Journal of East Asian Studies 3 (2003), 1–41

Political Institutions and the Malaise of East Asian New Democracies

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Although quite a few third-wave democracies in Southern and Central Europe became consolidated within a decade of their origin, all of those in East Asia are still fragile and fledgling. Ever since South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, and the Philippines embarked on democratic transition or restoration more than a decade ago,[1] elections have been regularly held, and democratic competition is widely considered the only path to power.[2] Rough edges remain, however. Rules are stretched, even bent. Political stalemate tends to delay, if not prevent, timely policy action. And public cynicism toward underperforming, if not malfunctioning, democracy in these four polities is so pervasive and unnerving that pundits warn against a crisis of governance in East Asia's new democracies.

Syndromes of democratic malaise abound. First of all, the party system is generally inchoate and shallow,[3] and legislative elections typically do not yield a majority party in the four new Asian democracies, resulting in constant political conflict and policy stalemate. The party system in Taiwan has become increasingly fluid, whereas in the other three cases political parties reinvent themselves without any qualms, party discipline is loose, and party-switching is all too frequent. Concerning the results of legislative elections, Corazon Aquino's (1986–1992) majority in the Filipino Congress was a notable exception, but it was an epic phenomenon of the People's Power Revolution, and the majority was based on a loose coalition in support of her rather than a political party. Another exception was the landslide victory for the Thai Rak Thai Party under the leadership of the billionaire Thaksin Shinawatra in Thailand's 2001 election. But this unprecedented result was a national backlash against the International Monetary Fund's policy prescriptions during the recent Asian financial crisis (Auerback 2001). The third exceptional case, the Kuomintang

(KMT, or Nationalist Party) legislative majority in pre-2000 Taiwan, was more apparent than real. The KMT's grip already had been reduced to a razor-thin margin after the 1995 legislative election, and prior to that, intra-KMT factionalism was so fierce that it functioned as if it were two parties (Cheng and Haggard 2001: 200). Without a majority party, cabinet turnover rate has been high in Thailand, political confrontation has become the norm in South Korea and Taiwan, and huge doses of patronage have become the sine qua non for governance in the Philippines. All parties concerned long for the next election to break the logjam, but the electoral cycle repeats itself with similar results. And reform policies often are not undertaken in a timely fashion to cope with various challenges.

Second, instead of guiding political contests, democratic rules themselves often are contested. Disputes over the rules contribute to political uncertainty, affect confidence in the marketplace, and threaten to discredit democratic institutions. In the Philippines, the Cha-Cha (Change Charter) movement attempted to transcend the one-term limit to clear the way for Fidel Ramos's (1992–1998) reelection. In South Korea, President Kim Dae-jung (1998–2003) appointed Kim Jong-pil as acting prime minister to bypass the confirmation battle. In Thailand, the qualifications of the prime minister always were a bone of contention, as many who had been elected were corrupt and unpopular, whereas many of those appointed by the coup leaders were clean and competent. In Taiwan, there were disputes over the necessity for the premier to resign following a legislative election and about the concurrent appointment of the premier and vice president. In both Thailand and the Philippines, the ill-defined regulations on bloc voting and the party list—meant to enhance party discipline—were arbitrarily interpreted. And the praxis of split voting and the submission of party lists from only "underrepresented groups" further fragmented the party system and increased electoral volatility. In South Korea, the proportional representation (PR) list continued as a bidding instrument for political contribution rather than a device for recruiting well-qualified candidates.

Finally, social protestors, often linked to political parties, frequently show their distrust, even disdain, for the normal democratic institutions and forums. Environmentalists boycotted the construction of the fourth nuclear power plant in Taiwan, and laborers and students in Korea and indebted farmers in northeastern Thailand habitually take to the streets. Filipino politicians are ridiculed as "daily commuters" changing party labels all the time (Rood 2002: 157), and political parties command little respect. Polls show that voters in Taiwan identify their constantly squab-

bling legislators as the principal source of instability (*China Times*, September 29, 2001).[4] Meanwhile, privileged economic interests are perceived as unduly affecting the political process. All four states score very low, or at least below the average, in the international survey of transparency or corruption (*Taipei Times*, March 19, 2001).[5]

Blaming Institutions

Problems of democratic governance may arise from a widening gap between mounting societal demands or political participation and relatively stagnant state capacity (Huntington 1968). Civil society is easy to arouse, whereas political institutions are difficult to build and refine. However, one cannot simply fault an overzealous civil society for the governance crisis in the four new East Asian democracies. For one thing, whatever the amount of political energy a previously repressed civil society may release, the high tide of social mobilization for democratic transition in these cases has largely receded. For another, newly created democratic institutions have yet to demonstrate their normal capacity to process legitimate social preferences into effective policies. When democratic institutions become a synonym for political immobilization, policy stalemate, or patronage machinery, it seems that these four democracies have simply underperformed.

A second suspect for democratic malaise is economic adversity. Democratic transition in South Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand initially unfolded in good times (Haggard and Kaufman 1995). Even in the Philippines, economic hardship eased with the downfall of the Ferdinand Marcos (1965–1986) regime, and the economy had improved drastically before Joseph Estrada (1998–2001) came to power. An unexpected financial crisis (e.g., the 1997–1998 Asian financial crisis [AFC]) or other sort of economic duress, therefore, might expose the weakness and fragility of democratic institutions in the four polities. However, the problems of democratic governance in the four democracies predated the AFC. In some cases, these problems even helped to trigger economic crisis (Haggard 2000: 50), and, in all cases, the problems have lingered even after the economic crisis subsided. The economy is probably more a victim than a villain of bad politics.

Political leadership is the third possible culprit for the problems of democratic institutions in East Asia. Capable leadership can get things

done within a hostile institutional structure, whereas mediocre leadership can ruin the best opportunity an institution can possibly create.[6] Facing an unruly multiple-party coalition, Chuan Leekpai (1997–2001) in Thailand's parliamentary system managed to nudge the reform process along during the AFC. In contrast, less affected by the AFC, the Philippines slowed its reform under President Estrada, losing the steam that his predecessor Ramos had assiduously built up. Leadership quality is therefore a crucial factor in democratic governance. Indeed, when things go wrong in mature democracies, pundits most likely will criticize leadership rather than political institutions. Watergate, Iran-contra, and other scandals, for example, confirm the Madisonian assumption that humanity is fallible and institutions are to be crafted in ways that detect the power-abusing leaders. However, when things turn sour in the four newly created East Asian democracies, the temptation to blame bad institutional design for producing bad leadership is strong.

One reason that observers are prone to fault institutions rather than leadership is that democratic malaise seems to persist in democratic East Asia. Leadership failure does not recur frequently, especially when a failed leader has paid a dear price, deterring future offenders. The enduring governance crisis in the four democracies, even under strong leadership, naturally leads one to suspect that institutions are flawed. The other reason is that newly designed institutions in the four democracies have been frequently "doctored." Not as time-tested and well-refined as in mature democracies, institutions in Asian new democracies are understandably still under experimentation and being fine-tuned. But their alterations are primarily by-products of power struggle. Thailand produced a new constitution after each coup that interrupted its intermittent process of democratization, and each new document was tailored to preclude some political forces that the military deemed undesirable. Taiwan's constitution has been revised five times since the onset of democratic change in the late 1980s, and the process of constitutional change has been characterized, rightfully or not, as an act of "institution-twisting" rather than institution-building. Each of the three attempts to switch from a presidential system to a parliamentary form of government in democratic Korea was a blatant power play and had nothing to do with the merits and demerits of each system.

Obviously, one cannot simply curse institutions for all the problems of democratic governance. Leadership shares some blame, as leaders may hesitate to act or may make mistakes. For example, Taiwan's KMT leaders

simply did not have the courage to order their party legislators to invoke a vote of no-confidence, a rule adopted in the 1997 constitutional amendment, to dislodge a Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) premier and end the policy stalemate that had plagued the divided government. Institutions, however, do bear the brunt of responsibility for problems of democratic governance. As Sue Crawford and Elinor Ostrom (1995) cogently state, institutions (defined in terms of rules instead of patterned behavior) embody an incentive structure that shapes actors' preferences and optimizing behavior.[7] Institutional frameworks, therefore, are often the primary determinant of political calculus, and different institutional setups are likely to motivate different political actions. In addition, institutions are not meant for saints; rather, they are created to constrain crooks and to enable a polity to muddle through if mediocre leadership comes along. Consequently, it seems natural to search for any major defects in the institutional design when diagnosing a malfunctioning democracy.

