

# Divided Government: A New Approach to Taiwan's Local Politics\*

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*The current literature on Taiwan's local politics focuses on elite politics, formal institutions, or political ecology. Virtually no literature addresses the problems arising from the dynamic operation of institutions. As the Kuomintang (KMT) gradually loses ground in the county/city elections, different political parties are gaining control of administrative and legislative powers in more and more counties and cities. The phenomenon of divided government, therefore, has become a feature of Taiwan's local politics. For both theoretical and practical purposes, the study of divided government is urgently needed. This article aims to demonstrate the domestic meaning of divided government, to open a new field in the studies of local politics on Taiwan, and to systematically develop an agenda for further research.*

**KEYWORDS:** divided government; unified government; separation of powers; executive president; party government

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In early 1998, a local newspaper in Taipei carried an editorial commenting on the working relationship between the Taipei City Government and the Taipei City Council:

... We want to point out further that one of the key elements leading to the present strained relations between the Taipei City Government and the Taipei City Council is the fact that none of the three major political parties has a majority in the Taipei City Council. As each of the three parties has less than half of the seats in the present council and the majority of councilors belong to parties different from the mayor's own party, government-council controversies are tinted with too much party confrontation. Councilors often attack the mayor's policies just for the sake of their opposition position, and with strong counterattacks by an unyielding mayor, their debates become rather emotional. Such an experience in Taipei indicates that our country's parliamentary democratic system of government is still immature. If it is allowed to spread further and if the legislative election at the end of this year also turns out a legislature without any political party obtaining a majority of the seats, the Taipei experience might reappear in the national political arena, producing a much more far-reaching impact. Therefore, it is highly necessary for the relevant authorities to set norms to promote the development of a mature parliamentary democracy as soon as possible so that the above types of overzealous contentions will not be repeated. In fact, such contentions distort the orientation of democratic reforms and obstruct the growth and progress of the state and society.<sup>1</sup>

On January 5, 1998, Taipei City Councilor Li Cheng-lung committed physical violence against four Taipei City Government officials, including Transportation Bureau Director Ho Chen-tan, during a stadium land lease case interpellation. By a consensus of councilors of all three political parties, the Taipei City Council decided immediately to suspend Li's right to attend the council for three months. The Taipei City Government, however, refused to send officials back to the council's interpellation sessions on the pretext that Li had not made a public apology. The stalemate came to an end two weeks later when the Taipei City Government finally announced an unconditional return to Taipei City Council sessions, but the phenomenon that different parties control administrative and legislative powers has been regarded as a normal feature of local politics since the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) achieved significant victories during

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<sup>1</sup> *Zhongguo shibao* (China Times), January 10, 1998, 3.

the 1997 elections of county magistrates and city mayors.<sup>2</sup> Local government-council confrontation has occurred again and again. Both Nantou County Magistrate Peng Pai-hsien and Taichung Mayor Chang Wen-ying had respectively run into serious stalemates with the Nantou and Taichung councils in the first year of their tenure. Newspapers considered these stalemates to be important enough to merit placement in their national news sections.<sup>3</sup> Government-council relations became a focus of discussion during the 1998 Taipei mayoral election campaign. Frequent conflicts between Mayor Chen Shui-bian and the Taipei City Council were more or less mentioned by Chen's challengers to prove that he is a domineering person. On the other hand, it was in consideration of future government-council relations that Frank Hsieh, the newly-elected Kaohsiung mayor, promptly began paying visits to Kuomintang (KMT) city councilors after the election. Government-council relations were also likely the chief consideration that led the newly-elected Taipei Mayor Ma Ying-jeou not to make his campaign spokeswoman San Hsiao-lin one of the Taipei City Government officials.<sup>4</sup>

Given the constant recurrence of conflicts between local administra-

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<sup>2</sup>The Kuomintang's landslide victory during the 1998 legislative election temporarily shelved the worry about the upward development of this phenomenon. However, if the KMT loses the presidential election in the year 2000, we shall see for the first time in our country's history a case where the executive and legislative branches of the central government are under the leadership of different political parties.

<sup>3</sup>The conflict between Nantou Magistrate Peng and the Nantou County Council took place on May 27, 1998. It was caused by Peng's establishment of a magistrate office with his eight Legislative Yuan aides as staff. The county council demanded that they attend the council for interpellation. Enraged by the demand, the aides staged a protest at an interpellation session, standing up in a row and displaying big-character posters. Finally, it was the exercise by Council Speaker Cheng Wen-tung of his right to introduce police intervention that forced Peng to order his aides to leave. After that, Peng announced that he would not be subject to political blackmail. This announcement, however, induced seventeen county councilors, including Li Ho-yuan, to jointly sue Peng for libel. See *Lianhe bao* (United Daily News) (Taipei), May 28, 1998, 8; *Zhongyang ribao* (Central Daily News) (Taipei), June 11, 1998, 4. The conflict between Taichung Mayor Chang Wen-ying and the Taichung City Council took place on September 8 of the same year. Chang was dissatisfied with the council's decision to reject the city government's budget allocation of NT\$1.5 billion for the land rights equalization fund. After reading a pre-prepared announcement, she led all top officials of the Taichung City Government in a withdrawal from the council hall. As a protest, the city council adopted a resolution on indefinite adjournment of its meetings until there was goodwill response from the mayor. See *Zhongyang ribao*, September 9, 1998, 4.

<sup>4</sup>*Zhongguo shibao*, December 14, 1998, 17.

tive and legislative branches, the study of divided government has, however, been neglected by scholars. The current literature on Taiwan's local politics focuses on elite politics, formal institutions, or political ecology.<sup>5</sup> Virtually no literature systematically addresses the problems arising from the dynamic operation of institutions.<sup>6</sup> However, as the KMT gradually loses ground in the county/city elections, different political parties are gaining control of administrative and legislative powers in more and more counties and cities. The phenomenon of divided government, therefore, has become a feature of Taiwan's local politics. From a theoretical perspective, divided government is a problem related to the separation of powers and is also a newly-adopted approach in American political studies. From the pragmatic viewpoint, most farsighted people are concerned about the influences of gangsters and rich businessmen on Taiwan's local politics, but as scholars have a relatively poor understanding of the operation of the local government-council institution, radical reforms put forth by scholars

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<sup>5</sup>Huang Chin-tang, *Difang zizhi fazhihua wenti zhi yanjiu* (A study regarding the institution of laws on local autonomy) (Taipei: Yuedan chubanshe, June 1995); Chen Ming-tung, *Paixi zhengzhi yu Taiwan zhengzhi bianqian* (Factional politics and Taiwan's political changes) (Taipei: Yuedan chubanshe, October 1995); Chao Yung-mao, "The Division of Powers between Central and Local Governments and the Way to Reduce Government-Council Conflicts," *Yankao shuangyuekan* (Research and Evaluation Bimonthly) 20, no. 4 (August 1996): 16-22.

<sup>6</sup>Without doubt, the operation of institutions relies on people. From the perspective of rational choice, the neo-institutional theory has enabled us to realize that institutions are not limited to the game rules stipulated in relevant government organizational regulations (i.e., the changeability of regulations). Institutions condition people's behavior, but they are also the results of people's interaction. See Kenneth A. Shepsle, "Studying Institutions: Some Lessons from the Rational Choice Approach," *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 1, no. 2 (1989): 131-47; Randall L. Calvert, "The Rational Choice Theory of Social Institutions: Cooperation, Coordination, and Communication," in *Modern Political Economy: Old Topics, New Directions*, ed. Jeffrey S. Banks and Eric A. Hanushek (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 217-18. Basically, consideration is simultaneously given to the origin, choices, and changes of institutions, i.e., the dynamic operation of institutions which was neglected by traditional institutional theories. In fact, James M. Buchanan, a Nobel economics prize winner, regards the lack of a set of theories on operation of institutions as a bottleneck in current institutional studies. He says that an informed and meaningful theory of constitutions cannot be constructed until and unless there exists some theory of the operation of alternative political rules. In the authors' opinion, for the sake of democratic consolidation, Taiwan urgently needs the study of divided government whose chief focus is on the operation of power-separation institutions. See James M. Buchanan, "Politics without Romance: A Sketch of Positive Public Choice Theory and Its Normative Implications," in *The Theory of Public Choice*, ed. James M. Buchanan and Robert D. Tollison, vol. 2 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1984), 16.

may be risky. As a research opportunity, after the streamlining of the Taiwan Provincial Government is completed, Taiwan's county and city level politics will become a virgin land for comparative political studies. Note that the twenty-one counties and cities have already overcome the "small N" problem. Moreover, comparative studies may supply answers to many questions regarding the operation of local institutions. This article aims to demonstrate the domestic meaning of divided government, to open a new field in the studies of local politics on Taiwan, and to systematically develop an agenda for further research. Its three main parts include a review of the literature on divided government written by scholars in the United States, a discussion of the significance of the divided government theory to the studies of Taiwan's politics and administration, and an assessment of the phenomenon of divided government on Taiwan.

