Issues & Studies 37, no. 4 (July/August 2001): 1-37.

Comparing Third-Wave Democracies: East Central Europe and the ROC*

YU-SHAN WU

This article develops a four-category analytical framework to compare the process of democratic consolidation in East Asia (the Republic of China on Taiwan in particular) and East and Central Europe (ECE—Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary). The four categories are social cleavage, party system, constitutional framework, and the nature of elections. Each category impacts on political stability. A major finding is that Taiwan is characterized by pre-materialist social cleavages, a biparty system sustained by the SNTV (single nontransferable vote) electoral regime and the staying power of the Kuomintang (KMT), a semi-presidential structure plagued by divided government, and identity voting. In contrast, the ECE countries are characterized by materialist social cleavages, a multiparty system, a parliamentary constitutional structure (except for Poland who shares with the ROC a semi-presidential system), and economic voting. Those characteristics have specific implications for political stability: materialist cleavages, biparty system, parliamentarianism, and economic voting are all conducive to political stability, while pre-materialist cleavages, multiparty system, semi-presidential system with di-

---

Yu-Shan Wu (吳玉山) is professor of political science at National Taiwan University, and convener of political science, National Science Council. His main research interests are comparative economic and political transitions in socialist countries, cross-Strait relations, and democratization. His areas of specialization are mainland China, Russia, Eastern Europe, and Taiwan. His major publications include *Comparative Economic Transformations: Mainland China, Hungary, the Soviet Union, and Taiwan* (1994), *Gongchan shijie de bianqian: Sige gongdang zhengquan de bijiao* (Communism in flux: A comparison of four communist regimes) (1995), *Yuanli shehuizhuyi* (Away from socialism) (1996), and *Eluosi zhuanxing 1992-1999: Yige zhengzhi jingjixue de fenxi* (Russia's transition 1992-1999: A politico-economic approach) (2000).

*An earlier version of this paper was presented at the "Conference on Political Change in East and Central Europe and Far East Asia: Comparison" on May 15, 2001 at Charles University, Prague.

vided government, and identity voting induce political instability. With Taiwan gradually developing into a multiparty system, the lessons from the ECE countries are becoming even more pertinent.

KEYWORDS: **Czech Republic; Poland; Hungary; Republic of China (ROC); social cleavage; semi-presidential system**

* * *

Political scientists rarely compare the political processes in the East and West. Even for formerly socialist countries (such as mainland China and Russia) that share important institutional similarities, the comparison is either rarely made, or made in an artificial way, i.e., by juxtaposing country studies without providing a meaningful frame of comparison.[1] Typically one finds country chapters in comparative politics books that do not talk to one another.[2] This demonstrates both the lack of general conceptual frameworks in comparative studies across regions[3] as well as limits on researchers' ability to go beyond the country that they are most familiar with.[4] This situation also arises from the publishers' preconception that the East should be separated from the West, that readers interested in political development in China, for example, are quite different from those interested in post-Soviet politics.[5] As a result the academic community that

---

[1]See, for example, Daniel Chirot, ed., *The Crisis of Leninism and the Decline of the Left* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991).

[2]Such as Andrew G. Walder, ed., *The Waning of the Communist State: Economic Origins of Political Decline in China and Hungary* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995). In this book, the chapters on the Chinese reform and those on the Hungarian reform are merely juxtaposed. Even though the editor attempts to come up with a general framework to knit all the chapters together, the book is basically two collections of articles dealing with the Chinese and Hungarian reforms respectively.

[3]For an exception, see Jeffrey Kopstein and Mark Lichbach, eds., *Comparative Politics: Interests, Identities, and Institutions in a Changing Global Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

[4]This is a problem that has existed for a long time. Except for comparative works that depend exclusively on quantitative data, one rarely finds works that deal with cross-regional comparisons. For one exception, see Thomas P. Bernstein, "Leadership and Mass Mobilization in the Soviet and Chinese Collectivization Campaigns of 1929-30 and 1955-56: A Comparison," *The China Quarterly*, no. 31 (July-September 1967): 1-47.

[5]Even though writers-cum-editors are interested in developing a genuinely comparative framework, publishers are hesitant to market cross-regional works. See the comparative

studies comparative politics in the post-Cold War era is still treating the East and West as separate entities divided by unbridgeable geographical, cultural, and intellectual gaps.[6]

Much can be gained, however, by comparing the East and West. The value of comparative works resides in gaining the kind of insight that one does not find in studying single cases, however thorough those case studies may be. One of the areas where such comparative works are particularly fruitful is the study of democratization and democratic consolidation. Reflecting the general situation, one finds single-country case studies dominating the field,[7] followed by intraregional comparisons.[8] In contrast, only very few works focus on interregional comparisons.[9] Even though some general conceptual frameworks are proposed for comparative purpose, the cases remain country-specific.

In the following analysis, we propose a comparative framework that can be applied to cases of democratic consolidation across geographical regions and cultural backgrounds. This framework will be used to compare two regions heavily influenced by the third wave of democratization.[10] Since the mid-1970s, there are four regions that experienced democratization and have subsequently gone through democratic consolidation. Those regions are Southern Europe, South America, East Asia, and post-communist Europe (including East and Central Europe and the former Soviet

---

framework developed by Edwin A. Winckler in his edited book, *Transition from Communism in China: Institutional and Comparative Analyses* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1999). Note that the case studies in the book are completely restricted to China.

[6]Here we are not talking about research on international relations, such as studies on Sino-Russian relations in the post-Cold War era. For example, see Sherman W. Garnett, ed., *Rapprochement or Rivalry: Russia-China Relations in a Changing Asia* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2000).

[7]Such as Payam Akhavan and Robert Howse, eds., *Yugoslavia: The Former and Future* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1995).

[8]For example, see Ivo Banac, ed., *Eastern Europe in Revolution* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1992).

[9]Such as Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

[10]Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991); and Larry Diamond et al., eds., *Consolidating the Third Wave Democracies: Themes and Perspectives* (Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).

Union). The regions for our comparison here are East Asia and East and Central Europe.[11] For East Asia, we will concentrate on the Republic of China (ROC), and for East and Central Europe, we will focus on Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary (the Visegrad, or ECE countries).[12]

Comparing the ROC in East Asia and the Visegrad countries is challenging and potentially fruitful. True, on the surface there seem to be great differences between the two regions. For one thing, the East Asian model features political democratization without significant economic restructuring, as economic success has long been considered an integral part of the East Asian success stories. The East and Central European model, however, features dual transition: political *and* economic reforms that thoroughly transform the countries. The addition of economic restructuring to the reform tasks greatly complicates the transition process in the ECE countries, and intensifies the interaction between the political and economic forces that arise from the structural changes.[13] Put in a nutshell, East Asia witnessed only one type of transition in the 1980s and 1990s, while the ECE countries experienced dual, or even triple, transitions (if one includes the dissolution of ethnic federations in the area, such as Czechoslovakia). Another great difference between transition in East Asia and

---

[11]One major effort in this direction was the conference held by the ROC's National Science Council and the Czech Academy of Sciences on transitional societies in comparison in Prague, on May 26-30, 1999. The resulting publication was *Conference Prague 1999: Transitional Societies in Comparison: East Europe vs. Taiwan*, ed. Bonn Office of the National Science Council (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2000). However, all the chapters in the book are concentrated on a single country, be it Taiwan, Poland, the Czech Republic, or other ECE countries. One finds no comparative framework, nor empirical research based on such framework in the volume. This is a reflection of the general situation as mentioned earlier in this paper.

[12]In November 1991, the European Commission met with the governments of Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia at Visegrad in Hungary and initiated a series of agreements that provide for free trade, economic, and technical cooperation, financial assistance, and the creation of political dialogue. The agreements incorporate principles of democracy and liberalization and conditionality for the transition to the second stage of accession by the then three countries (four, later on, given the breakup of Czechoslovakia in January 1993) to the European Union. In this paper, Visegrad countries refer to Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary.

[13]Whether economic and political transitions are complementary or incompatible is subject to academic debate. See Leslie Elliott Armijo, Thomas J. Biersteker, and Abraham F. Lowenthal, "The Problems of Simultaneous Transitions," in *Economic Reform and Democracy*, ed. Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 227.

East and Central Europe is the nature of the nondemocratic regime that was dislodged from power. In East Asia, one finds development-oriented authoritarian regimes while in East and Central Europe, one finds totalitarian or quasi-totalitarian regimes. Some have pointed out that the nature of the pre-democracy regime casts great influence on the viability of the democratic regime that follows.[14]

With those differences, however, one finds significant similarities between the East Asian and ECE models. For one thing, both types of regimes experienced democratization and democratic consolidation roughly during the same time period, i.e., from the end of the 1980s through the 1990s. This means some important external factors are controlled, such as the overall international context of their political change. It also means that they were aware of the other's transition, even though this understanding does not guarantee institutional borrowing or other demonstration effect. The population sizes of the four countries in our comparative study are roughly comparable, with Poland having a larger population (38.6 million) while the Czech Republic (10.3 million) and Hungary (10.2 million) having a smaller population than that of Taiwan (23 million). Similar population size excludes the possibility that the four countries' governments are widely different in size or complexity. Population size also has important implications for the prospects of democracy.[15] Being median countries, they all have containable central-regional problems,[16] unlike the situation in large transitional societies such as Russia. Finally, Taiwan and the ECE trio are roughly at the same stage of economic development. The gross domestic product (GDP) per capita was US$11,300 for the Czech Republic (1998), US$7,400 for Hungary (1997), US$7,250 for Poland (1997), and US$10,855 for Taiwan (1998). This means Taiwan's nascent

---

[14]Linz and Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, chap. 2.