The two most basic institutions for representative democracy are the constitutional framework within which political elite interact and the electoral system that counts votes, assigns seats, and thereby helps to shape the party system. Regarding constitutional form of government, the literature on institutional choice is profuse with the thundering criticisms of presidential systems, especially when adopted by new democracies (Linz 1990; Lijphart 1992; Linz and Valenzuela 1994; cf. Shugart and Carey 1992; Diamond 1996; von Mettenheim 1997).[8] Juan Linz, the author of the manifesto on the perils of presidentialism, sees this form of government as not easily conducive to the consolidation of a democratic regime. Of the four cases covered here, only Thailand has a parliamentary form of government. The Philippines is a clear-cut presidential system. The South Korean 1987 constitution also specifies a presidential system, even though it includes two parliamentary features: the position of prime minister, and the interpellation of the cabinet in the National Assembly.[9] Since a critical amendment in 1997, Taiwan's semipresidential system has had a strong parliamentary bent, but the president has acted as if he had a pure presidential system.

The distinction between the two forms of government is crucial, as a presidential system does function differently from a parliamentary system, and it does cause problems not found in a parliamentary system. However, it is necessary to go beyond the broad distinction between the two systems and examine special constitutional features as well as the broader context within which a government is embedded. As Scott Mainwaring and

Matthew Shugart (1997) argue, special features of a presidential system, such as the legislative power of a president, the electoral cycle, and the method of presidential election, can alleviate or compound the generic problem found in the presidential form of government. Moreover, the party system is as important as the form of government when it comes to the functioning of a democracy. If the party system is well-established and not too fragmented, the presidential system does not pose the problem of governance even under the condition of divided government. But if the party system is fragmented and party discipline is loose, a parliamentary system is not better than a presidential system. As analyzed below, coordination among weak parties in a parliamentary system can be intractable, and failure to coordinate can be very consequential.

To explain the party system, many have stressed the conditioning effects of electoral formulas, especially the impact of district magnitude, without denying the influence of social and cultural cleavages. Essentially, a plurality, single-member district (SMD) formula tends to yield a two-party system and enhance political stability, whereas a PR system is more fair to all parties concerned but is conducive to a multiple-party system. Three out of four cases of ours have a largely SMD/plurality system, supplemented by a small component of PR seats. Taiwan is the only case with a unique system called single, nontransferable vote (SNTV) with multiple-seat districts that, in Arend Lijphart's (1999: 298) most recent characterization, is akin to the PR system. And yet, as will be analyzed below, the party system in Taiwan is the least fragmented and most institutionalized. Unlike in the other three countries, political parties in Taiwan command relatively high party discipline, though they are more easily polarized. We should go beyond the broad distinction between two basic types of electoral formulas to explore the specific electoral rules that also may impinge on the shapes of party systems. These specific rules can better account for the symptoms of overly polarized (the case of Taiwan) and inchoate (the other three cases) party systems.

Features of Presidentialism in East Asia

The presidential form of government stipulates separation of powers (SOP) between the executive and legislative branches of government. The president and the legislative assembly do not share the same fate; the cabinet is not composed of members of the legislative branch; and there are

checks and balances—vetoes, overrides, and legislative confirmations of many presidential appointments—between the two branches. Because both president and legislators derive their mandate from the people directly, dual legitimacy can be a problem and political stalemate may result. This problem can be alleviated when the president has strong legislative power (with strong veto, decree power, and exclusive introduction of legislation) and his/her party has a majority control in the legislature and can enforce party discipline. The dual legitimacy problem, however, becomes quite intractable when the president does not possess majority support in the legislative branch (i.e., a condition of divided government) and the president has very weak or marginal legislative power (weak veto, no legislative decree, no exclusive right to introduce legislation). Both sides can claim to embody vox populi, as the president has a national constituency but the legislature aggregates the preferences of various constituencies. The dispute becomes even more acute if the two elections are held neither concurrently nor closely in tandem (the so-called honeymoon election). Is the latest election a better reading of people's will or is a larger share of popular votes a better one? Lacking a runoff election also can compound the problem, as the president-elect may not be a Condorcet winner (i.e., the winner in a pairwise competition).

All three presidential systems covered here have suffered from the dual legitimacy problem under the condition of divided government. Rarely elected by a majority of voters, presidents in all three democracies typically face an opposition-controlled legislature that overshadows the executive authority. South Korea and Taiwan have neither a runoff election for the presidency nor a concurrent election for the two branches of government (see Table 1). Presidents Roh Tae-woo (1988–1993), Kim Dae-jung, and Chen Shui-bian (2000–present) were probably Condorcet losers rather than Condorcet winners. The Philippines does have concurrent elections, which presumably could generate presidential coattail effects and reduce the chance of divided government. Yet twenty-four senators are elected from a national constituency on the basis of approval voting (i.e., a voter can cast as many votes as there are seats but cannot "cumulate" votes for any candidate), in which top-tier senators typically win a substantially higher vote share than the president-elect. Moreover, the Philippines permits a split ticket for president and vice president, potentially creating the problem of separation of purpose and adding another layer to the problem of divided government. With the backing of a coalition in Congress, the vice president in post-1986 Philippines always

Table 1 Type of Government and Special Features: The Philippines, Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand

Country	Type	Special Features
Philippines	presidential	one-term limit for president; two-term limit for senators; vice president on separate ticket; concurrent election; no run-off election
Korea	presidential	one-term limit for president; no vice presidency; president appoints prime minister with the consent of legislature; nonconcurrent elections; no run-off election
Taiwan	semipresidential	two-term limit for president; vice president on same ticket; after 1997, the president appoints the premier without legislative consent; vote of no-confidence, exercised at most once a year, can remove a premier, who can ask the president to dissolve the legislature; nonconcurrent elections; no run-off election
Thailand	parliamentary	senate also can dismiss cabinet; two-term limit for senators

Source: Compiled by author.

has become president either through the next election (Ramos and Estrada) or the resignation of the incumbent president (Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo).

To avoid gridlock, coordination is obviously necessary under SOP when there is a divided government. After all, SOP means that power is not fused, as in the case of majority government under a parliamentary form of government, but rather power is shared among branches of government. However, in a presidential system, the incentive for players to confront each other is often stronger than incentives for accommodation. There are at least three reasons why the incentive to negotiate and compromise is weak while the incentive to defect and boycott is strong. First, because the presidential system is a winner-take-all system, power sharing within the cabinet is not a credible arrangement. An alliance can be formed that reflects a working majority in the legislature. In return for legislative support, other parties that participate in the alliance may be able to claim a few positions in the cabinet. But such a power-sharing

arrangement does not amount to a coalition government because political partners are not able to make a credible commitment to one another for mutual support. The president can simply pass the legislation that his allies have agreed to support and then reshuffle the cabinet or bypass the cabinet minister. Chagrined allies have no leverage over the president except to boycott the next piece of legislation. And this threat is not likely to be effective because a new alliance can be forged, and the political survival of the president and his/her cabinet is not at stake. In addition, allies in the legislature who dance with the president face tremendous agency problems.[10] Unable to serve in the cabinet without giving up their legislative seats, they have to send someone to claim their share in the cabinet.[11] For job security, this agent may join the "king's entourage." Therefore, it is better for political partners in the legislature to strike a deal with the president on a case-by-case basis rather than accept a long-term partnership. In short, under the presidential system, it is difficult for the president and his/her political partners either to circle the wagons or to share the cake.

Second, fixed tenure for both the president and legislators adds to the problem of coordination. It is well known that fixed tenure may entail an elite circulation problem (i.e., temporal rigidity prevents a presidential system from keeping a good president for a long time or from quickly removing a bad one). Less known is that fixed tenure also may reduce the incentive to cooperate between two branches, especially if there is a one-term limit on the presidency, as in the case of South Korea and the Philippines. Without the threat of a vote of no-confidence and the dissolution of the legislature, the president and legislators are not inclined to compromise. Moreover, if the tenure of the president is not renewable, and if elections are not concurrent, legislators have additional incentives to wait out a president instead of cooperating.

Third, the pressure for claiming credit and avoiding blame under the presidential system reinforces the problem of coordination in a divided government. In the absence of a majority government, accountability is murky under a parliamentary system, as one can attribute a policy failure or success to the prime minister, other ministers, the prime minister's party, or coalition parties. However, voters in a presidential system tend to pin much, if not all, of their hopes on the president, who is elected nationwide and does not need to worry constantly about job security, as in the case of a prime minister.[12] The winner-take-all nature of a presidential system also is reflected in the assignment of blame and credit. The

president may serve as an easy target for criticism when times are bad, and the president certainly would hope to claim all the credit when times are good. Naturally, it is in the interest of a president to coordinate with the legislature at a barely sufficient level that does not dilute his/her performance but still permits scapegoatism. Playing second fiddle, the president's partners from other parties may be cursed more than praised (Mainwaring and Scully 1995: 26). The incentive to dance together, if it exists at all, is flimsy.