## **A Review of the Literature on Divided Government**

### *Defining Divided Government*

"Divided government" signifies that the government executive head's political party is unable to control the parliament via a majority.<sup>7</sup> This phenomenon is commonly regarded as the main reason for executive-legislative deadlocks, policymaking disharmony, and ambiguity in government responsibility.<sup>8</sup> The term can also be narrowly or broadly defined.

In a narrow sense, "divided government" means that *the executive and legislative branches of a government are controlled by different parties*. This definition has the following three connotations. First, divided government takes place in political systems in which each voter has two votes to cast, that is, in countries that have traditionally been practicing the presidential system.<sup>9</sup> Second, the control of the executive branch is rela-

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<sup>7</sup>David Menefee-Libey, "Divided Government as Scapegoat," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 24, no. 4 (1991): 643-46.

<sup>8</sup>The term opposite to "divided government" is "unified government," which means both the executive and legislative branches are under the control of the same political party.

<sup>9</sup>Strictly speaking, both the presidential and cabinet systems are democratic polities of

tively clear in a "winner takes all" election and the usual criterion for evaluating the control of the parliament is the party holding a majority of parliamentary seats.<sup>10</sup> Third, from the perspective of party institutions, the fact that the executive and legislative branches are controlled by different parties connotes the existence of a two-party system.

Broadly speaking, "divided government" indicates that *no political party can achieve simultaneous control of the executive and legislative institutions*. In addition to the aforementioned two connotations inherent in the narrow definition, the term also implies the possibility that none of the three major political parties can gain more than 50 percent of the parliamentary seats. Thus, divided government may also appear in countries other than those practicing the two-party system.<sup>11</sup> According to this definition, if the parliamentary ecology is routinely characterized by none of the three major parties having a majority, divided government will appear

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checks and balances. The cabinet system emphasizes the checks and balances of power on the basis of executive-legislative fusion and party responsibilities while the presidential system stresses the achievement of checks and balances by complete separation of executive and legislative powers by institutions. Giovanni Sartori says that "all constitutional systems are systems of checks and balances but that the American formula is, in fact, unique in checking and balancing power by dividing it." See Giovanni Sartori, "Neither Presidentialism Nor Parliamentarianism," in *The Failure of Presidential Democracy: Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Juan J. Linz and Arturo Valenzuela (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 116 n. 8.

<sup>10</sup> Here, it must be pointed out that the definition of "divided government" is related to whether party institutions are clearly defined or not. Particularly, the requirements for party control of a parliament are sometimes not very precise. For instance, if the KMT is in the majority by only one seat in the parliament, it may have nominal control of the parliament yet this majority is quite fragile. Moreover, if the guiding forces in the parliament are factions rather than parties, the definition of "divided government" built on power distribution according to parties will be inaccurate. However, this is a problem inherent in the studies of all party politics, not just in the case of divided government.

<sup>11</sup> In fact, from the perspective of comparative government, the phenomenon of divided government in the United States may be compared with the coalition government that has been adopted by many European governments for years. Although important differences exist between the constitutional systems in the United States and the European continent (a two-party presidential system versus a multiparty cabinet system), there are similarities between a divided government under presidentialism and a minority government on the European continent. See Kaare Strom, *Minority Government and Majority Rule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). The demarcation of two-party and multiparty systems may become blurred because of "divided government" studies. See Michael Laver and Kenneth A. Shepsle, "Divided Government: American Is Not 'Exceptional'," *Governance* 4 (1991): 250-69; G. B. Powell, Jr., "Divided Government as a Pattern of Governance," *ibid.*, 236-49; Morris P. Fiorina, *Divided Government*, second edition (New York: Macmillan, 1996), 111-24.

no matter which party wins the office of executive power. One such example has occurred in Taipei City. When the mayoral election was held for the first time in 1994, the DPP candidate Chen Shui-bian was elected, but neither the KMT, nor the DPP, nor the New Party (NP) won a majority of Taipei City Council seats. Thus, the phenomenon of divided government in the broad sense appeared. Although the KMT candidate Ma Ying-jeou recaptured the mayoralty for the KMT in Taipei's second mayoral election in 1998, the city still has a divided government because none of the three parties has a majority in the city council.<sup>12</sup>

*The Studies of American Government through  
the Issue of Divided Government*

In the past, American scholars have tried to find theoretical explanations for the inefficiency and irresponsibility in the operation of the U.S. Federal Government. They gradually focus their attention on the issue of divided government in the 1980s. James Sundquist has demonstrated that divided government was the cause of the executive-legislative deadlocks which rendered the U.S. government inefficient.<sup>13</sup> He suggested that scholars should no longer regard the President and party government as the pivot of American politics, but should contemplate the future orientation for the operation of the U.S. government from the coalition govern-

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<sup>12</sup>Of course, the American system of government has another split possibility, that is, diverse majorities between the House and the Senate. Therefore, divided government may develop toward two main directions: split branch and split legislatures. The existence of a split branch may not involve split legislatures but the existence of split legislatures is a sure sign of a split branch. Cox and McCubbins have tried to define divided government by the relations between the President, the Senate, and the House, resulting in eight possible combinations. In addition to unified Republican government, unified Democratic government, President (Republican)-Congress (Democratic), and President (Democratic)-Congress (Republican), there are four more divided government situations: President (Republican)-Senate (Republican)-House (Democratic), President (Republican)-Senate (Democratic)-House (Republican), President (Democratic)-Senate (Democratic)-House (Republican), and President (Democratic)-Senate (Republican)-House (Democratic). The concept of split legislatures will be used to explain the budget deficit problem. See note 37 below.

<sup>13</sup>See the following works by James L. Sundquist: *Constitutional Reform and Effective Government* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1986); "Needed: A Political Theory for the New Era of Coalition Government in the United States," *Political Science Quarterly* 103 (1988): 613-35; and "Response to the Petracca-Bailey-Smith Evaluation of the Committee on the Constitutional System," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 20 (1990): 533-43.



ment perspective. He contended that since the end of World War II, divided government had become a normal feature in Federal and state government elections and that the past idea about political party as a force for unification in the divided American political system might have become outdated.<sup>14</sup>

In about the same period, having reviewed the operation of the American constitution over the past two hundred years, the Committee on the Constitutional System proposed to consolidate party government via constitutional amendments.<sup>15</sup> A group of scholars led by Lloyd N. Cutler thought that the true efficiency of the U.S. government could only be achieved by reinforcing the operation of party government and that the constitutional amendments on the reinforcement of party government must recognize the power-sharing system by which political parties play a leading role through administrative institutions.<sup>16</sup> Their suggestions include: enabling the American people to elect the President before electing the Congressmen, modifying election methods to increase the possibility for the same party to win the presidency and the majority in both the Senate and the House of Representatives, reinforcing party discipline in the Congress, and allowing Congressmen to become members of the President's cabinet.<sup>17</sup> Of course, many scholars disapproved of these proposals. They said these proposals showed the inclination to excessively beautify party government (that is, the British government complex) in disregard of the local political situation in the United States. They also asked from whence

<sup>14</sup>Some scholars maintain that political parties constitute a force for unification in the divided American political system. See Frank J. Sorauf and Paul Allen Beck, *Party Politics in America* (Boston: Scott, Foresman, 1988), 16.

<sup>15</sup>For the main points of the Committee's review report, see Arend Lijphart, ed., *Parliamentary versus Presidential Government* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 78-89.

<sup>16</sup>This viewpoint can at least be traced back to a 1950 research report of the American Political Science Association entitled "Toward a More Responsible Two-Party System," which defined the political party within the U.S. government as the unifier of the separate powers. In fact, this viewpoint represents a longing for the clear responsibilities of political parties in the operation of the British government. See Sundquist, "Needed: A Political Theory for the New Era," 617.

<sup>17</sup>See the following works by Lloyd N. Cutler: "To Form a Government," *Foreign Affairs* 59 (1980): 126-43; "Some Reflections about Divided Government," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 17 (1988): 485-92; and "How Is the Time for All Good Men. . .," *William and Mary Law Review* 30 (1989): 387-402.



came the substance of constitutional reform as the academic circles had not yet conducted penetrating studies on the causes, influences, and results of divided government.<sup>18</sup>

The controversy coincided with a bottleneck regarding research on the U.S. government. Before divided government became a theme of heated discussion, the mainstream theory on American politics was party alignment and realignment.<sup>19</sup> Proceeding from the party government pattern, this theory relies on the studies of critical elections<sup>20</sup> to trace how party alignment and realignment influence American politics.<sup>21</sup> However, owing to the emergence of new themes such as national budget deficits and executive-legislative deadlocks, scholars began to reconsider the value of this mainstream theory in the new era<sup>22</sup> and embark on a search for a new theoretical focus. The timely appearance of such a theme as divided government thus stimulated lively discussion.

