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Power Rotation and Democratic Consolidation in
South Korea and Taiwan

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Korea and Taiwan have become widely recognized as the two most successful third-wave democracies in Asia. For more than a decade, these two new democracies have regularly held free and competitive elections at all levels of their respective governments. According to Huntington's “two-turnover test,” the two nascent democracies should be considered “consolidated” by 2008. However, passing this artificial threshold actually tells us very little what kinds of long-term impacts and consequences that the two peaceful power rotations have brought about for their respective democracy and how. It only shows strong evidences about the behavioral acceptance of rules of democratic competition by the contending elites. This paper investigates the multi-faceted impacts and consequences of impacts and consequences that the two peaceful power rotations in the context of Taiwan and South Korea’s democratic development. Following a useful analytical scheme developed by Andreas Schedler, we examine their impacts and consequences in five analytical domains: avoiding democratic breakdown, avoiding democratic erosion, completing democracy, deepening democracy, and organizing democracy. The paper argues that in both countries, after two power rotations, the popular confidence in the superiority of democracy has been restored. Citizens in both countries apparently have adjusted their expectation and understanding of democracy and got more used to the noisy, messy or even nasty aspects of the real-life democracy.

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Introduction

Korea and Taiwan have become widely recognized as the two most successful third-wave democracies in Asia. For more than a decade, these two new democracies have regularly held free and competitive elections at all levels of their respective governments. Citizens choose the heads of the executive branches and the members of the legislatures thorough regularly scheduled electoral contests. Unlike many their peers in the region, moreover, the two countries have in the recent decade peacefully undergone two power rotations, between Grand National Party and its opposition parties in the case of Korea and between the Kuomintang (KMT) and the Democratic Progressive Party in Taiwan. So according to Huntington’s “two-turnover test,” the two nascent democracies should be considered “consolidated” by 2008. However, passing this artificial threshold actually tells us very little what kinds of long-term impacts and consequences that the two peaceful power rotations have brought about for their respective democracy and how. It only shows strong evidences about the behavioral acceptance of rules of democratic competition by the contending elites.

This paper investigates the multi-faceted impacts and consequences of impacts and consequences that the two peaceful power rotations in the context of Taiwan and South Korea’s democratic development. Following a useful analytical scheme developed by Andreas Schedler, we examine their impacts and consequences in five analytical domains: avoiding democratic breakdown, avoiding democratic erosion, completing democracy, deepening democracy, and organizing democracy. However, for the sake of relevance and also due to the space limit, in each domain we select only the most important and meaningful issues for a closer examination. So our analytical framework is intended to be context-specific and historically relevant rather than comprehensive and cross-nationally generalizable. We should also caution ourselves against committing the fallacy of over-attribution, because not all the observed changes in political institutions and organizations or evolution in behaviors and attitudes of both the elite and mass were attributable to the two power rotations. There have been many other forces and dynamics at work at the same time.

Some Theoretical Consideration

Despite of the mushrooming of political science literature on democratic consolidation and quality of democracy over the last two decades, few literatures provide us with an integrated theoretical framework for analyzing the multi-faceted
impacts and consequences of repeated peaceful power rotations for young democracies or rigorous empirically analyses that identified the specific mechanisms through which these impacts and consequences actualize. It is not difficult to explain why that has been the case. After all, the trajectories of third-wave democracies vary greatly in terms of initial conditions, mode of transition, institutional foundation, cultural legacy, choice of constitutional design and electoral rules, and the resultant party system as well as its underlying cleavage structure. It is intrinsically difficult to develop a comprehensive framework to accommodate all these diverse circumstances and divergent outcomes. A more viable strategy is to develop a more limited framework, which is more context-sensitive but still guided by the existing literature on democratic consolidation and capable of small-N comparative analysis.

Huntington’s “two-turnover test”, despite of its wide appeal, was based on a very thin concept of democratic consolidation, so that it is intrinsically partial, inadequate, and even misleading. This measure of democratic consolidation has been criticized from many angles the most persuasive of which is Larry Diamond’s contention that in many of the world’s new democracies, competitive elections have not ensured liberty, responsiveness and the rule of law. Institutionalizing competitive elections is only one of the many requirements that a consolidated liberal democracy needs to fulfill. At best, passing the two-turnover test indicates that all significant political forces already have agreed to challenge for office via legitimate electoral means rather than by force or violence. Even within this limited scope, this rule of thumb is, as Andrea Schedler put it, “exceedingly specific and context-insensitive”. Given that it may err on both sides, it provides neither a necessary nor sufficient indicator for assessing the democratic commitment of political competitors.

As part of our effort to develop a context-sensitive analytical framework for analyzing the multi-faceted implications and consequences of two peaceful power rotations for the young democracies in Taiwan and South Korea, we need to identify some important similarities as well as dissimilarities in the trajectory of their regime evolution. First, unlike most third-wave democracies of Latin America and Eastern Europe, in both cases political opening was neither triggered by any major socioeconomic crisis or external market shocks, nor accompanied by popular demands for major socioeconomic reforms. Support for the old regime's development program in the two East Asian NICs was much more broadly based than in many Latin American countries with comparable levels of industrialization. Indeed, the very effectiveness of the development program during the authoritarian era has meant that ties to the old regime were not entirely a liability for the incumbent elite. Nor was the political coalition behind this development program one whose cohesion could be easily disrupted. As a consequence, in both cases the incumbent elite enjoyed
substantial political leverage, especially in the case of Taiwan, over steering the process of democratic transition and crafting new constitutional and electoral arrangements.

Coincidentally, both countries settled on a constitutional design that features semi-presidentialism, first-past-the-post rule for electing the president, and insufficient (if not flawed) mechanisms for breaking executive-legislative gridlock under divided government. In both cases, the ruling party (or the political force tied to the incumbent elite in the case of South Korea) managed to survive the founding election and refurbish its governing position with democratic legitimacy.

Both young democracies inherited a wrenching security environment as each is part of a divided nation and faces an enormous military threat from the other side (North Korea and China, respectively). Both were burdened a widely-shared nostalgia for the seeming efficacy and efficiency of the authoritarian era. On the other hand, as compared to a great majority of third-wave democracies, democratic consolidation in both Taiwan and South Korea has been facilitated by many favorable socio-economic conditions including a relative well-educated citizenry, a sizable middle class, a dynamic market economy and a vibrant civil society. The prevailing assumption both inside and outside Korea and Taiwan is that these two democracies are here to stay. Democracy has never collapsed in a country with the level of per-capita income that Korea and Taiwan now enjoy.7

Despite all the shared characteristics, there are at least two significant differences between the two cases of democratization. First, South Korea’s democratic transition was from a military regime while Taiwan’s transition from the rule of a hegemonic party. The South Korean military regime had never institutionalized its rule and been politically fragile, ideologically hollow and organizationally shallow since its inception. In contrast, Taiwan’s one-party authoritarian regime had institutionalized its hegemonic presence in society well before the island became industrialized and equipped with an established pattern of elite recruitment and an elaborate party apparatus with organizational links to the key social constituencies and local factions. Therefore, one might argue that the first power transfer from the military elite to the opposition could have occurred in as early as 1987 had not Kim Young-sam and Kim Dae-jung run against each other, splitting the opposition vote and enabling ex-general Roh Tae-woo, Chun’s hand-picked successor, to win the founding election. One might also argued that the KMT could have extended its lease to political life for much longer had not James Soong and Lien Chan run against each other, splitting the KMT camp and enabling Chen Shui-bian, the DPP candidate, to win in the 2000 presidential election with 39.7% of the popular vote. So South Korea’s real first power turnover with Kim Dae-jung’s electoral victory in 1997 was in a sense long overdue while the
DPP came to power for the first time in 2000 probably before its time.8

Second, the transition in Taiwan called into question not only the legitimacy of the regime but the legitimacy of the state itself -- its claims to sovereign status, its territorial boundaries, and the compass of its citizenship. The polarized conflict over national identity in Taiwan is emotionally much tenser, politically more divisive and structurally more intractable than the regionalism engulfing the South Korean society. By the same token, the clash between the so-called “pan-Blue” camp and the so-called “pan-Green” camp over the cross-Strait relation has also been more acute and explosive than the schism over Inter-Korea relations between the Conservative bloc and the Progressive bloc. As a result, politics of polarization has been a much more serious hindrance to the consolidation of democracy in Taiwan than that of South Korea.