All told, under a presidential system, incentives for defection from partnership are very high, as the president and legislators have no shared destiny or time horizon, and political allies may receive little credit while sharing much blame. How did the three new democracies cope with the coordination problem under the condition of divided government? To the extent the president in these three polities attempted any power-sharing scheme, the effort either was aborted, or was short-lived, or simply did not work. Facing a potentially adverse legislature, the president slighted, intimidated, or bribed. Such a leaderist tendency aptly illustrates the syndrome of "delegative democracy," in which a president believes he/she has the most explicit mandate to do anything necessary to get things done, and the public, upon electing the president, stops exercising oversight but is galvanized into action only at the next election, or on the occasion of a sudden scandal and acute elite conflict (O'Donnell 1996: 98–99). Presidentialism triggered overreaction from the legislature, including frivolous impeachment, boycotts of legislative sessions, and social protests.

Prosecutorial Politics in South Korea

Democratic Korea has elected three presidents on a five-year cycle, Roh Tae-woo in 1987, Kim Young Sam in 1992, and Kim Dae-jung in 1997. The president's party never won the majority of seats in the legislative elections held on four-year cycles in 1988, 1992, 1996, and 2000. The continual search for a working majority took many forms, most notably a grand party merger in 1990, predatory recruitment between 1992 and 1996, and judiciary investigation in 1998.

In January 1990, three parties—headed by Roh, Kim Young Sam, and Kim Jong-pil, a former deputy of military ruler Park Chung Hee in the 1960s and 1970s—merged to become the Democratic Liberal Party (DLP). The DLP commanded a supermajority (219 out of 299 seats) in the National Assembly, but it did not form a coalition government among the

three feeder parties or factions. The comfortable majority proved to be discomforting and slippery, however. To the remaining opposition party, headed by Kim Dae-jung, the DLP epitomized the tyranny of the majority and the persecution of the minority, compelling him to extend the arena of political confrontation from the assembly to the streets whenever the DLP rammed through any bill. The DLP also was consumed by internal strife, given that there was no power sharing and that the leaders of factions were perennially obsessed with the next presidential race. In the 1992 legislative election, the DLP lost one-third of its seats, prodding the president to use predatory recruitment to rebuild a working majority. In January 1995, Kim Jong-pil's faction quit the DLP, and in 1996 the DLP lost more seats in the legislative election, both events leading the beaver to repair its dam. Meanwhile, President Kim Young Sam (1993–1998), probably for the purpose of rescuing his sagging popularity (Armstrong 1997: 16), imprisoned two previous presidents, Roh and Chun Doo Hwan—spiritual leaders of the dominant faction of the DLP—through retroactive impeachment, leading to the inevitable disintegration of the DLP. Thus, the grandeur of a party merger ended up in political purges and divorce.

Once sworn in as president in early 1998, Kim Dae-jung faced political confrontation and policy stalemate almost instantly. Allied with Kim Jong-pil, Kim Dae-jung led only by 1.5 percent over his rival candidate, whose support was eroded by an intraparty insurgency. Kim Dae-jung and Kim Jong-pil did team up to form a government (a marriage of convenience between a democracy fighter and a former military coup leader); the former appointed the latter to the post of acting premier (to bypass the confirmation of the National Assembly). The opposition had a rock-solid majority (Kim Dae-jung and Kim Jong-pil's coalition had only 121 out of 299 seats). Given a weak mandate and facing a dominant opposition in the legislature, Kim Dae-jung resorted to overzealous political reform (an investigation launched from the prosecutor's office) to deter the opposition from stonewalling. The opposition party used special sessions as a shield against the investigation. The assembly was under siege for more than a year, essentially paralyzed during the first fourteen months of Kim's presidency. Given that very few political elites are untainted, the president's reform campaign (read: political purge) resulted in massive defection from the opposition to the ruling coalition. The president's party grew from seventy-eight to 105 seats, and his prime minister's party also collected new members, now standing at fifty-four, a net gain of eleven

seats (Kim 2000: 60–65). However, in 2001 the "coalition government" headed for a divorce, as President Kim Dae-jung did not even contemplate injecting into the political agenda a proposal to adopt the parliamentary system, a promise made earlier to Kim Jong-pil in exchange for electoral and coalitional support. Finding no mechanism to enforce the interparty agreement, Kim Jong-pil terminated legislative support to President Kim Dae-jung, and the coalition faltered. Beset with his sons' scandals after early 2002, President Kim Dae-jung ceased to use prosecutorial tactics to compose a legislative majority. Political stalemate has degenerated into political paralysis.

As shown in Table 2, the president's legislative power in South Korea is reactive, not proactive or dominant. Not permitted to issue legislative decrees or exclusively introduce legislation, as in the case of Southern Cone countries, the Korean presidents can count on only the majority in the National Assembly for policy initiatives that require budgetary sup-

Table 2 Presidential Powers over Legislation

Country	Configuration of Powers	Constitutional Legislative Authority
Chile and Argentina	decree power; strong veto, exclusive legislative introduction	proactive and potentially predominant
Philippines	no decree power; strong veto; item veto on budget; exclusive introduction of budget bill; power to borrow abroad; senate can veto all bills that house has passed	potentially proactive
Korea	no decree power; strong veto; package veto; exclusive introduction of budget bill	reactive
Taiwan	no decree power; weak veto; power to dissolve the legislature upon a vote of no-confidence on his premier	potentially marginal

Sources: For Asia, the author's compilation; for Latin America, see Matthew Soberg Shugart and Scott Mainwaring (1997), "Presidentialism and Democracy in Latin America: Rethinking the Terms of the Debate," in Scott Mainwaring and Matthew Soberg Shugart, eds., *Presidentialism and Democracy in Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 12–54, 49.

Note: The Filipino president can use discretionary budgetary power to induce a policy change.

ports and legal justification. A few special features of the Korean constitution have made it more difficult for him to construct a working majority through party alignment in the legislature but have tempted him to use a judiciary approach to deal with legislators. The presidency has a one-term limit, and the presidential and assembly elections are nonconcurrent, often placing an incumbent president in a weak position to build or maintain a majority in the assembly. Legislators have different electoral agendas from the president and may side with presidential hopefuls rather than with the incumbent president. Yet aside from the direct control over national security, the president in South Korea also has at his disposal an apparatus of auditing (notice that the Board of Audit and Inspection is attached to the Blue House rather than the cabinet), permitting him to subtly use investigating and prosecutorial powers to achieve political and legislative objectives (Kim 1998: 132–178).[13] In other constitutions, these powers reside in either the judiciary or legislative branch of government, but in South Korea they are within the reach of the presidency. It is little wonder that Korean presidents often indulged in prosecutorial politics to deal with the divided-government problem.

Patronage Politics in the Philippines

Under the 1935 constitution, the Filipino president gained awesome powers. The president appointed many officials, subject to confirmation of a two-house-based commission; convened and set the agenda for special congressional sessions (Congress met 100 days only for its regular session); and exercised emergency powers, even without congressional authorization (Wurfel 1988: 77; 1935 Constitution, art. VII). Equally important, the president had a line-item veto over the budget, was permitted to transfer funds (meaning the president could rewrite the budget and indirectly reset policy priority), and possessed the sole authority to distribute the contingency fund. The current constitution, promulgated in 1987, imposes a one-term limit on the presidency (the term was extended from four to six years), limits presidential discretion in judicial appointments, extends the legislative session to eleven months, specifies the line of political succession, and curtails the use of emergency decree power (Wurfel 1988: 310). However, the president's power remains extensive; the new document is meant to prevent the president from extending or perpetuating tenure rather than to restrict his/her power. The president still appoints civilian and military office holders; drafts the budget; and, should

a budget bill fail to pass, appropriates funds according to the format used in the previous year (reversion power).

Constitutionally, the Philippines has a stronger presidency than Korea and Taiwan. The Filipino president can use discretion in budget formulation to induce a policy change (see Table 2). But the president still lacks decree power, or the exclusive right to introduce legislation, as in many Southern Cone countries. The Congress remains utterly indispensable to the president's effective governance. It confirms nearly all political appointments, makes statutes, and meets three times longer now. Most important, with the exception of Aquino, the president's party typically has received a minority of seats in congressional elections, forcing the president to deal with the problem of divided government. However, even before the Congress begins a new session, the president has been able to forge a partnership with legislators, especially within the House of Representatives (as senators have national reputations). The partnership is typically based on an exchange of pork (budget for public works and personal appointments) for congressional constituencies and political support for the president. Ramos succeeded Aquino in 1992, with only thirty-nine of his party members in Congress out of a total of 250 when election results were tallied, but the party roster swelled to 120 when Congress convened. Similarly in 1998, Estrada's party won fifty-six seats, but in two months its ranks grew to 142 (Rood 2002: 154–155).