The development of the divided government theory in U.S. government studies has been threefold.<sup>23</sup> Regarding the design and operation of

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<sup>18</sup>See Philip C. Bobbitt, "The Committee on the Constitutional System Proposals: Coherence and Dominance," *William and Mary Law Review* 30 (1989): 403-9; Erwin Chemerinsky, "The Question Is Not Clear, But Party Government Is Not the Answer," *ibid.*, 411-23; Morris P. Fiorina, "An Era of Divided Government," in *Developments in American Politics*, ed. Bruce Cain and Gillian Peele (London: Macmillan, 1991); Mark P. Petracca, Lonce Bailey, and Pamela Smith, "Proposals for Constitutional Reform: An Evaluation of the Committee on the Constitutional System," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 20 (1990): 503-32.

<sup>19</sup>The party alignment and realignment theory is, to a certain extent, related to the theory of social cleavages proposed by Seymour M. Lipset and Stein Rokkan in 1967. However, the latter focuses on the freezing effect of social cleavage structures on party systems while the former stresses the influences on party systems caused by the changes in social cleavage structures. See Seymour M. Lipset and Stein Rokkan, "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments: An Introduction," in *Party Systems and Voter Alignments*, ed. Seymour M. Lipset and Stein Rokkan (New York: Free Press, 1967), 1-64.

<sup>20</sup>Walter Dean Burnham, *Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics* (New York: Norton, 1970); Valdimer O. Key, Jr., "A Theory of Critical Elections," *Journal of Politics* 17 (1955): 3-18.

<sup>21</sup>Valdimer O. Key, Jr., "Secular Realignment and the Party System," *Journal of Politics* 21 (1959): 198-210; James L. Sundquist, *Dynamics of the Party System: Alignment and Realignment of Political Parties in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1983).

<sup>22</sup>Everett C. Ladd, "Like Waiting for Godot: The Uselessness of Realignment for Understanding Change in Contemporary American Politics," *Polity* 22 (1990): 511-25; Byron E. Shafer, *The End of Realignment* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991).

<sup>23</sup>John Leonard, "Divided Government and Dysfunctional Politics," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 24, no. 4 (1991): 651-53.

institutions, the chief concern is the consequences of the control of executive and legislative institutions by separate political parties. In the realm of party systems, the focus is on exploring from the angle of divided government an old question concerning the U.S. government: Why is it easier for the Republicans to win the presidency when the Democrats have a persistent advantage in the Congress (particularly the House of Representatives)?<sup>24</sup> Regarding voting behavior, the emphasis of discussion is on the causes of divided government, including weakening voter partisan identification and split-ticket voting. The last two points are related to the causes for the formation of divided government.<sup>25</sup>

### *The Results of Divided Government Studies*

The most important progress of divided government studies is the recognition that the divided government phenomenon has already become a normal operating environment for the U.S. government. According to scholastic statistics,<sup>26</sup> since its establishment the Federal Government has been in a "divided government" condition for about 40 percent of the time. Notable, however, is that the phenomenon existed for over half of the forty-year period from 1952 to 1992. U.S. state data also indicate the same tendencies among U.S. local governments. There is a very high correlation between the divided government tendency in U.S. states and the tendency of these states to split their tickets in Federal Government elections: at both the central and local levels, the Democrats hold the majority of seats in the parliamentary institutions but the Republicans maintain an advantage in the elections of executive heads of government. The party images of divided

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<sup>24</sup>Since 1968, the Republicans have been defeated only twice in presidential elections, by Jimmy Carter in 1976 and by Bill Clinton in 1992. The Democrats, however, had dominated the House for a long period until a group of Republican freshmen were elected to the House in 1994. See Martin P. Wattenberg, "The Republican Presidential Advantage in the Age of Party Disunity," in *The Politics of Divided Government*, ed. Gary W. Cox and Samuel Kernell (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1991); Gary C. Jacobson, "The Persistence of Democratic House Majorities," *ibid.*

<sup>25</sup>Morris Fiorina divided the explanations for the causes of divided government into by-product explanations and purposive explanations, which coincided respectively with the last two points mentioned here. See Fiorina, *Divided Government*, 44-84.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, 6-43; Fiorina, "An Era of Divided Government," 387-95.

government are thus formed.

The most important themes of divided government studies are the causes and results of the split. There are three typical explanations for the causes leading to divided government. First, as propounded by Gary Jacobson on the basis of poll data, American voters favor different parties over different topics. They have more confidence in the Democrats over domestic issues including social welfare policies, but they show more confidence in the Republicans over diplomatic and macroeconomic issues. Therefore, the Republicans have an advantage in the nationwide presidential elections but the Democrats have an advantage in Congressional elections where electoral districts constitute an important factor. Voters seem to favor a "balancing act." They attribute the role of acquiring the best interests for electoral districts to the Democrats but they wish to have a stalwart Republican President to exercise a reasonable control over the country's distribution of interests.<sup>27</sup>

Second, Douglas Price presumes that legislative professionalism accounts for the loss of Republican advantage in the Congress. The rise of professionalism in the Congress has increased the Republicans' opportunity cost of being a full-time Congressman because the Republicans possess better development advantage in the private sector (especially in the business circles) than do the Democrats. While more and more Republicans choose to leave public office for opportunities in the private sector, the Democrats tend to remain in office and become more "professionalized" Congressmen, thus giving the Democratic Party the incumbent advantage in the Congress. Therefore, the possibility for the defeat of the Democrats by the Republicans in electoral districts is further reduced. This also leads more Republicans to choose to stay in the private sector, thus leading to a vicious cycle. The result is that the Republicans have long been at a disadvantage in the Congress.<sup>28</sup>

Third, proceeding from the theory of collective action, Morris Fiorina

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<sup>27</sup>Gary C. Jacobson, *The Electoral Origins of Divided Government* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1990), 75-137.

<sup>28</sup>H. Douglas Price, "Congress and the Election of Legislative 'Professionalism'," in *Congress in Change*, ed. Norman J. Ornstein (New York: Praeger, 1975).

concludes that the electoral district system causes a collective action problem in the shift in Congress majority. Since a shift of Congress majority involves the shift of majority in many electoral districts, rational voters tend to support the Democrats, given the uncertainty that the shift of majority would take place in sufficient districts. However, in elections for executive heads of government, voters give less consideration to policy voting, and the people's collective desire for a change is more easily manifested. Based on state government data, Fiorina has discovered that in states where the majority party in Congress has long and stable majority position, where Congressmen are more professional, and where the challengers have greater difficulty in achieving a successful shift of majority, the people's desire for a change will be much more easily expressed through their selection of executive heads of government from the minority party.<sup>29</sup> Such a situation produces the phenomenon of divided government. In conclusion, the phenomenon of divided government is never caused by a single variable.<sup>30</sup>

Many scholars have realized that the divided government phenomenon appears because of some problem with Federal Government operations, including governmental paralysis, budget deficits, and deterioration of the executive-legislative relationship. Therefore, current research on the results of divided government focuses on the question of whether divided government is the cause of these problems. Regarding governmental paralysis, both Lloyd Cutler and James Sundquist believe that divided government will lower the efficiency of government operations and weaken the dynamics of the government.<sup>31</sup> However, after scrutinizing major law-making data of the U.S. Congress since the end of World War II, David

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<sup>29</sup> Mark Zupan has used the "prisoner's dilemma" to develop a similar explanation. He maintains that the Democrats pay more attention to local interests while the Republicans attach more importance to national interests. If an electoral district supports the Republican candidate but all other electoral districts support Democratic candidates, that electoral district will become the sucker in the prisoner's dilemma because it will have to pay for the local interests of other electoral districts. However, this will never happen in the elections for executive heads of government. See Mark Zupan, "An Economic Explanation for the Existence and Nature of Political Ticket Splitting," *Journal of Law and Economics* 34 (1991): 343-69.

<sup>30</sup> Fiorina, *Divided Government*, 177.

<sup>31</sup> Cutler, "To Form a Government" and "Some Reflections about Divided Government"; Sundquist, "Needed: A Political Theory for the New Era."

Mayhew has found that unified, as opposed to divided, government makes little or no difference in the frequency of major lawmaking. He has also found from the statistics regarding Congressional investigations of alleged executive misbehavior that such cases in a divided government period did not outnumber those in a unified government period. This data shows that during a divided government period the Congress still maintained productivity in major lawmaking and did not challenge the executive branch.<sup>32</sup>

Charles Jones and Keith Krehbiel reinforce Mayhew's view in different ways.<sup>33</sup> Proceeding from the four patterns of partisan interaction,<sup>34</sup> Jones argues both that the U.S. government does not operate efficiently only during a unified government period and that sound partisan interaction can also create sound executive-legislative relationship during a divided government period. Krehbiel deduces from a game theoretical perspective<sup>35</sup> that both divided and unified governments can produce executive-legislative gridlock. He also uses paradigms to demonstrate that the key to the emergence of gridlock is policy preference rather than partisan image because, if a policy status quo deviates far from the policy preferences of all political parties, the President and the Congress can still achieve a consensus to change the status quo even under a divided government.

