and Taiwan, the degree of central bank independence is higher, whereas Indonesia and Mongolia are the nations where the central banks have the greatest level of independence (see Table 5).

*Patterns of democracy in Asia?*

One of Lijphart’s core conclusions is that these variables cluster on two separate dimensions. To test this conclusion we repeat Lijphart’s correlation analysis for the set of eight Asian countries and nine “cases” (since Thailand is treated as two cases). By looking at the correlation matrix below, the first striking result is the absence of a clear pattern of correlation between the variables in the Asian democracies included in this study (Table 6).
Table 6: Correlation between the nine variables of democracy in Asia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[1]</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>[2]</td>
<td></td>
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<td>[3]</td>
<td></td>
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<td>0.372</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>[4]</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.811(**)</td>
<td>0.555</td>
<td>0.343</td>
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<td>[5]</td>
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<td>-0.555</td>
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<td>[6]</td>
<td>0.679(*)</td>
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<td>-0.323</td>
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<td>0.478</td>
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<tr>
<td>[7]</td>
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<td>0.923(**)</td>
<td>-0.335</td>
<td>0.537</td>
<td>-0.676(*)</td>
<td>-0.636</td>
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<td>[8]</td>
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<td>0.470</td>
<td>0.426</td>
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<td>0.143</td>
<td>-0.359</td>
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<td>[9]</td>
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<td>0.108</td>
<td>-0.229</td>
<td>-0.046</td>
<td>0.431</td>
<td>0.027</td>
<td>0.102</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

[1]: Effective number of parties; [2]: concentration of executive power; [3]: executive dominance; [4]: electoral disproportionality; [5]: Federalism-decentralization; [6]: bicameralism; [7]: constitutional rigidity; [8]: judicial review; [9]: central bank independence.

* Statistically significant at the 5 percent level (two-tailed test); ** Statistically significant at the 1 percent level (two-tailed test).

The only significant correlation within the executive-parties-dimension exist between the effective number of parties and the concentration of executive power (a higher number parties corresponds to a lower percentage of minimal winning one-party cabinets), as well as electoral disproportionality and the number of parties (a higher disproportionality correlates with a smaller number of parties). In the federalism-unitary-dimension the degree of decentralization is negatively correlated with constitutional rigidity, whereas in his analysis, Lijphart found a positive correlation between the two variables.

Another interesting finding is the association between some indicators of the first and the second dimensions, although according to Lijphart they should be independent. The number of parties correlates with the degree of decentralization and the strength of bicameralism, which indicates an impact of the degree of decentralization and bicameral structures on the fragmentation of
party systems (the more decentralized a state and the stronger the bicameralism, respectively, the more fragmented is the party system). Furthermore, a smaller number of parties tend to correspond with more rigid provisions for amending the constitution. Moreover, the concentration of executive power positively correlates with constitutional rigidity. There also is a strong negative correlation between minimal winning one-party cabinets and bicameralism. This strongly suggests that institutional arrangements, which provide strong incentives for broad consensus building, influence the probability of the formation of broad coalition cabinets. In addition, there is a negative correlation between electoral disproportionality and bicameral structures.

Clearly at this point it must be concluded that there is neither an executive-parties nor a federal-unitary dimension in post-authoritarian Asia. Consequently, when we next cluster in scales the elements from each dimension in order to determine the position of individual democracies on Lijphart’s two-dimensional map of democracy, it does not mean that we propose the existence of a two-dimensional pattern of democracy in Asia. As previously mentioned Lijphart places each of the democracies in his study on a two-dimensional conceptual map of democracy. By doing so, their indicator values are averaged on each of the two sets of variables, so as to form just two summary factors. In order for the variables in each of the two dimensions to be averaged, they first had to be standardized, because they were originally measure on different scales. Moreover, their signs had to be adjusted so that high values on each variable represent either majoritarianism or consensus, while low values indicate the opposite characteristic (Lijphart 1999: 248). The executive-parties-factor is an average of the respective standardized original value of the first four indicators in Table 4. The federalism-unitary-factor is the average of the standardized original value of the remaining five variables in Table 5. To standardize the data the
values of the variables are converted, so that all variables have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1.