Patronage politics seemingly has subverted the incentive structure that is inherent in the presidential system, inducing accommodation between the two branches of government in the Philippines. However, patronizing politics is not a desirable device to overcome the divided government problem, as it reduces the democratic process to trading favors, thereby corroding policy deliberation and reducing the provision of public goods. Moreover, patronage politics has its limit in repressing confrontational politics. The majority forged by patronage politics is typically a minimum winning coalition: the fewer the partners the better, so the booty will not be spread too thinly. A minimum coalition is not necessarily fragile, if the president easily can replace the defectors. Yet two special features of the Filipino presidential system make patronage coalitions unstable. First, the Senate is not easily bribed. Senators have national reputations and presidential ambitions, leading David Wurfel to argue that a presidential candidate has twenty-four rivals in the Philippines. Many popular senators receive 50–60 percent of the votes nationwide, a mandate overshadowing the president's (Rood 2002: 152), aggra-

vating the dual legitimacy problem. Second, the split ticket of the presidential race poses a problem for the maintenance of the president's patronage coalition. The vice president in the Philippines is a spare tire without clearly specified power. In the past, the vice president and the president typically carried the same party label; indeed, the two candidates, on separate tickets, often campaigned together. Since 1986, vice presidents and presidents typically have come from different parties, as the party system became fragmented (explained below). The vice president cannot be fired, and he/she may have a different political agenda, drawing support away from the president in the Congress, especially when the president's integrity is a politicized issue. By the time that Estrada's incompetent leadership and financial scandal led to his resignation under the shadow of impeachment, his followers had been routed, and Vice President Arroyo's party had emerged as the dominant force in Congress. Indeed, it was because of the shifting alliance that impeachment became a real possibility, and Estrada had to go. In a sense, the impeachment drive functions like a general election that affords an opportunity for reforging the patronage coalition.

Subethnic and Identity Politics in Taiwan

Taiwan's constitutional framework is elusive, ill-defined, and frequently amended and made ever more confusing (Cheng and Haggard 2001: 192–193; Cheng 2001: 130–131; Wu 2000). Elected by the National Assembly, a relatively inactive body, the president appointed a premier, who, upon being confirmed by the Legislative Yuan (Chamber), formed the cabinet and ran the government. However, the Legislative Yuan had no way of holding the cabinet directly accountable, as the premier did not have to resign even if the executive veto of a bill was overridden by a two-thirds vote. The legislature could reject the president's nomination of the premier but could not remove an incumbent premier or appoint a new one. Since 1996, the president has been directly elected in national elections. And since the 1997 constitutional revision, the president has picked a premier without the requirement of legislative confirmation. Through the now-legalized National Security Council, he/she can direct foreign and mainland Chinese affairs. However, the Legislative Yuan now can cast a vote of no-confidence to remove a premier, though this power cannot be exercised during the first year of premiership or more than once per year, and, in the case of a no-confidence vote, can trigger a president's decision

to dissolve the Legislative Yuan for reelection. Finally, the premier's veto power over legislation now can be overridden by half, rather than two-thirds, of the total number of legislators.

Taiwan's system is largely a premier-presidential system, or a mixed one, with dual legitimacy, the separation of powers, and, since the 1997 constitutional revision, an increasingly strong parliamentary bent. As Table 2 shows, the president's legislative power is more limited than that in the other two cases. With the KMT in full control of the legislature, government functioned like a presidential system under the former president, Lee Teng-hui, who concurrently chaired the party. Lee was able to prevent the divergence of purpose and, if necessary, arbitrate between the executive and legislative branches of government. However, when the president lost control of the majority in the legislature, the premier-legislative relationship could be strained. Before the 1997 constitutional change, the legislature could threaten the choice of premier; after the change, the survival of the premier could be at stake. Hence, under the condition of divided government, the premier could be sandwiched in the test of wills between the president and the legislature. Aside from being tempered by a few parliamentary devices, the constitution in Taiwan also prescribes nonconcurrent election, a special feature that also compounds the generic coordination problem under the condition of divided government. Different electoral cycles—three years for legislators, six years and, after 1995, four years for president—had created the problem of legislative reconfirmation or vote of no-confidence on the existing premier. As in Korea, nonconcurrent elections also had created the problem of a "hung parliament" where, in awaiting legislative election, all parties concerned prefer confrontation to negotiation and compromise.

Although the KMT did not lose the presidency until the 2000 election, Taiwan did have a de facto divided government between 1991 and 1993. At that moment, President Lee and his mainstream (mostly "Taiwanese") faction were locked in a fierce intraparty conflict with Hau Pei-tsun, leader of the nonmainstream (mostly "Mainlander") faction.[14] The two factions functioned more like two parties, but they needed to work together to maintain a legislative majority. Lee was forced to appoint Hau as premier and conceded a few cabinet positions to Hau's faction. The cohabitation of the two factions in the government was an uneasy one, as shown in policy conflict between the cabinet and the presidency.[15] To bridle his premier, Lee reached out to the opposition party, the DPP, that was on the same side of the subethnic cleavage as Lee's own faction. Such a move drove some

of Hau's followers—predominantly Mainlander elites—to bolt from the KMT to form the New Party, thereby weakening the KMT and reducing its majority in the legislature to a razor-thin margin in the 1995 legislative election (Cheng and Hsu 1996). Consequently, the KMT had to rely on the de facto support of the DPP in the legislature on many important issues, especially those with respect to mainland Chinese affairs. Even socioeconomic issues such as welfare and public housing programs were deliberated in the context of the subethnic cleavage.

After the opposition-party candidate won the presidency in March 2000, the problem of divided government reached the boiling point and the intractable policy stalemate became a foregone conclusion. Holding only one-third of the legislative seats, the DPP president attempted to coopt KMT elites of various ethnic backgrounds to form a cabinet to preempt the problem of divided government. As the divergence of purpose between the president and the premier became evident, the president appointed a DPP premier. The confrontation between a DPP government and a KMT legislature became inevitable. The only way out was again to downplay the partisan differences while rekindling subethnic politics. The support of like-minded KMT legislators allowed the DPP to muddle through until the 2002 legislative election, during which the party again benefited from the politicization of the subethnic cleavage, chipping away at KMT support among the old Taiwanese voters. Formed by a former KMT maverick and quickly joined by nearly all New Party elite as well as some native Taiwanese elite, the People First Party, for its part, collected most votes from the new Taiwanese voters at the expense of the KMT. Subethnic politics permitted the DPP government to hang on, but it was not effective enough to help the DPP government to form a stable alliance in the legislature to undergird policy action.

Summary and Comparison

To sum up, with a fragmented, shallow, or highly polarized party system, all three new democracies under presidentialism face both severe dual-legitimacy and perpetual divided-government problems, which are reinforced by various special features in each case. The majoritarian tendency of presidentialism makes it difficult to share power, leading presidents to exploit judicial prosecution (Korea), patronage (the Philippines), and ethnic politics (Taiwan) to overcome the legislative blockage of the president's agenda. And these leverages have not effectively solved

governance problems, or have done so only with high political costs. The fact that the president is prone to confront, slight, and patronize the legislature serves to alienate members of the public who hold politicians in low esteem.

How do these problems measure up to those in Thailand? Being parliamentary, the Thai polity would appear to be insulated from the drama of adversary politics that unfolded in Korea, Taiwan, and, at times, the Philippines. A showdown between the government and the opposition would have led to either the collapse of government or the dissolution of Parliament. However, Thailand has its share of democratic malaise, which, in part, explains why the process of democratic change has been interspersed with military arbitration.[16] Unlike the Westminsterian parliamentary systems, Thailand has a fragmented party system with loose party discipline (explained below), practically necessitating the formation of a coalition government and inevitably resulting in high cabinet turnover rates.[17] The party-switching was so rampant that the 1997 constitution emphatically prohibits it between elections. Coalition has become such a synonym for collusion and corruption that military arbitration is not particularly unpopular. John Girling's (1981: 158; cf. Maisrikrod 2002: 189, 191) report on public perception of Thai politicians as unruly and corrupt is still relevant to Thai politics. Of the eleven governments that Thailand had in the 1990s, one ended with military intervention, three with hostile no-confidence votes, four as a result of mass media scrutiny, and three due to mass demonstrations. As Duncan McCargo (2002) trenchantly puts it, genuinely elected governments never completed their terms, and a credible government could not win elections, while a government that could win elections could not maintain credibility. Politicians and political parties have such low esteem that the new Thai constitution requires cabinet ministers to forsake their seats in the parliament and empowers the Senate to dismiss the nonperforming government officials, including cabinet ministers. Senators, now directly elected, should be persons of integrity from regional constituencies, serve at most two terms, and be nonpartisan. Indeed, Thailand has long been tinkering with the role of the upper house to instill a spirit of SOP found in a presidential system (Morell and Chai-anan 1981: 100).[18]