Van Assendelft examines the effects of divided government from the angle of the agenda-setting strategy of state governors. He considers that Mayhew's research perspective of legislative productivity does not reflect the true relationship between the state government and the state legislature. He maintains that although divided government could impair the administrative efficiency of a state government, the state's legislative productivity

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<sup>32</sup>David R. Mayhew, *Divided We Govern: Party Control, Lawmaking, and Investigations, 1946-1990* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1991).

<sup>33</sup>Charles O. Jones, *The Presidency in a Separated System* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1994); Keith Krehbiel, "Institutional and Partisan Sources of Gridlock: A Theory of Divided and Unified Government," *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 8 (1996): 7-40; Keith Krehbiel, *Pivotal Politics: A Theory of U.S. Lawmaking* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

<sup>34</sup>Based on the degree of tension of partisan relations, four patterns of partisan interaction are identified: partisanship, copartisanship, bipartisanship, and cross-partisanship.

<sup>35</sup>Krehbiel combines the rational choice theory with the study of divided government. See Krehbiel, *Pivotal Politics*. The first chapter of this book contains a penetrating and comprehensive discussion of these theories.

is also affected by the experience and character of the state governor, the political situation (such as electoral results and the degree of administrative satisfaction), and the governor's tactics in handling his relationship with the legislature.<sup>36</sup>

Regarding budget deficits, M. D. McCubbins' research shows that before the 1980s, all governments, either divided or unified, had more or less the same problem of budget deficits, but the gap between government expenditures and revenues continued to deteriorate in the 1980s. The reason, he points out, was that during budget consultations under divided government, compromises were made to overcome stalemates, thus causing increases in the budgets of almost all government agencies.<sup>37</sup>

From state government data, James Alt, Robert Lowry, and James Poterba examine the reactions of different government situations to budget deficits.<sup>38</sup> Their discovery is as follows: (1) a unified government can quickly reduce budget deficits via tax increases; (2) the reaction of a split-branch government<sup>39</sup> is slower and the problem can be tackled by tax increases and spending cuts; and (3) a government facing a situation of split legislature is often bogged down in a stalemate over how to overcome the deficit. Judging by their research results, the divided government phenomenon has indeed had some impact on government finance, including on both the causes and control of budget deficits.

Finally, as seen from the exercises of the appointment approval power and the presidential vetoes, divided government has no significant influ-

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<sup>36</sup>Laura A. Van Assendelft, *Governors, Agenda Setting, and Divided Government* (New York: University Press of America, 1997).

<sup>37</sup>Here, McCubbins refers to the Republican control of the Senate and the Democratic control of the House. See M. D. McCubbins, "Party Governance and U.S. Budget Deficits: Divided Government and Fiscal Stalemate," in *Politics and Economics in the Eighties*, ed. Alberto Alesina and Geoffrey Carliner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press and National Bureau of Economic Research, 1991), 83-111; M. D. McCubbins, "Government on Lay-Away: Federal Spending and Deficits under Divided Party Control," in Cox and Kernell, *The Politics of Divided Government*.

<sup>38</sup>James E. Alt and Robert C. Lowry, "Divided Government, Fiscal Institutions, and Budget Deficits: Evidence from the States," *American Political Science Review* 88 (1994): 811-28; James M. Poterba, "State Response to Fiscal Crises: The Effects of Budgetary Institutions and Politics," *Journal of Political Economy* 102 (1994): 799-821.

<sup>39</sup>For the difference between split branch and split legislatures, see note 12 above.

ence on executive-legislative relations.<sup>40</sup> According to a research report by Paul Peterson and Jay Greene, in a divided government period, the questions and answers in Congressional committees show no signs of Congressmen making things difficult for executive officials. However, during open Congressional sessions, verbal antagonism between the two institutions is comparatively more evident.<sup>41</sup>

On the other hand, the control of executive and legislative institutions by different political parties gives each party policy veto power. Divided government, therefore, makes partisan consultations a necessity.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, divided government has made unexpected contributions to policy-making openness. As pointed out by Morris Fiorina, in the period when the United States was under a unified Republican government, the whole policymaking process was controlled by the subgovernment "iron triangle" (including Congressional committees, responsible executive agencies, and related interest groups).<sup>43</sup> Now, the power of the iron triangle is declining due to the increasing influences of courts and the media. Moreover, divided government has become the norm and has enabled political parties to play a more important role in the decisionmaking process than has the traditional iron triangle.<sup>44</sup> Fiorina points out divided government's positive role in the policymaking process, although he agrees that divided government may give rise to executive-legislative conflicts. He says: "Conflicts? Yes, divided government probably does make executive-legislative relations more conflictual. But if the conflict serves to insure that public policies are more openly considered and more reflective of majoritarian sentiments, that conflict has a positive side. Is it so clear that we should

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<sup>40</sup>Jeffrey A. Segal, "Senate Voting on Supreme Court Nominees: A Neoinstitutionalist Model," *American Political Science Review* 84 (1990): 525-34; Albert C. Ringelstein, "Presidential Vetoes: Motivations and Classification," in *The American Presidency*, ed. Harry A. Bailey, Jr. and Jay M. Shafritz (Chicago: Dorsey Press, 1988).

<sup>41</sup>Paul Peterson and Jay Greene, "Why Executive-Legislative Conflict in the United States Is Dwindling," *British Journal of Political Science* 24 (1994): 33-55.

<sup>42</sup>Cox and Kernell, *The Politics of Divided Government*, 243.

<sup>43</sup>This argument is closely related to the interest group theory and the political pluralism theory. See also Jeffrey M. Berry, *The Interest Group Society*, second edition (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman, 1989).

<sup>44</sup>Fiorina, *Divided Government*, 103-6.



prefer the quiet, non-conflictual, special interest policy-making of subgovernments?"<sup>45</sup>

### **The Importance of the Divided Government Theory to the Study of Taiwan's Politics and Administration**

The study of divided government is significant to the study of Taiwan's politics and administration in three areas:

#### *The Separation of Powers*

Judging by democratic theories, the check-and-balance system is to allow executive-legislative rivalry to arise in the policymaking process via a power-separation mechanism so as to prevent overconcentration of power and corruption. The United States is the first among countries that have introduced the system. Although the power-separation concept has been adopted for over two hundred years, its many advantages still cannot cover up the executive-legislative deadlock problem it may create.<sup>46</sup> It is quite interesting that the problem finally caught wide attention due to the appearance of divided government in the post-World War II era. It was then that scholars realized their limited understanding of this system. The study of divided government, therefore, can help us understand the actual interactions among voters, politicians, and political parties under the separation of powers. Helpful to the understanding of the operation of the power-separation system has been the discussion of executive-legislative relations

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 106.

<sup>46</sup>Montesquieu, an originator of the power-separation theory, was aware of its potential problem, but he believed that a "necessary force" would appear to solve the problem. See Lijphart, *Parliamentary versus Presidential Government*, 48-51. This necessary force may be, as seen by James Madison, the people's inherent inclination to form factions. Although Madison did not encourage factional struggle (see *The Federalist Document*, no. 10), he did not think that separation of powers was designed to eliminate people's faction-forming inclination. On the contrary, he believed that the system can guide that inclination via institutional rivalry so that ambition can be suppressed by ambition and government administration can develop a constructive orientation. Madison did not see the development of the party system in democracies in this century. However, the operation of the party system is undoubtedly the basis for the operation of the power-separation system.

in divided governments<sup>47</sup> as well as the influences that divided government has had on elections and political parties,<sup>48</sup> economic development,<sup>49</sup> and public budgets.<sup>50</sup>

On the whole, the key to the smooth operation of the separation-of-powers system lies in whether a balance is achieved between checks and balances (prevention of malpractices) and operation (promotion of public interest). The results of studies on divided government can force us to reassess the operational cost of the system and plan for cost reduction. In the history of democratic development, the U.S. democratic system has always been regarded as a model<sup>51</sup> and has indeed had some influences on the Constitution of the Republic of China (ROC) on Taiwan.<sup>52</sup> After amendments to its constitution, Taiwan no longer embraces a cabinet system emphasizing executive-legislative fusion. Regarding local politics, a power-separation system specifying accountability of the executive head of government under the supervision of an assembly or council is being implemented. Therefore, studies on divided government conducted by U.S. scholars would contribute to Taiwan's reflection on its future choices of

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<sup>47</sup>Samuel Kernell, "Facing an Opposition Congress: The President's Strategic Circumstance," in Cox and Kernell, *The Politics of Divided Government*; Bert A. Rockman, "Legislative-Executive Relations and Legislative Oversight," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 9, no. 3 (1984): 387-440; James A. Thurber, *Divided Democracy: Cooperation and Conflict Between the President and Congress* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1991); James A. Thurber, "Representation, Accountability, and Efficiency in Divided Party Control of Government," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 23, no. 4 (1991): 653-57; Wattenberg, "The Republican Presidential Advantage in the Age of Party Disunity."