[15]See Robert A. Dahl and Edward R. Tufte, *Size and Democracy* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1973).

[16]Thus, for example, the anti-Prague sentiment in the regions of the Czech Republic is quite like the anti-Taipei feelings in central, and particularly southern, Taiwan. Both are real but containable. See Andrew Stroehlein, "The Second Possibility," *Central Europe Review* 0, no. 20 (February 8, 1999), at <http://www.ce-review.org/-authorarchives/stroehlein_archive/stroehlein20old.html>.

democracy is operating against an economic background similar to the ECE trio, and the experiences of democratic consolidation of the two are thus rendered more comparable.

This paper argues that the most fascinating similarities between the East Asian and ECE transition models are the similar ways in which the democratic institutions in those countries were determined, the mode of functioning of the democratic institutions, and their impact. These similarities reveal underlying patterns concerning the choice, operation, and effect of human political institutions that transcend geographical and political boundaries. In additional to institutional similarities, one also finds the voting patterns of the new democracies in the two regions comparable. In the following analysis, I will first present a general framework of comparison that includes both institutional and voting pattern variables. That framework of comparison is then applied to both the ECE countries (Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary) and the ROC. Major focus will be cast on identity voting and economic voting. Finally, discussion will be made on the prospects of political stability in the four countries based on the preceding comparison. The main purpose of the paper is to gain insight into Taiwan's political development through a comparison with the ECE countries, and to enrich the study of new democracies that appeared toward the end of the 1980s and became consolidated in the 1990s.[17]

Framework of Comparison

There are four areas where Taiwan and the ECE countries can be compared as young democracies. These areas are social cleavages, party system, constitutional framework, and nature of elections. Social cleavages refer to fundamental differences in a society that define the country's party system. There are mainly three types of social cleavages: pre-materi-

[17]It is the belief of this author that Taiwan's democracy should be compared not with the advanced countries in the West that have had long experience with democratic institutions and practices, but with the nascent democracies in Eastern Europe (or Southern Europe and Latin America). Proper comparisons can shed light on our own problems and suggest possible solutions. Comparisons with the West would be less fruitful.

alist, materialist, and post-materialist. The number of effective parties and the nature of the issues that define them characterize party system. The former is closely linked to the electoral system, while the latter is derived from the social cleavages. Generally speaking, one finds biparty and multiparty systems with the actors pursuing goals of varying compatibility. Constitutional framework is the institutional structure that defines political actors in the government and distributes power among the actors. Parliamentary, presidential, and semi-presidential systems are the three dominant structures of constitutional framework that one finds in contemporary democracies. Nature of election is the orientation that voters are geared to when casting their votes. Here we are primarily interested in two voting patterns: identity voting and economic voting. These four major categories of comparison capture the most salient dimensions of national politics of a transitional country and provide a useful frame of comparison.[18] Most importantly, they directly bear on political stability in a country. Put in a nutshell, materialist social cleavage, biparty system, parliamentary constitutional framework, and economic voting are more conducive to political stability than pre-materialist cleavage, multiparty system, semi-presidential framework, and identity voting. In the following analysis, I shall use these four dimensions to organize the comparison of Taiwan and the ECE countries. The conclusion spells out their implications for political stability.

Social Cleavages

There are typically three types of social cleavages: pre-materialist, materialist, and post-materialist. The materialist social cleavages are those arising from industrialization and are generally referred to as the Right/Left

[18]Obviously there are other comparative frameworks, such as the legalistic one that emphasizes the formal institutions or the functional one that directs one's attention to the structures and functions of a political system. As we are primarily interested in political stability in a transitional society, however, we will concentrate on the four variables as specified for they have direct bearing on our main concern.

cleavages. In a standard Western democracy, the materialist cleavage is the dominant cleavage, so that the major political parties are defined with reference to their positions on the desired structure of the economy, as well as on the ideal distribution pattern among different classes.[19] The pre-materialist cleavages are related to ethnic, religious, and other fundamental social differences that in the history of Western countries predated the materialist cleavages. They may still constitute powerful divides that continue to plague the fabric of a modern society. The Quebec independence movement and the Northern Ireland question are pertinent cases, but these kinds of cleavages are much more pronounced in non-Western countries and may define party systems there. The post-materialist cleavages are those that rose to prominence after industrialization and the subsequent class formation of a country. Again, the Western experience defines what exactly are those post-materialist cleavages. Environment issues (Green parties), pro-life vs. pro-choice conflict, etc., are prominent cleavages in this last category. One may argue that gender issues are more "fundamental" than class differences and should be grouped under the rubric of pre-materialist cleavages. Also, the sequence in which the various social cleavages arose in a particular country may not conform to their sequence in Western history. These problems with the typology of social cleavages are real but should not deter researchers from applying the typology to the study of comparative democratization. This is because this typology provides convenient conceptual instruments to capture otherwise highly complicated social phenomena.

In the ECE countries, the dominant social cleavages are of the materialist type. A casual look at the party system that reflects the dominant cleavage pattern leads one to this conclusion. There are historical parties in those countries—such as the Independent Smallholders (FKgP) in Hungary, the Czech Social Democratic Party (ČSSD), and the Polish Peasant Party (PSL) in Poland—that regained political significance in the post-

[19]For an authoritative treatment of the changing pattern of social cleavages, see Ronald Inglehart, "The Changing Structure of Political Cleavages in Western Society," in *Electoral Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies: Realignment or Dealignment?* ed. Russell J. Dalton, Scott C. Flanagan, and Paul Allen Beck (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), 25-69.

communist period.[20] Then one finds the new parties—such as the Civic Democratic Party (ODS) in the Czech Republic, the Alliance of Free Democrats (SzDSz) in Hungary, and the Democratic (and later Freedom) Union (UW) in Poland—that appeared during the process of political transition. Finally, there are the successor parties that emerged from the old ruling communist parties—such as the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSČM), the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSzP), and Social Democracy of the Polish Republic (SdRP) which dominates the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD).[21] Almost all of these abovementioned major parties can be put on a Left/Right political spectrum.[22] Even though at times central forces may gain some strength—such as when Polish presidential candidate Andrzej Olechowski garnered 17 percent of the popular vote in the 2000 presidential elections, those central forces are still defined in materialist terms (i.e., in terms of their economic and distribution policies).[23] The major ethnic conflict in the ECE countries, that of the independence movement of Slovakia, was resolved through the "Velvet

---

[20]The Polish Peasant Party was founded in May 1990 as the result of a merger agreement between the satellite United Peasant Party and several émigré parties that lay claim to old prewar traditions. See Gordon Wightman, "Parties and Politics," in *Developments in Central and European Politics 2*, ed. Stephen White, Judy Batt, and Paul Lewis (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1998), 150.

[21]Among the three, the Polish SdRP's founding congress was the continuation of the final congress of the Polish United Workers Party (PZPR), the ruling communist party in the past. The MSzMP (Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party) split into MSzMP (the conservatives) and MSzP (the reformers) after the October 1989 conference; thus MSzP's relation with the former communist party is not as strong as the SdRP's relation with the Polish Communist Party. The Czech KSČM is unique in being the least reformed communist party in ECE, and thus has the strongest linkage with the past. See "Bulletin: Electoral Statistics and Public Opinion Research Data," *East European Politics and Societies* 7, no. 3 (Fall 1993): 562, 568, 574; András Bozóki, "Post-Communist Transition: Political Tendencies in Hungary," ibid. 4, no. 2 (Spring 1990): 217; and Michal Klima, "The Formation of the Czech Party System and Its Role in the Institutionalization of the New Regime" (Paper delivered at the 17th World Congress of the International Political Science Association, August 17-21, 1997, Seoul, Korea).

[22]In this general framework, one still finds attempts by Right-wing political parties to emphasize sociocultural conservatism in major elections, such as the campaign run by the presidential candidate of the Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS) Marian Krzaklewski in 2000 that focused on Catholicism and his opponent's communist past. See Andrew Cave, "Off Balance," *Central Europe Review* 2, no. 36 (October 23, 2000), at <http://www.ce-review.org/00/36/cave36.html>.

[23]Ibid.

Divorce" between the Czech Republic and Slovakia in 1993, thus removing the most prominent pre-materialist cleavage from the ECE region.[24]

The dominance of materialist social cleavages in the ECE countries has to do with their history of industrialization. During the interwar period, all the three countries developed a typical class structure and corresponding party system.[25] The communist experiences of the three countries failed to abolish class divisions, the official endeavors to do the contrary notwithstanding. Because Czechoslovakia's economy was much more developed than Poland and Hungary during the interwar period, one finds parties representing the farmers' interest more powerful in the latter two (PSL and FKgP), while social democratic forces strongest in the Czech lands (ČSSD). This pattern was reflected in the post-communist politics of the three countries. All the three parties (PSL, FKgP, and ČSSD) are major participants in the post-communist governments in the three countries, with their leaders taking the role of prime minister on many occasions, such as the PSL's Waldemar Pawlak and the ČSSD's Miloš Zeman. The communist rule claimed to have abolished class. That claim is true only in the limited sense that one did not find bourgeoisie under state socialism. The industrial workers, peasants, managers, professionals, and intellectuals were all economic classes with their own material interests.[26] Some of them had become quite powerful and laid considerable pressure on the regime.[27] In

---

[24]For a discussion of the Czechoslovak "Velvet Revolution," see Jan Škaloud, "The Case of Czechoslovakia's Managed Divorce," *Chinese Political Science Review* 24 (June 1995): 165-70.