Benjamin Franklin's admonition reveals the essence of coalition government in a parliamentary system: hang together or be hanged separately. Hanging together entails something that, to Michael Thies (2001: 596), is quite analogous to SOP but qualitatively different from the West-

minsterian single-party parliamentary government. Coalition partners in a parliamentary system hold mutual vetoes. For the purpose of stability, a prime minister will have to please all veto players in a coalition government. Thus the decisiveness of decisionmaking may be sacrificed. In contrast, a president can act decisively and in a timely way, even under divided government. Stephan Haggard's study of the Asian financial crisis provides a telling example. Equally affected by the AFC, Thailand's reform was more gradual, slow-paced, and less thorough than Korea's. Every time Thailand signed a letter of intent with the International Monetary Fund, there was a major battle or a coalition to be reconfirmed or rebuilt (Haggard 2000: 97–100). As Byung-Kook Kim (2000: 36) shows, even before Kim Dae-jung's inauguration, the assembly passed three laws laying down some foundation for sweeping reform. And even after losing majority support, a president could still use nonlegislative mechanisms to push for reform. In this respect, the "temporary rigidity" of presidentialism has worked well for Korea. Because of the failure of the previous government and his dissociation from it, newly elected Kim Dae-jung was able to take his case for economic reform to the public. Compare this with Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai and his Democratic Party in Thailand, facing the same burden of policy reform in the midst of the AFC. As a probusiness party, the Democratic Party, mostly under the leadership of Chuan, had been a key player in Thai coalition politics for three decades. The party was an "established institution," acceptable to the Thai civilian and military elite despite its objection to military arbitration (Girling 1981: 167). It was natural for this party to undertake liberal reform, but it also was necessary for it to make many compromises with coalition partners whenever its reform program incited protests from various social sectors and triggered intracabinet bargaining within the governing coalition.

With a coalition government in place, Thai democratic politics has been more collegial (and collusive) than confrontational in terms of the executive-legislative relationship. Coalition government, however, is not necessarily immune from adversary politics. In fact, precisely because of the endogenous nature of election time (not fixed), and the possibility of using policies to affect electoral fortunes in snap elections, coalition partners may have less incentive to coalesce than we tend to assume, and adversary politics may surface.[19] The downfall of Chuan's first coalition government (October 1992–May 1995) was a prime example. The government was slowly but steadily implementing a rural development plan,

yet as soon as a land-reform scandal broke out and exposed the weakness of the prime minister's party, a coalition partner pulled the rug, leading to a new election and then the reshuffling of a new coalition government (Murray 1996: 362). There is no incentive to compromise if the chances of bringing down the government and then winning the next election are high. A coalition partner can bargain and threaten to defect. Surely, the threat is credible only when a partner is indispensable to coalition government. If the partner is surplus, easily replaceable, then its threat is not credible. Thus, there is incentive for minority partners to gang up to bring down the government, because following a new election, they even may get the chance to form the cabinet.

The distinction between the two forms of government is still important. As these four cases illustrate, if we hold the party system constant,[20] the bargaining between the prime minister's party with other parties for the making of a viable coalition government under the parliamentary system is intrinsically different from interbranch bargaining between the president and an independently elected legislature. Not only does political bargaining take place in different arenas; it also proceeds under different parameters and incentive structures. Major players essentially haggle within the government, and the showdown in the parliament only acts out the endgame. The result can be the collapse of government. In a presidential system, the interbranch negotiation unfolds actually in the legislature between the ruling alliance and the opposition. The process can be protracted, repetitive, and frustrating, but not lethal, as no body's mandate is at stake. If the party structure remains the same, coordination and defection problems for political alliance under the presidential system are more pervasive and intractable than those for coalition government under the parliamentary system. Confrontational politics tends to persist in Taiwan, mass defection is common in the Philippines, and both features are present in Korea. But the consequences for failure to collaborate under the parliamentary system could be more severe than those under presidentialism. Thailand has had eleven governments since the early 1990s, and each major policy decision takes a long time to make.

Party Systems and Electoral Rules

The problems of the presidential system are intractable in the absence of a moderately institutionalized party system. Unfortunately, the three cases

of the presidential system have a fragmented, fluid, or polarized party system.[21] But as the case of Thailand shows, the parliamentary form of government is not better if the party system is not well-established. Without a stable party system, interparty negotiation—so crucial to overcoming the coordination problem among branches of government under the presidential system and among members of a coalition government under the parliamentary system—is next to impossible, because political parties cannot make credible commitments to one another. Conversely, if major parties are few, stable, well-rooted in the society, and able to maintain party discipline, then the political market will not be volatile. Even if no majority party emerges from an election, regular, continuing, and accountable political parties are in a position to negotiate and coordinate. As Scott Mainwaring and Timothy Scully (1995: 5) put it in the context of Latin America, a well-established party system will prevent flash parties from gaining adherents and can enhance, though not guarantee, legislative support. In the case of a presidential system (to borrow from Shugart and Mainwaring 1997), the president's ability to work through a party system can make up for his weak constitutional power.

In Table 3, I characterize the party systems in newly democratized East Asia along three dimensions: fragmentation, fluidity, and polarization. *Fragmentation* denotes the number of "effective" parties, *fluidity* refers to the stability of political parties, and *polarization* measures ideological distance among major political parties. The party systems in three of the four cases are underinstitutionalized and either fragmented or fluid, whereas that in Taiwan is arguably overinstitutionalized, rigidly organized, and tenaciously polarized. Many political parties are major contenders in election and coalition politics in the Philippines and Thailand. Political parties in South Korea, the Philippines, and, to a large extent,

Table 3 Distinct Features of the Party Systems in Four East Asian New Democracies

	Fragmentation	Fluidity	Polarization
Philippines	high-medium	high	low
South Korea	low	high	medium-low
Taiwan	low	low	high
Thailand	high	high-medium	low

Source: Compiled by author.

Thailand are loose-knit political groupings. Party organization is merely a front desk for a leader; intraparty procedures are ad hoc; party-switching and the creation of new parties are all too common. Parties are not dominant players, politics tend to be erratic and unpredictable, patrimonialism thrives, and the space for populism is wide. Candidates directly appeal to voters, and political contests for legislative elections are a matter of personality rather than partisan and policy differences.[22] The president's or premier's grip over his/her party is never reliable, and his/her ability to organize support in the legislative branch is even more flimsy. The well-developed party system in Taiwan, for its part, has its own problems. Political parties in Taiwan are few and relatively stable but tend to be polarized ideologically. Eventually, the government leaders in all four cases indulged in using extralegal methods to overcome the governance problems that were made worse by weak party systems.

In South Korea, the effective number of political parties is moderate (N = 3.5), and parties do seem to have their own regional support bases while sharing the constituents in metropolitan Seoul. However, political parties are all faction-ridden, constantly realigned, and frequently renamed. Card-carrying rank-and-file members are few, party organizations are underdeveloped, and the parties' ideological positions are vague, or at least blurred by distinct regional colors. Candidates' regional origin, not their party organizations in the region, is used to mobilize votes. Mass defection easily undermines the seemingly tight party discipline. Lacking continuity and stability, political parties simply cannot nurture any reputation for their labels or political brand names. Moreover, political parties simply cannot make credible commitments to each other, as insurgency within any political party is rampant. Party splits and realignments are so frequent that the president often resorts to extraordinary measures to organize and maintain a working majority in the legislative branch. As discussed above and shown in Table 2, the president's constitutional power is neither strong nor weak in South Korea. His limited party power undercuts rather than strengthens his constitutional power.

The pre-Marcos Philippines had the semblance of a stable two-party system between 1946 and 1971, but party discipline was loose and party-switching common. The two parties were cadre parties, not rooted in any particular social stratum, economic sector, or region (Wurfel 1988: 98). Lacking internal rules, the two parties were essentially aggregates of local machines. Party label was more like a flag of convenience for candidates, and personal voting was prevalent. The two-party system became nearly

defunct during the authoritarian era. After the authoritarian aberration (1971–1986), political parties were slowly rebuilt, and many new parties came into being. A fluid two-party system became fragmented. Although candidate selection is typically based on caucus, not on a primary, party leaders do not really control the process, because the political machine is in the hands of local notables. Political parties in the post-Marcos Philippines are as shallow as before, competing not on policy platforms but on personality, swelling and evaporating as fast as one can imagine.

