

Reunification Benefits for LGBT Movements

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Introduction

Taiwan's ruling for same-sex marriage makes it the first country in Asia to have marriage equality. However, countries with similar cultures and similar governments have not yet guaranteed civil unions. To explore this phenomenon I examine Taiwan and South Korea, two North Eastern Asian countries with relatively similar cultures and relatively similar governments. And so, this research explores the structural, cultural and economic factors that led to different rates of LGBT mobilization in Taiwan and South Korea.



Research Question

How does a threatening neighbor state affect the LGBT mobilization of the threatened state?

Arguments

My Argument

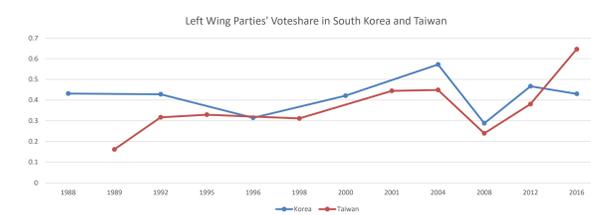
As a state increasingly adopts a democracy master frame, then the probability of LGBT mobilization success increases.

Argument in Literature

1. If resources for mobilization increase, so will the probability of LGBT mobilization success¹.
2. As the openness of political opportunity structures increase, so will the probability of LGBT mobilization success¹.
3. As attitudes favoring the LGBT increase, so will the probability of LGBT mobilization success.
4. As economic development increases, shifts in cultural values favoring self-expression and secularism increase the probability of LGBT mobilization success⁴.

Methodology

- Examine the master frame narratives
 - Attitudes of reunification and views of themselves
- Compare resources for mobilization
 - Civil society strength, number of LGBT organizations, and number of significant protests
- Analyze political opportunity structures
 - Number of left leaning political allies, number of pro-LGBT political allies, and laws toward minorities
- Investigate political culture
 - Inglehart's measure of culture with the dimensions of survivalist/self-expression and tradition/secularism
- Review economic development
 - Gross domestic product and income per-capita



Preliminary Results

	Framing	Resource Mobilization	Political Opportunity Structure	Political Culture	Public Opinion	Economic Development
Taiwan	Positive	Positive	Positive	Positive	Positive	Positive
South Korea	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive

Resource Mobilization

Although South Korea has a very strong social movement culture and many professional social movement organizations, South Korean LGBT SMOs lack the same amount of resources as other major SMOs. Taiwan, on the other hand, has less of a social movement culture and far less professional SMOs, Taiwanese LGBT SMOs relatively more resources than other SMOs.

Political Opportunity Structure

Taiwan's and South Korea's left leaning politicians win elections at roughly in the same rate as each other. However, politicians who are vocally pro-LGBT rights are higher in Taiwan than South Korea. Thus, there are less elite allies for the LGBT movement in South Korea.

Political Culture and Public Opinion

On the cultural map of Inglehart and Welzel, Taiwan and South Korea are relatively the same. Thus, we would not expect culture to strongly affect LGBT mobilization. However, public opinion toward the LGBT are more negative in South Korea than Taiwan. Which in turn, would be expected to negatively affect the LGBT movement in South Korea.

Economic Development

Taiwan and South Korea's economic development are roughly the same. Thus, cultural changes are roughly at the same rate. We would expect the same rate of mobilization if only concerning this factor.

Framing provided the best possible explanation: Because China presents a large threat to Taiwan, Taiwan develops a democracy master frame. This is a result of trying to separate itself from China. However, North Korea doesn't present as a large threat to South Korea, South Korea doesn't develop a democracy master frame. This is a result of South Korea not feeling the need to distance itself with North Korea.

When examining the causes of higher LGBT mobilization, differences in POS and public opinion is not enough to explain the broader picture of a more successful LGBT mobilization in Taiwan. Rather, framing appears to influence public opinion and the openness of POS. Thus, once a movement builds on the master frame of the political environment, the movement will have favorable conditions from POS and the public opinion.

References

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Acknowledgements

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