

SUMMARY

Analysis on the Australian Federal Elections in 2007: In Relations with “Middle Class”

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The Australian federal election in 2007 has resulted in the massive victory for the ALP led by the newly-elected leader Kevin Rudd, and ended the eleven-year coalition government. John Howard, former prime minister, lost his seat in inner Sydney suburb and this also ended his political career. The ALP recorded swing of 5.44 and gained 23 seats.

The careful analysis of the change of seats and swing shows the similarity with 1996 election, which was the last regime-changing election. Number of seats changed hands and swing was almost the same. This shows that the degree of change of support of voters when the regime change happens, even though minor change of seats and swing enables regime change theoretically, if it brings majority seats.

State by state analysis reveals that there were strong change of seats and swing especially in New South Wales and in Queensland. Queensland only delivered the gain of nine seats to the ALP. NSW also delivered seven seats for the ALP. It can be said that these two states were critically important for the overall election result. However, WA delivered no net-gain for the ALP. This shows the importance of closer look to the situation of each state as there are a lot of differences.

The seats which changed hands recorded high swing, especially in Queensland. It is true that the change of political party in a particular seat can happen if there is enough swing more than margin to the other party. However, of all twenty seven seats which changed hands, eighteen seats recorded swing more than six, which is above the national average.

These seats which directly delivered the Labor government are mainly located in outer suburban area. Also, analysis with 2007 census data shows that many of these seats are “middle class” seats, as individual weekly income is from 401 dollars to 600 dollars in twenty seats of all twenty seven seats. Only one seat is above 601 dollars and only four seats are below 400 dollars.

This shows that “middle class”, or so-called “Howard battlers” in outer suburban area was the main driving force of the regime change in 2007. The switch of support of these people from the Coalition to the ALP is supposed to be the main reason of the birth of the Rudd Labor government.