The Filipino presidency has more constitutional power than the presidencies in Korea and Taiwan. Even under the condition of divided government, the president in the Philippines potentially can initiate legislative and policy change and induce congress to negotiate and collaborate rather than simply react to the opposition-controlled legislature (see Table 2). However, a highly fluid party system permits and perpetuates patronage politics—an easy way out of the problems that a divided government may entail. As detailed above, the president-elect in the Philippines recruits or collects members of congress into a "king's alliance" for patronage, and allies have no qualms defecting from their own parties. Hence, by the time of inauguration, the president has congressional majority support in place. As the president's nonrenewable term is ending or is endangered, and as a presidential hopeful looms large, the existing alliance for patronage can evaporate quickly. The distribution or promise of private goods to individual legislators, rather than policy debate, bona fide bargaining, and the nurturing of ideological affinity among parties, became the mechanisms for overcoming the coordination problem between the president and the legislature in the Philippines.

Thailand has had an enormously fragmented and rather fluid party system without much party discipline or many organizational ties to society. Typically, more than ten parties compete in each election, and electoral volatility remains high, as every party in the leading pack of five or six parties has its ups and downs. Although candidate selection is based on the decision of the regional or central party committee rather than on an open primary, party discipline is loose. The incumbent or former member of parliament (MP) often does the first round of selection for a given district, and party-switching and party-splitting are not unusual, especially if an election is in the offing (Limmanee 1998: 408, 425–426, 443). Representation belongs to MPs, not parties. Moreover, many parties are resource-funneling machines, responding to "shareholders," and are a tool for factions to appropriate power (McCargo 1997: 121). Money politics is

so pervasive that new or reinvented parties are perennially welcome, construed by media and voters as a result of dissatisfaction with existing parties and a sign of renewal and reform (McCargo 1997: 121). Few parties have card-carrying members. At least in rural areas (Limmanee 1998: 418, 432), most MPs would be elected irrespective of their party labels. Through proselytizing incumbent MPs, the newly created Thai Rak Thai Party mushroomed into the leading party on the eve of the 2001 general election and claimed an unprecedented landslide victory (Montesano 2001: 175).

Party fragmentation and fluidity make the formation and maintenance of coalition government a daunting task, within which many other parliamentary systems continue to wrestle (e.g., Israel, Italy, and Holland).[23] Lack of party discipline and heavy doses of money politics in elections aggravate the problem of organizing and sustaining a coalition government in Thailand. Coalition-making means not so much interparty bargaining as buying support from all veto gate players whose main obsession is with campaign financing rather than policies. However, we should note that Thailand's party system has shown signs of consolidation. Forty-two parties took part in the 1975 election, and twenty-one won some seats. Since the early 1990s, some ten parties have competed, and five or six have been familiar names. The effective number of parties is shrinking. Defection remains common, but defectors have been gravitating toward larger parties, hoping to be able to become part of the new leading coalition to form the government. In the 1996 general election, many gravitated toward either the Democratic Party or the New Aspiration Party, as one of the two was expected to win a majority (Limmanee 1998: 419). In addition, whereas in the past political parties were highly personalistic, they now are increasingly regionally oriented and linked to various social sectors, in spite of the role the personality of Thaksin played in the most unusual landslide victory of his party in the 2001 election.

Among the four cases covered in this essay, Taiwan has the most institutionalized party system. The effective number of political parties is small. The ruling party, the KMT, democratized without losing power for quite a while, as if a one-party dominant system à la Japan would be created. Eventually, the ruling KMT lost its hegemony and spun off a few small parties, but the viability of third parties is still in doubt.[24] The two established leading parties, the KMT and the DPP, are highly organized, with elaborate internal rules on candidate selection, policy research apparatuses, and large numbers of card-carrying members. Party discipline is

relatively well maintained, and party-switching happens primarily during the critical juncture of party realignment. However, political parties are easily factionalized internally, and political parties easily can be polarized into extreme positions and locked into a zero-sum game rather than moderating themselves or compromising. Unlike the other three cases plagued by party fragmentation and/or fluidity, the weakness of Taiwan's party system lies in its ideological rigidity, its tendency of radicalization, and its propensity for confrontation. Embedded in this sort of party system, the presidents in newly democratized Taiwan—constitutionally least powerful among the three presidential systems covered in this essay—have found it tempting to exploit subethnic politics to bridle an opposition-controlled legislature.

How, then, do we account for the weakness of the party system in these four cases? Many have attributed it to social cleavages or cultural factors. Regionalism is said to have fragmentized parties, whereas clientelism undermined their discipline in Korea (Kim 1998). The voters' acquiescence to a deeply entrenched spoils system—politicians support a newly elected president in exchange for private goods—is said to have made "turncoatism" prevalent, and pervasive clientelist ties simply corrode the party system in the Philippines (Leones and Moraleda 1998: 312–313).[25] In Thailand, patron-client ties are blamed for lack of party discipline as well, and the rural-urban cleavage is said to help to segmentize the party system (Limmanee 1998: 407). Moreover, Thai political parties are generally mistrusted, branded by the military as illegitimate and unrepresentative, and seen as agitating the masses and selling political power to the wealthy (McCargo 1997: 121). The older the parties are, the more corrupt they are perceived to be. In Taiwan, the subethnic cleavage is said to have polarized the party system (Hsu 1999).

However, electoral rules have their impacts as well. Although the patterns of cleavages may account for different choices of electoral formulas to begin with (Rokkan 1970: chap. 4), electoral rules, once chosen, condition the behavior of political elites in the electoral game, thereby shaping the party system. Moreover, electoral rules can reinforce or alleviate the problems that are presumed to be culturally and socially induced. Indeed, in all of the four cases covered here, most notably in Thailand, electoral rules have been blamed for the problems found in their party systems, and there have been attempts to recraft the rules to redress these problems.

As Table 4 shows, South Korea adopted in 1988 upon its democratization a primarily SMD and plurality-based electoral system with a small

Table 4 Electoral Systems in the Philippines, Thailand, Korea, and Taiwan

	House			
	Districts	PR	Ballot Rules	Senate
Philippines	SMD/PL	20%	2-ballot	candidate-based BV
Korea	SMD/PL	16.8%	1-ballot	none; unicameral
Taiwan	SNTV/MMD	12%	1-ballot	none; unicameral
Thailand	SMD/PL	20%	2-ballot	SMD (nonpartisan)

Source: Compiled by author.

Notes: SMD/PL is single member district with plurality rule, a system under which an electoral district chooses only one legislator.

PR is proportional representation; the percentage indicates the portion of the total seats that are allotted to parties according to a PR formula.

A two-ballot rule allows each voter to cast two votes, one for a party and for the purpose of distributing the PR seats, the other for a candidate and for the purpose of choosing the winner in each SMD on the basis of plurality.

A one-ballot rule allows each voter to cast only one vote, for a candidate for the purpose of choosing the winner in SMD or a set of winners in SNTV. The PR seats are allocated to political parties on the basis of the votes each party's candidates collected.

SNTV/MMD means single, nontransferable vote, multiple-member district system. Under this system, each voter can only cast one vote and for a particular candidate rather than a party in spite of the fact that an electoral district may have multiple seats and a party may nominate multiple candidates and win more than one seat.

BV is block-vote, a plurality system used in multiple-member districts in which each voter has as many votes as there are candidates to be elected. Voting can be candidate-centered (the case of the Filipino Senate) or party-centered. The candidates with the highest vote totals win the seats.

The *nonpartisan rule* in Thailand's Senate race requires that candidates not have any party affiliation.

PR component. Under this system, three-fourths (incrementally increased to 83.2 percent) of the legislators are elected from SMDs on the basis of the first-past-the-post rule; the remaining one-fourth (incrementally decreased to 16.8 percent) of the legislators are selected from the party lists on the basis of the total votes political parties have received in the SMD-plurality contest.[26] This new and repeatedly refined system was meant to increase the stability of the party system, facilitate the emergence of the majority party in the legislative branch, and—through the party-controlled, closed-list system—enhance party discipline and ameliorate the disproportionality that the SMD component inevitably would create (Park 2002: 130–131). This basic electoral framework, however, has not stabilized Korea's party system; neither has it maintained party discipline.

Most of specific electoral rules are at odds with the basic electoral framework. Table 1 and Table 4 list four specific rules in South Korea: no

run-off election for the presidential race; no concurrent election for the presidency and legislature; a one-term limit for the presidency; and a single ballot for legislative elections. Only the first rule helps to consolidate the party system: the presidential race is based on plurality, inducing parties to collaborate and cosponsor truly viable candidates all along, rather than sticking to their own candidates in the first round and then trading votes with other parties in the second round. The plurality-based race tends to fuse parties, whereas a run-off election for the presidency tends to generate a centrifugal force in the party system, even though a president elected by a majority of votes may have a stronger mandate than one elected by a plurality of votes.

