
Foreword

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During the past two decades, two major trends have occurred in the global political-economic environment. East Asia has emerged as the most economically dynamic area in the world. The economic growth of Japan, followed by that of Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and now Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia, has created the world's most vigorous region in economic terms. The changes that have begun in mainland China suggest that the process of rapid economic growth in this region could well continue into the next century. US trade is shifting from Europe to East Asia. The economic rise of East Asia is clearly one major trend altering fundamentally the balance of world power.

A second major trend has been in politics: the transition to democracy in a large number of countries throughout the world. This process began in 1974, with the Portuguese revolution and the overthrow of the colonels' regime in Greece. It then moved on to Spain, India, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Argentina, Turkey, Uruguay, El Salvador, Guatemala, Brazil, the Philippines, Korea, and, of course, the Republic of China. And this major global democratic surge appears not to have stopped. At the end of the 1980s, an opposition party did unprecedentedly well in, and indeed may have won, the elections in Mexico; a long-entrenched dictatorship was rejected in a referendum in Chile and fell from power; and an election in Pakistan brought the opposition party, led by a woman, into office. Most dramatically, country after country in Eastern Europe seized the opportunity to end its Communist regime and to introduce a democratic one. Democracy has been and still is on the march around the world.

What factors have been responsible for the remarkable democratic surge of the past fifteen years? One can think of a variety of possible causes. These include, obviously, the economic growth that has occurred in so many parts of the world. They include the failures, economic and military, of undemocratic regimes. They include the increased communication and interaction among societies that has helped the spread of democratic values

and concepts of legitimacy. It is worthwhile to note that in a global sense, almost no one is against democracy; in that respect democracy has clearly won the war of ideas. This trend was undoubtedly also encouraged by the influence of the most powerful democratic countries in the world. The attraction of the European Community was a major factor in the movements toward democracy in Spain, Portugal, Greece, and Turkey. The United States under both the Carter administration and the Reagan administration made the promotion of human rights and democracy a key goal of US foreign policy.

This democratic wave swept through southern Europe and Latin America before it reached East Asia. Only in the late 1980s were there significant steps toward democratization in this part of the world, most notably in Korea, the Philippines, and Taiwan, and these have been balanced, one must note, in part by a movement in the opposite direction in Singapore, Malaysia, Burma, and mainland China. Yet the overall trend is obviously clear.

In assessing the future of democracy in Taiwan, three factors may be of critical importance. They are factors that will be familiar to anyone who has studied the process of democratization.

First, as Seymour Martin Lipset has shown, a clear correlation exists between democracy and economic development. The economic and social preconditions for a democratic political order clearly have come into existence in Taiwan. The rapid economic growth of the past two decades has given Taiwan a high-income economy and a complex economy. The per capita income of Taiwan equals that of such European countries as Spain and Ireland, is 50 percent higher than that of Greece, and is double that of Portugal. In the past several years, Taiwan and Singapore have been the only non-oil exporting countries in the world with per capita incomes of \$5,000 a year or more that have not had fully competitive democratic political systems.

Thanks largely to the land reform of the early 1950s, Taiwan has maintained throughout the process of industrialization an extraordinarily equal income distribution. A large middle class now dominates the social scene. The population is overwhelmingly urban and literate. Social groups and civic associations exist in increasing numbers. Labor unions and farmers' organizations have begun to assert themselves. In addition, the growth of the economy has created sources of power independent of government control. In 1952 the Republic of China (ROC) government controlled 56 percent of Taiwan's industrial production; in 1972 it controlled 19 percent; today it controls less than 10 percent. Clearly, the economic and social basis for democracy has come into existence here.

Countries, however, do not automatically become democratic when they reach a certain level of material well-being. Institutional and political factors constitute a second influence on the process of democratization. It has been common among scholars to differentiate between transitions to democracy

that involve the alteration of a nondemocratic regime by its leaders—a process that I have called “transformation” and that Juan Linz has called *reforma*—and those transitions that involve the overthrow of an authoritarian regime by leaders and groups that have not been a part of that regime—a process that could be called “replacement,” or in Linz’s term, *ruptura*. The Philippine transition in 1986 was a relatively clear case of *ruptura*: popular forces, opposition elites, and elements of the military combined to overthrow the Marcos government. The movement toward democracy in Korea during the past two years has been a mixed case: major popular forces there pushed for movement in a democratic direction, but the regime itself responded to, and even anticipated, these pressures and kept substantial control of the transition process.

