
CLIENTELISTIC DEMOCRACY

Ethan Scheiner: *Democracy without Competition in Japan: Opposition Failure in a One-Party Dominant State* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Pp. xviii, 267. \$70.00; \$25.00, paper.)

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Democracy without Competition aims at the heart of the study of party politics and political behavior in Japan since the end of World War II. Why is Japan the only nation among true democracies in the developed world to have one party dominating its national-level politics, decade after decade? All of the other one-party dominant nations—such as Italy, Sweden, and Mexico—have witnessed the fall and replacement of the once dominant party. Not Japan. Between 1955, when the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) was formed, and 2005, the LDP was out of power only a little more than ten months. One observation is very clear: there have been lots of opportunities for the LDP to lose its mandate to govern. Major scandals have come on a regular basis, and party splits have occurred that seemed to threaten the continuation of LDP rule. But in each case, the LDP has managed to survive the challenges and continue its political domination. Part of the subtitle of the book, *Opposition Failure*, hints at the argument that Scheiner will offer to explain this curious phenomenon. But his argument is much more complex than just the failure of the opposition parties year after year, decade after decade. It involves the very foundations of the Japanese political and economic system and how government and the LDP have used that foundation to ensure the survival of the LDP political power.

Scheiner begins his exploration of opposition failure by examining the usual suspects. Over the past five decades, a variety of explanations has been advanced by Japanese and western scholars for the LDP's continued dominance: the bias of the various aspects of the Japanese election system, including the previously used multiple-member House of Representatives districts and the current mix of single-member districts and proportional representation; the very restrictive rules that govern Japanese political campaigns; the ineffectual Japanese campaign finance laws; and the malapportionment of both houses of the Japanese Diet. These structural and cultural explanations are discarded as being too limited to explain this long-term pattern. However, in addition to these explanations, Scheiner notes that the opposition parties have had trouble finding good candidates to run in Diet elections; the LDP has been very skillful in utilizing the resources of the state to wed various interest groups in Japan to the LDP; and the opposition parties over and over again have not been able to present themselves and their leaders as attractive alternatives to LDP rule. These latter three explanations are combined by Scheiner into a comprehensive explanation (clientelist politics) for the LDP's success and the opposition's failure.

Clientelism combines with Japanese structural characteristics such as fiscal centralism and institutional protections for the clients of the LDP rule. Japanese politics is rarely based on programmatic appeals to the electorate. Very seldom can one see any major policy differences between the major opposition party and the LDP. This lack of distinction seems to be especially true at the current moment with the opposition Democratic Party hard pressed to establish any major policy differences between itself and its LDP opponent. Consequently, Scheiner argues quite persuasively that the pattern of clientelism has produced a system of resource allocations to major interests in Japanese society that makes it extremely difficult for any opposition party to overcome the LDP advantages. This difficulty has, in turn, made it very difficult for new or challenging parties to organize at the local level. Thus, the party organizations have been relatively strong at the top and almost nonexistent at the grassroots of Japanese politics.

One of the values of this book is its placement of the Japanese pattern within the largest context of other nations' experience with one-party democratic rule. Scheiner builds a model based on these comparative analyses to test his clientelist explanation for the Japanese phenomenon. The rest of the book is characterized by an application of a wide variety of information from Japanese society, economy, and government to test the clientelist explanation. In short, clientelism produces opposition failure by reducing the chances of opposition parties to field strong candidates and build strong local party organizations and by limiting areas of effective party competition, especially in the rural and less urbanized parts of Japan where the LDP strongholds continue to exist. The formation of new parties joined together by politicians from various existing parties is almost guaranteed to fail because of the weak linkages to local and grassroots politics.

Many of Scheiner's arguments are not new or unique to this book. What is especially valuable is the author's bringing together the up-to-date data and arguments in one place for the reader to consider a variety of explanations as to why a truly democratic nation has not produced a pattern of alteration in power of parties at the national level. While the 1955–1993 party system could be characterized as ideological with the left wing Socialists being the primary alternative to LDP rule, the current post-1993 era with two largely conservative parties (LDP and the Democratic Party) requires a much more sophisticated analysis. Here Scheiner shines with his data collection and analysis, which are persuasive in many aspects. The book concludes with a very useful examination of the political implications of this pattern of clientelism and some predictions about the future of opposition politics. (The author notes that the best hope for opposition party success in the near future is a defection of Diet members from the LDP, as occurred in 1993.)

This may be the most useful book on contemporary Japanese party politics since Pempel's *Regime Shift* (1998). On the slightly, and only slightly, negative side, I would note the manuscript still has a little too much of the dissertation feel to it for my taste. To make his point on the value of clientelism as an

organizing model, the author is a bit too quick in his rejection of alternative explanations for the failure of Japan's opposition. But, all in all, this is a very valuable book and an excellent text for any course in contemporary Japanese politics.

–Ronald J. Hrebenar

LEARNING THAT FIRE KILLS

Robert A. Doughty: *Pyrrhic Victory: French Strategy and Operations in the Great War* (Cambridge, MA: Belnap Press, 2005. Pp. xii, 578. \$39.95.)

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In 1914, Europe was a powder keg, divided into two armed camps, each of which commanded massive armies of citizen-soldiers apparently prepared to die for their respective fatherlands. It was a continent riven with dissension, whose leaders increasingly viewed every dispute as a zero-sum game, in which they dare not yield lest they face the ire of their nationalistic populations and threaten the solidity of their fragile alliances. Therefore, war came as no surprise in 1914. What was a surprise, for most people anyway, was that it lasted so long and was so terribly destructive. The expected war of annihilation revealed itself to be a war of attrition. Four years and millions of casualties later, the fighting ended more out of exhaustion than military victory.

Robert Doughty's impressive new book on the French army in World War I adds to a growing literature—indeed, one might add obsession—with that war, especially in Europe. Leonard V. Smith's 1994 book, *Between Mutiny and Obedience*, focused on the evolution of discipline and command relationships in the French Fifth Infantry Division. In 2003, Smith joined with French historians Stéphane Audoin-Rousseau and Annette Becker to publish *France and the Great War 1914–1918*, which concentrates on the experience and legacy of the war in French memory. The tactical dimensions of the French war were covered by Michel Goya in *La chair et l'acier: l'armée française et l'invention de la guerre modern (1914–1918)*, published in 2004, a year after Anthony Clayton's very useful overview, *Paths of Glory, the French Army 1914–1918*, appeared. American military historian Robert Doughty has produced a major, archive-intensive history of the French army in World War I that focuses on the intersection of strategy, planning, and operations.

Waging war is about balancing dilemmas, and the French faced them in spades, usually with unhappy results. French Commander-in-Chief Josef Joffre had to plan for, and fight, a war against an enemy that was superior in practically every organizational and technological category. While