In a nutshell, the two power rotations presented the two young democracies with many similar opportunities and challenges but also a few country-specific problems in the context of democratic consolidation. In the domain of avoiding democratic breakdown, we ask whether the two young democracies have faced any threat of illegal or pseudo-legal overthrow by antidemocratic forces even as a remote possibility and whether the two power rotations helped to further neutralize and eliminate that possibility. Both young democracies face a remote possibility of a sudden death caused by an outright military aggression from their communist rival. In addition, at early stage of their democratic transition South Korea once faced the task of eliminating its Praetorian legacy while Taiwan had to neutralize the military which had been tied and loyal to the KMT for decades.

In the domain of avoiding democratic erosion, we ask whether the two democracies face any danger of slow decay, of more incremental and less transparent forms of regression, one O'Donnell described as "a progressive diminution of existing spaces for the exercise of civilian power and the effectiveness of the classic guarantees of liberal constitutionalism. In both cases, we don’t think there has been any systemic risk of slow regression. However, there are pockets of grey areas that warrant scrutiny with vigilance. Much like some excessive measures undertaken by the U.S. government in the name of anti-terrorist campaign that could turn out to be dangerous encroachment on civil liberties, in South Korea and Taiwan witch-hunt for sympathizers of communist rival regimes could lead to serious violation of human rights. In South Korea, the National Security Law — or anti-communist law — was used to crack down on democracy and human rights activists and effectively curtail freedom of the press, freedom of assembly and freedom of conscience. In Taiwan this could be an even more serious issue in the midst of a national identity crisis. Under the old martial law regime, advocates of Taiwan independence had been prosecuted...
on treason charges. Under the new democratic regime, an impulse for reversed discrimination is lurking under the rising tide of Taiwanese nationalism. We need to examine if the two power rotations helped arrest these undercurrents of human right backsliding.

In the domain of completing democracy, we ask to what extent the two power rotations helped eliminate the residual authoritarian elements in the system and realize the attainment of full democratic rule. The residual authoritarian elements could include the constitution’s birth defects, discrimination in electoral arrangements, “reserved domains” enjoyed by the military and the security apparatus (beyond the scope of democratic accountability), and a legacy of partisan grip on the state bureaucracy, the judiciary and mass media. Another difficult challenge is how to handle the so-called “transitional justice” especially after the political force representing the victims of authoritarian suppression came to power for the first time. Furthermore, in a transition under the tutelage of the hegemonic-party, it is difficult to know if the system becomes fully democratized because the problem is how to tell at what point an authoritarian hegemonic party has become a democratic dominant party. In this sense, Taiwan’s historical power rotation in 2000 constitutes a necessary condition for completing democracy. It opened up the possibility of dealing with all the “holdovers” from the authoritarian past.

In the domain of deepening democracy, we ask whether the two power rotations helped institutionalize a liberal democracy’s basic ground rules and strengthen the legitimacy of the democratic form of government. For the former, we ask if leaders of government, state institutions and significant political parties respect the rule of law, in particular if they obey the constitutional procedures, respect each other’s legal right, and uphold constitutionalism. For the later, we ask whether the democratic regime enjoys a “broad and deep” legitimacy in terms of popular beliefs and normative evaluations. We pay specially attention to the moderating effect of power turnovers on the citizenry by asking if winner-loser gaps in perceived regime legitimacy has narrowed. Ruling and opposition elites face greater incentives to play by the rules of the democratic game when citizens from both the winning and losing sides maintain moderate perceptions of institutional legitimacy. Subservient and complacent insiders are just as dangerous for democratic consolidation as aggrieved and alienated outsiders.

In the domain of organizing democracy, we ask if the two power rotations facilitated the strengthening of some key sub-systems within a functioning liberal democracy. We pay special attention to developing the mechanisms of horizontal accountability. Two key components deserve our attention. The first is the effective checks and balances between the executive and the legislature. Under
semi-presidentialism effective mechanisms of checks and balances entail both the adequate legal tools and procedures for legislative oversight and a timely resolution of conflict under divided government (where different parties control the executive and legislative branches of government), a challenging scenario that both Taiwan and South Korea has experienced after power rotations. The second is the building up of an independent and effective judiciary which applies law fairly and consistently to all -- from underprivileged minorities to high-ranking government officials and elective politicians. In particular, we ask if the two power rotations helped enhance the impartiality and effectiveness of the judiciary in rooting out the two most important sources of popular distrust toward democratic institutions in East Asia -- money politics and electoral fraud.12

The Meanings and Consequences of the Two Power Rotations

Kim Dae-jung’s victory in 1997 and Chen Shui-bian’s victory in 2000 were both landmark events by any measure. In both cases, the first real power rotation established a series of new precedents and reinforced the popular belief in the legitimacy of the new democratic institutions. With the election of Kim Dae Jung Korea became the first third-wave democracy to attain a peaceful rotation of power. Kim’s victory was historic because it broke a long stigma of East Asian democracies ruled by “a dominant, corporatist party that tolerated a limited opposition but never ceded power.”13 The DPP’s victory in 2000 put an end to KMT’s fifty-five years of continuous rule over the island. It foreclosed an epoch of one-party dominance and set forth a period of party dealignment and realignment. At the same time, it opened up a historical opportunity to deal with the holdovers from the authoritarian past and tackle the island’s young democracy’s lingering deficiencies and weaknesses.

In both cases, the first power rotation was preceded with reform-minded presidents who were tied to the old governing party but at the same time independent enough to push for further democratization, making progress in some sensitive areas such as asserting civilian control over the military and setting up special commissions to deal with the issues of “transitional justice”. In the case of Taiwan, Lee Teng-hui went much further. He engineered a revamp of the constitutional design, marginalized the KMT’s old-timers (mainlander elite), and reoriented the KMT’s core commitment from upholding Chinese nationalism to constructing a separate Taiwanese identity. Both Kim Young-sam and Lee Teng-hui should be given credit for laying the groundwork for each country’s first peaceful power turnover.

In both cases, the new governing elite was oftentimes bogged down by political paralysis, failed to live up to the popular expectation for extensive political reform, but managed to renew its term for one time with slim winning margin. In both cases,
the new era under the novice governing elite did not last long and was brought to an abrupt end by a humiliating electoral defeat. In the following, we will examine the meanings and impacts of the two power rotations under the analytical framework laid out earlier.

Avoiding Democratic Breakdown

South Korea

One of the modes of democratic transition in South Korea was that it was a "transition through transaction" or "transition by pact" or by compromise between softliners within authoritarian regime and moderate opposition. Because democratic transition in Korea was made by compromise between reformist faction within the regime and moderate opposition, both reformers in the regime and the moderate opposition had critical interests in protecting the transition process by avoiding mutual confrontation. If both actors opted for mutual confrontation, the outcome would be open, violent conflicts in which both reformers within the regime and moderate opposition would be wiped out by hard-liners within the regime or radical intransigent oppositions. Thus both reformers and moderate opposition chose an abstention strategy to protect the politics of transition by accelerating constitution making process. Reformers abstained from using repressive power apparatuses to quell down civil unrest after June 29 compromise while moderate opposition abstained from mobilizing masses in streets to press the regime to make more concessions with regard to more substantive democratic reforms. Mutual abstention was clearly revealed in both actors' responses to "Great Workers Struggle" in which million workers waged more than 3400 strikes from July to early September 1987. Reformers abstained from resorting to police force to squash striking workers and let the striking workers and firms to resolve their industrial conflicts through dialogues and negotiations while moderate opposition abstained from politicizing workers' outburst for their political advantage.

In addition to playing abstention strategy, the two parties at the same time accelerated drafting new constitution in order to preempt both radical intransigent oppositions and hardliners from exploiting the unrest and instability created by massive workers outbursts. Three leaders of democratic transition (Roh Tae Woo, Kim Young Sam, and Kim Dae Jung) agreed on minimalist constitution drafting by revising indirectly elected presidential system elected into directly and popularly elected 5 year single-term presidential system without touching many substantive issues such as neutrality of the military in the politics, workers' rights to participate in the management and the distribution of profits, and protecting universal human rights. The leaders of transition completed constitution making in short period of time, in less
than 4 months. They drafted new Constitution in two months by September 18, 1987; the new Constitution was approved by popular referendom on October 27; the "founding election" was held on December 16 and the constition making and constituting new democratic government was finished less than 6 months since the democratic transition breakthrough on June 29, 1987.