<sup>48</sup>Jacobson, *The Electoral Origins of Divided Government*; Morris P. Fiorina, "Coalition Governments, Divided Governments, and Electoral Theory," *Governance* 4 (1991): 236-49; Krehbiel, "Institutional and Partisan Sources of Gridlock"; John R. Petrocik, "Divided Government: Is It All in the Campaigns?" in Cox and Kernell, *The Politics of Divided Government*; Peverill Squire, "Divided Government and Public Opinion in the States," *State and Local Government Review* 25, no. 3 (1993): 150-54.

<sup>49</sup>Alberto Alesina and Howard Rosenthal, *Partisan Politics, Divided Government, and the Economy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

<sup>50</sup>McCubbins, "Party Governance and U.S. Budget Deficits"; Gary W. Cox and Mathew D. McCubbins, "Divided Control of Fiscal Policy," in Cox and Kernell, *The Politics of Divided Government*.

<sup>51</sup>Klaus Von Beyme, *American as a Model* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987).

<sup>52</sup>Herbert H.P. Ma, "American Influence on the Formation of the Constitution and Constitutional Law of the Republic of China: Past History and Future Prospects," in *Constitutionalism in Asia: Asian Views of the American Influence*, ed. Lawrence W. Beer (Occasional Papers in Contemporary Asian Studies, School of Law, University of Maryland, 1988).

central and local political systems.

### *Reinventing Government*

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, a tendency to reinvent government—including advocating building entrepreneurial governments to enhance democracy and efficiency of government operations—spread in democracies led by the Anglo-Saxons (including the United States, Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand).<sup>53</sup> This tendency has also influenced Taiwan in recent years. However, Taiwan's domestic studies of government inefficiency concentrate mainly on government reinvention measures such as simplifying levels of government<sup>54</sup> and introducing the total quality monitoring (TQM) system for government operations<sup>55</sup> or on legislative efficiency and ecology.<sup>56</sup> There has rarely been discussion of the effects of executive-legislative relations on government efficiency. Interesting is the fact that although the divided government phenomenon has long existed at the county/city level, many studies of local government-council relations have concentrated on the discussion of static institutional factors.<sup>57</sup> This is

<sup>53</sup>David Osborne and Ted Gaebler, *Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit Is Transforming the Public Sector* (New York: Plume, 1993).

<sup>54</sup>Chiang Ta-shu, "Administrative Divisions and Government Levels," *Guojia zhengce shuangzhoukan* (National Policy Biweekly), no. 97 (October 18, 1994): 6-8.

<sup>55</sup>Research, Development and Evaluation Commission of the Executive Yuan, *Quanmian tisheng fuwu pinzhi fang'an* (The TQM program) (Taipei: Executive Yuan, 1996).

<sup>56</sup>Editorial, *Zhongguo shibao*, December 30, 1997. Lin Shui-po and Ho Hung-jung, "The Legislative Yuan's Restructuring and Agenda-Setting"; Weng Hsing-li, "The Legislative Yuan's Structure and Agenda-Setting"; and Chou Yu-jen, "Presidential Office/Executive Yuan-Legislative Yuan Relations" (Papers presented at the Symposium on Reinventing Parliaments sponsored by the College of Law of National Taiwan University, Taipei, January 1996). See also Chou Lung-shan, "Where Will 'None of the Three Political Parties Winning over Half of Seats' Be Found?—Discussion Based on the Electoral Tendency," *Zhongshan renwen shehui kexue qikan* (The Chungshan Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences) 4, no. 2 (December 1995): 239-44; Chen Shan-jung, "The Caucus Operation in the Legislative Yuan Characterized by 'Three Political Parties and One Faction,'" *Guojia zhengce shuangzhoukan*, no. 138 (May 14, 1996): 6-7; Ho Hung-jung, *Zaizao xiaoneng zhengfu—Xingzheng chongzhu, guohui kongzhi yu gaizao* (Reinventing an efficient government—Administrative reorganization, and the control and reinvention of parliaments) (Taipei: Shiyong chubanshe, September 1996); Huang Cheng-hsiung, "A Review of Executive-Legislative Interactions," *Guojia zhengce shuangzhoukan*, no. 140 (June 11, 1996): 5-6; Huang Chun-sheng, "Executive-Legislative Relations—The Sharing of Legislative Powers by the Parliament and the Government," *ibid.*, no. 73 (November 16, 1993): 14-15.

<sup>57</sup>Lin Ching-hua, "A Study of Taipei City's Government-Council Relations" (Master's thesis,

probably because factional and clannish relationships have a decisive role to play in local politics,<sup>58</sup> especially in an undemocratic environment. However, as Taiwan's party politics gradually became firmly established, the problem of government-council relations began to ferment at the local level, causing worries among the people about possible paralyzation of government operations due to government-council stalemate. The tendency of traditional administrative reform theories to overlook government-council relations should be challenged in order that we can better cope with future situations.

### *Political Transition*

For newly-democratized countries, the question of executive-legislative relations does not pertain to institutional choices in a transitional period, but rather to the operation of institutions in a democratic consolidation period. Institutional choice theories about executive-legislative relations<sup>59</sup> cannot fully explain the influences of para-constitutional factors on

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Graduate Institute of Public Administration, National Chengchi University, Taipei, May 1972); Wu Sheng-yu, "A Study of Taiwan Province's Local Government-Council Relations" (Master's thesis, Graduate Institute of the Three People's Principles, Chinese Culture University, Taipei, May 1982); Huang Chin-tang, "An Institutional and Political Analysis of Taipei City's Government-Council Relations," *Lüshi tongxun* (Lawyers' Newsletter), no. 202 (July 1996): 38-42; Chang Hung-an, "A Study of Kaohsiung City's Government-Council Relations" (Master's thesis, Graduate Institute of Public Administration, National Chengchi University, Taipei, June 1975); Chang Chien-hung, "A Study of Taipei City's Government-Council Relations" (Master's thesis, Graduate Institute of Public Administration, National Chengchi University, Taipei, June 1997); Tsai Hsiang-ting, "A Study of the Power Relations Between the Taipei City Government and the Taipei City Council" (Master's thesis, Graduate Institute of the Three People's Principles, National Taiwan Normal University, June 1990); Yen Ming-te, "A Study of the Relations Between Taiwan's County/City Governments and County/City Councils" (Master's thesis, Graduate Institute of Public Administration, National Chengchi University, Taipei, July 1976); Lien Che-wei, "Government-Council Relations in DPP-Ruled Counties and Cities: A Comparative Analysis of Hsinchu County, Changhua County, and Kaohsiung County (1989-93)" (Master's thesis, Graduate Institute of Political Science, National Chengchi University, Taipei, June 1995).

<sup>58</sup>Chen, *Paixi zhengzhi yu Taiwan zhengzhi bianqian*; Chao Yung-mao, *Taiwan difang zhengzhi de bianqian yu tezhi* (The changes and special characteristics of Taiwan's local politics) (Taipei: Hanlu chubanshe, February 1997).

<sup>59</sup>Lijphart, *Parliamentary versus Presidential Government*; Arend Lijphart, "Democratization and Constitutional Choices in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland," *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 4, no. 2 (1992): 207-23; Arend Lijphart, "Constitutional Choices for New Democracies," in *The Global Resurgence of Democracy*, ed. Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 146-58; Arend Lijphart,

the operation of constitutional institutions.<sup>60</sup> Non-constitutional mechanisms such as elections, partisan interaction, and the operation of bureaucratic apparatus may produce impacts of various degrees on a nation's political stability in a democratic consolidation period. The countries implementing a power-separation system in political transition often face the following dilemma: The people recognize the need to consolidate the leadership core in a transitional period, but they are also concerned that the restoration of authoritarianism may lead to the collapse of democracy or that immobilism—caused by the legislative branch learning to check the executive branch—also induces the people to desire the return to the simple reign of executive powers.<sup>61</sup> The studies of parliamentary inefficiency and leadership core consolidation from the perspective of institutionalization cannot provide a practical solution to this dilemma as the problem is one of institutional operation. More importantly, democratization and the downsizing of the Taiwan Provincial Government have already created an ex-

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"Presidentialism and Majoritarian Democracy: Theoretical Observations," in Linz and Valenzuela, *The Failure of Presidential Democracy*, 91-105; Juan J. Linz, "Presidential or Parliamentary Democracy: Does It Make a Difference?" *ibid.*, 3-87; Giovanni Sartori, *Comparative Constitutional Engineering* (New York: New York University Press, 1994); Sartori, "Neither Presidentialism Nor Parliamentarianism," 106-18; Scott Mainwaring, "Presidentialism in Latin America," *Latin American Research Review* 25, no. 1 (1990): 157-79; Scott Mainwaring, "Presidentialism, Multipartism, and Democracy," *Comparative Political Studies* 26, no. 2 (1993): 198-228; G. Bingham Powell, Jr., *Contemporary Democracies: Participation, Stability, and Violence* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982); Matthew S. Shugart and John M. Carey, *Presidents and Assemblies: Constitutional Design and Electoral Dynamics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Alfred Stepan and Cindy Skach, "Constitutional Frameworks and Democratic Consolidation: Parliamentarianism versus Presidentialism," *World Politics* 46, no. 1 (1993): 1-22.

