

Socio-economic background, vote choice, and support for democratic reform: A study of legislative yuan elections during democratic transition

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Abstrak

This article explores the relationship between socioeconomic status and support for the opposition by examining six legislative elections in the democratic transition period between 1980 and 1995. We demonstrate how political economic environment, framed by the constitutional, economic, and cross-strait policies of the main parties, influences voters' vote choice. Before the launching of democratic reforms in 1986, individuals of a higher socioeconomic status tend to embrace democratic values but fail to translate into concrete electoral support for the opposition camp due to the concerns about the potential shocks to the stability of the political economic system. It is only after the onset of democratic reforms that this group begins to reveal their support for the opposition camp. In contrast, the relationship between occupations and vote choices was largely stable in the decade of the 1980s. Both petty bourgeois and blue-collar labor were consistently in favor of the opposition party. With the democratic reforms come to an end and the convergence of the two main parties' policies, the significant relationship between socioeconomic status and voting choice vanished in the 1992 and 1995 elections.