

The Opposition Takes the Presidency! Democracy Consolidated?
Considering the Victories in South Korea, Mexico, and Taiwan

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Introduction

Beginning with the December 1997 victory of Kim Dae Jung in South Korea, and followed by the March and July 2000 triumphs of Chen Shui-bian in Taiwan and Vicente Fox in Mexico, respectively, the world has recently witnessed astonishing takeovers of the office of the presidency by opposition candidates in three major, long-term authoritarian, one-party-dominant regimes. How did these so unlikely and unexpected events occur, and what are their implications for the "consolidation" of democracy?

This article proposes lessons for democratic theory. It proceeds by ferreting out similarities that appear to be critical to the turnovers of power, at least in these three cases. It goes on to draw inferences about the effects of the most crucial of these similar factors, again by considering events and political conditions in the three polities. I will demonstrate that there appears to be a certain logic and a set of regularities that mark both the structural conditions prior to the election and the outcomes linked to these conditions in these cases. Moreover, this logic and its playing out may bode poorly for democratic consolidation, at least for awhile. For the facilitating prior conditions, I will explain, may contribute to making the game of governance so difficult to play that--unless overcome by adept political maneuvering--pose genuine obstacles to rule.

Scholars have debated the definition and conditions that should be used by the analyst to certify that a given country has achieved a "consolidated" democracy.¹ As Omar Encarnacion has noted, the problem goes beyond definitions: scholars as a group have not agreed how to measure consolidation, how to chart its progress, or how to recognize its conclusion.² One easy solution, following Samuel Huntington, is to regard as a principal criterion the success of the opposition party in taking over the government from the entrenched dominant party.³

¹ Omar G. Encarnacion, "Beyond Transitions; The Politics of Democratic Consolidation," Comparative Politics 32, 4 (2000): 479-98; Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation (Johns Hopkins, 1996); Stephan Haggard and Robert Kaufman, "The Challenges of Consolidation," Journal of Democracy 5,4 (1994): 5-16; Larry Diamond, Mark F. Plattner, Yun-han Chu, and Hung-mao Tien, eds., Consolidating the Third Wave Democracies: Regional Challenges (Johns Hopkins, 1997); Larry Diamond and Byung-Kook Kim, "Introduction: Consolidating Democracy in South Korea," in Larry Diamond and Byung-Kook Kim, eds., Consolidating Democracy in South Korea (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2000), 1-20; and Larry Diamond and Doh Chull Shin, eds., Institutional Reform and Democratic Consolidation in Korea (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1999).

² Encarnacion, op. cit., 479.

³ Samuel P. Huntington, The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late 20th Century (Oklahoma, 1991), 267. There Huntington posits a double turnover of power, first to the opposition and then back to its competitor. But there is often a sense in the

Another source of ambiguity in treating the concept of consolidation is a tendency to confuse both its preconditions and its achievement with the temporally prior process of the transition to democracy. Each has its own separate necessary behaviors and characteristics, Encarnacion also underlines. Whereas the transition simply refers to the authoritative replacement of the previous institutions of rule by democratic ones, the concept of consolidation, properly speaking, ought at a minimum to be used to indicate that these new institutions are functional, i.e., that the officials operating within them are able effectively to decide upon and implement policy.⁴

In this article, I set aside the usual list of societal, historical, political, economic and socio-economic, cultural, and international factors adduced to account for or explain the occurrence of a power change from communist or authoritarian to democratic forms of rule--such as the nature of the prior regime, the effects of modernization and industrialization, the rise of a middle class, the birth and growth of popular organizations and the protests and demands issuing from them, the spread of literacy and the media, or international pressure and/or demonstration/snowballing effects from other recently democratized polities. I also ignore the strategic choices, calculations and crafting and engineering of democracy, or the pacts among the elite that have been viewed as especially central in at least some contexts in creating openings for and then clinching transitions.

The impact of none of these factors can be denied, and, indeed, most or even all of them were present in all three of my cases. But I focus instead just on the following six elements, all of them shared by the three countries, and all of which can be seen as relating to and even emerging from the long-term rule by one authoritarian party. These traits are:

literature that even one handover is sufficient proof that a newly democratic regime has become "consolidated."