As is the case in Lijphart’s analysis, the direction of the variable values corresponds, which means that the low value represents consensus, while the high value represents majoritarianism. The position of individual countries on the two-dimensional map is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: The position of the Asian cases in Lijphart’s democracy matrix

Bangladesh is in the first quadrant of the graph (unitary democracy with strong majoritarianism on the executives-parties dimension). The Philippines and Indonesia are in the third quadrant, illustrating predominantly consensus-oriented elements in both dimensions of democracy. Thailand represents the combination of consensus elements on the executives-parties dimension (in particular, oversized coalition cabinets, multipartism, and low cabinet durability, especially
from 1992 to 1997), but majoritarianism on the federal-unitary dimension (not difficult-to-amend constitution, weak bicameralism and weak or absent judicial review). The figure also shows the shift that took place in Thailand from the pre-1997 period to the post-1997 period. The direction of the arrow points to a shift toward greater majoritarianism in Thailand, which reflects the impact of constitutional reform on the executives-parties dimension.

Taiwan, South Korea, Nepal, and Mongolia are all placed in the fourth quadrant. To varying degrees, they combine majoritarian traits in the executive-parties dimensions with “consensus” elements on the federalism-unitary dimension (in particular, judicial review, and constitutional rigidity). Due to the fact that the division of power between separate institutions in this dimension does not have much to do with federalism (all four countries have unitary-centralized states), it perhaps is more accurate to label this second dimension the “divided-power dimension” (Lijphart 1999: 5).

Furthermore, at this point it can also be concluded that there is no alternative “Asian model” of democracy. This finding contradicts Benjamin Reilly’s (2006: 194-195) observation of an emerging majoritarian “democracy model” in the region. Although Nepal, Taiwan, and South Korea are grouped in close proximity to each other, this does not provide enough evidence to conclude the convergence of the Asian democracy structures in the majoritarian democracy model. In addition, only Bangladesh, the Philippines, and Indonesia can be categorized as distinctive types, while the patterns in the remaining nations are hybrids.

This conclusion should be taken with a grain of salt because of the small size of the sample which emphasizes the differences between the Asian democracies. Analyzing the entire set of 45 cases (nine from this data set and 36 from Lijphart’s study) could possibly show that there is an Asian sub-pattern. To test this assumption, we repeat the calculation of factor values in both
dimensions for 45 democracies (excluding the variable of interest group pluralism). The position of individual Asian cases on the two-dimensional map (not shown here) changes slightly. However, not a single case moves from one corner of the matrix into another. Still, the Asian democracies do not cluster into a single coherent pattern but are dispersed throughout all four quadrants of the democracy map.

The origins of institutional anomalies in Asia

Taken together, these findings suggest that young democracies in Asia follow different dynamics than Lijphart’s established democracies. Why is Asia distinctive? One factor could be the small sample size which limits the statistical power of the exercise. Another factor is the relatively brief democratic history of most countries in this study. The hybrid patterns in most Asia could indicate that not enough time has elapsed for coherent structures to emerge. Finally, it is also true that Lijphart has more variety along his index of federalism variable in the 36 countries he chose, whereas all states included in this study are unitary. Nevertheless, there are other explanations worth exploring, which question the plausibility of some of Lijphart’s assumptions and findings. First, Lijphart is not entirely clear why he finds the pattern he does. At times he explains the coherence of the indicators in both dimensions with the fact that democratic constitutions are designed by rational actors, who have a choice between two philosophies of governing and share a clear and coherent conception of how much political power actors and institutions should have, and which actors should be allowed to have that political power (2008 [1991]; 1999).

The assumption that countries choose between coherent patterns of consensus and majoritarian institutions, however, is not persuasive for constitution-making processes in democratizing countries (van der Kolk 2000). Rather, constitutional choices are often shaped by national
historical experiences, elites’ preferences for certain institutional options, the unequal assertiveness of individual actors’ preferences, and the voluntary imitation and emulation of successful institutional models in other parts of the world (Colomer 1995; Merkel, et al. 1996; Elster et al. 1998). A quick glance at the Asian realities supports this view. Everywhere in Asia, historical experiences and institutional traditions have been enormously important. For example, all countries kept the existing unitary state model. Except for Mongolia, all new democracies in the region adopted a type of legislature, a form of government and an election method that was firmly rooted in each country’s constitutional heritage often by amending the existing constitution instead of drafting an entirely new basic law (e.g., Taiwan, Indonesia, Bangladesh, and Thailand in 1992). While there was a clear break in legal continuity with the previous socialist constitution in Mongolia, the drafting of the 1990 constitution followed a similar pattern as in other post-socialist countries (cf. Elster 1996; Roberts 2006). Furthermore, several studies show the importance of the distribution of bargaining power between competing political elites for the making of new democratic institutions. As a rule, political struggles between political elites with often conflicting preferences did lead to the introduction of less-than-coherent, often self-contradictory constitutional systems (Merkel 1999: 326-338; Moestrup/Ganzorig 2007:185), with sometimes unintended consequences for the distribution of power between political forces.