In the Republic of China, the process so far has largely been one of transformation. The democratic movement has, of course, existed for many years, and it took concrete form in September 1986 with the formation of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). The government could have crushed this development, which, in a technical sense, was illegal, as somewhat similar movements were crushed earlier. But the government did not do that. Instead, it surprised many people by accepting the formation of the DPP, by announcing that the Kuomintang (KMT) would contest elections like an ordinary political party, and by stating its intention, which became reality in 1987, of terminating martial law. Subsequently, further changes in a democratic direction were made in the structure of the party itself.

It is, I think, widely accepted that democratization in Taiwan is an ongoing process and one that is increasingly irreversible. It is, however, a process the direction and timing of which have so far been largely set by the government. This process of transformation thus bears many resemblances to the somewhat similar processes controlled from above that have occurred in Spain and in Brazil.

There is, however, an additional factor here that distinguishes it from the Spanish and Brazilian cases and puts it in a category with two other cases. This factor involves the nature of the nondemocratic regime. The KMT regime has been one of three non-Communist one-party regimes that came into existence in the third decade of this century. The others were those of the Republican People’s Party (RPP) in Turkey and the regime led by what is now called the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) in Mexico. Important differences exist among these countries but in each of them the dominant single party—the PRI, the RPP, and the KMT—was in large part the creation of military leaders and forces. In all three systems, opposition parties were either effectively prohibited or excluded from any significant political role. In all three systems also, the party organization became a key source of power in the regime. The PRI, the RPP, and the KMT were not weak parties like the Falange in Franco’s Spain or like the single parties that have existed in so many African countries; they were strong parties. In differing degrees,

the military and other social forces shared in power, but the party played a central and usually the central role. Thus these three regimes are distinguished in twentieth-century history by being single-party regimes dominated by strong non-Communist parties.

They are also distinguished by something else. In all three cases, the identity of the state was defined by the ideology of the party. The RPP defined Turkey as a secular, Western, modern, ethnically homogeneous republic. The PRI, boasting that the 1917 Mexican constitution was the first socialist constitution in the world, antedating that of the Soviet Union, defined Mexico as revolutionary, socialist, secular, and corporatist. The KMT defined the Republic of China in terms of Chinese nationalism and Sun Yat-sen's Three Principles.

In recent years, in all three countries, political movements have emerged that have questioned the national identity as defined by the ideology of the dominant founding party. In Turkey, political groups have developed, and acquired some strength, that claim that Turkey should be Islamic and Middle Eastern, not secular and Western. In Mexico, the principal opposition party—which has been the Partido de Accion Nacional (PAN)—argues that Mexico should be a liberal, capitalist society, not a corporatist, socialist one. From the point of view of the traditional leaders of the PRI, that was a subversive ideology. In Taiwan, various political movements have in varying degrees challenged the definition of the state in terms of China and Chinese nationalist identity and have argued for an independent Taiwanese Taiwan.

The appearance of movements challenging the founding myth propagated by the single dominant party poses a central question for democratization. If the identity of the state is defined by the ideology of the dominant party, how can opposition to the party, which in a democratic system is legitimate, be distinguished from treason to the state, which is illegitimate? That question is crucial in the democratization of these regimes.

To date, the problem has been dealt with in two ways. First, those dissident parties challenging the founding myth have been kept out of power or, as once happened in the case of Turkey, removed from power, by both democratic and nondemocratic means. Second, the regime itself has pragmatically adjusted, in effect modified, or even abandoned, the founding myth in practice. The Turkish government supports Islamic groups and builds mosques. The Mexican government under Presidents de la Madrid and Salinas has tried to liberalize the economy and has privatized many state-owned enterprises. The government in Taiwan acts in practice as the government of a highly prosperous, stable, independent nation of 20 million people. Over time, in addition, the founding myth tends to recede into the background. Other issues come forward in political debate, often issues involving economic conflicts and social welfare. It is, however, fair to say that in none of these three countries as yet has the problem of the identity of the state been fully resolved.