<sup>60</sup>Fred W. Riggs, "The Survival of Presidentialism in America: Para-Constitutional Practices," *International Political Science Review* 9, no. 4 (1988): 247-78.

<sup>61</sup>See Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Society* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1968), 1-23, 93-139. Huntington says that appropriate power centralization is conducive to stability of a government in a transitional period. However, when discussing democratic consolidation, he also mentions that in many countries, immobilism caused by the parliament learning to check the executive powers leads to the crumbling of democracy and the return to inefficient, undemocratic military or strongman dictatorship. This may also be the reason why Mainwaring believes that presidentialism and multipartism is a dangerous combination. He argues that a strong president confronting a parliament under multiparty control (also a divided government situation) is an insupportable environment of institutional operation for a country just beginning to learn checks and balances through the separation of powers. He believes that under such a scenario immobilization of the government will be inevitable. See Mainwaring, "Presidentialism, Multipartism, and Democracy."

cellent opportunity for the comparative study of Taiwan's local politics. Moreover, the "small N" problem that often confronts comparative political studies has been resolved.<sup>62</sup> In the future, statistical test for hypotheses regarding local politics will no longer be difficult. Through the collection of local statistics and more meticulous statistical inference, we can obtain answers to many questions concerning the operation of local institutions. Studies of the causes and effects of divided government in Taiwan during a period of political transition will be conducive to empirical studies of institutional operation that have long been overlooked by democratization theories. Such studies also provide a valuable reference case for the studies of political transition of new democracies.

### **Divided Government in Taiwan**

How is the divided government theory related to the study of Taiwan's local politics? Let us answer this question in three steps. First, we shall briefly describe the current developments of divided government as revealed by statistics. Then, we shall discuss particular problems in Taiwan's situation that deserve special attention in order to prevent inappropriate application of the divided government theory to Taiwan. Finally, based on the causes and effects of divided government in Taiwan, we shall develop a new agenda for the research on Taiwan's local politics so as to enable the divided government theory to take root in Taiwan.

#### *Statistics on Taiwan's County/City Governments*

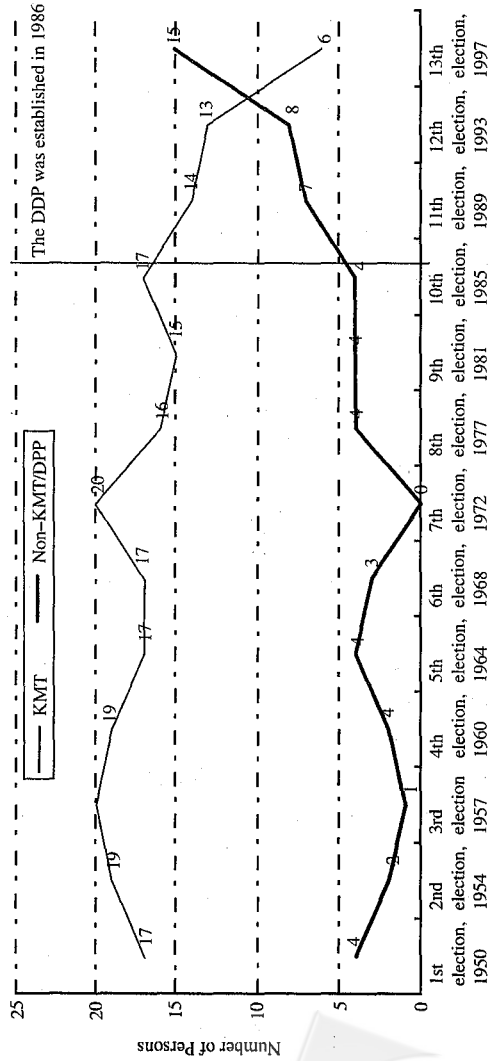
To gain a general understanding of the divided government situation in Taiwan, we shall start by examining the electoral statistics of Taiwan's twenty-one counties and cities.<sup>63</sup> From figure 1, we can see that the KMT

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<sup>62</sup>On the question of too few case studies in comparative political studies as well as general arguments about case study methodology, see Harry Eckstein, "Case Study and Theory in Political Science," in *Handbook of Political Science*, ed. Fred I. Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby, vol. 7 (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1975).

<sup>63</sup>Taipei and Kaohsiung cities are municipalities under the jurisdiction of the Executive Yuan.

**Figure 1**  
**Distribution by Party Affiliation of Taiwan's County Magistrates and City Mayors Elected in Previous Elections**



**Note:** Taipei and Kaohsiung cities were upgraded to be municipalities under the jurisdiction of the Executive Yuan, respectively in 1967 and 1979. Chiayi and Hsinchu cities became cities under the jurisdiction of Taiwan Province in 1982.



was at an overwhelming advantage in the county magistrate/city mayor elections before the establishment of the DPP in 1986. The ruling party gradually lost this advantage after the DPP's establishment, however, and finally suffered a decisive setback and became the minority in the 1997 local elections.

However, table 1 shows that in all four county/city councilor elections that have ever been held, the KMT has been at an advantage in local councils—on the average, the KMT has always been the majority party. However, the party's advantage is waning as the percentage of seats it held declined from 80 percent in 1985 to less than 60 percent in 1997. The era in which the KMT had control of both the local government and the local council is clearly already over. Now the KMT relies mainly on its majority in county/city councils to maintain its local political influence, although this advantageous position may be declining.

Corresponding to the decline of KMT influence, the DPP won more and more seats in councilor elections. Table 2 indicates that the DPP won 5.7 percent of total councilor seats in the 1989 elections, and the percentage nearly doubled to 10.6 percent in 1993 and increased further to 13.1 percent in 1997. Despite the rapid increase in DPP councilor seats, the DPP has not yet become the majority. The reason for this is that about one-fourth of the county/city councilors are independents without any party affiliation. This percentage of independents has not declined because of the DPP's participation in the competition during the last three elections. In 1997, among those elected to the Tainan County Council, independents even outnumbered KMT members (23:22). Why have these local elite without party affiliation not joined the KMT, the DPP, or other small parties? Do they have characteristics different from those councilors with party affiliation? What are their role in the operation of local governments? These are questions that deserve serious discussion.

Table 3 shows that during the past four local elections, most divided governments at the county/city level have been in the form of a non-KMT

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Their administrative level and mayoral election regulations are different from those of counties and cities under Taiwan Province's jurisdiction. Therefore, they are excluded from the present analysis.

Table 1

The Percentage of Seats Won by KMT Candidates in Taiwan's County/City Councilor Elections (1985-97)

County/City	1985	1989	1993	1997
Taipei County	75.38%	*73.85%	*56.92%	*58.46%
Ilan County	*75.76%	*69.70%	*55.88%	*61.76%
Taoyuan County	79.63%	75.00%	65.00%	*56.14%
Hsinchu County	93.10%	*68.97%	*60.00%	*57.58%
Miaoli County	81.58%	81.58%	*78.95%	*65.79%
Taichung County	86.54%	80.00%	63.16%	*57.89%
Changhua County	*69.81%	*66.04%	55.56%	62.96%
Nantou County	72.97%	62.16%	54.05%	*54.05%
Yunlin County	72.73%	(46.51%)	53.49%	58.14%
Chiayi County	94.74%	64.86%	62.16%	59.46%
Tainan County	68.75%	55.10%	*(48.00%)	*(44.00%)
Kaohsiung County	*69.81%	*(49.06%)	*(44.44%)	*(46.30%)
Pingtung County	78.18%	*74.07%	56.36%	*56.36%
Taitung County	93.75%	96.67%	76.67%	73.33%
Hualien County	93.94%	87.88%	78.79%	75.76%
Penghu County	68.42%	68.42%	*63.16%	63.16%
Keelung City	92.86%	82.14%	82.14%	*67.74%
Hsinchu City	68.00%	68.00%	57.69%	*55.17%
Taichung City	92.50%	93.02%	80.00%	*71.11%
Chiayi City	*72.73%	*54.55%	*(40.91%)	*(47.83%)
Tainan City	61.54%	52.50%	46.34%	*(46.34%)
Average	79.18%	70.00%	60.94%	59.02%

\*Non-KMT candidates were elected magistrates of these counties.

( ) The KMT has only a relative majority in these councils.