Transition leaders, by accelerating constituting new democratically elected government, prevented "sudden death" of new democracy by anti-democratic forces who tried to exploit instability, turmoil, violent street mobilizations, and populist upheavals during transition period for subverting new fragile democracy.

After constituting the new democratic government, the main potential force that can overthrow the new democratic government could be politicized military officer groups inside government and retired military officers. The military is called by O'Donnell and Schmitter as the queen of democratic chess game who “may simply sweep the opponents off the board to kick it off and start playing solitaire.” Since Korean War in 1950, Korea has been one of the highest militarized countries in the world and even after democratic transition, returning military to the barracks and establishing civilian supremacy over the military was a highly risky job. To make things worse, the first popularly elected president Roh Tae Woo was not the right person to persuade politicized military officers to return to barracks because he was himself a former general who was deeply involved in military coup in 1980 and was elected to the president with the backing of the military.

It was not until the Kim Young Sam presidency that military forces were comprehensively purged from politics and removed the potential source of democratic breakdown by “sudden death.” Kim Young Sam, the first civilian president in 30 years, called his government a “civilian government” (munminjungbu) and launched a massive project of demilitarization and civilianization of Korean politics. On inaugurating president, Kim Young Sam took decisive and quick actions to disband the Hanahoe Club, the politicized military officer clique that had occupied key strategic posts in the military and national security apparatus under the Chun Doo Hwan and Roh governments. Immediately after disbanding the Hanahoe Club, President Kim purged most of Hanahoe members from the military and national security apparatus.

Kim Young Sam even prosecuted the two former presidents, Chun and Roh, on charges of corruption, military mutiny, treason for staging the December 1979 coup, and the massacre of civilians during the Kwangju uprising in 1980. With the quick and comprehensive purging of the politicized military officer group, President Kim ensured avoiding sudden breakdown of new democracy by coup-mongering military officers. Moreover President Kim removed the “reserved domain” for the military in
Taiwan

Taiwan’s young democracy did not face any meaningful internal threat of illegal or pseudo-legal overthrow by antidemocratic forces after the founding election. The military as a mainlander-dominated power bloc within the KMT has already been politically tamed by Lee Teng-hui after he forced out former-general Hau Pei-tsung from the premiership in 1993. Under the instruction of Lee, two days after the March 20, 2000 election, Tang Yao-min, the Chief of the General Staff, cleared off the lingering worry about the resistance of the military and security establishment to a DPP takeover by publicly pledging the allegiance of the armed services to the newly elected president. However, Chen Shui-bian and the DPP elite still harbored a deep suspicion about the loyalty of the professional officer corps, which had been a strong bastion of KMT loyalists and hostile to Taiwan independence movement. To neutralize the military, Chen Shui-bian on his watch introduced the most sweeping personnel reshuffling at the top echelon ever with rapid turnover and by vigorously promoting like-minded native Taiwanese senior officers. The reshuffling was so extensive, irregular and frequent that the military has become very demoralized and its public image was severely damaged by recurring bribe-taking scandals.

The only conceivable external threat to the survival of Taiwan’s young democracy is a military invasion by the PLA most likely under a scenario of Taiwan declaring formal independence. In a sense the 2000 election had proceeded in the shadow of the PRC’s military threat. Beijing was deeply upset by Chen Shui-bian’s victory and Washington was prompted to exercise crisis-management behind the curtain. To de-escalate the tension in the Taiwan Strait, Chen was cajoled by the United States to pledge in his 2000 inaugural address the so-called "four no's:" no declaring independence, no changing Taiwan's formal name of the Republic of China, no enshrining "state-to-state" in the Constitution, and no holding a referendum on formal independence.

However, during his eight-year presidency, Chen simply could not resist the temptation of pushing the Taiwan independence agenda and stepping on the red line drawn by Beijing as these highly emotional issues always helped galvanize his DPP constituency and divert people’s attention away from the sagging economic records. He pushed for holding referendum to redefine the cross-Strait relation as “state-to-state”, changing the name of the country and adopting a new constitution. Each time he was forced to back down by an arm-twisting White House that took
Beijing’s stern warning very seriously and did not want to upset the strategic applecart in East Asia. Toward the end of Chen’s eight-year tenure, the pro-independence constituency has grudgingly accepted a chilling reality that de jure independence is simply not a realistic option and the DPP had already given its best shot.

In the 2008 president race, the Taiwanese nation-building crusade has visibly lost its momentum. The KMT candidate, Ma Ying-jeou, won a landslide victory with an agenda of resuming the cross-Strait political dialogue and normalizing the bilateral economic relations. In response, Beijing launched a series of peace overture culminating in the signing an Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) in July 2010. With the acceleration of cross-Strait economic integration and cultural exchange, the possibility for a head-on collision between Taiwan’s political provocation and mainland China’s military retaliation has significantly (but not completely) diminished. At the same time, the worry among the DPP supporters about the long-term political implications of economic dependence on the mainland has gone up considerably. More importantly, after two power rotations, the legitimacy the existing state structure anchored on the R.O.C. Constitution has been strengthened rather than weakened. Ironically, it is now emerging as not only the common denominator for the great majority of Taiwan’s electorate but also one of the pillars supporting a stable Washington-Beijing-Taipei triangle.

Avoiding Democratic Erosion

South Korea

In South Korea, many worried that the outcome of founding election that elected former army general Roh Tae Woo would be an omen for “silent regression from democracy to semi-democratic rule.” Roh Tae Woo was himself responsible “December 12 Military Mutiny” in 1979 after Park Chung Hee’s death and Massacre of Civilians in Kwangju in May 1980. Because Roh was elected popularly elected, he would surely protect electoral democracy from sudden attempts of coup by politicized military officers. Nonetheless, many worried that during Roh’s tenure space for civilian power would remain narrow and new democracy would slowly die because many former and incumbent military officers were taking key strategic posts in government, national security area in particular, and wide area of “reserved domain” remained intact for the military and “national security apparatus.”

However, those worries of slow death or democratic erosion did not occur because the ruling party for the first time in history failed to get the majority of National Assembly and three opposition parties combined got a solid majority in the National Assembly. The policy coalition of three parties possessed sufficient
countervailing power to prevent authoritarian forces from attempting of erosion of democracy or “slow death” in the shaky, uncertain period of transition. Congressional opposition majority persuaded, pressed, and compromised with president Roh for more democratic reforms, establishing “transitional justice” for past wrongdoings, crimes, and violation of human rights, and expanding democracy in socio-economic arena.

President Roh Tae Woo tried to impasse between president and National Assembly by establishing a hegemonic party through merging three parties, ruling Democratic Justice Party, Kim Young Sam’s Reunification Democratic Party and Kim Jong Pil’s Liberal Democratic Coalition. The merged party had more 3/4 of National Assembly seats and after three party mergers, the process of making transitional justice had been slowed down, violent attacks on radical labor and civil activists resurfaced, most of all the monopoly of regional bastion except Kim Dae Jung’s Cholla region suffocated electoral competition.

The merge of three parties and the rise of hegemonic parties, Democratic Liberal Party might have made new democracy regress gradually into a hybrid, semi-democracy. The experiment of hegemonic party in post-transition Korea, however, was not successful. The hegemonic party, Democratic Liberal Party turned out not hegemonic because of family feud among three party factions in DLP, especially between President Roh Tae Woo’s faction and next presidential candidate Kim Young Sam’s faction. Because of intraparty conflicts, Kim Young Sam was elected to president with slim margin over archrival Kim Dae Jung. After inauguration, president Kim Young Sam launched democratic reforms targeted mainly on old establishment forces of the military and chaebuls such as demilitarization of politics, civilian supremacy over the military, transitional justice to former two presidents of ex-general, and “real-name financial account reform” which removed the possibility of black money dealing between chaebuls and corrupted politicians.