⁴ Encarnacion, op. cit., 485-86. Encarnacion adds to this that the institutions should be enduring (though this raises the question of the necessary length of the duration required before a new regime can be pronounced consolidated), and that they be "connect[ed] to civil society and citizenship."

--decades of **elections**, at a minimum for local offices, installed in each case to bolster the otherwise questionable legitimacy of long-term rule, but which were virtually uncontested, because of some combination of fraud, power of the incumbent, and official rules;

--the presence throughout these decades of at least one and sometimes more than one **opposition party** (or, in Taiwan's case, local factions and later an outside-the-Party (dangwai) movement), permitted to exist largely, again, to shore up a perception of the dominant party's right to govern;

--**electoral reforms**, undertaken, again, to uphold the ruling party's self-justification as the proper governor in a "free" regime--as well as to stifle external criticism and demands from the party's domestic opponents by giving the opposition more voice;

--a very high and ultimately, for the voters, **intolerable** level of **corruption** in and by the ruling party, made possible by uninterrupted command of the country;

--one or more **split-offs** from the dominant party, with the result that at least **three significant parties** were in contention in the critical election won by the opposition leader; and, finally,

--a **charismatic opposition leader**, able quite convincingly and credibly (because of his own past political record) to **promise change**.

As is evident from the sequencing of this list, each dimension of the package of traits is linked, sometimes temporally, sometimes causally, to the preceding trait, and leads to the following traits in the listing. I turn now to show how each of the three countries played out this concatenation of conditions.

The Cases and the Conditions

Elections going back many years

In Mexico, South Korea, and Taiwan, in order to prettify the international image it presented to democratic, first-world nations (especially the U.S., with which each of these had a special relationship), and to convince its constituencies at home that they were being well served by the party's rule and that this party was the country's rightful ruler, the regimes all sustained long-standing apparatuses of elections for at least half a century before the victory of the opposition leader. In none of these cases did elections--at least until the late 1980's in Taiwan and Mexico and the late 1990's in South Korea--offer voters genuine policy choices.

In Mexico, according to Roderic Ai Camp, "the most important principle of political liberalism" celebrated by the Revolution of 1910 and later enshrined in the Constitution of 1917, was "increased participation in governance expressed through effective suffrage." This principle was undergirded by

what Camp refers to as "the political mythology of the revolution," which advocated "effective suffrage, no reelection."⁵ Elections occurred at all levels, though Daniel C. Levy and Kathleen Bruhn have aptly labeled them "ritualized," fraudulent and manipulated.⁶

The leaders of South Korea had a strong incentive to appear to perform as the leaders of a democracy, in particular because of their rivalry with the North, and their excessive dependence on the goodwill of the United States, which propped up their regime, first with development aid and over the long-term in matters of defense. Two military coups (1961 and 1980) substituted force for elections. But other than that, in the main two or more supposedly genuine political parties participated in elections at the national level, and, up to 1961 and after 1991 at local levels, though, unlike in Mexico, there was no direct election of the president from 1960 until 1987.⁷

⁵ Roderic Ai Camp, Politics in Mexico: The Decline of Authoritarianism (3rd ed.) (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 42.

⁶ Daniel C. Levy and Kathleen Bruhn, "Mexico: Sustained Civilian Rule and the Question of Democracy," in Larry Diamond, Jonathan Hartlyn, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset, eds., Democracy in Developing Countries: Latin America (2nd ed.) (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1999), 540, 545.

⁷ In fact, the power transition in 1960 was not really a matter of direct election. After the overthrow of President Syngman Rhee in 1960, his party, the Liberal Party, had to concede constitutional revision to the opposition, Democratic Party, since its own leader had been unseated. According to the new constitution, which instituted a parliamentary system, the leader of the opposition, Jang Myun, became Prime Minister.

Taiwan's rulers, the Nationalist Party (Guomindang), established the island's new government after retreating in defeat from its rule on the Mainland in 1949. As in South Korea, the leaders' desire sharply to distinguish their regime from that of their Communist competitors on the Mainland, to appear to the external world as "free" and democratic, and to win the support of the local, Taiwanese population which they had in essence conquered, led them to put elections in place almost immediately.

