



## SESSION SKETCHES

Asan Plenum 2013: “New World Disorder”  
[www.asanplenum.org](http://www.asanplenum.org)

---

### Stability and Change in Post-Crisis Party Systems

**Panel:** Session 4 (Grand Ballroom I)

**Date/Time:** Wednesday, May 1, 2013 / 9:00-10:15

**Speakers:** Christophe Crombez, Stanford University  
Hahrie Han, Wellesley College  
Kim Jiyoung, The Asan Institute for Policy Studies  
Kohno Masaru, Waseda University

**Rapporteur:** Darcie Draudt, Yonsei University

Moderator David Brady indicated that as governments fail to address the problems voters ask them to solve, parties may evolve or party systems may change.

Christophe Crombez began by questioning the meaning of “party instability” in Europe, as the strains of European party changes are not new. In countries such as Italy and Germany voters have joined new parties or fringe parties in increasing numbers. In cases like Spain, Portugal and Ireland, many voters have moved from one major party to another. Over the past several decades, voters have become more demanding and better informed. Crombez also noted that religious motivations, which used to automatically dictate voting patterns, have become less important. Main parties have not been able to deliver solutions to the problems faced by welfare states in the postwar period, which has resulted in increased interest in fringe parties, protest parties, and nationalist parties.

Hahrie Han focused on two trends shaping contemporary US campaign strategies: a big demographic shift following the growth of minority groups and increased use of technology to contact voters. Han noted that there is now greater focus on ground mobilization. From 1950-2000, 25 percent of voters report being contacted by a campaign. In 2012, the figure reached 40 percent. While pundits tend to focus on campaign financing, Han suggested examining the growth of ground operations. In 2012, Obama for America had “a much superior ground game” than Romney’s campaign, which registered almost two million new voters. The Republican Party in particular will continue to face problems if it does not reach

---

\* The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the Asan Institute for Policy Studies.

\*The views expressed herein are panel overviews of the Asan Plenum. They do not necessarily reflect the views of the author or the institutions they are affiliated with.



## SESSION SKETCHES

Asan Plenum 2013: “New World Disorder”  
[www.asanplenum.org](http://www.asanplenum.org)

---

out to minority voters, Han said.

Kim Jiyeon questioned how we might approach the concepts of “crisis” and “party system” in the South Korean case. Both economic crises and regional security issues factor into South Korea’s experience. Since the 1987 democratization movement, the average life cycle of Korean parties has been only five years, as parties change names or merge with other parties. While divergent security policies were the main factor driving party affiliation, recently the two major parties have begun to take new stances on economic issues following increased public concern. In fact, 2012 was the first year in which the majority of voters supported redistribution programming. Another problem facing Korean parties, Kim noted, is decreasing voter turnout: 1987 turnout was over 80 percent, but 2012 turnout was 63 percent, the lowest yet.

Kohno Masaru focused on observations about two critical elections in Japan: the 2009 Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) victory and the 2012 Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) victory. As an indirect reason for the shift, Kohno pointed to the March 2011 earthquake, in which 20,000 people died and from which the economy is still recovering. Anti-incumbency sentiment seemed to affect the DPJ, as the public criticized them for insufficient response to the disaster. The fundamental problem with the Japanese party system, he said, is low party identification among voters. Though some worry about a rising right-wing nationalist sentiment, Kohno claimed that movement to the right at the elite level is hardly reflected in overall preference of the general electorate.

---

\* The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the Asan Institute for Policy Studies.

\*The views expressed herein are panel overviews of the Asan Plenum. They do not necessarily reflect the views of the author or the institutions they are affiliated with.