[25]For the interwar political history of the three countries, see Joseph Rothschild, *East Central Europe Between the Two World Wars* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993).

[26]Obviously, if one defines class purely in terms of its relation with the means of production, then with the elimination of the propertied class under state socialism, one can no longer speak of class differentiation in the traditional, Marxist sense. This is why Jon Elster and others argue that "class conflict was repressed under state socialism, both regarding distributional struggles and struggles for the control of the production process," and that there was "a highly amorphous socioeconomic pattern of interests and conflict and an atomized social structure." However, the disappearance of propertied class does not render a "classless society," as the workers, managers, peasants, intellectuals, and party apparatchiks were stratified in terms of income and prestige, and endowed with specific material interest. For the opinions of Elster and others, see Jon Elster, Claus Offe, and Ulrich K. Preuss, *Institutional Design in Post-Communist Societies: Rebuilding the Ship at Sea* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 248.

[27]The overthrow of a series of communist governments in Poland (Edward Ochab in 1956,

Table 1
Population Homogeneity

% of Total Population

	Major Ethnic Group	Minorities
Poland	Polish 97.6%	German 1.3%, Ukrainian 0.6%, Byelorussian 0.5%
The Czech Republic	Czech 94.4%	Slovak 3%, Polish 0.6%, German 0.5%, Gypsy 0.3%, Hungarian 0.2%, other 1%
Hungary	Hungarian 89.9%	Gypsy 4%, German 2.6%, Serb 2%, Slovak 0.8%, Romanian 0.7%
Bulgaria	Bulgarian 85.3%	Turk 8.5%, Gypsy 2.6%, Macedonian 2.5%, Armenian 0.3%, Russian 0.2%, other 0.6%
Croatia	Croat 78%	Serb 12%, Muslim 0.9%, Hungarian 0.5%, Slovenian 0.5%, other 8.1%
Macedonia	Macedonian 65%	Albanian 22%, Turkish 4%, Serb 2%, Rom (Gypsy) 3%, other 4%

Source: *Transitions Online*, at <http://archive.tol.cz/countries/>.

addition to entrenched classes, Marxism as the official ideology inculcated a materialist-cum-class perspective among the population that lasted beyond the communist era. When economic transition began, the new rich swiftly rose to prominence, filling the class vacuum artificially created and sustained by the old regime. "Barbarous capitalism" swept the economic landscape, and stratified social classes emerged.

Besides class consciousness and materialist perceptions, the three ECE countries are exempt from serious ethnic problems. This can be shown in the absolute majority status of the main ethnic group in the three countries. A comparison between the ECE Three and some of their Balkan neighbors vividly demonstrates the relative population homogeneity of the former. In table 1, we can see that the ethnic majority in Poland, the Czech

Władysław Gomułka in 1970, and Edward Gierek in 1980) testifies to the power of the Polish workers even under communist rule. The Hungarian workers' unions also played a critical role in sabotaging the New Economic Mechanism reform of 1968-72. See Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, *The Soviet Bloc: Unity and Conflict* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), chap. 11; J. F. Brown, *Eastern Europe and Communist Rule* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1988), chap. 5; and Yu-Shan Wu, *Comparative Economic Transformation: Mainland China, Hungary, the Soviet Union, and Taiwan* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1994), chap. 3.

Republic, and Hungary all constitute more than 90 percent of the population.[28] The comparison between Hungary and Bulgaria is interesting, for even though the population shares of their major ethnic groups are only 4.6 percent apart, the political significance of the largest minority in Bulgaria (Turks with 8.5 percent) is much greater than the Gypsies (4 percent) in Hungary. In short, one can argue that ethnic problems are not the dominant political issue in the ECE countries as they are in the Balkans. In Macedonia and Croatia, for example, strife between the dominant ethnic group (Macedonians and Croats) and the largest minority (Albanians and Serbs) led to open rebellion and civil war. The contrast between the "northern tier" ECE countries and the "southern tier" Balkans is indeed sharp.

The contingent fact that the three ECE countries are exempt from minority problems is important for our study here. Perfectly possible (and it has been shown in the Czechoslovak case) is that the three countries could have embroiled themselves into ethnic strife and endangered democratic consolidation had they been endowed with serious minority problems. Throughout the whole former Soviet bloc, it has been repeatedly shown that "democracy is good for ethnic mobilization, but not so *vice versa*."[29] With the guaranteed political rights to form parties, to advocate opinions in frantically competing mass media, and to clash with each other in elections, radical political forces espousing ethnic messages are free to spread fear, distrust, exclusion, and repression. This is obviously against the principles of a liberal democracy and is harmful to democratic consolidation. The ECE trio that we are concerned with here, however, is happily immune from such problems.

Compared with the dominance of the materialist cleavage in East and Central Europe, Taiwan politics is dominated by political parties that define themselves and separate each other primarily according to subethnic cleavage, different national identifications, and opposing attitudes

---

[28] In the 1991 census of Czechoslovakia, 13.2 percent of the total population chose Moravian nationality. In Moravian districts the share of Moravians ranged from 20 to 65 percent. However, the temporary rise of Moravian regionalism is more of an economic nature than an ethnic nature. See Michal Illner, "The Protracted Reform of Territorial Government in the Czech Republic," in *Conference Prague 1999*, 131.

[29] Elster, Offe, and Preuss, *Institutional Design in Post-Communist Societies*, 254.

toward mainland China. The ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP 民主進步黨) has long held a pro-independence, anti-Beijing position. The party's supporters are predominantly native Taiwanese (particularly the Hok-los). Most of the mainlanders, however, support either the Kuomintang (KMT 國民黨) that holds a middle-of-the-ground position on the unification/independence spectrum, or the New Party (NP 新黨) and the newly-formed People First Party (PFP 親民黨) that are more pro-unification than the KMT.[30] Even though the party alignment of different sub-ethnic groups tends to be less evident among the younger generations, the basic structure remains in place. None of the major parties in Taiwan defines itself in Left/Right terms. Based on the performance of the DPP government since the inauguration of President Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁), one can easily conclude that the current government is no more pro-labor than the previous KMT administration. This fact has become crystal clear with the DPP government's pro-business policies issued at the time of economic downturn in 2001, policies that went beyond what the KMT government had attempted in the past in order to save Taiwan's businesses from going under.[31] In short, Taiwan politics is characterized by its pre-materialist cleavage. This is different from the common pattern we find in the ECE countries. However, in the Balkans and in the former Soviet Union, the dominance of pre-materialist cleavages is dominant and ethnic strife is a recurrent phenomenon.[32]

Taiwan's relative lack of materialist cleavage is explainable in terms of its industrial structure that emphasizes small and medium-sized enterprises, and the persistence of a sub-ethnic cleavage that has been only

---

[30]One also finds many Hok-los in the PFP, and even the NP camp.

[31]After Chen's inauguration and the installment of Premier Tang Fei's government in May 2000, the KMT-controlled Legislative Yuan collided with the DPP over a government bill regulating working hours and made havoc of a previous agreement between business leaders and unions. Both the KMT and the DPP reversed their previously-held positions: the KMT demanded fewer working hours for the workers, while the DPP insisted that any cut of working hours should not impose an unbearable burden on business. See Yu-Shan Wu, "Taiwan in 2000: Managing the Aftershocks from Power Transfer," *Asian Survey* 41, no. 1 (January/February 2001): 46.

[32]See Graham Smith et al., *Nation-building in the Post-Soviet Borderlands: The Politics of National Identities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

partially bridged through rapid industrialization in the past five decades and intermarriages across the sub-ethnic line.[33] Taiwan's labor movement activists find organizing political activities in the island's industrial and class settings extremely difficult. The particular profile of Taiwan's industrial structure reduces class consciousness among workers, and the potential resources that activists can mobilize against the managers are meager when compared with South Korea where the big *chaebols* dominate the national economy and give rise to serious class conflict. The persistence of sub-ethnic consciousness, coupled with democratization that provides both the incentive and capacity for political activists to mobilize grass-roots support, orients the opposition (originally *dangwai* 黨外, then the DPP) toward a redefining of Taiwan's national consciousness. In the electoral competition, the ruling KMT responded by moving to the center of the unification/independence spectrum, which then caused the pro-unification forces in the party to split away. As such, Taiwan's major political parties find themselves firmly anchored on a pre-materialist cleavage. The interaction between the KMT and the DPP, the two main parties in Taiwan, has from the beginning been characterized as a conflict not over materialist issues, but over national consciousness. Both the KMT and the DPP are basically pro-business. Neither has a major working class representation built into its organizational structure. Since there are no Left parties to speak of, half of the Right/Left political spectrum is conspicuously missing in the ROC politics. In addition to the conspicuous lack of class conflict, Taiwan has only a weak environmental movement. When environment causes are pitted against economic development, there is an overwhelming support for development, as demonstrated in the DPP government's failed attempt to suspend the building of the Fourth Nuclear Power Plant. When the economy began deteriorating rapidly, and the stock market went into a tailspin, President Chen ordered a turnabout of the government's policy and resumed the construction of the nuclear power plant. Obvious is that supremacy of economic development in Taiwan dampens not only class

[33] See Yu-Shan Wu, "Marketization of Politics: The Taiwan Experience," *Asian Survey* 29, no. 4 (April 1989): 382-400.

conflict (the nation is fundamentally pro-business) but also environment concerns. Materialist and post-materialist cleavages are in this way suppressed.