Therefore, we can say that the potential source of democratic erosion was removed during Kim Young Sam presidency. And Kim Young Sam’s reforms, and his economic mishandlings, and the blow of tsunami of East Asian financial crisis in 1997 lay the ground work for the first peaceful power rotation in East Asia all contributed to ending the process of retrogressing to semi-democratic democradura.

**Taiwan**

Taiwan’s national identity crisis is intrinsically a perilous factor that carries the risk of not only inviting external military intervention but also inducing intolerance, discrimination and extremism at home because by nature it is a struggle between two
seemingly irreconcilable emotional claims about Taiwan's statehood and the national identity of the people of Taiwan. During Chen Shui-bian's first term, one witnessed a steadily hardening of two competing power blocs, the DPP-TSU alliance, to be known as the “Pan-Green”, and the KMT-PFP coalition, the ‘Pan-Blue, over this issue. Both sides feared that the other camp would use the governing power to impose its ideological agenda and introduce irreversible changes to the construction of national identity and the direction of cross-Strait relations. The “Deep Green” voters vehemently opposed the possibility of a return of the KMT-PFP alliance to power on the fear that the Pan Blue leaders would reverse the state-sponsored cultural program, accelerate the cross-Strait economic integration beyond the point of no return, and “sell out” the interest of Taiwan over the negotiation table. The “Deep Blue” voters, on the other, vowed to stop the political ascendance of the DPP-TSU alliance on the fear that Pan Green leaders would exterminate “Republic of China” and replace it with “Republic of Taiwan, purge the remaining Chinese identity, and sooner or later ignite a deadly military conflict in the Strait with their “reckless” pursuit of Taiwan independence.

Most unfortunately, there was no short supply of demagoguery politicians and TV talk show hosts, and bloggers, who willful inflamed the “hate politics” and “fear politics”. The zealots of the two camps paid little due respect for civility, compromise, tolerance, due process and rule of law, all essential elements to make a liberal democracy work. In this frenzy atmosphere, politicians were rewarded for their degrading demeanors, unsavory political tactics and unlawful practices.

The whole society became excessively polarized and partisanship penetrated into every aspect of social life as Taiwan approached the March 2004 presidential election, which was viewed by many die-hard supporters of the two camps as the final showdown. In the end, the legitimacy of this election was seriously challenged by the losing camp and questioned by many skeptical voters. The integrity and independence of the Central Election Commission was also cast in seriously doubt this time, something that had never happened since Taiwan’s democratic opening. The society was deeply divided over the “true” story behind the bizarre shooting incident that took place on the eve of the election. The deep acrimony surrounding the 2004 presidential election left Taiwan's democracy with a deep scar as it had seriously eroded the popular faith in the openness and fairness of the political game.

Fortunately, Taiwan’s democracy has not, in the end, lost its self-correcting capability. The incited passion finally reached the point of saturation by the time of December 20004 parliamentary election. The turnout rate dropped to 59%, a record low for parliamentary elections. More than 3.3 million voters who had come out to vote in the last presidential election chose to stay home this time. The society has
gradually returned to a path of reconciliation, which paved for a much less stressful and tumultuous presidential race in 2008 and a smooth second power rotation.

However, the national identity crisis still precipitated endless debates and conflicts over the legal discrimination against citizens who have family, social, cultural or commercial ties with mainland China. Hundred thousands of Taiwanese expatriates and their dependents working and living in mainland China were de facto disfranchised due to the DPP’s strong objection to absentee ballots. Telephones conversations across the Strait were regularly screened by the Taiwan’s security apparatus without sufficient legal ground. Taiwanese students who graduated from the mainland’s top universities could not get their diploma officially accredited. Public sector retirees who choose to live in the mainland were denied their monthly pension. Some of these issues have been steadily resolved after the second power rotation but many more are still held up by the skirmishes on the legislative floor and the inertia of the Council of Grand Justice.

Completing Democracy

South Korea

President Kim Young Sam completed democratic consolidation in negative sense by instituting a firm civilian supremacy over the military and purging politicized military officers from politics. By the time of the presidential election in 1997 there remained very few anti-democratic system forces to publicly veto democratically elected leaders. Kim Young Sam paradoxically paved the way for Kim Dae Jung to be elected to the president by removing preemptively potential veto forces.

Long-time opposition leader Kim Dae Jung was elected to the president in the 1997 presidential election in his fourth bid for power. The 1997 presidential election marked the first peaceful transfer of power to an opposition party candidate in Korean electoral history and also the first power rotation in East Asian new democracies. The election of Kim Dae Jung has many historical meanings for the journey of democratic consolidation in Korea. First it demonstrated the convertibility of power between rivals that is critical for an effectively functioning democracy. For the first time Korean conservative establishment who ruled the country more than half century tolerated the transfer of power to the leader who led minority opposition.

The 1997 election has another historic meaning because the power rotation took place in the midst of a severe economic crisis. The East Asian financial crisis that broke out first in Thailand and Indonesia reached Korea in the late 1997 and almost melted down financial and economic system in Korea. Korea avoided the worst scenario of state default by massive bail out loans (55 billion dollars) from IMF. The unexpected coincidence of the time of the presidential election and economic crisis
tested the durability and accountability of new democracy in Korea. Face with severe economic crisis, Korean people did not pay attention to authoritarian nostalgias as well as populist demagogues, but went to ballot boxes to elect opposition party candidate who was not responsible for bringing economic crisis and mandated him the authority and power to overhaul the “crony capitalism” and to resume high-growth economy.

The power rotation in 1997 was the watershed in the journey toward completing democracy in Korea. The 1997 election demonstrated Korean people’s determination to live under democracy regardless of external fluctuations such as economic hardship and national security crisis. It also shows that the mechanism of democratic accountability was working because the people held the ruling party accountable for the economic crisis by defeating the candidate of the ruling party.

In terms of Huntington’s “two turnover test,” Korea passed the test in 2007 presidential election ten years after the first peaceful power rotation. In the election, Korean people held the candidate of the ruling party accountable for the Roh Moo Hyun government’s mishandlings of political and social issues and poor economic performances. Again democratic accountability was working in the second power rotation in 2007 and people held the ruling party accountable by casting votes retrospectively based on past 5 years’s performances of Roh government and the candidate rather than prospectively based on future vision and policies that candidates promised.27

Taiwan

The historical power rotation in 2000 opened up the opportunity of doing away with shady authoritarian practices that had been preserved under a continuous KMT rule despite the transition to democracy. These practices constituted a sort of “institutional fraud” that had always loaded the political dice in favor of the incumbent and deprived the opposition of a true level playing field. The holdover of these unsavory practices also had made the creation of unconstrained sphere for public discourse, an autonomous civil society and mass media, and politically neutral civil service, military and security apparatus, and independent law-enforcement agencies and the judiciary a daunting task. None of these lingering deficiencies were deemed tractable had the KMT remained in power.

The overall record for removing these holdovers on Chen Shui-bian’s watch was a mixed one and in certain areas rather disappointing. After the power rotation, the KMT had no choice but severe its established organizational ties with the military, the civil service, and government-sponsored business associations. The KMT relinquished its coveted network television and radio to comply with DPP-initiated
new regulations without a fight. However, the DPP government’s initiative to clean up the KMT-owned enterprises and dubious business deals of the past was stalled by a feisty KMT on the legislative floor.

Being a long-time political underdog, facing an opposition-controlled parliament, winning less than 40% of popular support last time, the DPP leadership came into office with a deep sense of insecurity. Chen and his top advisors were anxious to try everything conceivable to secure their hard-won but shaky hold on power, in particular finding ways, including many of the unsavory practices of the old days, to turn their control of the executive power into political advantage. Chen and his top lieutenants did not ask the authoritarian watchdogs, such as the Attorney General Office and the Bureau of Investigation, to kick off their old habits. On the contrary, these watchdogs were ready to fulfill their new master’s wishes with vigilance. They offered effectively weapons for political intimidation by spying on the master’s political enemies, applying selective prosecution and tax-auditing, and if necessary suppressing evidences of their master’s own unlawful actions.