At first, they simply continued to hold the grassroots elections for township representatives with universal suffrage that they had in 1946 instituted on the Mainland. But in 1950 they extended these contests to township heads and city executives and council members. In the next year, the Party installed electoral competition for the first Taiwan Provincial Assembly, and for village executives and councils.⁸ Here, unlike in South Korea, elections were never cancelled throughout the years, and after 1969, as in Mexico and South Korea, the people were permitted to take part in direct elections for some seats at the central level as well. In Taiwan, however, the important posts at the central level, especially for the president, were chosen indirectly until 1996.

As it transpired, elections instated to enhance the legitimacy of the ruling party and of its regime in each case eventually paved the way for the party's loss of power, many decades later. But, in order to hold elections that at the very minimum exhibited the trappings of authenticity, the rulers had to permit some form of opposition to appear to contest their position in power.

One or more opposition parties (or factions) for decades

Thanks to a personal communication from Dr. Sung Chull Kim, December 23, 1997.

⁸ Shelley Rigger, Politics in Taiwan (Routledge, 1999), 18-19. Hung-mao Tien presents this history a bit differently in "Elections and Taiwan's Democratic Development," in Hung-mao Tien, ed., Taiwan's Electoral Politics and Democratic Transition: Riding the Third Wave (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1996), 5. See also Bruce J. Dickson, "The Kuomintang Before Democratization: Organizational Change and the Role of Elections," in Tien, op. cit., 57.

Of the three countries, the Mexican political system housed the largest number of "opposition" parties; there were always simultaneously existing a substantial handful (unlike in South Korea where, except for the period of the Second Republic in 1960-61, generally only a few of note were in place at any one time, even if there were many, many names of parties over the decades).

The presence of numerous parties in Mexico had a venerable history, dating back to the early days of independence after 1821. In the 20th century, conflicts and internal splits on the left produced what Levy and Bruhn termed "countless parties, quasi parties, and currents" which supplied "a facade of competition."⁹

By the time the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) had incorporated, coopted or colluded with the many smaller, leftist parties, had taken on its present name, and had consolidated its rule in 1946, only the National Action Party (PAN), created in 1939, remained somewhat separate; up until the 1980's, even that party acted more as a "symbolic counterweight" to the PRI than as an actual competitor for power.¹⁰

South Korea's party system over the five-plus decades from 1948 up to the present saw an amazingly confusing succession of parties emerging and disappearing, in accord with the rise and fall of particular politicians who have led them. Indeed, one can identify nearly 20 parties worth noting, each with its own distinctive name between 1948 and the present, if one counts both the dominant party at each juncture and the one or more coexisting opposition parties. But from the Liberal Party formed and led, beginning in 1948, by the U.S.-hand-picked president Syngman Rhee, through to today's Grand National Party (so named in late 1997), the continuity of personalities, regional origin (the Kyongsang provinces in the southeast), and cliques of politicians (if not coherent policies), have meant that the dominating party has essentially been one party throughout the years.

In Taiwan the case was superficially different, since no opposition party was allowed to exist there until 1986, but in it was reality quite similar. There local factions appeared within the borders of counties or cities, and were for the most part incorporated into the Guomindang (GMD). But as early as the 1970's, a growing and maturing opposition movement began to coalesce among the local Taiwanese, nurtured through the opportunities the local elections had provided for the expression of dissent and mobilization. During that decade, politicians involved in this movement took on for their grouping the title

⁹ Levy and Bruhn, op. cit., 542.

¹⁰ Ibid., 544.

dangwai, and by the late 1970's were coordinating campaigns and attracting ever more support.¹¹ But it was not until 1986 that the ruling GMD under soon-to-expire President Chiang Ching-kuo recognized and legalized the movement, which then took on the name the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP).

Thus, in Mexico, South Korea, and Taiwan, over the half century from the late 1940's to the late 1990's either one party (the PRI and the GMD, in Mexico and Taiwan, respectively) or what amounted to one party (the Liberal (1948-60)/Democratic Republican (1972-79)/Democratic Justice (1981-89)/Democratic Liberal (1990-95)/New Korea (1995-97)/Grand National Party (GNP) (1997-present) in Korea) held the reins of power, none of them facing any significant opposition at all until the late 1980's.