Pre-materialist cleavages, especially ethnic or sub-ethnic ones, are more prone to social conflict than materialist or post-materialist cleavages. Other things being equal, the ascriptive nature of the pre-materialist cleavage makes the divide impossible to dissolve through the interaction of different groups. As Elster and others argue, socioeconomic cleavages are more compatible with, or more easily processed through, the institutional machinery of liberal democratic capitalism than are identity cleavages (based on ethnic, linguistic, or religious identities).[34] Quantitative compromise over distribution of income and control of production resources is easy to achieve through bargaining and concessions, but ethno-cultural conflict is not susceptible to such solutions. The rising violence associated with ethnic conflicts everywhere in the post-Cold War world attests to the tenacity of the ethnic problem. With Taiwan's major social cleavage of the pre-materialist, sub-ethnic type, the country is poorly endowed in consolidating its democratic institutions compared with its ECE counterparts.

Party System

A party system can be defined in terms of the number of significant actors, and the issues that divide the parties. We have already discussed the issues as derived from the fundamental social cleavages in Taiwan and the ECE countries. Taiwan's political parties are anchored on a unification/independence political spectrum, while the ECE parties are on a Right/Left spectrum. The former reflects a dominant pre-materialist social cleavage, while the latter demonstrates a typical materialist cleavage. The number of major political parties, in turn, is heavily influenced by the electoral

[34]This argument is expanded into the concept of "differential reconcilability" applied to socioeconomic, politico-ideological, and ethno-cultural cleavages with decreasing reconcilability. See Elster, Offe, and Preuss, *Institutional Design in Post-Communist Societies*, 249, 251.

system.[35] Conventional wisdom holds that a proportional representation system favors multiparty system, while a British-style Westminster system favors biparty system. In all the three ECE countries, proportional representation is built into the electoral system, and not surprisingly results in a multiparty structure.[36] Taiwan's SNTV (single nontransferable vote) system has proportionality between the first-past-the-post Westminster system and the European continental proportional representation. The fact that Taiwan has developed a biparty system can be partially attributed to the SNTV electoral regime.[37]

There is another major reason for Taiwan's biparty system. Throughout the protracted period of democratization, Taiwan's longtime opposition has successfully kept a movement mentality, characterizing itself as an anti-system, all-people (*quanmin* 全民) umbrella organization that maintains its internal solidarity with the moral mission of defeating the authori-

---

[35]There are different ways to define the nature of party systems. Thus Giovanni Sartori stresses the importance of party size, and their "coalition potential" and "blackmail potential"; Jean Blondel provides a typology of party systems based on the number of dominant parties as defined by their seat shares; Markku Laakso and Rein Taagepera calculate the "effective number of parties"; and Douglas W. Rae and Michael Taylor offer the "index of fragmentation" to define the party systems. See Giovanni Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 122-23; Jean Blondel, "Party Systems and Patterns of Government in Western Democracies," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 1, no. 2 (June 1968): 180-203; Markku Laakso and Rein Taagepera, "Effective Number of Parties: A Measure with Application to West Europe," *Comparative Political Studies* 12, no. 1 (April 1979): 3-27; Douglas W. Rae and Michael Taylor, *The Analysis of Political Cleavages* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1970), 22-44; and Arend Lijphart, *Democracies: Patterns of Majoritarian and Consensus Government in Twenty-One Countries* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1984), 117-22.

[36]Obviously proportional representation systems differ among themselves, and greater proportionality begets a more fractured party system. For the Polish electoral reforms and their impact on the structure of the party system, see Krzysztof Jasiewicz, "The Pit and the Pendulum: Electoral Designs and Political Stability in Post-Communist Poland" (Paper delivered at the 17th World Congress of the International Political Science Association, August 17-21, 1997, Seoul, Korea).

[37]Even though there was a period when the New Party seemed successful in presenting itself as the third, and the critical force, the vote and seat shares that the NP managed to garner in national elections were not enough to warrant a redefining of Taiwan's party system that remained biparty. The rise of James Soong's PFP presents a greater challenge to the biparty structure. How effective that challenge will be will depend on the performance of the PFP in the December 2001 parliamentary elections. Prior to that, it is safe to characterize Taiwan's party system as bipolar.

tarian KMT regime.[38] That solidarity has begun to show cracks with the political ascendancy of President Chen and the installment of a DPP government in May 2000. Prior to that, however, the KMT had always shown itself to be a formidable enemy to the opposition movement, and that fact provided the strongest argument for the opposition's cohesion.

In this respect, one finds some parallel cases in the ECE countries. There was an umbrella organization in both the Czech Republic and Poland that set as a goal the transformation of the one-party system under communism. In the Czech Republic the Civic Forum (*Občanské Fórum*) was created during the showdown between the communist regime and the dissidents led by Václav Havel in November 1989.[39] The Forum was instrumental in bringing down the communist dictatorship in the Velvet Revolution. It then dissolved into the Civic Democratic Party (*Občanská Demokratická Strana*, ODS) and the Civic Democratic Alliance (*Občanská Demokratická Aliance*, ODA), and shed its all-embracing, anti-system movement character.[40] In Poland, Solidarity had been the rallying point for dissidents—workers and intellectuals—since 1980 until the communist candidates were totally defeated in the semi-free elections of June 1989.[41] The subsequent transfer of power to Solidarity led to the division of this all-embracing movement into a plethora of post-Solidarity parties. Those parties sometimes converged and sometimes diverged. However, under no circumstances have the post-Solidarity parties constituted a united Right as during the Solidarity Movement that fought the communist regime.[42] Thus

---

[38]Chou Hui-chun, "A Study of Division or Unity in the Opposition during Democratization: The Cases of the Polish Solidarity and Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party" (M.A. thesis, Graduate Institute of Political Science, National Taiwan University, 1996; in Chinese).

[39]Timothy Garton Ash witnessed the creation of the Civic Forum in the Magic Lantern Theatre in November 1989 and recorded the Velvet Revolution from within the Forum in *The Magic Lantern: The Revolution of 89 Wtinessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin, and Prague* (New York: Random House, 1990), 78-130.

[40]Wightman, "Parties and Politics," 152.

[41]For the rise of Solidarity, see Raman Laba, *The Roots of Solidarity* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991); and Jerome Karabel, "Polish Intellectuals and the Origins of Solidarity: The Making of an Oppositional Alliance," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 26, no. 1 (March 1993): 25-46.

[42]The fate of the Right has much to do with the cohesiveness of the post-Solidarity parties.

in both the Czech Republic and Poland, the successful conclusion of democratic transition spelt the end of the all-embracing democratic movement. The Hungarian case is unique in that the Hungarian Democratic Forum (*Magyar Demokrata Fórum*, MDF), the Alliance of Free Democrats (*Szabad Demokraták Szövetsége*, SzDSz), and the Alliance of Young Democrats (*Fiatal Demokraták Szövetsége*, Fidesz) went to the Round Table talks with the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (the Communists, MSzMP) prior to the fall of the one-party system. There was no anti-system, all-embracing movement in Hungary that is comparable to Solidarity or the Civic Forum. In any case, when there was an anti-system, all-embracing movement against the party-state, that movement could maintain its internal cohesion only when the common enemy (the Communist Party) was still in power. As soon as the old system was transformed, and particularly when the opposition found itself in power, then the movement could not hold itself together. Deep cracks appeared and the movement ultimately split.

Following the above rule, the ability of the DPP in Taiwan to hold together fourteen years into political transition owes a lot to the staying ability of the KMT. During the same period of time, the KMT itself has shown signs of internal division—including the formation first of the New KMT Alliance (新國民黨連線) within the party, then the Alliance's splitting off and the founding of the NP, and finally the breaking away from the KMT leadership of no other than James Soong (宋楚瑜), the most popular political star in the KMT. Soong ran on a separate ticket for presidency in March 2000 and was defeated by the DPP's Chen Shui-bian by a

---

In 1993, they disintegrated into competing political blocs and the SLD decisively won the parliamentary elections. The 1997 elections demonstrated the opposite phenomenon when a united AWS defeated the SLD. Prior to the 2001 elections, the Right again splintered into competing blocs, as represented by the AWS-P (coalition of Solidarity Electoral Action and former prime minister Jan Olszewski's Movement for the Reconstruction of Poland, ROP), the Freedom Union (UW), the Civic Platform (PO, founded by Andrzej Olechowski, the presidential election runner-up; *Sejm* Speaker Maciej Plazynski; and Senate Deputy Speaker Donald Tusk), the Conservative People's Party (SKL), the Right-Wing Alliance, and many others. This pre-election division of the Right doomed their hope of sustaining the majority position in the *Sejm*. See Wojtek Kość, "A Surprising Alliance," *Central Europe Review* 3, no. 4 (January 29, 2001), at <http://www.ce-review.org/01/4/kosc4.html>; and *The Polish Voice*, no. 9, at <http://www.thepolishvoice.pl>.

slight margin (2.5 percent of the popular vote). The split in the KMT camp and the cohesion of the DPP shed light on the different situations in which the two parties find themselves. The DPP held the advantage of being a movement party, one with a high mission, which would not allow a split because the revolutionary goal had not been achieved. That advantage, however, has been rapidly vanishing since the DPP captured the presidency and formed a government. Nothing is more divisive than the disappearance of the common enemy coupled with conflict over how to divide the spoils.