Chen and his top lieutenants also suspected that they were surrounded by senior bureaucrats leaning toward the KMT. Instead of installing new mechanisms to enforce political neutrality, they set up a political academy and vigorously recruited mid-level bureaucrats to attend the training programs and formally join the DPP. Chen also encouraged the creation of a pro-DPP advertisement buyers’ cartel to starve the unfriendly media. The government’s advertisement budgets under various ministries and state-owned enterprises were substantially expanded, polled together and then gingerly dispensed to reward complacent mass media. Most notoriously, Chen and his wife extorted business tycoons to make donations to the DPP’s campaign coffer and at the same time hand over billions of cash to be transferred to their overseas secret accounts. In some areas, employing these unsavory strategies came almost as their second nature as they had been victimized by these very practices in the past. In other instances, they simply outdid their KMT predecessor.

The first power rotation brought about three unexpected consequences, all by and large conducive to Taiwan’s democratic maturing. First, many weighty social actors, such as bureaucrats, the academics, business executives, religious groups, trade associations and NGOs, have learned to live with democratic uncertainty. They tried to maintain an equal distance with both the Blue and the Green camps. Secondly, the political tug-of-war between the DPP-controlled executive and the KMT-controlled legislature inadvertently created more breathing space for other independent branches of the government. Some independent-minded prosecutors, judges, auditors were able to crack down corruption, embezzlement, vote-buying and other criminal offenses committed by members of either political camp. Entering Chen Shui-bian’s second
term, many of his top aides and protégés were indicted for corruption charges. Eventually a few muckraking journalists brought to light the rampant corruption at the highest echelon. At the end of 2006, Chen’s wife was indicted for corruption and forgery charges and the president himself was also expected to be indicted as soon as he steps down and no longer protected by immunity. Third, many of DPP’s former allies in the progressive camps, such as labor, environmental and gender movement, and liberal intellectuals, were able to maintain their anti-establishment propensity and scrutinize the new governing elite. In so doing, they helped expand the sphere for non-partisan public discourse. In response to the shocking revelation of rampant corruption and obstruction of justice by Chen and his family, they collaborated with Shih Ming-teh, a former DPP chairman, but rejected the involvement of the KMT in organizing waves of large-scale demonstration demanding the president to resign. Altogether close to a million citizens took part in this three-month long demonstration at different points in time. For the first time ever a political movement of this scale was able to transcend the Blue-Green divide. It also evidently reinforced the resolve the prosecutors to press the charges against a sitting president and set a new hallmark for judicial independence.

By the time the KMT returned to power in 2008, the island’s political soil has been thoroughly turned over. It is no longer possible for the KMT to recover its coveted political assets and old privileged ties, much less its steering capability. Instead, Ma Ying-jeep government has to cope with a less governable society featuring a very polarized, vulgarized and over-competitive media sector making all public political figures look equally untrustworthy and incompetent, many more assertive single-issue NGOs refusing to yield any ground, short-sighted business elite interested only in sector-specific issues and tax reduction, and over-cautious bureaucrats not ready to take any new initiatives or responsibility.

Deepening Democracy

South Korea

A liberal democracy becomes “deepened” with the maturation of liberal constitutionalism. First, free citizens must be created and protected. For guaranteeing civil liberties, the power of government must be limited within boundary prescribed by laws and constitution. Second, norms and values of liberal constitutionalism must be habituated by elite and masses. Third, all actors believe that political conflicts must be resolved by norms of constitution and that the violations of constitution are likely to be both ineffective and costly.28

Before 1987 Korea had been a notorious case of “weak constitutionalism” in which constitutions “were modified frequently and remain irrelevant.”29 From 1948
to 1987, constitution had changed 9 times and every president or prime minister took
over power with constitutional procedure that he drafted.

One of the characteristics of democracy since 1987 is strengthening and
depending constitutionalism. Since the founding election in 1987, Koreans have
elected 5 different presidents and constituted 6 different National Assemblies. In 1991,
local assemblymen were elected for the first time since Park Chung Hee ended local
elections. In 1995 the heads of local governments, governors, mayors, and county
chiefs were added 4 times to the ballot in local elections.

Therefore, since 1987 elections have been held regularly and overwhelming
majority of Korean elite and masses believe that the only way to take power is
through free and fair electoral competition. Elections have held regularly and become
fairer year after year. Losers in elections voluntarily accept the result and prepare for
the next elections. The elections in Korea become “the only game in town” and
constitution generates self-enforcing compliance with the outcome of an election from
all relevant political actors.30

Nevertheless, while constitution has become institutionalized and most Koreans
increasingly internalized the norms and values of constitutionalism, power mongers
efforts to politicize and manipulate constitution in their favor have obstructed the
depening of constitutionalism in Korea. Until now Incumbent presidents and his
parties’ candidate have tried to revise constitution but failed without exception
because of opposition from intra-party contenders and opposition parties. Kim Young
Sam joined to merge of three parties in 1991 accepting constitutional revision from
presidential system to parliamentary system, but after being nominated to the
presidential candidate of the ruling DLP, he broke his promise to revise constitution
and instead maintained the current system of 5 year single term presidential system.
Kim Dae Jung was elected to the president by making coalition with Kim Jong Pil
(one of Three Kims) and his Liberal Democratic Coalition Party with concession to
Kim to revise constitution to a parliamentary system. Kim Dae Jung, however, did not
keep his promise after election and Kim Jong Pil and his party split with Kim Dae
Jung’s party and made Kim Dae Jung’s ruling Millenium Democratic Party a minority
in the National Assembly. Incumbent president Roh Moo Hyun was no exception. He
proposed one-point constitutional revision from 5 year single term presidency to 4
year double terms presidency in January 2007 less than an year before presidential
election which was scheduled to be held on December 18th 2007. Major political
forces, including the ruling Woori Party did not pay attention to Roh’s proposal for
constitutional revision seriously and doubted the sincerity of his proposal. President
Roh had to withdraw his proposal in May 2007 and the presidential election was held
as scheduled according to the rules of 1987 Constitution.
Constitutionalism can be said to be deepened and institutionalized in terms of longevity of constitution, regularity of elections, protection of human rights, political rights and civil liberties. Nevertheless, the spirit of liberal constitutionalism, and the rule of law in particular, has not yet been deepened and institutionalized in Korea. The core of liberal constitutionalism is protecting and guaranteeing individual rights. Police must respect individual rights and freedom that are guaranteed by laws; every citizen has to have equal access to the judicial process, and there must be an independent judiciary and constitutional court that can guarantee the superiority of the judiciary and constitution over other governmental branches.

However, unfortunately in Korea, the “rule of man,” rather than the “rule of law,” prevailed even after the democratic transition in 1987. Confucian patrimonialism remained intact in the minds of politicians after the democratic transition. When democratically elected leaders applied laws in their protégés’ favor and to their opponents’ disadvantage, universal law-making, law-implementing, and law-adjudicating could not be routinized, and the rule of law could not be institutionalized.

Since its inauguration, the Lee Myung Bak government has emphasized the rule of law. However, when the Lee Myung Bak government talks about the “rule of law,” it is not actually the rule of law in the liberal constitutionalist sense, but can be understood in terms of the “rule by law” according to the ancient Chinese “legalists” (fa jia) such as Han Feizi, Shang Yang, and Li Si in the Warring State Period (453-221 BC) and Lee Kwan Lew of Singapore in modern times. While Chinese legalists argue for strict application of laws without exception, strong enforcement and voluntary obeisance to laws, they say nothing about protecting citizens’ rights through laws, to say nothing of human rights.

In contrast to the legalists’ “rule by law,” the spirit of the “rule of law” is to limit and constrain the power of the state in order to guarantee civil liberties and the autonomy of civil society, to protect civil society through constitutionalism, and to institutionalize mechanism of constraining and checking the state to act within the boundary limited by laws. In contrast, under the system of the “rule by law,” politicians rely on politicized judicial institutions (courts and prosecutors), raise the legitimacy of legal implementation of partisan government policies, and justify legally transgression of civil liberties. “Rule by law” can spread out “judicialization of politics” and what Shefter called “politics by other means.”31 (Ginsberg and Shefter, 1999) Judges and prosecutors are not delegated power from the people through elections; to make things worse, they are not forced to be accountable to the people through elections. If judges and prosecutors replace politicians who are delegated power from the people, then the basic framework of liberal democracy will crumble.
In terms of the rule of law, Korean democracy under Lee government has a long way to go.