Second, Taagepera (2003: 10) has persuasively argued that on the second dimension, the association between the variables is not as close as Lijphart suggests. A pronounced federalism

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1 Nepa’s 1990 constitution was based on the example of the (failed) 1959 constitution. South Korea and the Philippines adopted genuinely new constitutions that continued national traditions of presidential government.
logically implies bicameralism, a rigid constitution, and strong judicial review. This is not the case in unitary systems where a large variety of institutional combinations is possible. For example, Korea, Nepal and Mongolia combine a strong extent of power concentration in the executive-parties-dimension with rigid constitutions and strong judicial review. The function of these constitutional provisions is not to protect federalism from centralism or ethnic minorities from discrimination but to constrain the uncertainty of the political outcomes of democratic competition (Ginsburg 2003). Lawoti (2007: 69-70) makes a similar point for Nepal, where constitutional rigidity and a strong Supreme Court helped to protect the privileges of higher Hindu and Newar castes against reformist policies.

Third, not all of Lijphart’s institutional criteria are consequences of deliberate institutional engineering. For example, the type of party system is a consequence of institutional factors such as the election system, the cleavage structure, and the political mobilization of existing cleavages and sub-national identities by party elites (Croissant 2008b: 112-113). Cabinet types, cabinet durability and the degree of disproportionality of the election system are also subject to extra-institutional factors. For example, neither in Thailand nor in the Philippines does the constitution requires the formation of oversized cabinets. Similarly, in Indonesia the formation of oversized or grand coalitions is a result of informal bargaining and compromising between party elites (Reilly 2006: 159). Lijphart’s criteria which focus mostly on formal institutions and constitutionally codified political rules do not adequately capture this “informal” dimension of the political process.

The consequences of majoritarian and consensus institutions
Another question is the consequences of democratic institutions and constitutional choices. As mentioned at the beginning of this article, considerable differences exist among the eight Asian cases regarding the dynamics and the state of consolidation of their democratic systems. Most observers agree that only South Korea and Taiwan can be regarded as consolidated democracies (Diamond 2008: 220-227). The other countries in the region face various challenges of democratic consolidation which are hard to overcome and which have contributed to a (temporarily) breakdown of democracy in Nepal, Bangladesh, and Thailand.

The debate in political science about the virtues and perils of consensus and majoritarian democracy for the consolidation of new democracies concentrates on two major issues: First, the issue of political inclusion of ethnic (or other structural) minorities in heterogeneous societies; and second, the consequences of the degree of dispersion or concentration of political power in the executives-parties-dimension for the “horizontal accountability” of elected governments (O'Donnell 1994).

With regard to the first issue, scholars argue that consensus institutions have the advantage over majoritarian institutions that they are more inclusive and therefore more conducive to the integration of different segments of society into the democracy system. This is especially important in ethnically heterogeneous societies, where the higher degree of inclusiveness of the democratic system provides better incentives for political elites to develop a sense of restrained partisanship and an underlying consensus on political game rules, and contributes to broader support for and legitimacy of the democratic system among the mass citizenry (Merkel 2004; Rüland, et al. 2005: 11; Norris 2008: 210).

Another main advantage of consensus government is that it subjects elected governments and legislative majorities to formal and informal checks and balances which ensure that democracy is
not becoming an “elected dictatorship” (Hailsham 1976). On the other hand, majoritarian systems lack such mechanisms of checks and balances. Lijphart and others (Linz 1994; Ackerman 2000) make the point that “majoritarian” presidentialism² in particular runs the risk to turn the democratic system into a “delegative democracy” in which “whoever wins elections the presidency is thereby entitled to govern as he or she sees fit, constrained only by the hard facts of existing power relations and by a constitutionally limited term of office” (O’Donnell 1994: 59; Lijphart 1999: 12-13). Other authors, however, bring forward that Westminster-style parliamentary systems are more likely to produce “elective dictatorships” because in these majoritarian systems, parliamentary supremacy can easily be abused by governments, especially when the rule of law, the media and civil society is weak (Sajó 1999: 160; Cameron/Blanaru/Burns 2006: 11).

