

Department of Political Science Department Seminar

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Professor Edmund Malesky

"Sincere Preference by Default: An Alternative Theory of Public Support for Party Labels in Single-Party Regimes"

Moderator: Dr Subhasish Ray
Friday, 10th Nov 2017
2.00pm to 3.30pm
PS Staff Meeting Room, AS1, #04-01
National University of Singapore
ALL ARE WELCOME!

ABSTRACT

What explains support in polls for single-party regimes? The dominant theoretical explanation for this phenomenon is preference falsification, in which survey respondents insincerely express support for the party due to fear. In this paper, we provide an alternative theory that does not assume insincerity. We theorize that a party label in single-party settings provides a minimal level of information on the capacity and policy positions of a candidate vis-à-vis an unknown independent. We test our theory using a conjoint analysis survey experiment on 14,063 respondents in Vietnam, which asks them to select between two hypothetical candidates. Results show that voters are 23 percent more likely to select party members over non-partisan alternatives. Consistent with our theory, about 40 percent of this advantage is due to uncertainty about the policy preferences of independent candidates. Using these findings, we discuss our work's implications for theories of democratization in single-party regimes.

BIO

Edmund Malesky is a Professor of Political Economy and the Associate Chair of the Political Science Department at Duke University and is a noted specialist in economic development, authoritarian institutions, and comparative political economy in Vietnam. In 2012, Malesky received a state medal from the Government of Vietnam for his role in promoting economic development for USAID's Vietnam Provincial Competitiveness Index and, in 2013, he was appointed by President Obama to serve on the board of the Vietnam Education Foundation. He has published extensively in the leading political science and economic journals and has received various awards including the Harvard Academy Fellowship and the Rockefeller Bellagio Residency Fellowship. His most recent book is *China's Governance Puzzle* (co-authored with Jonathan Stromseth and Dimitar Gueorguiev).