Taiwan

A key indicator of to what extent contending elites in a young democracy commit themselves to basic democratic rules of game is the deepening of constitutionalism, i.e., a widely held belief that government can and should be legally limited in its powers and abide by the norms and procedures prescribed by the constitution and relevant statues, and that its authority depends on its observing these limitations and rules. However, for Taiwan this has been a daunting challenge since the beginning of democratic transition. Before the first power rotation, the R.O.C. Constitution had been undergone six phases of substantial revision. The basic design of the constitution system shifted from parliamentarianism to semi-presidentialism. Over the course of democratic transition, the process of constitution-making had been complicated by a polarized conflict over national identity. For people who strongly believe in Taiwan independence, all the revisions undertaken within the framework of the R.O.C. Constitution were meant to be transitory. To them, the only acceptable final destination is the creation of a new constitution that signifies the island’s independent sovereign status. For people who avow to preserve and defend the existing state structure, the R.O.C. Constitution and all political symbols it carries constitute the cornerstone their political identity. To them all the amendments adopted at each round of constitutional revision were meant to be binding and lasting. They oppose any attempt to abolish the existing constitution through extra-constitutional means, such as plebiscite, which happens to be the favorite of Taiwanese nationalists. This means the emerging constitutional order was built on the fault line of two colliding nationalistic claims and did not enjoy the kind of broadly based legitimacy that one expect to find in a consolidated democracy.

The legitimacy of emerging constitutional structure had been further undermined by the strategic choices of some key players involved in the pact-making process, which had been littered with their unsavory hidden-agenda, short-term political calculation and improvised compromises. There was no strong and widespread consensus among the contending political elites about the nature and logic of the government structure defined by the current constitution. When the representatives of the two major political parties, the KMT and the DPP, coalesced to craft the current government structure during the fourth round of revision around late 1996 and early 1997, the newly amended system was sold to the public as an improved version of semi-presidential system modeled after the French 5th Republic. But this bipartisan understanding of the moment has no biding power and is not shared by other political
figures (including Chen Shui-bian) who were not directly involved in the constitutional crafting process.

After the first power rotation, these two inherited weaknesses became sources of endless legal disputes and political stalemates between a combatant minority president and a feisty parliament. A more serious conflict involved the very existence of the R.O.C. Constitution itself. Chen Shui-bian made the adoption of a new constitution the top priority of his second term and openly pledged to have the new constitution ready by the end of his term in his second inaugural speech. He probably would have pushed for this agenda to its realistic limit had not been for the strong objection from Washington and the outbreak of a major political scandal dealing fatal blow to his credibility and effectiveness. Nevertheless, as a sidekick to his ambitious agenda of constitutional overhaul, Chen Shui-bian managed to broker a deal with KMT and paddled through the 7th amendment. It reduced the size of the Legislative Yuan and changed the electoral arrangements for electing the parliamentarians. At the same time, the procedure for amending the constitution was made even more difficult as it requires not just the support of a three-quarter majority in the Legislative Yuan but also more than 50% of all eligible voters casting yes vote in a referendum.

After the second power handover, all major political actors on the island have finally come to a point where possibility for further change to the constitution had been virtually exhausted. They have little choice but learn to live with this imperfect constitution. Making the existing constitution a living, active and authoritative legal document seems to be the only feasible recipe for strengthening Taiwan’s constitutional democracy. In this context, Ma Ying-jeou’s solemn pledge in his inauguration speech that he is resolved to re-establish a robust tradition of constitutionalism by affirming the authority of the R.O.C. Constitution should be taken as a good starting point.

**Mass Attitudes in South Korea and Taiwan**

In both countries, the two power rotations in the end did exert their expected socializing as well as moderating effect in strengthening the popular foundation for the legitimacy but not without a bumpy ride. In both Taiwan and South Korea, the first power rotation actually had triggered a sharp decline in people’s confidence about the superiority of democracy. According to the Korea Democracy Barometer (KDB) and Asian Barometer Survey, Korean citizens’ preference for democracy dropped considerably from 54% in 1998 to 45% in 2001. This sharp drop had probably more to do with the extensive economic hardship Korean people had experienced n the wake of the 1997-1998 regional financial crisis. At the same time, the Korean voters were also disappointed by antagonism between the ruling party and
the opposition and the resultant legislative immobilism and paralysis that stalled virtually all the political reform bills initiated by Kim Dae Jung government. In Taiwan, the citizen’s confidence in democracy’s superiority was also shaken by the extremely nasty, endless, and paralyzing political battles between the DPP minority government and the KMT-controlled legislature. They were also shocked by the way Chen Shui-bian administration mismanaged the economy, which suffered from rising unemployment, a 2.2 percent negative growth in 2001, and a more than 40 percent loss in the stock market since his inauguration just as the rest of East Asia was on the track of steady economic recovery. The citizens’ preference for democracy dropped from 57% in 1998 to only 40% in 2001.

However, in both countries, after two power rotations, the popular confidence in the superiority of democracy has been restored. Citizens in both countries apparently have adjusted their expectation and understanding of democracy and got more used to the noisy, messy or even nasty aspects of the real-life democracy. More importantly, the winner-loser gap over this important indicator has not only narrowed between 2001 and 2006 but even reversed after the second power rotation. As Figure 1a has shown, among Taiwan’s citizenry the gap between winners and losers was 12% in 2001 and it shrunk to only 4% (52% vs. 48%) in 2006. Figure 1b indicates a similar trend in Korea. The gap was narrowed to 3% in 2006 from 10% in 2001. The two figures also show not only a significant rise in the overall level of popular support for democracy but a dramatic reversal in the winner-loser gap. In both countries, after the second power rotation, the losers actually registered a much stronger commitment to democracy than the winner. It shows that both the DPP followers in Taiwan and the progressive camp in South Korea not only accepted their recent defeat but re-embraced their pro-democracy roots.

However, in both countries, a very substantial portion (around 25%) of the population still believed that authoritarian government can be preferable under certain circumstances. This sentiment of authoritarian nostalgia has persisted more than two decades after the two countries had embarked on the path of democratic transition. This suggests that young democracies in both Korea and Taiwan are still burdened with their authoritarian legacy, one that is oftentimes in people’s memory associated with a strong record in delivering economic prosperity, social stability and clean politics.
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Figure 1a: Taiwan's Winner-Loser Gap in Preference for Democracy
Agreement to "Democracy is always preferable to any other forms of government"
(Source: ABS Taiwan Survey)

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<th>2001 Survey</th>
<th>2006 Survey</th>
<th>2010 Survey</th>
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<tr>
<td>Winners</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>58</td>
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<tr>
<td>Losers</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>46</td>
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<td>Others</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>42</td>
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One of indicators of democratic consolidation is what Shedler calls “the organization of democracy” or what Schmitter termed the organization and institutionalization of “partial regimes” such as political parties, system of interest intermediation, state bureaucracies, judicial system, and legislative bodies. Among partial regimes in Korea political parties have been the least organized and institutionalized. During “Three Kims Era” (1987-2002) Three Kims (Kim Young Sam, Kim Dae Jung and Kim Jong Pil) founded, dissolved, reestablished, and renamed their own parties at will. They ran the parties as if they were feudal lords. They reigned over party as imperial party president that monopolized nomination of candidates, appointed party secretaries and officials and the chairmanship of National Assembly committees, and allocated party finance. They distributed political money to their followers in return for their loyalty. Under the circumstance that parties were organized along the regional lines and Three Kims maintained the exclusive loyalty from their home provinces, very few party politicians could challenge the autocratic rule of Three Kims over the party because it must have been their political suicide. Yet no regionalist political party could assemble a stable majority in the National Assembly through electoral system of single member, simple majority. Because every party has been based on a particular region, it usually forged to win presidential election a very loose alliance with other regional parties that broke down one or two years after the election.

The volatile, short-lived, personal political party of Three Kims style had been the major impediment to internal party democracy and responsive and accountable party system. Regionalist political parties created by Three Kims obstructed South Korea from devising policy-oriented party system. Party bossism under Three Kims was the symbol of pre-modernity of political system. Three Kims were like a father in patriarchal family who had moral authority of the father-leader. Three Kims as party bosses took care of their family-people, who in return were bound to meet complementary obligations on the family (or people) to the father (or leader). Three Kims' parties are Confucian patrimonial parties in the sense that leadership and followership are both personalized.