The other three rules weaken the party system and aggravate the divided-government problem. Given that presidential and legislative elections are not concurrent, the president's party has a smaller chance to become the majority party in the legislature, as it cannot benefit from the coattail effects generated in the presidential race. The one-term limit for the presidency in South Korea reduces incentives for legislative-presidential collaboration, or interparty cooperation in the legislature, because a president becomes a lame duck almost from the day he/she assumes office (Mo 2002). Finally, the single-ballot rule for legislative election is not conducive to party-building. Under this rule, each voter has only one ballot, and this ballot is for a candidate in the SMD race. However, this same vote, rather than a voter's second ballot for a party, also is the base for the allocation of at-large seats for a political party. If there were a two-ballot rule, each political party would have the incentive to nurture its reputation and polish its label. And if the party as a collectivity thrived, individual candidates—be they on the list or in the district race—would benefit from it. Under the current one-ballot rule, a party's fortune hinges on its elite's performance, because the party's share of at-large seats depends on individual candidates' votes in the SMD races. When a group of party elites decides to rebel against the leadership, the party will simply vanish. Although the party leadership generally controls nomination, rank-orders the candidates on the party list, and allocates state subsidies to political parties, party discipline is not tight in South Korea. At-large seats account for only 16 percent of the total number of seats. State subsidy to a party easily is dwarfed by political donations, and money flow is not transparent (Kim 1998: 153). Moreover, a PR list is a double-edged sword: it enhances party discipline in that seat holders must listen to the party whip or resign to run on their own under different banners. But it

also provides an outlet for rebels to bolt from a party to start their own shops. Not only can incumbents with strong local bases get reelected under a new party label; they can also leverage their party's PR seats to recruit more followers.

The post-1986 Philippines has a primarily SMD-plurality electoral system, with concurrent elections and a plurality rule for the presidential race.[27] Such a U.S.-style institutional setup would be hospitable to a stable two-party system. However, four rules encourage party fragmentation and undermine party discipline: an open list for the Senate race; a split ticket for the presidential and vice presidential candidates; a one-term limit for the presidency; and freedom to alter party affiliation. For the Senate election, the whole nation is a constituency, and the race is based on plurality and an open-list system under which political parties submit lists. However, voters can choose across the lists for as many candidates as there are seats. Filipino voters also choose the president and vice president separately rather than from the same ticket. These two rules, open list and split ticket—obviously deemphasize party labels and encourage personal voting. The one-term presidency rule makes the Filipino political party system even flimsier, as toward the end or beginning of each presidential term the legislators are all in the process of changing political colors again. The final rule also is a party-busting rather than party-building device. According to the 1985 Omnibus Election Code, "A political party may nominate and/or support candidates not belonging to it" (sec. 70), and "an elective official may change his party affiliation for purposes of the election next following his change or party within one year prior to such election" (sec. 71).[28] Thus, party affiliation is not a requirement for candidacy, and party-switching imposes little cost.

Party discipline and loyalty were so loose that a few prominent constitutional convention participants started extolling the virtue of the PR system in 1972. In the 1971 constitutional debate, some advocated modified PR to deal with the widespread turncoat problem (Wurfel 1988: 108). Aside from converting all multiple-member districts (MMDs) into SMDs, the 1986 electoral rules—enshrined in the post-Marco constitution in 1986—also prescribe a closed-list system for 20 percent of the seats, which are to be allocated according to a separate ballot that each voter casts for a political party. When this PR-list component was first implemented in the 1998 election, only 30 percent of the voters cared to cast the second vote for a party. The PR seats are proportionally very well distributed, and any party garnering more than 2 percent of the votes is qualified

to receive some seats. Although the electoral law does not clearly stipulate this, the at-large seats are understood to have been created for special, underrepresented sectors (women, senior citizens, the disabled, etc.). Small parties representing these sectors came into being, and "regular" parties did not submit party lists.[29] The "regular" parties still lack a mechanism to enhance their internal discipline, and the newly created list system has resulted in the increased number of parties.

Prior to its 1997 electoral reform, Thailand had an MMD system. The district magnitude ranged from one to three.[30] Political parties were required to submit full lists (the number of party candidates equaled the number of seats in a constituency) in the constituency in which they cared to compete. Despite the constitutional stipulation on "group voting" (see article 91 of the 1979 constitution), voters were allowed to and many voters did pick and choose individual candidates from across the lists, especially in the north.[31] The MMD rules and the practice of split voting had three consequences. First, candidates relied on and voters responded to personal rather than party strategies (Hicken 2002: chap. 3). The prevalence of split returns indicated that candidates did not place great value on a party label, and voters disregarded partisan differences. Second, unable to canvass in person effectively in a large multiple-member district, candidates relied on local notables and their machines to deliver votes. Money politics was rampant. And the Thai elites and masses were particularly concerned with this consequence (Maisrikrod 2002). Third, split voting created centrifugal forces and kept the party system fragmented. Political parties were required to field candidates for at least one-fourth of the total seats in the House (Limmanee 1998: 406). But this minimal number of candidacies (versus a minimal vote share in a PR system) was not an effective barrier to deter frivolous and small parties from going into the fray.

Money politics, corruption, and, eventually, the Asian financial crisis led to changes in the constitution and electoral system in 1997. SMD plurality is now used to elect 80 percent of the members of the Lower House, and the remaining 20 percent of the seats are distributed according to the closed party lists and a PR formula, which is based on a second ballot cast for a political party. With the double intent of consolidating the party system and tightening up party discipline, this new electoral design is identical to the one currently used in the Filipino House elections. However, Thailand has prescribed a number of special rules to improve the quality and reputation of its party system and party government. First, there is the

high educational attainment requirement (a bachelor's degree) for all parliamentary seats. Second, a powerful election commission has been established to order a rerun of elections in districts with electoral irregularities, including an overdose of money politics. Third, the Senate is no longer an appointive body, and its elective, nonpartisan members are vested with power to censure the government. Fourth, cabinet ministers are drawn from 100 at-large seat holders. Thus, the new electoral system essentially yields three groups of representatives: nonpartisan, watchdog-like senators; 400 MPs elected from SMDs, who are to deliberate policies; and 100 MPs from high-caliber party lists, who are to govern the country. Whether the new electoral law will curtail money politics is still a moot question (Maisrikrod 2002: 196). SMDs probably will reduce the number of parties, and the closed-list system with two ballots will enhance party discipline and provide incentives to a party to build up its collective reputation. Although the PR component allows small parties to survive and new parties to start, political parties appear to be clustering into two broad groups, which may conceivably lead to a two-party system in the long run (Limmanee 1998: 419).

Taiwan uses SNTV-MMD to elect 88 percent of its legislators and a PR formula to distribute the remaining (at-large) seats. The SNTV-MMD electoral system is a party-busting rather than party-building design. First, under this system, a candidate tends to rely on personal rather than party strategy for electoral mobilization. A voter casts only one vote for one candidate in a multiple-member district. The top tier of vote-getters win the race, and the "surplus" vote a party candidate receives cannot be transferred to a fellow-party candidate. The candidate is obliged to compete not only with rival-party candidates but also with fellow-party candidates. Second, because of the use of personal strategies, individual support bases or political machines are common. Maintaining a machine is expensive, which means that money politics is often unavoidable. The proprietary right to a political machine often lies with an individual elite rather than with the party. Third, under this system, a candidate and his/her party have conflicting interests. For a candidate, the more votes one can get, the better chance one has to be in the winning set. The party prefers to have even distribution of party votes across its nominees in order to win more seats for the party. Moreover, any party must strive for optimal nomination, because too many party candidates in a given district means party supporters would be spread too thinly, whereas undernomination means that many votes are wasted. Finally, the district magnitude is huge in Taiwan,

meaning that one can collect votes from a vast area, a condition benign to new and small parties. The larger the district magnitude, the more proportional the system is going to be. Therefore, there always is a temptation to bolt from a party to start a new one.

And yet Taiwan's party system is the most institutionalized party system among the four cases covered here. Why? There are idiosyncratic factors. For example, the KMT's immense wealth permitted it to recruit and discipline poorly endowed candidates while a series of ideological goals cemented the main opposition. But essentially, the two leading parties became major players in the political market because they figured out ways to solve the most challenging problem the SNTV-MMD system poses: vote division. The parties have experimented and refined various methods to divide party votes among their candidates or to enforce an "agreement" among candidates. The methods range from the responsibility zone to giving cues to party supporters (Liu 1999).[32] Political parties serve as contract enforcers for their candidates. In addition, major parties also have made extraordinary efforts to control nominations, as they affect the party's fate. The party can discipline the defector by nominating someone in his/her district to spoil the game. The game is very dicey if there is a popular vote-getter. In this case, a few swing votes may be able to defeat a particular candidate. The threshold for securing election can be very low, and the fate of candidates is uncertain. The coordinating function provided by a party in a condition of high uncertainty is valuable.