**Sources:** *Taiwansheng dibajie shengyiyuan, dishijie xianshi zhang, deshiyijie xianshi yiyuan, dishijie xiangzhen xianxiashi zhang xuanju xuanwu shilu* (Records of Taiwan Province's eighth assemblymen election, tenth county magistrate/city mayor election, eleventh county/city councilor election, and tenth mayoral election of cities and towns under county jurisdiction) (Chunghsing Village: Taiwan Provincial Election Commission, 1986); *Qishiba, qishijiu nian gongzhi renyuan xuanju Taiwansheng xuanju xuanwu shilu* (Records of Taiwan Province's 1989 and 1990 public official elections) (Chunghsing Village: Taiwan Provincial Election Commission, 1990); *Bashier, bashisan nian difang gongzhi renyuan xuanju Taiwansheng xuanju xuanwu shilu* (Records of Taiwan Province's 1993 and 1994 local public official elections) (Chunghsing Village: Taiwan Provincial Election Commission, 1994); *Bashiliu, bashiqi nian gongzhi renyuan xuanju Taiwansheng xuanju xuanwu shilu* (Records of Taiwan Province's 1997 and 1998 public official elections) (Chunghsing Village: Taiwan Provincial Election Commission, 1998).

**Table 2**

**Numbers and Percentages of Seats on Taiwan Province's County/City Councils by Party Affiliation (1989-97)**

	KMT	DPP	NP	Others	Total
1989	587 (69.7%)	48 (5.7%)	n.a.	207 (24.6%)	842 (100.0%)
1993	517 (60.3%)	91 (10.6%)	8 (0.9%)	242 (28.2%)	858 (100.0%)
1997	505 (58.4%)	113 (13.1%)	8 (0.9%)	239 (27.6%)	865 (100.0%)

government head (mainly a DPP member after 1986) versus a council with the KMT as the majority. The KMT's advantage in local councils may be absolute or relative (see also table 1). In the 1997 election, for instance, the KMT held a majority in all county/city councils. In counties/cities under KMT rule (i.e., Changhua, Yunlin, Chiayi, Taitung, Hualien, and Penghu counties), the KMT held an absolute majority in the councils at the same time; but the KMT held only a relative majority in the councils of over one-fourth (4/15) of the counties/cities under non-KMT rule (i.e., Tainan and

**Table 3**

**Distribution by Party Affiliation in Taiwan's Local Governments and Councils**

Government vs. Council	Unified Government		Divided Government	
	KMT	Non-KMT**	KMT	Non-KMT
	vs. KMT	vs. non-KMT	vs. non-KMT	vs. KMT
1985	17	0	0	4
1989	13 (1)*	0	0	6 (1)
1993	12 (1)	0	0	5 (3)
1997	6	0	0	11 (4)

\*The figures in parentheses indicate the number of counties/cities in whose council the KMT had only achieved a relative majority, i.e., cities where although the KMT held less than 50 percent of the seats on the council, KMT councilors still outnumbered those of any other party.

\*\* Non-KMT county magistrates and city mayors include DPP and non-party personages.

Kaohsiung counties and Chiayi and Tainan cities). In these councils, the DPP also failed to obtain the majority of seats because of the existence of independent councilors. Thus, both the KMT and the DPP had less than 50 percent of the seats.

At present, the basic divided government combination at the local level is a non-KMT government head versus a KMT-dominated council, but the KMT majority in the councils of counties/cities under non-KMT rule has already been reduced to a relative one. The situation may be seen from the changes in the effective number of parties<sup>64</sup> in the local councils in the past three elections. The county/city councils' effective numbers of parties are gradually increasing. It is still unclear whether they will be stabilized at a two-party system. Ever since the DPP's establishment in 1986, the acceleration of democratization and the development of partisan politics have resulted in the KMT advantage at the local level undoubtedly declining. Since the 1997 local elections, the KMT has lost the majority among county magistrates and city mayors. Only less than one-third of the county magistrates and city mayors are KMT members. Thus, divided government has become a normal environment for the operation of Taiwan's local governments. However, will the trend of declining support for the KMT continue to spread to local councils? If such a circumstance really comes to pass, will the situation that both the KMT and the DPP hold less than 50 percent of seats take place in more and more councils, or will the majority be held by another party than the KMT? This question deserves further study.

Table 5 contains the KMT's vote-gaining percentages in the 1997 county magistrate/city mayor and county/city councilor elections. The statistics show that the KMT's average vote-gaining percentages in the six counties/cities where unified government was achieved were higher than its average vote-gaining percentages in the thirteen counties/cities where divided government was the result (about 10 percent and 8 percent higher in the magistrate/mayor election and councilor election respectively). The

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<sup>64</sup>Rein Taagepera and Matthew Soberg Shugart, *Seats and Votes* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989), 78-79.

**Table 4**

**The Effective Number of Parties\* in Taiwan's County and City Councils (1989-97)**

County/City	1989	1993	1997
Taipei County	1.70	2.54	2.43
Ilan County	1.86	2.44	2.18
Taoyuan County	1.67	2.04	2.51
Hsinchu County	1.75	2.10	2.28
Miaoli County	1.46	1.52	1.98
Taichung County	1.49	2.06	2.31
Changhua County	1.81	2.22	2.07
Nantou County	2.02	2.34	2.34
Yunlin County	2.47	2.16	2.09
Chiayi County	1.90	2.08	2.15
Tainan County	2.12	2.32	2.41
Kaohsiung County	2.44	2.76	2.58
Pingtung County	1.69	2.39	2.25
Taitung County	1.07	1.56	1.69
Hualien County	1.28	1.54	1.66
Penghu County	1.76	1.87	1.87
Keelung City	1.42	1.44	1.93
Hsinchu City	1.84	2.38	2.54
Taichung City	1.15	1.51	1.84
Chiayi City	2.28	2.35	2.51
Tainan City	2.27	2.61	2.78
Average	1.78	2.11	2.21

\*The effective number of parties =  $1/HH$ .

$HH = \sum P_i^2$ ,  $i = 1-n$ ;  $P_i$  = ratio of seats of a political party.

**Source:** Rein Taagepera and Matthew Soberg Shugart, *Seats and Votes* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989), 78-79.

difference between the KMT's vote-gaining percentage in the magistrate/mayor election and that in the councilor election was more obvious in counties/cities where divided government was formed than in counties/cities where unified government appeared. As shown in table 5, the average difference between the KMT's vote-gaining percentage in the magistrate/mayor elections of 1997 and that in the councilor elections was 5.5 percent in the six counties/cities where unified government was achieved, but the figure was 7.5 percent in the thirteen counties/cities

Table 5

### Divided Government and Split-Ticket Voting in Taiwan's 1997 County Magistrate/City Mayor Elections

#### (1) Unified Government

County/City	Vote-gaining percentage of KMT magistrates and mayors (a)	Vote-gaining percentage of KMT county and city councilors (b)	Difference (a-b)
Changhua County	49.56	55.65	-6.09
Yunlin County	34.93	51.85	-16.92
Chiayi County	53.26	61.19	-7.93
Taitung County	47.64	54.82	-7.18
Hualien County	56.76	55.89	0.87
Penghu County	57.53	53.31	4.22
Average	49.95	55.45	-5.51

#### (2) Divided Government

County/City	Vote-gaining percentage of KMT magistrates and mayors (a)	Vote-gaining percentage of KMT county and city councilors (b)	Difference (a-b)
Taipei County	38.67	46.66	-7.99
Ilan county	46.17	50.58	-4.41
Taoyuan County	42.96	42.60	0.36
Hsinchu County	32.89	48.61	-15.72
Miaoli County	35.37	54.92	-19.55
Taichung County	53.59	52.88	0.71
Nantou County	30.11	44.98	-14.87
Tainan County	34.27	36.73	-2.46
Kaohsiung County	44.69	36.87	7.82
Pingtung County	41.45	42.52	-1.07
Keelung City	37.97	61.11	-23.14
Hsinchu City	42.79	51.53	-8.74
Taichung City	41.28	60.48	-19.20
Chiayi City	42.52	42.72	-0.20
Tainan City	38.78	42.83	-4.05
Average	40.23	47.73	-7.50

**Source:** Taiwan Provincial Election Commission, *Bashiliu, bashiqi nian gongzhi renyuan xuanju Taiwansheng xuanju xuanwu shilu*.

where divided government appeared. Whether the tendency that such a difference is more serious in counties/cities affected by divided government can be interpreted as an inclination of split-ticket by individual voters<sup>65</sup> and whether that inclination has contributed to the formation of divided governments deserve further studies.