Since the last days of Three Kims Era in 2002, the party reform movement began in the ruling party. In the aftermath of a devastating defeat in the by-election on October 25, 2001, the ruling MDP (Millennium Democratic Party) made a comprehensive reform in party governance and a new nomination system for party candidates. The new party governance system abolished the post of party president, prohibited an incumbent president from concurrently holding the post of party...
Organizing Democracy

South Korea

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president, separated the presidential candidate and the chief party representative, and finally adopted a new nomination system in which presidential candidates are to be chosen by a “People’s Nomination System.”

The new party reforms removed the elements of personal, feudal, and autocratic party leadership of the Three Kims style and attempted to build a mass-based party system. The most striking party reform was made in the system of nominating a presidential candidate. The new People’s Nominating system was actually a mixed system of open and closed primaries. The new People’s Nominating system acted as the turning point in the conversion of the MDP from an elite party to a mass party. It opened a bottom-up process of nominating the presidential candidate of the party and as opposition parties, including Grand National Party followed MDP’s party reform, semi-open primary system became routinized among most political parties in Korea.

“Slimmed but more efficient political party” became the catchword of party reform in the era of IT-based neo-nomadic democracy. The over-development of party secretariat and district branch party organization had been the major source of bureaucratization of the party, "high costs, low efficiency politics" and political corruption. Thus major parties slimmed down their size by scaling down central party secretariat and by virtually abolishing local party branches. Now Korean political parties are transforming themselves into “neo-nomadic parties” that try to aggregate, represent, and respond to constituencies’ interests quickly, efficiently, and responsively with slimmer size through on-line communications with their constituencies.

The second partial regime that has been reformed since Roh Moo Hyun presidency is political finance reform. In the 2002 election, major candidates relied less on outdoor campaign in front of mobilized mass audiences and instead more on TV or radio, advertisements through on-line and off-line media, organizing and mobilizing supporters on-line as well as off-line. The prominence of media and on-line campaigns reduced the necessary amount of campaign money and led the presidential campaign to adapt to the American style of policy-debate campaigns. However, illegal political contribution did not disappear in 2002 election. The disclosure of illegal campaign contribution to conservative opposition party GNP by major Chaebul groups demoted public trust toward political society to the lowest level.

In 1993 president Roh started Korean “mani pulite” (clean hands) to end illegal money politics by ordering prosecutors to investigate illegal political funds of both the ruling party and opposition parties. Together with prosecutor’s office’s investigation of illegal campaign money, public pressure for establishing transparent political finance system before the National Assembly election in April 15, 2004 forced
Korean political society to enter into reforming political finance. The new political finance laws made parties and candidates obligatory to report National Election Commission in a clear and verifiable manner by providing receipts, set the limit of political contribution, and encouraged many small donations. And the government and National Election Commission encouraged whistle blowing on illegal campaign money and vote-buying by rewarding whistle blowers 50 times of the amount of illegal money they report and imposing fine to both illegal donors and receivers 50 times of the money they gave and received.

With the political finance reform under Roh Moo Hyun presidency, money played the least important role in the National Assembly election of April 15, 2004 than in any other elections. The National Assembly election was the cleanest election in history and made a turning point for political transparency in Korea.

Third, new partial regime that has been organized since the advent of IT-based neo-nomadic society is internet democracy or “neo-nomadic democracy.” Korea is the front runner in IT revolution and currently more than 30 million out of 47 million population became netizens. Korean netizens make use of Internet as the revolutionary instrument to improve accountability and transparency of Korean politics. Internet can deliver more and diverse information to citizens with faster speed and cheaper cost, disclose information about politicians in cyber space that works 24 hours, transmit quickly the demands of people to their representatives through two-way cyber communication, and enable politicians to respond to people’s demands in their policy making and legislations in a speedy manner. In addition, netizens can make use of internet as collective action place of monitoring, pressuring, and protesting that works 24 hours and can establish a constant political accountability system.

In the aftermath of 2002 election, Korean political parties, sensing the power of internet in presidential election, embarked on reorganizing party governance using internet. Parties and National Assemblemen opened cyber forum in their homepages to communicate with constituencies, to lure active participation of rank-and-file members in party policy making, and aggregate voters’ preferences. Parties also open cyber poll through which citizens can propose policies to parties and vote on major policies of parties.

Internet revolution or web 2.0 has been not only reforming representative democracy but also strengthening participatory democracy. Netizens became prosumer voters who transformed themselves from passive consumer of political information that politicians and parties produced to active producers and providers of information. Netizen groups such as NoSaMo and ParkSaMo (People who love Park Keun Hae) have replaced political parties or politicians as the organizers of electoral
campaign. Netizen voters lead electoral campaign by means of UCC (User Created Content), UGC (User Generated Content), and UGV (User Generated Video). Web 2.0 has softened politics and changed politics from space for dealing with hard issues to space for low politics, festivity, and entertainment. Web 2.0 opened the age of participation, sharing and opening information and thus expanded the political influences of minorities.37

Taiwan

The first power rotation was a litmus test for the adequacy and coherence of the mechanisms of horizontal accountability within Taiwan’s democratic system. Well before the power rotation of 2000, many constitutional scholars had wondered how a non-KMT president could shape the cabinet and steer national policies without a power-sharing arrangement with the KMT, which by most account would (as it actually did) continue its majority control of the parliament for a long while. Under the revised constitution, the president is no longer obliged to appoint a premier with majority support in the parliament but the legislature can unseat a sitting cabinet with a vote of no confidence. Also, unlike the French’s 5th Republic, in Taiwan the president does not enjoy the option of repacking the legislature. He or she can dissolve the parliament only when the Legislative Yuan unseats the cabinet with a vote of no confidence. Furthermore, Taiwan’s parliament is much more powerful than its French counterpart in steering the legislative agenda (and to cripple the government when the situation is called for). The R.O.C. Constitution does not recognize the priority of government bills. Instead, the legislature controls its own agenda. The cabinet can send back objectionable legislation and biding resolutions to the parliament for re-consideration. But the parliament has the final say if the same bill is passed again with an absolute majority, i.e., half of the total seats plus one.

Chen apparently overestimated his chances of getting away with the political imperative of “cohabitation” when he refused the KMT’s demand for a party-to-party negotiation over a power-sharing scheme and insisted on exercising his authority of appointing the premier. Out of its own political calculation, the KMT chose to strangle the DPP government piece by piece, rather than unseating the sitting cabinet and force a political showdown. This inevitably sparked a fierce competition over the steering wheel of legislative agenda and national priorities between a combatant president and a hostile parliament. The coalition of the KMT and FPF blocked virtually all the major legislative bills introduced by the DPP government. It questioned their hidden political agenda and replaced them with their own versions.

On many occasions, the political battle escalated into constitutional mini-crisis. The DPP government sometimes just refused to implement legally binding resolutions
passed by the parliament on the ground that they transgressed on its executive power. In retaliation, the KMT-PFP coalition simply blockaded more pending budget bills and the vicious cycle went on. Most of the legal disputes ended up in the hand of the Council of Grand Justice, which became increasingly overburdened with highly politicized cases. Avoiding taking side, the Council on a number of occasions delivered its interpretations with vague languages, which simply invited more partisan bickering and legal disputes.

Another major battle is over the confirmation of the presidential nominees to three other branches, the Control Yuan, the Council of Grand Justices and the Examination Yuan. The KMT-controlled parliament blockaded off nominees with a suspicious track record and Chen refused to nominate replacements and intentionally left many slots vacant. In a most dramatic way, in 2005 the Legislative Yuan sent back the whole slate of Control Yuan nominees citing the controversial backgrounds of many candidates, but Chen refused to redo the nomination. As a result, the Control Yuan, which performs the function of ombudsman, left empty and dormant for three years.

It became apparent by the end of Chen’s first term that the existing institution arrangements were not equipped to produce definitive resolution of the conflict intrinsic to a semi-presidential system. The only available tie-breaking device under such circumstance turned out to be worthless. With the veiled threat of dissolving the parliament, the KMT-PFP coalition never dared to initiate a vote of no confidence and take the risk of entering a snap election. The reason is quite simple. The electoral uncertainty as well as the high campaign cost imposed by the singular non-transferable vote (SNTV) system made members of the parliament extremely reluctant to use the no-confidence vote, rendering this device of accountability virtually useless. The saga of political stalemate has lingered on for the entire eight years of CSB’s presidency.