Electoral Reforms

Certainly the opposition would never have become a threat had it not been for electoral reforms inaugurated in each country, first and most continuously in Mexico (from 1977 through to 1996), but also in Taiwan in the 1970's and again, notably, in 1986, and in South Korea in 1987. In every case, the reforms were inspired by essentially the same motivations that had led to the creation of elections in the first place, namely, desires to silence and coopt protest and discontent, and to give the opposition what the rulers hoped and expected would be improved--but actually impotent--channels through which to express their interests and demands. Each governing party had its own incentives to appear to the outside world to be increasingly democratic, and to seem at home to authoritative, relatively representative, and rightful.

In Mexico, reforms in 1977 legalized the participation of the leftist, independent parties, and reserved 100 (of 400) federal seats in the Chamber of Deputies for the opposition parties (though they had to be divided proportionately among these parties, thereby weakening the take of any one of them); and opposition parties also received more access to the media. Nine years later, in 1986, President de la Madrid introduced much more powerful reforms, which decreed that the major party could never obtain more than 70 percent of the seats in this lower chamber, while the seats allocated to representatives based on a proportional percentage of their total national vote was increased from 100 to 200, now out of a total of 500 seats. Moreover, opposition parties could thenceforth take up to 40 percent of the seats.

¹¹ Rigger, op. cit., 29.

The only hitch was that the party which won the largest number of seats was permitted to retain a simple majority in the lower chamber.¹²

Further reforms were passed in the mid-1990's under the presidency of Ernesto Zedillo. Those in 1994 eliminated the right of the plurality party to guarantee itself a majority, established a Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) to monitor elections, limited campaign spending and increased media access for the opposition. In 1996, the IFE was turned into an independent agency, greater quantities of public funds were designated for campaigning for all parties, and free media advertising was extended to all candidates.¹³

In South Korea, several reforms of the electoral process occurred in the 1990's, including a 1994 new Comprehensive Election Law placing many limitations on campaigning and spending, and an amendment to the local autonomy law in the same year that mandated the direct election of provincial governors, city mayors, and county chiefs every four years, reinstating contests that had been eliminated in 1961.¹⁴ But more critical than these for the story we are telling was the decision of General Roh Tae Woo, soon to become the first president of the Sixth Republic, to respond to a public outcry and support an immediate constitutional amendment permitting direct popular election of the president, rather than as it had been, by an electoral college sure to be dominated by the ruling party. Had Roh not imposed the alteration, he would have been essentially appointed to power by his predecessor, Chun Doo Hwan; as it was, he won at the polls with 36.6 percent of the vote.¹⁵

¹² Camp, op. cit., 180-82.

¹³Ibid., 187, 189.

¹⁴ Larry Diamond and Doh Chull Shin, "Introduction: Institutional Reform and Democratic Consolidation in Korea," in Diamond and Sin, op. cit., 11-13.

¹⁵ Donald Stone Macdonald, The Koreans: Contemporary Politics and Society (3rd ed), ed. and rev. by Donald N. Clark (Boulder: Westview, 1996), 121-22.

As for Taiwan, pressures both at home and abroad enhanced the GMD's need to make more obvious efforts to legitimize itself. At home, elections and the expansion of opposition sentiment, which elections had furthered, pushed the party to make some changes. Externally, new steps were spurred by the decline in Taiwan's international stature throughout the decade, as it progressively lost its seat in the United Nations (1971) and later was forced to sever diplomatic relations with Canada, Japan, and other industrialized countries as they each set up ties with China, a process initiated when the U.S. began to normalize its relations with the People's Republic in early 1972. At this point the GMD reformed its own central organs in 1972 and undertook major personnel changes which eventuated in the Taiwanization of the party.

But as with Mexico and South Korea, though earlier and later reforms either paved the way or reinforced a trend, the most significant measures were those taken in the late 1980's. These were the acts of then-President Chiang Ching-kuo in 1986-87: lifting martial law and eliminating the nearly 40-year-old ban on opposition parties. With the end of the ban, as noted above, the DPP began at once to contest elections. In 1989 the first elections were held in which opposition parties could openly compete with GMD candidates; in 1994 the first direct gubernatorial election was held and direct mayoral elections were restored in Taipei and Kaohsiung cities; and in 1996 the first direct, popular presidential elections were held.