Despite its theoretical plausibility, the Asian countries fit Lijphart’s view about the difficult combination of presidentialism and majoritarianism only partially. For example, it does not apply to Indonesia and the Philippines, where the presidency is embedded in an extensive system of “veto players” (Tsebelis 2002) which can counterbalance delegative tendencies of the executive. South Korea is prime example for Lijphart’s assumption of majoritarian presidentialism. Since transition to democracy, South Korean presidentialism has alternated between the two scenarios of delegative democracy and institutional gridlock. For approximately 70 percent of the time analyzed in this article, the president’s party controlled a majority of seats in the National Assembly. In this situation, South Korean presidentialism is characterized by the rigid logic of

² Lijphart assumes that presidentialism is a highly majoritarian form of government as it concentrates “executive power to an even greater degree than does a one-party parliamentary cabinet – not just in a single party but in a single person” (Lijphart 2008 [1991]: 162).
winner-takes-all politics, exclusion of the parliamentary opposition and weak horizontal accountability (Croissant 2003). On the other hand, when the president’s party was in a minority position in the parliament, permanent gridlock was the rule, to the point of the entire paralysis of the democratic system. But it seems that South Korean democracy has learned to live with the perils of its majoritarian presidentialism. On the one hand, this can be attributed to the strong Constitutional Court. On the other hand, it is a result of the willingness of political elites to accept the idea of temporary government, even if this means the loss of their own governmental power (Nam 2008).

In contrast, Bangladesh and post-1997 Thailand provide examples of parliamentary systems where majoritarianism has given rise to “elected dictatorships”. In Bangladesh, this occurred already in the immediate post-transition period. The transformation of the constitution from a system of unpartisan rules to an instrument of political power by the elected government in the early 1990s, reinforced the prevalence of winner-take-all competition among the political parties: “Bangladesh’s democratic politics are unstable, […] not because of disagreements over constitutional rules, nor because powerful politicians seek to alter the separation of powers. Bangladeshi parliamentary governments have given rise to elective dictatorships because the actions of government and opposition politicians have undermined the ability of parliament to function effectively as a restraint on executive power” (Cameron/Blanaru/Burns 2006: 18).

Thailand’s turn into “elected authoritarianism” (Thitinan 2008) during the government of PM Thaksin Shinawatra (2001-2006) was closely associated with the institutional reforms of 1997. The new constitution weakened the existing institutional arrangements in favor of stronger power concentration within parliament, the cabinet and among political parties. The aim of constitutional engineering was to provide incentives for the emergence of more stable and
effective governance, and a stable, well institutionalized and truly representative party system. At the same time, new constitutional organs were established, such as the constitutional court, which were expected to provide effective constraints on the elected parliament, the political parties, and the executive (McCargo 2002). The emergence of an “elected dictatorship” of PM Thaksin was an unintended consequence of this failed attempt to regulate democracy’s development. By 2005, Thaksin and his TRT party had established firm control over parliament, government and most other constitutional organs. The concentration of political power in the hand of the Prime Minister, which was made possible by the introduction of majoritarian institutional arrangements in 1997, threatened the informal network of monarchy, bureaucracy, military, and civilian elites, which had previously informally formed a counterbalance to the elected politicians (McCargo 2005).

Furthermore, newly democratic countries in Asia also fit only partially the assumption that majoritarian institutions are less conducive to democratic consolidation because they are less inclusive than consensus institutions. With regard to the effect of majoritarian institutions on political exclusion, it is worth to mention that the risk of turning majoritarian democracy into the tyranny of the majority is a particular problem in emerging multicultural democracies. Holding periodic elections may not be sufficient in multicultural societies to accommodate different groups (Horowitz, 2000b). Rather, accommodative political institutions are required to address the cultural cleavages and to consolidate democracy (Reynolds, 2002). However, a glance at Alesina’s index of ethnic fractionalization (Alesina et al. 2002) shows that there are enormous differences between the societies in the sample of this study in terms of their ethno-linguistic and ethno-religious heterogeneity (Figure 2).
Figure 2: Ethnic Fractionalization in Asia

\[ FRACT_j = 1 - \sum_{i=1}^{N} s_i^2 \]

\( s_i \) is the proportion of a particular ethnic group \( i \) in a country; the higher the value, the larger the fractionalization. Source: Alesina et al. 2002.

The data in Figure 2 show that Indonesia, Nepal and Thailand are plural societies characterized by a high extent of ethnic fractionalization. Mongolia, Taiwan, and the Philippines are “semi-plural societies” (Lijphart 1999), while Bangladesh and South Korea are ethnically homogenous.

From a theoretical perspective, the institutional arrangements of Indonesian democracy which emphasize political inclusion and power sharing are especially appropriate for the consolidation of democracy in ethnically fragmented societies. On the other hand, the socio-culturally homogeneous South Korean society can afford majoritarian institutions because neither socio-cultural cleavages, nor issues of economy and wealth distribution are salient for party competition. The same is true for Taiwan. Until the late 1980s, the sub-ethnic cleavage between Taiwanese and Mainlanders formed the decisive political cleavage in party politics and society. Since the 1990s, this cleavage has gradually been replaced by the issue of the national identity and the Island’s political status (independence/unification). In addition, most political parties...
claim to be “Taiwanese” parties. Although other, socio-economic cleavages have emerged, the national identity issue and other, more recent cleavages are cutting across the traditional “Taiwanese vs. Mainlander” cleavage (Liu/Hinrich 2006; Lin/Chu 2008).

