

Voters' Acceptance of Anti-guardians' Narratives: Electoral Politics in Establishmentarian Democracies

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Abstract : Guardians in hybrid regimes fragment opposition parties and ban their political leaders, and disenfranchise their voters' political participation. When guardians in hybrid regimes are so powerful that they remain decisive on electoral politics of states, and have powers to ban political parties and their leadership, then "why do political parties backed by those powerful guardians lose elections" and "how do anti-establishment parties make electoral inroads at the local and national levels." These two questions are interrelated with the key research question of my research "why do people vote for political parties rejected by powerful guardians in establishmentarian democracies." Furthermore, this research question is important to be explored for two reasons. First, existing literature only reflects the electoral victories of opposition parties or defeats of military-sponsored parties (see Thailand and Turkey) but remains silent on political change that led the anti-military parties to win the elections. Second, why is it a case that people belonging to the countries where militaries remain popular among the public (see Turkey and Pakistan) have started putting their trust in anti-establishment politicians who criticise the military against their intervention in politics? For instance, in Pakistan, where commenting against the military is meant to comment against the state -- an anti-military narrative is getting popular support. The conceptual framework of hybrid states in this research relies on the concept of a 'reserved domain/tutelary body' (guardians of hybrid states). However, this research makes a case that hybrid states are not consolidated separate political entities but rather vacillated states that fluctuate between democratic and authoritarian practices. This paper, therefore, uses the term establishmentarian democracy as a subtype of the hybrid regime, which is more consolidated than a hybrid democracy.

Keywords : Guardians, Hybrid Regimes, Voters, Elections, Democracy, South Asia

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