So in all three polities, very significant electoral reforms took place in 1987, principally the product of elite powerholders' efforts to stave off any further draining of their power. This was a draining that, one might argue, had been set into motion precisely by earlier leaders' allowing elections and authorizing opposition forces that were later to become genuine matches for these once-dominant politicians' machines. Still, perhaps electoral reform might, as planned, have acted to refurbish officeholders' credibility and clout, had the very institution of long-term authoritarian rule--by permitting unchecked corruption to proceed without penalty--corroded the ruling parties' integrity.

Intolerable Corruption

It is in the nature of authoritarian rule that power is not accountable¹⁶; moreover, power wielders are free to amass and allocate resources in a totally untrammelled fashion. The leaders in each country

¹⁶ Juan J. Linz, "Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes," in Fred I. Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby, eds., Handbook of

managed elections corruptly, buying votes in Taiwan; stuffing ballot boxes, bribing voters, coercing villagers to vote for the PRI by busing them to the polls, and tampering with tallying computers, among other tricks in Mexico; and working in close league with big business (the chaebol) to skew elections and sometimes jailing the opposition in South Korea.

Additionally, in each case, the ruling party and the government were so tightly linked as to be more or less indistinguishable. Incumbent command of the seats of power enabled the ruling parties to dominate the collection of campaign money, monopolize the media, and even, when necessary (as in the case of countryside caudillos and rural police in Mexico, the garrison command in Taiwan, and the army itself in South Korea), mobilize military force to commandeer "electoral" victory.

But as the oppositions' growth in strength in each case came close to balancing off the ruling parties' progressively more blatant graft, fraud and intimidation, these dominant parties began to be in trouble. Besides, in each case the effects of this expansion of their opponents' force was compounded by something else that aroused popular anger, again a product of the once unobstructed potency of the ruling power. In Mexico the problem was economic hardship, brought on by economic policies, from the debt crisis of 1982 until the early 1990's, and again with the crash of the peso in late 1994, for which the working class was made to bear the brunt without its having any opportunity for political policy input. There were also exposures of shocking corruption cases, especially one entailing the brother of former President Salinas, that surfaced just as he stepped down from power.

In South Korea, the most shocking incident bringing out into the open the misdeeds of the ruling party, was perhaps in part dramatized by President Kim Young Sam in order to deepen his own support among the populace. Kim had the two former presidents, Chun Doo Hwan and Roh Tae Woo, arrested, brought to trial, and charged with corruption and sentenced to lengthy jail terms in 1995, in part over slush fund scandals. President Kim was later implicated to some extent by another scandal--concerning illegal loans to the bankrupt Hanbo steel corporation--because of the involvement of his son and confidants. These cases enraged a public that had already had a taste of democratic opening.

And in Taiwan, the vote buying that had always been in effect only escalated once elections were truly contested. By the late 1990's, politics on the island were significantly marred by charges of "black

Political Science, Volume 3: Macropolitical Theory (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1975), 266.

and gold" power, referring to the gangster links and the serious financial irregularities that marked GMD rule by then.

Initially, corruption was made possible and thrived in these countries because of the unimpeded political sway exercised by authoritarian parties. The behavior of the politicians who enjoyed this prerogative, however, eventually was brought to the surface and castigated, once elections, opposition parties, and electoral reforms gathered force.

Split-offs: three significant parties

Against the background of this unfolding history, was it inevitable that at some stage a portion of the ruling party, either frustrated with the persistence of one-sided policies or the corrupt practices of its members, or emboldened by the new space accorded opposing voices, would split off, once electoral reforms made it clear that elections were to have some authenticity? Such splits, however, in each case proved deadly--the final, clinching condition that made for the ruling party's loss of the presidency.

