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Abstract

Gesellschaftliche Heterogenität, Staat und Demokratie in Ostasien: Ein statistischer Ländervergleich (Social Heterogeneity, State and Democracy in East Asia: A Statistical Comparison of Countries)

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The current heterogeneity levels of East Asian countries can be traced back to long-term evolutionary processes, mainly the development of traditional social organization, competitive state and empire building, and the impact of colonialism. The resulting levels of societal heterogeneity are highly relevant for political as well as socio-economic processes. This article analyzes the political relevance of ethnic, linguistic and religious heterogeneity in East Asia, comparing it to a sample of 90 African and Asian countries. Homogenous countries in East Asia as well as in the reference sample are not any more democratic than heterogeneous ones, but they seem to be in a better position to start and continue democratization. In striking contrast to the reference sample, there is no correlation between the heterogeneity level and the quality of government and state administration in East Asia. Some of the region's countries with rather high heterogeneity levels have managed to break this link. Many East Asian countries, however, are still far from achieving efficient and effective governance.