The electoral system as well as the amazing staying power of the KMT set the stage for Taiwan's biparty system, while a more proportional electoral regime and the swift downfall of the communist regime ushered in a multiparty system in the ECE countries. In terms of implications for political stability, conventional wisdom holds that a biparty system stands a better chance of sustaining a stable government than a multiparty system. The ROC's biparty system thus endows the country with a better institutional base for political stability than the ECE countries. The rise of the PFP after the 2000 presidential elections spelt a most serious split in the KMT ranks, however, and the emergence of the Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU 台灣團結聯盟) on the eve of the 2001 parliamentary elections cracked the DPP's internal solidarity.[43] With the premises of bipartism gradually undermined, Taiwan may develop into a multiparty system very similar to the Visegrad trio.

If we take both the number of parties and the defining issues of Taiwan's party system into consideration, we find a mixed picture as far as political stability is concerned. Taiwan's predominantly pre-materialist, sub-ethnic social cleavage defines its party system in a way as to reduce the possibility of compromise and reconciliation among the major political parties. On the other hand, its biparty structure tends to ameliorate extremism and prevent polarization. In contrast, the ECE countries typically have predominantly materialist social cleavage and a party system reflecting that

[43]The TSU is spiritually led by the former President-cum-KMT Chairman Lee Teng-hui, thus damaging the prospects of winning for some KMT legislators. However, since Lee has taken a more pro-independence position with his reentry into national politics, the brunt of the TSU's shock is felt by the DPP candidates.

basic picture. That structure is good for political stability. However, the multiparty framework of those countries invites more confusion and encourages fundamentalist forces to emerge near the ends of the ideological spectrum. In short, both Taiwan and the ECE countries have some features in their party system that are conducive to political stability, and other features that work against it.

Constitutional Framework

Of the three ECE countries, Hungary and the Czech Republic are parliamentary democracies, with their parliaments holding supreme authority and the president of the republic being elected by the parliament. The situation is different in Poland where a semi-presidential system is adopted. The Republic of China also has a semi-presidential system, with a constitutional framework that resembles that of Poland more than either the Czech Republic or Hungary.

The design of the constitution in our four countries testifies to the validity of the elite rational choice model. Constitutional design is a subject in the upstream study of institutions. There are many interpretations of the choice of institution in transitional democracies. Among the most popular ones are communist legacy, cultural impact, demonstration effect, and elite rational choice.[44] In the case of the ECE countries, a powerful explanation of their institutional choice is the geographic diffusion model. This model argues that the closer the transitional countries are located to Western Europe, the more likely that they would develop a West European style parliamentary democracy; the farther those countries are to Western Europe and closer to Moscow, the more likely that they would adopt a semi-presidential or presidential system.[45] The geographic diffusion model

[44]See Thomas A. Baylis, "Presidents versus Prime Ministers: Shaping Executive Authority in Eastern Europe," *World Politics* 48, no. 3 (April 1996): 297-323; and Beverly Crawford and Arend Lijphart, "Explaining Political and Economic Change in Post-Communist Eastern Europe: Old Legacies, New Institutions, Hegemonic Norms, and International Pressures," *Comparative Political Studies* 28, no. 2 (July 1995): 171-99.

[45]This model is pioneered by Andrew Janos and elaborated by Jeffrey Kopstein and David

is basically a summary of the cultural heritage, the historical legacy, and the demonstration effect explanations of institutional choice, as geography constitutes the basis for the cultural, historical, and demonstration factors to work. As such, this is a powerful analytical model. However, when dealing with constitutional design in countries with similar historical, cultural, and geographic factors (i.e., geographic proximity to the source of demonstration effect), one needs to add the elite rational choice model to explain the actual outcome of institutional choice.[46]

Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic are pertinent cases here. The three countries are culturally and historically (not to mention geographically) closest to Western Europe of all the former Soviet bloc members. They also inherited similar Leninist legacy of a highly concentrated party-state. However, their constitutional designs are not the same. In both Poland and Hungary, the Round Table talks preceding the founding elections of the new democracies led to indirectly elected president for different reasons. The Polish Communist Party (PZPR) was well aware of the unpopularity of its presidential candidate Wojciech Jaruzelski, but the party maintained control over the *Sejm*, so that its institutional preference was a parliament-elected president. Because at the time when the Round Table compromise was reached the democratic opposition did not expect the imminent fall of European communism, a political pact was made to install an indirectly elected president tailored for Jaruzelski. The communist party's strong bargaining power (as perceived by the opposition) and institutional preference led to the parliament-elected Polish president. In Hungary, a popular reformer Imre Pozsgay in the MSzMP predisposed the communist regime toward popular election of the president. The opposition (SzDSz

---

Reilly, and is also proposed by Yu-Shan Wu. See Jeffrey S. Kopstein and David A. Reilly, "Geographic Diffusion and the Transformation of the Postcommunist World," *World Politics* 53, no. 1 (October 2000): 1-37; and Yu-Shan Wu, *Eluosi zhuanxing 1992-1999: Yige zhengzhi jingjixue de fenxi* (Russia's transition 1992-99: A politico-economic approach) (Taipei: Wunan, 2000), 53-55.

[46]For advocates of this model, see Gerald M. Easter, "Preference for Presidentialism: Post-Communist Regime Change in Russia and the NIS," *World Politics* 49, no. 2 (January 1997): 187-90; and Barbara Geddes, "Institutional Choice in Post-Communist Eastern Europe" (Paper presented at the 1993 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, D.C., September 1993).

and Fidesz) objected to this system based on the same calculation: they did not want Pozsgay to win the presidential elections.[47] A referendum was held that defeated the MSzMP's proposal, and a parliament was elected prior to the president's election. The opposition's strong support from the electorate and their institutional preference for an indirectly elected president thus determined the basic constitutional framework of Hungary. In both Poland and Hungary, the party (or parties) that is sure of the victory of its presidential candidate demanded popular election of the president, while the party (or parties) unsure of the outcome or predicted the victory of the opponents wanted an indirectly elected president. The bottom line is that every political actor tries to maximize his power, and would advocate the kind of institutional design accordingly. Popular election of the president would enhance the prestige of the office and thus would be supported by political parties that have good chance of winning the popular electoral race, but would be loathed by those that are doomed to lose. By the same token, in 1990 Poland shifted to the direct election of the president because Solidarity's charismatic leader Lech Wałęsa was able to engineer such a constitutional amendment for his own benefit. Wałęsa's national charisma and his institutional preference thus shifted Poland from a parliamentary to a semi-presidential system.

In Czechoslovakia there were no Round Table talks à la Poland or Hungary. Václav Havel commanded such overwhelming moral prestige that he and his Civic Forum dominated the transition process. No effort was made at this early stage, however, to amend the constitution and create a popularly elected president. One of the major reasons was that Havel had been elected president of the Czechoslovak Federation in December 1989 by a parliament still dominated by members of the Communist Party, and he felt no need to further strengthen his power. Havel's personal conviction was for a president with limited powers and yet with high moral prestige to unite and represent the nation. His idealism was soon shattered by rising Slovak separatism. The June 1990 parliamentary elections raised the polit-

[47]Another opposition party, the Democratic Forum (MDF), was willing to collaborate with Pozsgay's plan, for the MDF was linked to the reform wing in the MSzMP from the start.

ical influence of Václav Klaus and Vladimir Mečiar, leaders of the ODS and the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia. Even though the new parliament promptly reelected Havel as Czechoslovak president, political parties in the parliament had gained much greater legitimacy and authority and would not allow expansion of presidential powers. Worried that the Federation would break up, Havel in December 1991 called for the president to be given the powers to veto a law, to rule by decree between the dismissal of parliament and the establishment of a new legislature, and to appoint a caretaker cabinet in crisis situations.[48] His effort was blocked by the parliament, especially by the Slovak deputies. The June 1992 elections all but doomed the Federation as Klaus and Mečiar soon began negotiating the terms of the "Velvet Divorce." Havel failed to be elected president by the Federal Assembly in July 1992, and the Federation officially broke up on January 1, 1993. Again Havel attempted to demand expansion of presidential powers, this time by proposing direct presidential election of the new Czech Republic.[49] Contrary to Havel's desires, the December 1993 constitution further reduced the president's powers, reflecting the parliament's desire to keep him a symbolic figure. Havel remained politically respected, yet his influence was further curtailed. Havel did not grasp the initial opportunity to expand his presidential powers, and his later attempts failed under adverse circumstances. He was first blocked by the Slovak separatists, and then by the parliamentary parties (including the post-Civic Forum parties) from which he consciously kept at a distance. If one compares Havel and Wałęsa, one finds both are power-maximizers, and yet Havel attempted to expand presidential powers too late while Wałęsa captured the moment. The result is Poland has a semi-presidential system with a popularly elected president, while the Czech Republic maintains a parliamentary system.[50]

---

[48]Sharon L. Wolchik, "The Czech Republic: Havel and the Evolution of the Presidency since 1989," in *Postcommunist Presidents*, ed. Ray Taras (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 178.

[49]Ibid., 181.

[50]Obviously the method of electing the president is not the only criterion to determine whether the country has a parliamentary or a semi-presidential system. However, popularly elected president is a necessary condition of semi-presidentialism.