These splits meant that there were in each country in the critical, finally truly competitive and certifiably fair election, at least three significant parties which put candidates before the voters. It was under these circumstances that the ruling party was defeated. Had there still been just two parties in 1997 in South Korea, and in 2000 in Mexico and Taiwan, it is quite unlikely that, even with the playing out of the string of inter-related factors just recounted, the GNP, the PRI, or the GMD would have lost their hold on the top position of power in the polity. But then again, it may be that the split itself was unavoidable, a necessary outcome of the previous conditions.

In Mexico, the relevant split came the earliest of the three. In 1986, the more leftist-oriented, populist section of the PRI, calling itself the Democratic Current, censorious of de la Madrid's choice of painful austerity policies as his strategy of coping with the 1982 debt crisis, tried to alter the structure of the PRI and to render it more democratic. Its continual criticism led to the ouster of this factions' members from the party in 1987. At the core of the group was the son of 1930's beloved President Lazaro Cardenas, Cuauhtemoc Cardenas, who became the new party's candidate in the 1988 presidential election and, officially, captured 31 percent of the vote (with the PAN receiving 17 percent and the PRI just over 51 percent). Indeed, a quite suspicious breakdown of the vote tallying computers at a crucial moment has even caused some observers to suspect that Cardenas might actually have been the winner. The following year, the various segments of the left were consolidated under the name Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD).

This split had a number of consequences that eventually led to the defeat of the PRI's candidate in the 2000 election. Most obviously, some of the rural vote was shifted from the PRI as was some portion of the more traditional, "dinosaur" wing of the PRI. In addition, the split sent a signal that the PRI was to be challenged, and that its policies could be defied. Although the victor in 2000 was not the candidate of the PRD but that of the PAN, Vicente Fox (who took about 42.8 percent of the vote, to PRI candidate Francisco Labastida's 35.7 percent and PRD candidate Cuauhtemoc Cardenas's 16.5 percent),¹⁷ it seems possible, if not likely, that had Cardenas and his followers not broken with the PRI, Labastida's chances would have been far greater. Indeed, one reason for the strength of the PAN was its nurturing by the PRI after 1988, once the PRI sensed a dangerous rival in the new PRD.¹⁸ Moreover, a co-founder of the PRD, Munoz Ledo, once a supporter and ally of Cardenas, withdrew his own candidacy (for one of the three smaller parties) and threw his support to Fox.

In South Korea, after Roh's announcement in July 1987 that he would call for an amendment to allow a direct election for the presidency, the opposition (at that time united under the name the New Korean Democratic Party) stood an excellent chance of winning the election. The difficulty, however, was that in the months prior to the December vote, the leaders of the opposition were unable to coalesce under one candidate, each candidate refusing to cede his own position. This rivalry clearly split up the opposition vote, with Roh from the ruling Democratic Justice Party taking a mere 36.6 percent of the vote and the three opposition leaders--Kim Dae Jung (with his then named Party for Peace and Democracy) winning 27 percent, Kim Young Sam (with his Reunification Democratic Party or RDP) 28 percent, and Kim Jong Pil (heading the New Democratic Republican Party or NDRP) gaining 8 percent, respectively. So, in that round, the ruling party was the benefactor of splits.

But by the time of the 1997 elections, shifts had occurred that undermined the former ruling party (having since become first the Democratic Liberal Party in 1990, in a merger with the NDRP and the RDP; the New Korea Party (NKP) in 1995; and the Grand National Party in 1997, just before the

¹⁷ Molly Moore and John Ward Anderson, "Fox's Victory Brings a New Era to Mexico," Los Angeles Times, July 4, 2000, 1. This count is based on the official tally with 93 percent of the vote added up.

¹⁸ Thanks to Pamela Starr for this insight.

election). The maneuvering in the years 1995 to 1997 had a great deal to do with the victory of Kim Dae Jung. To begin with, in 1995, Kim Jong Pil broke off from the NKP, creating his own United Liberal Democratic Party in 1995. This LDP was to form an alliance with Kim Dae Jung's new (as of 1995) National Congress for New Politics, enabling Kim to win. His victory was also assured when Rhee In Jae broke away from the NKP's new incarnation, the Grand National Party in 1997, thereby further weakening the GNP.