Third, there is the question of culture and its impact on democratization. Exceptions exist to any generalization. It is, however, broadly true that democracy developed first in the Protestant countries of Europe and North America. In this century, it has taken root in more and more Catholic countries. It has been largely absent from Islamic societies.

With respect to Taiwan, two issues are relevant. First, some scholars have argued that the emphases in traditional Confucian culture on order, discipline, hierarchy, and the primacy of the group over the individual are obstacles to democratic development. If Taiwan is a Confucian society, then there could be an obvious problem here. But that brings up the second question: Is Taiwan a Confucian society? I do not know the answer to that question, but my colleague Lucian Pye argues strongly that Confucian values and traditions are weak in Taiwan, and he suggests that this creates the basis for what democratization has occurred in Taiwan and that it makes the prospects for further democratization in Taiwan promising.

The question of culture and the impact of Confucian culture on democratization can be approached in two ways. First, the years 1987 and 1988 saw an unprecedented upsurge in protests, demonstrations, strikes, riots, and even scuffles in the legislature in Taiwan. Reflecting, perhaps, traditional Confucian commitments to order, formality, and decorum, many people here expressed concern about these developments that they saw as the unfortunate and disturbing consequences of democratization. I would like to reassure these people. In general, democracies are often unruly, but they are rarely unstable. People will march, shout, confront, and be disorderly; incidents will occur, such as that which occurred in May 1988, but these are superficial events. History shows that in complex and developed societies, democratic governments are very stable. Just as violent social revolutions never produce democracies, democracies never produce violent social revolutions. A study done many years ago by Ivo and Rosalind Feierabend analyzed instability in countries that were democratic, those that were authoritarian, and those that were a mixture, somewhere in between democracy and authoritarianism. The study showed that democracies were the most stable, that the second most stable were the authoritarian systems, and that the least stable were countries that were partly democratic and partly authoritarian. This finding suggests that the events that caused some concern here in Taiwan may be a phenomenon of the transition from what has been a stable authoritarian regime in the past to what will be an even more stable democratic system in the future.

There remains the question of how democracy will develop and survive in Taiwan or other societies that put emphasis on authority as against liberty, that stress the importance of hierarchy, and that elevate the role of the group against that of the individual. It must be recognized that until recently democracy did not develop indigenously in East Asia. With the ambiguous exception of Malaysia, only two East Asian countries have sustained

experience with democratic government. In these two countries, Japan and the Philippines, democracy was the product of US presence. It was not just imported from the West; it was imposed by the United States.

The recent movements toward democracy in Korea and Taiwan, in contrast, represent developments that have their origins in the dynamics of those societies rather than in the actions of a colonial or occupying power. The institutions of democracy that prevail in the West are rooted in Western concepts of liberalism, individualism, and human rights. Conceivably, institutions of democracy will develop in East Asia that could take a significantly different form because they are rooted in different cultural traditions and values. To some extent, perhaps, this has already happened. In the West, we think of democracy as normally requiring changes through elections in the parties that control government and hence an alternation in power. East Asia has been different. Malaysia, for instance, has more or less successfully maintained broadly representative institutions in which the key ethnic groups are represented, but there has been no real change of power. No one doubts that Japan is a democracy, but the same party has governed Japan for forty years. Indeed, apart from the Philippines, to the best of my knowledge, no opposition party has ever come to power through elections in an East Asian country. One could cite this as evidence of the absence of democracy, which is obviously the case for many countries. But it may also reflect a different concept of democracy, one that holds that democratic institutions should promote consensus and stability rather than conflict and change.

In any event, as Taiwan moves forward on the democratic path, one should not be surprised to see the possible emergence of new institutional forms of democracy. That brings me to my final point, which may sound trivial, but is not, and which may also sound parochial, and is. A close connection exists between the development of the discipline of political science and the development of democracy. Historically, these two have gone hand in hand. Nondemocratic countries may be outstanding in fields like physics, mathematics, or literature, but they are never outstanding in the field of political science. Taiwan, like Korea, has a healthy and vigorous political science profession. The process of democratization in Taiwan faces many challenges. Taiwan's many talented political scientists, along with their US colleagues, can play a key role in helping to find answers to these challenges and in devising whatever new institutional forms of democracy may be appropriate and required. This volume and the conference on which it was based will, I hope, make a contribution to this important yet difficult task.