In the Republic of China, one also witnessed the expansion of presidential powers in the 1990s. Two constitutional amendments are of particular importance. One was the shift from indirect to direct election of the president. The other was to grant the president the power to appoint the prime minister without the consent of the Legislative Yuan (立法院). The two amendments basically shifted the ROC's constitutional framework from a semi-parliamentary to a semi-presidential system. The architect of the constitutional reforms was the KMT's Chairman Lee Teng-hui (李登輝) who held the position of the ROC's president from 1988 to 2000. Since the KMT held a dominant position in national politics during the transition period, and had confidence that the party would control the office of presidency in the foreseeable future, the party, and particularly President Lee, thus pushed for enhancement of presidential power. Opposite to where the KMT stood was the NP. Because this is a splinter party from the KMT, one that stands no chance of winning a presidential race, the NP has been an ardent supporter of the parliamentary system. The party was vehemently against the expansion of presidential power, particularly under the reigns of Lee Teng-hui.

The KMT was worried not about the NP opposition in the National Assembly (國民大會), but rather that collaboration from the much more powerful DPP was necessary in order to push through such a major constitutional reform. The DPP was internally divided over the KMT's proposal. Chen Shui-bian and his faction wanted a thorough presidential system and a new constitution. In their opinion Chen could win a presidential race if his KMT opponents were divided, a scenario that led Chen to victory in the 1994 Taipei mayoral elections. Hsu Hsin-liang's (許信良) faction, however, was more pessimistic about the possibility of defeating the KMT in a presidential race, and put more emphasis on forming a coalition government with the KMT. In order to do that, Hsu was willing to collaborate with Lee to amend the constitution in ways proposed by the KMT.[51] The

[51] For an account of Taiwan's constitutional reform process, see Yu-Shan Wu, "Taiwan's Constitutional Framework and Cross-Straits Relations" (Paper presented at the 1999 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Atlanta, Georgia, September 2-5, 1999).

result was the 1997 constitutional reform that brought about a semi-presidential system. In short, Taiwan's institutional choice strongly reflected the calculation by the elites of the major political parties. All were power-maximizers who advocated different constitutional amendments based on their perceived political interests.

In a semi-presidential system the president is directly elected and holds substantial constitutional power. However, the government headed by the prime minister is responsible to the parliament.[52] In short, both president and parliament can exercise great influence on the premier and the cabinet; thus one cannot be sure whether the president or the premier is the one who holds ultimate administrative power.[53] Divided government is the most serious challenge to political stability under semi-presidentialism. When the president and the parliamentary majority are of different political parties, the structure of semi-presidentialism automatically brings about conflict between the president and the parliament over control of the government. It is thus interesting to note that there have been two divided governments in Poland in a relatively short span of time, each one with a president "cohabiting" with a parliament (the *Sejm*) controlled by opposing political parties. From 1993 through 1995, President Lech Wałęsa faced a Left-dominated *Sejm*, and was forced to accept Waldemar Pawlak (PSL),

---

[52]Popularly elected president, substantial presidential powers, and a cabinet responsible to parliament are the three main features of Maurice Duverger's semi-presidentialism. See Maurice Duverger, "A New Political System Model: Semi-Presidential Government," *European Journal of Political Research* 8, no. 2 (June 1980): 165-97.

[53]Sometimes, semi-presidentialism is confused with dual leadership, bi-cephalic executive, etc., which stresses the existence of two heads in the executive branch of the government. True, duarchy is possible under the semi-presidential system. However, semi-presidential systems may take many different forms and a division of authority between the president and the premier is but one mode of president-parliament interaction. The French Fifth Republic, for example, has never had balanced division of power between the president and the premier, or two heads, in the executive branch of the government. The real power either resides with the president (non-cohabitation period) or with the premier (during cohabitation). At the same time, duarchy is possible in non-semi-presidential or nondemocratic regimes. See Jean Blondel, "Dual Leadership in the Contemporary World," in *Parliamentary versus Presidential Government*, ed. Arend Lijphart (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 162-72; Huang Chun-sheng, "The Relations between the Executive and Legislative Authorities: Rational Parliamentarianism," in *Faguo diwu gonghe de xianzheng yunzuo* (The constitutional operation of the French Fifth Republic), ed. Yao Chih-kang et al. (Taipei: Yeqiang, 1994), 161.

Jozef Oleksy (SLD), and Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz (SLD) as premiers. The presidential elections of November 1995 brought to power the SLD's Aleksander Kwasniewski and ended the first cohabitation. The parliamentary elections of September 1997, however, saw a strong comeback of the Right under the rubric of Solidarity Electoral Action (*Akcja Wyborcza Solidarność*, AWS).[54] Again Poland was plunged into a Left-Right cohabitation with President Kwasniewski sharing power with the AWS-UW's Jerzy Buzek. That second cohabitation lasted until September 2001 when the SLD made a successful comeback in the parliamentary elections by capturing 41 percent of the popular vote, and sweeping the AWS-P (coalition of AWS and former prime minister Jan Olszewski's Movement for the Reconstruction of Poland, ROP) out of office.

Cohabitation between the president and the premier from an opposing party is never desirable, even for the French who pioneered the practice.[55] Wałęsa's relationship with the three Left premiers was very tense,[56] though Kwasniewski's cohabitation with Buzek was a bit smoother. In the case of Taiwan, since President Chen has the power to appoint the premier without consent of the parliament (the Legislative Yuan), he defied the KMT majority in the parliament and appointed first Tang Fei (唐飛 defense minister of the outgoing KMT government who took the job on a personal basis) and then Chang Chun-hsiung (張俊雄 a DPP member) as premier. Chen's move reflected the greater appointing power of the ROC's president compared with his Polish counterpart, but his insistence on forming a DPP-led government caused strong opposition from the pan-KMT camp in the parliament (the KMT, the PFP, and the NP) that controls almost two-thirds of

---

[54] AWS was created in June 1996 in response to Solidarity's catastrophic performance in the 1993 elections. Marian Krzaklewski, Solidarity president since 1991, managed to unite three-dozen political groupings under the union's banner and leadership.

[55] In June 2000 French President Jacques Chirac proposed to cut the presidential term from seven to five years in order to be in sync with the term of the National Assembly so as to reduce the possibility of cohabitation. That proposal was ratified in the September 2000 referendum.

[56] See, for example, the constitutional strife between Wałęsa and the SLD government over the 1995 budget and Wałęsa's threat to dissolve the *Sejm* for its failure to pass the budget bill into law within three months of the bill's submission to the *Sejm* (which was caused by none other than Wałęsa himself). See *EIU Country Report: Poland*, First Quarter 1995, 10.

the body's seats.[57] The tension ran so high that the opposition once contemplated impeaching President Chen. Obviously the divided government under semi-presidentialism caused similar tension and conflict in Poland and the ROC. Here we find that institutions have a strong impact on political stability, and the semi-presidential system is more conflict-prone than the parliamentary system of the Czech Republic and Hungary.[58]

Nature of Elections

In the 1990s, a pattern of voting behavior in the ECE countries has emerged. Because of the great turbulence (rising unemployment, rampant inflation, and widening income disparity) caused by rapid economic transition from a command economy (in the Czech case), or a partially reformed socialist economy (Poland and Hungary), to a market economy, it is difficult for the incumbent party to maintain voter allegiance.[59] Everywhere one finds mass popular rejection of the new governments.[60] The result is frequent alternations of the ruling party. In Poland, the October 1991 parliamentary elections brought about a Right-wing, pan-Solidarity

---

[57]For a discussion of political conflict under Taiwan's semi-presidential system, see Yu-Shan Wu, "The ROC's Semi-Presidentialism at Work: Unstable Compromise, Not Cohabitation," *Issues & Studies* 36, no. 5 (September/October 2000): 1-40.

[58]This is not to say, of course, that President Václav Havel did not conflict with the Czech administration, whoever is the prime minister, or President Arpad Göncz did not exercise his influence in the Hungarian government affairs. However, Havel and Göncz are no match for Wałęsa in terms of exercising presidential powers and ruling the country. See Taras, *Postcommunist President*, chaps. 6 and 7.

[59]For an overall discussion of the economic transitions of formerly socialist countries, see Stanley Fischer and Alan Gelb, "Issues in the Reform of Socialist Economies," in *Reforming Central and Eastern European Economies: Initial Results and Challenges*, ed. Vittorio Corbo, Fabrizio Coricelli, and Jan Bossak (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 1991), 67-82; Ben Slay, "Rapid versus Gradual Economic Transition," *RFE/RL Research Report* 3, no. 31 (1994): 31-42; and Stanley Fischer, Ratna Sahay, and Carlos A. Vegh, "Stabilization and Growth in Transition Economies: The Early Experience," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 10, no. 2 (Spring 1996): 45-66. For a discussion of the economic transitions in East and Central Europe, see Leszek Balcerowicz, *Socialism, Capitalism, Transformation* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1995).

[60]Judy Batt, *East Central Europe from Reform to Transformation* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1991), 73.

government.[61] This government lasted until the September 1993 elections when the SLD won 20.4 percent of the vote and gained 171 seats in the 460-seat *Sejm*, while the PSL gained 15.4 percent of the vote and 132 deputies. Those two parties kept a very comfortable majority in the 1993-97 parliament and President Wałęsa was forced to cohabit first with Waldemar Pawlak (PSL), and then with Jozef Oleksy (SLD). In the September 1997 elections, the tide again turned. This time the AWS won the race.[62] Solidarity's comeback has to do with the successful strategy of the Right parties to unite under one banner, while in 1993 they destroyed their own chances by splintering into a plethora of parties too small to win seats in the parliament. Still obvious, however, is that the Polish voters have grown tired of the Left SLD-PSL coalition and they have been willing to give the Right another chance. This year (2001) the tide has turned again. With nearly 16 percent unemployment, the ruling parties had been lagging behind the SLD led by the charismatic President Kwasniewski since the electoral campaign started.[63] As the elections turned out, the SLD and its junior partner Labor Union (UP) garnered 41.04 percent of the popular vote and 216 of 460 seats in the *Sejm*. The SLD-UP began seeking coalition partners to form a new government right after the election results were released. In all the elections that post-communist Poland experienced, economic voting was the driving force.[64]

---

[61]The Central Alliance's Jan Olszewski organized a coalition government in December 1991 after twenty-nine parties were elected into the *Sejm* through an extreme proportional representation system in the October 1991 elections. Olszewski's government was toppled in June 1992, and after a short interlude by the Peasant Party's Pawlak, the Democratic Union's Hanna Suchocka was appointed prime minister by Wałęsa in July 1992. Thus from 1991 through 1993 when the second *Sejm* elections were held, Poland had a Right-wing government.