So, by the time of the election, Kim Dae Jung was strengthened by his alliance while the GNP was diminished by Rhee's exit, permitting Kim to take 39.7 percent of the vote to Lee Hoi Chang (of the GNP)'s 38.2 percent, and Rhee's 18.9 percent.¹⁹ Clearly Kim could not have rode to victory without these switches of allegiance and the resultant three-way race. In the case of South Korea, such fissions, mergers and shifting alliances were the name of the game in party jockeying, being the stuff of politics even in earlier eras when the opposition had absolutely no hope of winning.

In Taiwan, the critical events occurred in 1993 and again in late 1999. The first group to separate itself from the GMD was a pro-unification (with the Mainland) segment, which called itself the New Party, under the leadership of Hau Pei-tsun, an event that was the result of schisms simmering between President Lee Teng-hui and his old-guard rivals in the GMD.²⁰ Later, on the eve of the 2000 presidential election, James Soong, who had been governor of the provincial government, departed and created his own small party. In fact, it was perceived as quite likely that Soong himself would triumph, had a financial scandal not surfaced that damaged his candidacy.

Although the New Party was no longer a force to be reckoned with by 2000, the three-way split between Soong, running as an independent, the GMD, and the DPP was undoubtedly a critical factor in the victory of Chen Shui-bien of the DPP, who took a mere 39 percent of the vote to Lien Chan (of the GMD)'s 23 percent and Soong's 37 percent. Yes, the GMD had become unpopular. But surely it could have remained in power had Soong stayed with it, as the vote tally demonstrates.

¹⁹ Byung-Kook Kim, "Party Politics in South Korea's Democracy: The Crisis of Success," in Diamond and Kim, op. cit., 57-61.

²⁰ Tien, "Elections," 15.

Commentators on all three pivotal elections make the point that the divisions in the contests among three chief contenders in each case made all the difference.²¹ But, one still must wonder, did the winning candidates themselves not have a contribution to make to the outcome?²²

Charismatic opposition candidates promising change

It may be true that the structural conditions just laid out were crucial, and that any candidate from the opposition could have come to power once long-term unchallengeable rule had promoted rampant corruption; once election reforms had changed the nature of the game; and once splits from the ruling party had cut into its constituency in each country. Nonetheless, in each case the victorious opposition parties were blessed to have at their heads charismatic leaders who could convincingly proclaim their intention to promote change, especially change that would deal harshly with corruption and at the same time expand the democratic practices of the government. Vicente Fox, Kim Dae Jung, and Chen Shui-bian, because of their personal histories, their principled stands, and their commanding personalities, were ideal for the job at hand.

²¹ The analysis above might suggest that Japan, whose Liberal Democratic Party experienced critical splits in 1992 and 1993, might be the next to see an opposition victory. However, at this writing, there is no strong and charismatic leader on the side of the opposition. According to the Far Eastern Economic Review, August 24, 2000, 17, 20, it is former Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, the new head of the LDP itself's own largest faction, who is the most likely new leader of the country.

²² To give just one example, see Erik Eckholm, "Taiwan Nationalists Ousted After Half-Century Reign," New York Times (hereafter, NYT), March 19, 2000, 1.

Fox campaigned explicitly on a platform of change and his calls for change struck a cord among the young, the well educated, and the urban populace, all growing sections of the population.²³ According to the New York Times, he was seen by supporters as "a clever strategist..[who] succeeded in attracting supporters from across the political landscape." His past as a big-time business executive could convince the voters that he was a capable administrator, and that he perhaps would be a fighter against mainstream political tactics. Back in 1988 he had attracted support for standing up to soldiers in an attempt to retrieve disputed ballots from the basement of the Congress.²⁴ And to quote from political strategist Dick Morris, "Fox has a chemistry with the people of Mexico that is beyond belief."²⁵

In South Korea, the victor, Kim Dae Jung, had been known for decades as a fighter for democracy. In 1971, after he (with 45 percent of the vote) was narrowly defeated for the office of President, President Park Chung Hee cancelled all political parties and introduced the autocratic Fourth (Yushin) Republic; yet throughout the 1970's Kim tirelessly battled for human rights. In 1980, at the time of pro-democracy protests in Kim's home province, South Cholla, General Chun Doo Hwan, soon to grab power for himself, arrested Kim Dae Jung and had him sentenced to death for allegedly provoking the rellted Kwangju uprising. With his charismatic personality and his impeccable democratic credentials, Kim himself, like Fox, must have won supporters in his own right.