In Bangladesh and the Philippines, the issue of political exclusion of ethnic minorities is also less relevant for the consolidation of democracy because of rather low extent of ethnic fractionalization in the two nations, and because the political salient cleavages run along the socioeconomic cleavage (the Philippines), and between secular nationalism, moderate Islam, and radical Islam (Bangladesh).

For ethnically heterogeneous Nepal, the exclusionary nature of its political institutions is a major source of political conflict and instability during the democratic period. The existing ethnic cleavages were reinforced by social inequalities and economic conflicts (Hutt 2004). The exclusionary institutions further reinforced the exclusionary effect of the socio-historical and economic factors (Lawoti 2007: 72). Furthermore, some “consensus elements“ such as judicial review and a rigid constitution further weakened the capacity of the democratic system to accommodate conflict between different socio-cultural groups in society, as they protracted socio-economic reforms and protected the vested interests of particular minority groups (ibid.).

The prolonged discrimination and exclusion of socio-cultural minorities and economically disadvantaged groups from political participation and representation is reflected by the exclusive composition of political parties, parliament and cabinet, the state administration and the judiciary, which are all dominated by the cultural and resource-wise dominant group, the Caste Hill Hindu Elite (Lawoti 2005, 2007; Pradhan/Shrestha 2005: 25).

Conclusion
Three conclusions can be drawn from the analysis. First, Lijphart’s patterns of democracy do not fit well in Asia. This finding resonates with recent studies on new democracies in East Europe, which were not able to find empirical evidence for Lijphart’s two-dimensional pattern of democracy (Robert 2006; Fortin 2008). Second, the majority of Asian democracies (six out of nine cases), appear to be hybrids, mixing Lijphart’s consensus and majoritarian categories. Only Philippines, Indonesia, and Bangladesh can be categorized as either “consensus” or “majoritarian” democracy, whereas the other democracies show unexpected, even contradictory, deviations from Lijphart’s patterns. These anomalies point us toward a greater focus on the context of democratic transition in which institutions are designed. Even though the causes for the hybrid elements of Asian democracies cannot be established with certainty within the framework of this article, they appear to have much to do with the specific historical circumstances under which institutions were made in the democratizing countries in Asia. Moreover, our analysis supports the skepticism about the plausibility and appropriateness of some of Lijphart’s prepositions, which has been noted in previous studies.

Third, although there are good theoretical reasons to assume that consensus institutions are more conducive to the consolidation of democracy, the association between the type of democratic structures and the dynamics and status of democracy in Asia is clearly ambiguous, especially since not all of Lijphart’s criteria are not relevant to the same degree for the consolidation of a democratic system (e.g. the degree of independence of the central bank). Furthermore, some institutions indices’ misrepresent their actual effect on political exclusion or inclusion. Judicial review and the rigidity in the constitutional amendment process in Nepal are cases in point (Lawoti 2007: 69). This suggests that institutional structures must be re-coupled to the contextual conditions in which they operate.
Finally, institutional arrangements, which appear to be functional in one case, can prove dysfunctional in another case. For example, the experiences of Indonesia and the Philippines indicate, that presidentialism can be part of a power dispersing institutional arrangement and does not necessarily contribute to political exclusion (Horrowitz 1994) or the emergence of a “delegative democracy” (Croissant 2003), whereas Westminster parliamentary systems can turn into “elective dictatorships”. Bangladesh and Thailand are cases in point. In addition, theoretically plausible arguments regarding the problems of political exclusion of structural minorities in majoritarian institutions fit Asian realities only partially. While the exclusion of minorities helped to destabilize democracy in Nepal, the persisting social and economic exclusion of broad segments of society has become the most threatening factor for democracy in the Philippines, and also increasingly in Thailand. This form of social exclusion is substantially more problematic in its effect on the democratic system at large, than are ethno-nationalist conflicts in both countries. This is all the more essential, as this form of political and social exclusion cannot be solved by the “consensualization” of democratic institutions. Thus, if there is a general quintessence as to the relationship between majoritarian and consensus institutions and democratic consolidation than it is that the context matters. Lijphart’s apodictic preference for the consensus option as "the attractive option for countries designing their first democratic constitutions or contemplating democratic reforms” (1999: 302) may fall short for the realities in the new democracies in Asia and in other regions.
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