[62]In the 1997 parliamentary elections, the AWS received 34 percent of the vote and 201 deputies, the SLD had 27 percent of the vote and 164 deputies, the Freedom Union (UW) 13 percent of the vote and 60 deputies, the PSL 7.3 percent of the vote and 27 deputies, and the ROP 5.5 percent of the vote and 6 deputies. Only those five parties entered the *Sejm*. With 51 senators, the AWS has the majority in the Senate, the SLD has 28 senators, UW 8, ROP 5, and PSL 3. Five senators are independent.

[63]The lag was so huge that prior to the parliamentary elections, President Kwasniewski showed confidence that the SLD could win majority in the *Sejm* and form a single-party government. See "Polish Left-wing Electoral Coalition Continues to Lead in Polls," *Poland Today*, March 28, 2001; and Wojtek Kość, "Reshufflings on the Right," *Central Europe Review* 3, no. 13 (April 2, 2001), at <http://www.ce-review.org/01/13/kosc13.html>.

[64]For the theory of economic voting, see Marcus A.G. Harper, "Economic Voting in Post-

Similar electoral pattern can be found in Hungary. The May 1990 elections brought about a center-right government headed by Jozsef Antall of the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF). Antall's coalition government was jointed by the Independent Smallholders (FKgP) and the Christian Democratic People's Party (KDNP). The plight that accompanied the following economic transition made the Hungarian people wonder about the wisdom of continuing the route charted by the center-right government. The result was a comeback of the ex-communist Socialist Party (MSzP) in the May 1994 parliamentary elections.[65] The reason was primarily economic: There was a 20 percent drop in Hungarian GDP between 1989 and 1993. Although foreign investment poured into Hungary much faster than into any other country in Eastern Europe, ordinary people suffered from the turbulence of transition and abhorred the concentration of wealth in the hands of the new rich class. They accepted Gyula Horn and his Socialist Party by 33 percent of the popular vote, compared with 11 percent of the vote the party received in the 1990 elections.[66] The Socialist-Free Democrat (MSzP-SzDSz) coalition government that ruled Hungary from 1994 to 1998 made great effort to improve economic performance. These efforts were partially successful, but not to the satisfaction of the Hungarian voters. In the May 1998 elections, the Socialists' vote share dropped slightly from 33 percent to 32.3 percent, but the Free Democrats slumped badly from 19.7 percent to 7.9 percent. The result was a comeback of a Right-led government, with Viktor Orbán of the Alliance of Young Democrats (Fidesz) taking the premiership, and the Independent Smallholders as the coalition partner. As in Poland, economic voting was the main propeller of changes in government.

---

communist Eastern Europe," *Comparative Political Studies* 33, no. 9 (November 2000): 1191-27.

[65] Istvan Csurka, the leader of the MDF's radical wing, launched a populist movement (*Magyar Ut*) against Antall and sought support from the people embittered by the social costs of economic transformation. This effort was not successful. See Edith Oltay, "Hungary: Csurka Launches 'National Movement'," *RFE/RL Research Report* 2, no. 13 (March 26, 1993): 25-31.

[66] For a discussion of the transformation of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (MSzMP) into the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSzP), see Bozóki, "Post-Communist Transition: Political Tendencies in Hungary," 217-20.

The "Velvet Divorce" of 1993 did not really disturb the domestic politics of the Czech Republic. The country boasted a thorough transformation of its economy, a revival of its interwar democratic heritage, and a most stable pro-reform and pro-Western leadership under Václav Klaus of the Civic Democratic Party (ODS). The economic situation of the Czech Republic was comparatively good in the region, and Klaus was full of confidence that he had charted the right route for the country.[67] In the 1996 elections, the government coalition (ODS, the Christian Democratic Union-Czechoslovak People's Party [KDU-ČSL], and the Civic Democratic Alliance) performed reasonably well, garnering 99 seats of the 200 in the Chamber of Deputies. As a result, Klaus retained his premiership and continued his drive toward full capitalism. However, the Czech economy deteriorated significantly in 1997. The ruling coalition was embroiled in a series of financial scandals. In December 1997 the coalition government was forced to resign. A caretaker government was appointed in January 1998, and five months later early parliamentary elections were held. Following the economic voting pattern of Poland and Hungary, the ruling parties were penalized and the main opposition, the Czech Social Democratic Party (ČSSD), scored high by capturing 32.3 percent of the popular vote. After a few weeks of interparty negotiations, the ČSSD formed a minority government. The prime minister is Miloš Zeman (ČSSD). For the first time since 1989, a left-oriented party rules in the Czech Republic. However, the inauguration of the Left government in the Czech Republic did not usher in an economic recovery. The governing ČSSD entered into an "opposition agreement" with Klaus' ODS and shared ruling power with it.[68] Key state posts were guaranteed to the ODS in ex-

---

[67]Václav Klaus was prime minister from 1992 to 1997. He saw himself as a Right-wing politician, a follower of Margaret Thatcher. His policies were aimed at undoing communism and reinstalling capitalism in the Czech Republic. He was highly successful for the initial fours years in office and was welcome by most Czechs who abhorred communist rule and wished to rejoin Europe. See Andrew Stroehlein, "The Czech Republic 1992 to 1999," *Central Europe Review* 1, no. 12 (September 13, 1999), at <http://www.ce-review.org/99/12/stroehlein12.html>.

[68]Partly because of a successful smear campaign run by the ODS, the ČSSD garnered insufficient votes in the June 1998 parliamentary elections and was more or less forced to seek an agreement with the ODS. See Jan Culik, "The Politics of Smear," *Central Europe Review* 2, no. 20 (May 22, 2000), at <http://www.ce-review.org/00/20/culik20.html>.

change for its support of the ČSSD minority government which holds only 74 of 200 seats in the lower house of parliament.[69] In this way, political responsibility was blurred, as the ruling party and the major opposition party now collaborated in running the country. Continuous economic downturn penalized the ČSSD by undermining its popular support, and the Communists are gaining strength at the ČSSD's expense.[70] If a general election was held at this moment, the ČSSD would surely be decimated and the Communists would win for they are the only untainted political force that does not need to share the responsibility of mismanaging the Czech economy.[71]

From table 2, which presents the parliamentary elections of the three countries together, we can clearly see a pattern of economic voting reflected in the rapid alternations of government between the Right and Left. Because all three countries have strong historical ties with the West and experienced the highest degree of relative deprivation during the communist rule (compared with the Balkans, for example), the first elections in the ECE Three all resulted in victory for the Right.[72] The Left was decimated. Because of the economic plight associated with structural reform, however, the new democratic government soon lost popularity, and people became disillusioned with the brave new world of "barbarous capitalism" and even nostalgic for the good old days under communism. The result was a shift of support for the Left and the installment of Left governments (post-communist in Poland and Hungary and social democratic in the Czech Republic). Sustained economic plight easily shifted popular mood again,

---

[69]Andrew Stroehlein, "A Grand Coalition of Politics and the Media," *Central Europe Review* 0, no. 37 (June 7, 1999), at <http://www.ce-review.org/authorarchives/stroehlein_archive/stroehlein37old.html>.

[70]Because President Havel has held a steadfast position in refusing to talk with the Communist members in the parliament, and excluded them as much as he could from any political decision-making process, the Communists are the only Czech political party that are not implicated in the mismanagement of the economy. See Jan Culik, "Completing the Circle," *Central Europe Review* 1, no. 19 (November 1, 1999), at <http://www.ce-review.org/99/19/culik19.html>.

[71]Jan Culik, "Profound Disillusionment," *Central Europe Review* 1, no. 20 (November 8, 1999), at <http://www.ce-review.org/99/20/culik20.html>.

[72]Michael G. Roskin, *The Rebirth of East Europe* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1991), 146.

Table 2
Economic Voting and Alterations of Government

Country	Parliamentary Elections	Government	Prime Minister	Orientation
Poland	October 1991	PC, ZChN, PChD, PL	Jan Olszewski (PC)	Right
	September 1993	PSL, SLD	Waldemar Pawlak (PSL)	Left
	September 1997	AWS, UW	Jerzy Buzek (AWS)	Right
	September 2001	SLD-UP**	Leszek Miller*** (SLD)	Left
Hungary	May 1990	MDF, FKgP, KDNP	Jozsef Antall (MDF)	Right
	May 1994	MSzP, SzDSz	Gyula Horn (MSzP)	Left
	May 1998	Fidesz, FKgP, MDF	Viktor Orbán (Fidesz)	Right
The Czech Republic*	June 1996	ODS, ODA, KDU-ČSL	Václav Klaus (ODS)	Right
	June 1998	ČSSD	Miloš Zeman (ČSSD)	Left

Source: compiled by author.