As for Chen Shui-bian in Taiwan, he too had the image, in the words of New York Times reporter Mark Landler, of "a determined fighter."²⁶ Though--as distinguished from Kim and Fox--not especially inspirational in style, Chen was well known for several reasons in particular that must have attracted some votes: his "ethnicity" as a Taiwanese native, as are about 85 percent of the population; his prior support for independence for the island; his effective--and puritanical--governance of the capital, as

²³ Moore and Anderson, op. cit.

²⁴ Sam Dillon, "Presidential Challenger in Mexico Pitches Tent in Two Camps," NYT, June 11, 2000.

²⁵ Quoted in Sam Dillon, "Businessman Breaks Political Mold," NYT, July 4, 2000, 3.

²⁶ Mark Landler, "A Determined Fighter Who Paid a Price," NYT, March 19, 2000, 1.

Mayor in the mid-1990's; and his wife's paralysis, the result of her having been struck by a truck in 1995--probably intentionally by Chen's political opponents--which marked Chen as a man willing to sacrifice for his ideals.²⁷

All told, it is difficult to differentiate necessary from sufficient causes in this catalogue of determining factors. Once the victories have been won, who can say definitively that other candidates would not have been able to seize the opportunities that the structural factors linked to long-term one-party rule had fostered? And yet it does seem plausible that without the ruling party splits and the three-party contests, the victories--even of these remarkable politicians--may not have occurred.

Outcomes for Governing and Implications for Consolidation

At the outset of this piece, I emphasized the importance for the consolidation of democracy of the governability of the new regime, the ability of elected officials to function as decision makers and implementers of policy. Paradoxically, at least for the short run, in these three cases triumph at the polls did not mean easy sailing for the victors.

For in each case, the new leaders had to confront congresses that their parties did not control. For Kim Dae Jung, the solution was the simplest: given the historical fluidity of the party system and the fragility of the specific parties, in 1998, his first year in power, Kim was gradually able to coax GNP members of the National Assembly to switch over to his own party, facilitating his command over policy. Lacking the power to do that in their own systems, leaders in the other two places will have to form coalitions, or else be thwarted by coalitions among their rivals. A critical issue will be who can--or is willing to--form coalitions with whom.

For in Mexico and Taiwan the outlook is decidedly less rosy than in South Korea. In Mexico, in recent years, when, after the 1997 Congressional elections, the PAN + the PRD controlled more seats together than the PRI did by itself, despite negotiations about coalitions at least for certain votes, in the end the PAN generally sided with the PRI. But now it is not unthinkable that, in the interest of undermining the rule of the PAN, the PRI will find common cause with the PRD, perhaps on some issues if not consistently. In Taiwan, the first months of Chen's presidency have been decisively marred by efforts of the GMD, which still dominates over the Legislative Yuan, to block his moves.

So in these latter two cases, that so key structural feature that enabled opposition leaders to win--the presence of three competing parties--is making the business of governing problematic. In none of

²⁷ Ibid.

these places does there appear to be the peaceful resolution of the difficulties of divided government that France has found in its institution of "cohabitation"; nor, it would seem, would the strong leaders who have won the presidency in these countries be apt to surrender their power to a prime minister, as Chirac and before him Mitterrand managed successfully to do.

Thus a clash of institutions that has emerged from the three-way, opposition-triumphant races (and not the elections themselves, as many think) may well prove to be the pass that critically tests--or finally forges and consolidates--the democracies that were launched 13 years ago in all three countries. For maneuvering around its shoals will try both the institutions needed for making democracy appear to be in place, and, even more, the culture of civility, trust, and cooperation and compromise without which these institutions are just a sham.

What I have shown is that in a certain kind of system, a one-party dominant authoritarian system, where leaders permit other parties or factions to participate in elections, these leaders may be setting into motion a chain of events that unfold according to a particular logic--one that, granted, may take decades to play itself out--that not only breaks down the system these leaders have constructed, but that also puts up roadblocks on the way to the consolidation of a new one.