The KMT’s landslide victory in the January 2008 legislative election and the March presidential election brought the eight-year of political gridlock to a temporary end. However, Taiwan’s semi-presidentialism is still vulnerable to the recurring of political gridlock under a scenario of divided government. In the future, the system needs to be augmented by reinstituting the old requirement of parliamentary confirmation to certify the majority support that an incoming premier enjoys in the parliament either through formal constitutional amendment or by making this a constitutional convention to be adopted by all political parties.

Also the last-round constitutional revision, which was engineered under an unholy alliance between the DPP and the KMT in 2005, brought about many undesirable consequences when it was implemented the first time in 2008. First, the
new electoral rule which carries a strong majoritarian bend\textsuperscript{39} dealt the DPP a crushing defeat. The DPP won 38\% of popular vote on the first ballot (district) 36.8\% on the second (party list) but it only gained less a quarter of the seat in the parliament. The DPP caucus was so powerless that it was not able to wage any meaningful objection to the KMT-initiated legislative proposals. When it comes to the most controversial bills over cross-Strait relations, the DPP caucus oftentimes tried to paralyze the parliamentary process with disruptive tactics.\textsuperscript{40}

Next, as the size of the Legislative Yuan was drastically cut down by half to 113 seats, it takes only three or four MPs to block or manipulate a bill at the committee stage. Under a unicameral system, Taiwan’s MPs are substantially more powerful than U.S. Senators. On appearance, the KMT-controlled cabinet has been given a carte blanche under a Pan-Blue-dominated parliament. In substance, except for politically salient issues, the decision-making power becomes highly fragmented. Oftentimes individual ministries became subversive to a few powerful MPs, including the Speaker, the party whips from both camps and some ranking MPs, who brokered the legislative deals and fix the budget, without much public scrutiny. As a result, the legislature becomes the most crucial decision-making arena over a wide range of issues and thus making it far more easy for fat-cat donors or lobbyists representing special interests to exert their unduly influence.

Under strong popular pressure, the major political parties took a cosmetic step by passing the Lobby Law, which took effect in August 2008. But so far the law is just for window-dressing purpose thanks to the complacency indulged by virtually all MPs. So far a great majority of the MPs from both camps has shun any discussion for tougher rules of transparency to enable the mass media and other public watch-dogs to scrutinize the log-rolling process in the legislature. It is no wonder that after the second rotation, popular trust in the parliament has sunk to its lowest level.

In the area of judicial independence, some important progress has been made over the last decade. During Chen Shui-bian’s second term, the popular pressure for judicial reform had kept on rising as many of the rank-and-file public attorneys who had been agonized by unduly interference from their superior formed an informal alliance and pushed vigorously for more independence. In response to the growing pressures, the DDP government worked out a reform bill with the KMT-controlled parliament in 2006 to make the Office of Attorney General more independent. Under the new legislation, the Attorney General is protected by a fixed term and whose appointment requires parliamentary confirmation. Unfortunate, Mr. Chen Chong-ming, the first Attorney General who survived the confirmation of the Legislative Yuan was someone who had been lenient on so many politicians and collected so many I-owe-you.
After the second power rotation, Chen Chong-ming was impeached by the Control Yuan and forced to resign because he was implicated in quite a few incidents of covering-ups. The new head, Mr. Huang, nominated by Ma Ying-jeou commands more respect among the mid-level public attorneys. Mr. Huang is not shy away from controversy by pressing embezzlement charges against Lee Teng-hui. He also re-organized the Special Investigation Division, supposed to be the top-guns chasing after senior officials and politicians. In addition, a newly-created Department of Government Ethics under the Justice Ministry is entrusted with the mission to root out corruption within the government. It remains to be seen if the KMT government is really serious about crack-downing money politics at the risk of alienating many of its own crooked politicians at the grassroots.

Conclusion

In both South Korea and Taiwan, the two power rotations of the recent decades were historical events by many measures. In both cases, they pushed their respective political system for a major step forward toward democratic consolidation. In both cases, the first power rotation inaugurated a period of party dealignment and realignment. Taiwan’s first power rotation in 2000 closed off an epoch of one-party dominance and opened the possibility of creating a level playing field for the two competing power blocs.

In both cases, the first power rotation had gone more smoothly and peacefully than many observers had expected. In both cases, their predecessors, Kim Young-sam and Lee Teng-hui should be credited for removing some potential sources of democratic backsliding and paving the way for a smooth power turnover. Kim Young Sam launched democratic reforms targeted mainly on old establishment forces of the military and chaebuls while Lee Teng-hui marginalized the KMT old-timers and tamed the military.

The two peaceful power alternations have exerted positive socializing effects on the populace at large. They strengthened the popular confidence in the legitimacy of the democratic system and their sense of political empowerment. They have also strengthened the rule of law by dissuading future office-holders from repeating the mistakes of their predecessors, whose abuses and criminal offenses in the end had been brought to justice after power rotation. Most notably, we witnessed a convergence of popular commitment to democratic norms after the second power rotation between the winning and losing camps in both countries. Also both countries had lived through aborted constitutional reforms and the contenting elites have learned to live with the existing constitution despite of their shortcomings and deficiencies after the second power rotation.

According to Huntington, a nascent democracy is considered consolidated only after it has experienced two peaceful electoral alternations after the founding election, see Samuel Huntington, The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991): 266.


Larry Diamond, Developing Democracy: toward Consolidation (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999)


Chu, Yun-han, Larry Diamond and Doh Chull Shin, "Halting Progress in Korea and Taiwan."

Most scholars thought the election of Kim Young-sam in 1992 was not a real power rotation because in 1990 he had merged his Peaceful Democracy Party with Roh’s ruling D.J.P. The "real" power rotation came only in 1997 when a whole slate of governing elite was replaced by people from the Progressive camp.


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According to Moehler and Lindberg, boosting support for democratic institutions among citizens on the losing side is beneficial so that they do not disengage from formal political structures or support destabilizing interventions by opposition elites. However, it is equally important that citizens on the winning side do not become so euphoric about their electoral fortunes that they forfeit their critical capacities, ignore the performance of their government, and give their leaders carte blanche to tamper with democratic rules, see Devra C. Moehler and Staffan I. Lindberg, “Narrowing the Legitimacy Gap: Turnovers as a Cause of Democratic Consolidation.”


Donald Share, “Transition to Democracy and Transition Through Transaction,”
Comparative Political studies, Vol. 19 (1987)
17 Hyug Baeg Im, “Politics of Transition: Democratic Transition from Authoritarian rule in South Korea,” in Sang-Yong Choi (ed.), Democracy in Korea: Its Ideals and Realities (Korean Political Science Association, 1997)
22 There was a series of scandal showing that many senior military officers had to bribe their superior (sometimes up to the presidential office) to get promotion.
24 The Pan Blue camp also includes the majority of the independent and the diminishing New Party.
25 According to the survey data, the freeness and fairness of the two previous presidential elections (in 1996 and 2000) was widely recognized even among the voters of the loosing camp. There were 82.6% and 80.7% of the electorate respectively considered the 1996 and the 2000 elections were fair. This time, only 46.35 of the eligible voters felt the same way. Among the loosing camp, only 11% of the respondents thought the election was fair. See Yun-han Chu, Taiwan’s Democracy at Turning Point,” American Journal of Chinese Studies, Vol. 11, No. 2 (May 2005): pp. 901-924.
26 For the concepts of positive and negative consolidation, see Hyug Baeg Im, “Faltering Democratic Consolidation in South Korea: Democracy at the End of the ‘Three Kims’ Era,” Democratization, Vol 11, No. 5 (2004), pp. 118-182.
31 Benjamin Ginsberg and Martin Schefter, Politics by Other Means (New York: Basic
Books, 1999)


39 The old SNTV system for electing the member of the Legislative Yuan was replaced with a mixed system with 75% of the members selected under single-member plurality system and the remaining 25% selected out of party slate under PR rule and by a ballot.

40 The familiar repertoire include using human chain to block the entrance, locking up the Speaker in his private chamber, or tearing down the Speaker’s microphone and taking away his gavel. These disruptive tactics have made Taiwan’s parliament infamously well-known in the world.