From the above figure and tables, we can outline the main characteristics of divided government in Taiwan as follows:

1. Before the establishment of the opposition party, the KMT not only had control of most of the seats of local government heads but also had an absolute advantage in local councils. Since the appearance of a substantial opposition party, the KMT has suffered successive defeats and captured minority shares in elections of local government heads. KMT seats on county/city councils have also decreased, although the party has still maintained a majority in all county/city councils. However, in some of the counties/cities characterized by divided government, the KMT holds only a relative majority in the county/city councils.
2. Owing to the KMT's long-held advantage in local councils, the basic divided government combination at the local level is a county/city government headed by a DPP or independent government head versus a KMT-controlled council.
3. A special feature of Taiwan's local councils is that nonpartisan councilors possess a steady percentage (about one-fourth) of seats.
4. As a whole, the phenomenon that electoral support for the government head does not accord with their support for councilors is more serious in divided governments than in unified governments.

### *The Main Themes of Taiwan's Current Situation*

After a preliminary understanding of divided government develop-

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<sup>65</sup>Using a conclusion deduced from aggregate data to infer individual behavior can easily cause the so-called "ecological fallacy." See Gary King, *A Solution to the Ecological Inference Problem: Reconstructing Individual Behavior from Aggregate Data* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998).



ments at the local level in Taiwan, we shall discuss the following three main themes of Taiwan's post-transitional political situation. Such an exercise will prevent us from losing our orientation when we apply the divided government theory to Taiwan's current situation.

1. The ROC's political system, from the central to local levels, was not designed according to the spirit of the cabinet system but is rather a type of power-separation system using split institutions to achieve checks and balances in accordance with the spirit of the presidential system. This structure makes the phenomenon of divided government possible.
2. As a matter of fact, divided governments existed among Taiwan's local governments as early as before the beginning of democratization (for example, Yilan County). However, they were nominal divided governments of no substantial significance because without democracy, there could not be any divided government problem. Therefore, we must recognize the fact that, when faced with the divided government phenomenon, mature and new democracies may have different reactions and connotations.
3. Taiwan's system is different from the one in the United States. First, we do not have the tradition of a bicameral parliament. If the divided government phenomenon takes place, the problem is less complicated as there will not be split legislatures. Second, we are not a union of states and the operations of our local governments are subject to more restraints from the central government.<sup>66</sup> Therefore, the discussion of Taiwan's divided government phenomenon involves more than one administrative level, and attention must be paid to central-local relations and the influences of the images of national political parties on the divided government phe-

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<sup>66</sup>For instance, Art. 21 of the Province and County Autonomy Law stipulates that if the county/city governments do not carry out the resolutions adopted by the county/city councils promptly and properly, the councils may request the executive chiefs to explain the reasons why and, when necessary, "may inform related autonomy supervisory institutions to invite relevant institutions to solve the problems by consultation."

nomenon at the local levels. Third, in Taiwan, partisan politics is still immature at the local levels as factionalism and clanism still have a decisive role to play in local elections. This is a factor that does not exist in the studies of the U.S. divided government phenomenon at the local levels. Thus, to evaluate the influences of divided government on Taiwan's local politics, consideration must be given to the interaction between political parties and factional forces. Fourth, we are not a stable bipartisan country. That is why we can have the situation that none of the three major political parties holds more than 50 percent of the seats during an election, a situation which could never occur in the United States. Fortunately, such a development in the Taipei City Council has so far been a special case. Fifth, our SNTV (single non-transferable vote) parliamentary electoral system is very different from the system in the United States. Whether this difference will affect the causes and developments of divided government in Taiwan remains to be examined.

When we analyze Taiwan's divided government phenomenon, we must pay attention to the possible results caused by explanations of the aforementioned themes.

### *The Future Research Agenda*

The last step to link the divided government theory with Taiwan's local politics is to propose a forward-looking research agenda which future related studies can follow systematically. We shall center our discussion of the possible contents of future studies of Taiwan's divided government phenomenon around three main axes: causes, results, and the normative question of institutional changes.

Regarding the causes of divided government, we believe that the following four types of problems need to be clarified:

1. Is the competition between political parties and factional forces at the local levels a reason for the rise of local divided governments? Why is the DPP unable to absorb all political forces that have split

from the KMT in many counties/cities (such as Tainan, Kaohsiung, and Pingtung counties) after its establishment? Will the tendency that both the KMT and the DPP hold less than 50 percent of the seats intensify among local councils? Is the tendency in metropolitan areas different from that in non-metropolitan areas? What kind of role does the third force of local councils play in government-council relations?

2. Does the question of incumbent advantage exist in Taiwan's local councils? Does this advantage have a cause-and-effect linkage with the KMT's longtime advantage in these councils? Is it caused by professionalization of councilors or by other factors?
3. Is divided government a result of a deliberate choice by the voters? Do Taiwan voters expect different political parties to perform different roles? For instance, the voters may consider that DPP members can be better local government heads because the DPP is more honest and that KMT members can be better councilors because the KMT is more competent in advancing the interests of electoral districts. Another possibility is that the voters may believe that it is suitable for the DPP to head local governments and the KMT to control the central government because the former is more adept at local affairs and the latter is more proficient in such realms as cross-Straits relations, foreign relations, and macroeconomic planning.
4. Does the fact that the central and local governments are dominated respectively by the KMT and the DPP imply that the DPP's long-time strategy of "encircling the central government with localities" is successful? Does this phenomenon have any cause-and-effect linkage with the divided government phenomenon at the local levels?

With respect to the results of divided government, the core concern should be to search for standard criteria suitable for evaluating Taiwan. In the past, our impressions and comments of government-council relations have come from the media; systematic understanding of divided government and its results is seriously insufficient within the academic circles.

Here, we propose the following criteria for future assessment of the results of divided government in Taiwan:

1. The total number of motions examined or the percentage of important laws passed
2. The size of budget reductions, the length of the examination period, and the examination of supplementary budgets
3. The number of reconsidered motions and their resolutions
4. The analysis of the phrases used during interpellation sessions
5. The agenda-setting strategy of government heads
6. The poll results concerning the people's degree of satisfaction with the county/city governments' performance
7. The analysis of the contents of media reports on government-council relations

It should be noted that while studying the results of divided government, we must be very careful in regard to the control of variables unrelated to the study because a variation of any set of criteria can possibly be explained by many factors at the same time. Divided government is not the only reason for that variation. Moreover, the insufficiency of long-term data in Taiwan will certainly impose limitations on statistical deductions.

As to the normative questions regarding local institutional changes, we suggest that attention be paid to the following two points:

1. *The political engineering normative theory*: As was quoted from the *Zhongguo shibao* editorial at the beginning of this article, in the face of chaotic parliamentary politics, "it is highly necessary for the relevant authorities to set norms to promote the development of a mature parliamentary democracy as soon as possible." Our first reaction to the question of operation of institutions is to reinvent the system. That is why the consensus of suspending grass-roots elections was reached at the National Development Conference in December 1996. However, we must ask whether the reformers will be able to set norms for the development of parliamentary politics, and whether their normative efforts will further aggravate the prob-

lem. It seems that in order to give full scope to political engineering, we must develop a set of parliamentary political engineering normative theories.

2. *The establishment of development indices:* Amid the development of local parliamentarianism, we also need to find a set of observable indices to enable us to determine the actual development or progress. The normative significance of these indices can be established. For instance, whether "alternative rule" can be an index to the development of parliamentarianism is a question deserving penetrating studies from the normative perspective in different directions such as human nature, the operation of institutions, and political stability.

### Conclusion

The general understanding of the causes and results of the divided government phenomenon in Taiwan focuses on the following points. First, when the political party of a magistrate or mayor does not hold a majority in the county/city council, a deliberate boycott of the county/city government's administrative work by the council's majority party for ideological reasons is inevitable and the magistrate or mayor may also challenge the council for ideological reasons. Second, as the present Autonomy Law for Cities Directly Under the Central Government contains certain unbalanced stipulations about government-council relations, the elected mayors are unable to perform their administrative duties well because of the constraints imposed from the councils. Third, Taiwan's councilors are not of high quality. They are either gangsters or rich businessmen, so they often find fault with the administrative units for the sake of their own interests. From the angle of academic studies, these opinions are only speculations or myths. After operationalization, they may at most become assumptions awaiting verification. They will, however, never become generally-recognized conclusions. The academic circles should study divided government-related questions because it is their duty and obligation to clarify problematic issues.

Take Taipei City for example. Are the bickerings of Taipei's government—over such issues as resolutions to increase councilors' own incomes, the abolition of legal prostitution, and Councilor Li Cheng-lung's beating of city government officials—a symbol of the inevitable development of partisan competition from the central to local governments? Are Taipei City's government-council relations a normal development of checks and balances, or a ferocious partisan struggle? Will the situation that none of the three parties holds more than 50 percent of councilor seats lead to prosperity and peace or produce disorder? What influences will government-council relations have on the government's policies? The answers to these questions can be obtained only after an overall assessment of the government-council operational experiences. So far, the divided government theory has made considerable progress in studies on the U.S. government. This has enhanced our understanding of the operation of power-separation institutions and debunked some of our myths. We hope that in the near future, academic circles in Taiwan can make use of the divided government theory to gain a better understanding of the operation of our own power-separation institutions.