Notes:
*We do not include the elections held prior to the breakdown of the Czechoslovak Federation in 1993.
**At the writing of this article, the SLD-UP is still seeking partners to form a coalition government.
***Leszek Miller led the SLD-UP to its electoral victory and at the writing of this paper is almost sure to be the next Polish prime minister.

Keys:
PC = Central Alliance (Poland); **ZChN** = Christian National Union (Poland); **PChD** = Party of Christian Democrats (Poland); **PL** = Agrarian Alliance (Poland); **PSL** = Polish Peasant Party (Poland); **SLD** = Alliance of Democratic Left (Poland); **AWS** = Solidarity Electoral Action (Poland); **UW** = Freedom Union (Poland); **UP** = Labor Union (Poland).

MDF = Hungarian Democratic Forum (Hungary); **FKgP** = Independent Smallholders (Hungary); **KDNP** = Christian Democratic People's Party (Hungary); **MSzP** = Hungarian Socialist Party (Hungary); **SzDSz** = Alliance of Free Democrats (Hungary); **Fidesz** = Alliance of Young Democrats (Hungary).

ODS = Civic Democratic Party (the Czech Republic); **ODA** = Civic Democratic Alliance (the Czech Republic); **KDU-ČSL** = Christian Democratic Union-Czechoslovak People's Party (the Czech Republic); **ČSSD** = Czech Social Democratic Party (the Czech Republic).

however, and the Left governments soon found their regained popularity undermined. Then came the next election and a Right government was sworn in. This same picture is true in all three countries, even though they are currently at different stages of the same pattern of development. In Poland, the parliamentary elections of 1991, 1993, 1997, and 2001 produced a sequence of Right-Left-Right-Left governments. In Hungary the 1990, 1994, and 1998 elections created a similar sequence of Right-Left-Right governments. Currently the Fidesz-FKgP-MDF coalition government led by Viktor Orbán is losing popularity, following the established pattern of economic voting. In the Czech Republic, a comparatively better economic situation sustained Klaus's ODS regime, but the economic downturn in 1997 ultimately brought down the Right government and installed a ČSSD government in the 1998 elections. The Czech sequence is thus Right-Left.[73] In short, as table 2 clearly shows, all the three ECE countries clearly follow the economic voting pattern and produced rapid alterations of government in the 1990s.

Quite obvious is that a pattern of economic voting has been established in the ECE countries. The social plight accompanying rapid economic reform discriminated against the ruling party and caused frequent changes of government. The same pattern, however, cannot be found in the ROC, where the KMT kept an unbreakable record of wining national elections until 2000 when the party lost for reasons unrelated to mismanagement of the economy. One major difference between Taiwan and the ECE countries is that the former enjoys a much more robust economy (expected to grow at a 5 or 6 plus percent annually).[74] This track record desensitized Taiwan's voters to the issue of economic growth and the government's supporting role. The opposition DPP had been gaining ground incrementally since the late 1970s, uninterrupted by the booms and busts of the economy. In the 1990s, the three parliamentary elections in 1992, 1995, and 1998 resulted in a gradual decline of the ruling KMT's position, al-

[73]If we include in our calculation the early pre-Velvet Divorce elections of 1992, then the Czech sequence is Right-Right-Left.

[74]Taiwan's average annual economic growth rate for 1990-99 was 6.96 percent.

Table 3
The ROC's National Elections in the 1990s

	Vote Share (%)				
	KMT	DPP	New Party	Others	GDP Growth
December 1992 Parliamentary	52.5	30.8	n/a	16.7	7.49
December 1995 Parliamentary	46.1	33.2	13.0	7.8	6.42
March 1996 Presidential	54.0	21.1	0.0	24.9	6.10
December 1998 Parliamentary	46.4	29.6	7.1	17.0	4.57
March 2000 Presidential	23.1	39.3	0.1	37.4	5.86

Source: compiled by author.

though the expansion of the Legislative Yuan from 164 to 225 seats and the decimation of the NP boosted the KMT's position artificially in 1998, thus keeping the KMT's vote and seat shares intact (see table 3). In the March 2000 presidential elections, the ruling KMT was riding on an 8 percent quarterly growth and yet still found its candidate Lien Chan (連戰) defeated in a most humiliating manner.[75] There is obviously no economic voting of the kind one witnessed in the ECE countries. A reasonable growth rate was more or less taken for granted by Taiwan's voters. The past voting pattern in Taiwan basically reflects the electorate's national identity, sub-ethnic division, party orientation, and popular detestation of corruption and mafia politics. Because the main political parties differentiate themselves in terms of national identity, which reflects the main social cleavage, national elections witnessed a strong tendency toward identity voting.[76] However, that may be changing. With Taiwan now facing a serious economic downturn caused by the new government's inexperience in managing the economy, an overall slowdown of international growth, and domestic political

[75]Lien received 23.1 percent of the popular vote, which is less than half of what the KMT's Lee Teng-hui garnered in the 1996 presidential elections.

[76]Voting patterns of Taiwan's voters are closely linked to their national consciousness and their underlying ethnic identity, but are not strongly related with their unification/independence stance or their mainland policy preferences. For a differentiation of ethnic identity, national consciousness, unification/independence stance, and mainland policy preferences, see Yu-Shan Wu, "The Chinese/Taiwanese Identity in Cross-Strait Relations," *Zhongguo shiwu* (China Affairs Quarterly), no. 4 (April 2001): 71-89.

turmoil, one keenly senses the frustration of a people used to the uninterrupted high growth of the past five decades. The upcoming parliamentary elections scheduled for December may signal a shift from identity politics to economic voting. If that happens, one would be witnessing a fundamental change in the voting behavior of Taiwan's electorate.[77] However, that remains to be seen.

Conclusion

In the above analysis, we approach democratic consolidation in the Czech Republic, Poland, and Hungary on the one hand, and the Republic of China on Taiwan on the other hand, for a cross-regional comparison. We look into the social cleavages, party system, constitutional framework, and nature of elections of the four countries. We find that the ECE countries have materialist cleavages as their main social divides, while Taiwan's dominant social cleavage is pre-materialist. These different patterns of social cleavages then inform the party systems by providing the main political spectra on which the major parties find themselves. Another dimension of the party system has to do with the effective number of parties. Here, because of the greater proportionality of the East and Central European electoral regimes and the fact that the old communist regimes were all swept away in the initial founding elections, hence no need for maintaining an all-embracing, anti-system movement, one finds multiparty systems in the Czech Republic, Poland, and Hungary. On the other hand, Taiwan has an SNTV system that has less proportionality than its ECE counterparts' electoral systems, and the KMT demonstrated much greater staying power during the transition process (thus sustaining the need for the opposition to hold together). The result is a biparty system. As for the constitutional framework, one finds that the ROC and Poland share the features of semi-presidentialism and thus have to face the difficulties of divided government

[77] A shift in Taiwan's voting pattern can be detected if one finds a significant migration of votes away from the DPP candidates in the year-end elections among the traditional DPP loyalists.

when the popularly elected president and the parliamentary majority are from opposing political parties. In the Polish case, even President Wałęsa with his historic role in founding Polish democracy and with a charismatic personality had to yield to the parliamentary majority and accepted cohabitation with Pawlak and Oleksy. In Taiwan the greater constitutional power of President Chen allowed him to appoint two minority governments. The subsequent political turmoil testifies to the structural defects of the semi-presidential system. In comparison, the parliamentary system in both the Czech Republic and Hungary proves less conflict-prone. Finally, economic voting is the driving force behind the frequent alternations of government in the ECE countries and thus defines the nature of elections there. In Taiwan, assured economic growth minimized economic voting in past elections. However, with the recent economic downturn following the DPP's political ascendancy, economic voting may quite possibly become more prominent in the future.

In sum, the East and Central European countries are characterized by materialist social cleavages, multiparty system, parliamentary constitutional structure (except for Poland who shares with the ROC a semi-presidential system), and economic voting. In contrast, Taiwan is characterized by pre-materialist social cleavages, a biparty system sustained by the SNTV electoral regime and the staying power of the KMT, a semi-presidential structure plagued by divided government, and identity voting. Those characteristics have specific implications for political stability: materialist cleavages, biparty system, parliamentarianism, and economic voting are all conducive to political stability, while pre-materialist cleavages, multiparty system, semi-presidentialism with divided government, and identity voting induce political instability. As can be clearly seen from the previous discussion, the ECE countries and Taiwan are endowed with different factors for political stability. The ECE countries have materialist cleavages, parliamentary system, and economic voting, while Taiwan has a biparty system. The December 2001 parliamentary elections in Taiwan may witness the emergence of a multiparty system and the shift from identity to economic voting. The importance of these factors is demonstrated by the experiences of the ECE countries in the 1990s. The ROC and the ECE trio are all third-wave democracies, and they have demonstrated a degree of

democratic maturity that makes them stand out among the nascent democracies in the world.[78] Even though there are significant differences between the four, they share the same commitment to making democracy work. In light of this, one may find useful lessons from the other side that can shed light on domestic political development and demonstrate possible solutions to local problems.[79]

[78]The political stability of the ECE trio is in stark contrast with the turbulent politics of its eastern and southern neighbors, such as Yugoslavia and Belarus. Taiwan also stands out as a stable democracy compared with, for example, the Philippines and Indonesia.

[79]By observing the multiparty politics in ECE, for example, one can learn much that can shed light on Taiwan's post-December 2001 situation.