Nevertheless, the SNTV-MMD system has some pernicious effects on Taiwan's party system. First, it invites political radicalism. To be elected, a candidate needs to ensure only the support of a fraction of the votes in a large district. He/she can cater to a niche of voters rather than a broad base of voters as in SMDs. Moreover, for the sake of "product differentiation," a candidate often is tempted to take an extreme position on the salient issues (ethnic and national identity in the context of contemporary democratic Taiwan), a position that makes him/her distinct. Thus, a few radicals are able to drive a party away from the medium toward a polar position. Second, aside from polarization, parties also easily factionalize under this system. The factional tie is both a way for a legislator to boost his/her chance for party renomination and a signaling device to niche voters (Cheng and Chou 2000). Factionalization in the Taiwan context also tends to develop along subethnic and national identity fault lines. Third, smaller parties also can be tempted to radicalize the issue in order to erode the support base of the centrist catchall party, leading to the growth of polarized

parties and the depletion of the moderate, centrist party. Once a party system becomes rigid and polarized, the incentive to confront easily prevails over the incentive to compromise. Nonconcurrent elections also can fan the flames of confrontational party politics in Taiwan, as they may increase the chances of divided government and complicate the president's effort to forge a legislative alliance. It is little wonder that Taiwan is seriously considering electoral and constitutional reforms to synchronize elections and adopt a parallel system (a combination of SMD and PR) with a two-ballot rule (*China Times*, August 15, 2002).

To sum up, the electoral systems in the four democracies have flaws in either the basic framework (Taiwan) or in the specific rules (the other three cases), contributing to the rise of party systems that are either over- or underinstitutionalized. The problems of each party system vary: polarization in Taiwan, fluidity and fragmentation in the other three cases. The pathetic party systems then stunt democratic governance because they enhance the opportunities for and aggravate the condition of divided governance under the presidential system while they accelerate the turnover of coalition government under the parliamentary system. Parties in Taiwan often are overly committed to their self-imposed positions, whereas parties in the other three cases simply cannot make credible commitments to anything or to one another.

Conclusion: The Devil Is in the Details

Institutional designs have consequences. Better-designed institutions do not guarantee smooth democratic governance, although poorly designed ones may dampen it. The literature on institutional design initially highlighted the perils of presidentialism and extolled the merits of a parliamentary form of government. The debate today has transcended the dichotomy of presidentialism versus the parliamentary system and focuses on the variety of presidential systems, the conditions under which the presumed problem of presidentialism can be alleviated, if not solved, and the conditions under which the presumed advantages of parliamentary systems can be sustained.

The presidential systems are not of one piece. In some cases, "positive" specific features, such as strong legislative power in the hands of the president (decree power and strong veto power), concurrent elections, the plurality rule used in the presidential election, and a renewable presiden-

tial term, facilitate the interbranch coordination and even minimize the probability of divided government under the presidential system. In some other cases, "negative" specific features, such as the president's weak constitutional power, nonconcurrent elections, a runoff election for the presidency, and a one-term limit, aggravate the problems that are often found in a presidential system: little incentive to accommodate and collaborate, strong incentive to defect and confront. The three cases of presidential systems examined here have more negative specific features than positive ones, leading the presidents to exploit extraordinary measures (bribery, prosecution, and ethnic politics) to neutralize the executive-legislative conflict.[33]

The crux of the matter, however, lies in the electoral framework, the party system it produces, and the party politics it shapes. Lacking a sound party system is probably the worst situation for a presidential system. But lacking a sound party system, a parliamentary system is no better off. Again, just as we need to transcend the broad distinction between the presidential versus parliamentary forms of government, we need to go beyond the two polar types of electoral formulas—the SMD-plurality system versus the PR system—to uncover the specific rules that really structure electoral competition, frame the party system, and drive the dynamics of party politics. Most notable are the single-vote and nontransferable rule in Taiwan; nonconcurrent elections, the one-term limit for the presidency, and the single-ballot rule in Korea; MMD and split voting in pre-1997 Thailand; and the open list for the Senate race, the split ticket for the presidency and vice presidency, and the freedom to alter party affiliation in the Philippines. These rules in their respective ways loosen party discipline and fragmentize the party system in Korea, Thailand, and the Philippines while making political parties in Taiwan rigid and vulnerable to political radicalism. The weak or pathetic party system reinforces, rather than ameliorates, the problems derived from a poorly designed constitutional framework.

However, this analysis on the centrality of specific rules and features of democratic politics also suggests that it is possible to improve the functioning of existing constitutional systems through incremental tinkering and adjustment rather than by a shift to a new constitutional form of government. It is also essential to redesign both the basic electoral framework and the auxiliary electoral rules to strengthen the party system. Only Thailand seems to be assiduously pursuing both electoral reform and constitutional refinement. Electoral reform requires time. As Gary Cox (1987)

shows, it takes a few elections for actors to sort out the ideological axis, for various parties to gradually gravitate toward two poles, and for the system to become stable. Thailand, the only parliamentary system among the four cases, indeed is the most serious student of institutional design in a newly democratized Asia.

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Notes

Thanks are due to Deborah Brown, Yun-han Chu, Byung-Kook Kim, Michael Thies, Michael Tierney, Yu-shan Wu, and an anonymous referee for their comments on earlier drafts of this essay. I also benefited from conversation with Allen Hicken.

1. This essay will not discuss Indonesian democracy, which is even younger and cannot be compared easily with the four cases covered here.

2. Some scholars (Przeworski 1991; Linz and Stepan 1996) highlight regular elections and access to power only via democratic competition as minimal requirements for democratic consolidation.

3. Various adjectives have been assigned to define the kaleidoscopic nature of a party system that is devoid of socioeconomic basis, programmatic ideas, and, within a party, a rule-based decisionmaking process. Terms used include *inchoate* (Mainwaring and Scully 1995) and *shallow* (Diamond and Kim 2000). Duncan McCargo (1997) shows that Thai parties are Janus-faced: "real" (i.e., with some history, principles, and organization) and "authentic" (i.e., opportunistic, faction-ridden, and money-tainted).

4. Numerous public opinion surveys reveal this. Even legislators or hopeful legislators were extremely self-critical. In a survey conducted in September 2001, 77 percent of the nominees for the forthcoming legislative elections were in favor of reducing the size of the legislature by half.

5. The most recent report from the Political and Economic Risk Consultancy shows that Vietnam, Indonesia, India, Thailand, the Philippines, and China were perceived as "most corrupt" in the Asian region, with Malaysia, South Korea, and Taiwan falling below the average.

6. Consider the Philippines: Joseph Estrada inherited a good economy from Fidel Ramos but had to "resign" after an incomplete tenure of two and a half years, during which the peso plummeted while corruption and graft soared. See *New York Times*, March 16, 2001.

7. Similarly, Masahiko Aoki (2001) defines *institutions* as expectations or beliefs that are shared by everyone as self-enforcing rules based on the strategic interaction of people in organizational settings. Others define *institutions* as stable patterns of behavior or as equilibria under which actors no longer would change their responses to one another.

8. Juan J. Linz's (1997: 1) recent analysis is more nuanced, contending that the crises of parliamentary systems are crises of government, whereas the crises in presidential systems are more likely to be crises of regime.

9. Although the National Assembly confirms the president's appointment of prime minister, the removal of the prime minister and cabinet members remains a prerogative of the president (art. 63). The constitution clearly states that the president is head of the executive branch and is assisted by the prime minister, who assumes the vice chairmanship of the state council or cabinet (art. 66, 88).

10. Michael Thies's (2001) pioneering study analyzes the agency problems in a coalition government under a parliamentary system. Under the presidential system, a coalition government is difficult to sustain and the agency problem involved is even more intractable.

11. South Korea is a rare exception. Article 43 of the 1987 constitution stipulates that members of the National Assembly may not concurrently hold any other office prescribed by law. Yet in practice they can hold cabinet posts without giving up their legislative seats through presidential decrees based on the Law on Public Officeholders. This rule ameliorates the agency problem within a political party, the point made here, but not interbranch and interparty gridlock problems discussed below.

12. Scholars in U.S. politics show that presidents do receive blame and credit for overall economic policy outcomes and promises (see Lewis-Beck 1990: 125–129).

13. This point should not be overemphasized, though. More often used by the president were the National Tax Service under the Ministry of Finance and Economy and the Public Prosecutor's Office under the Ministry of Justice. Both are nominally under ministries but are de facto controlled by the president.

14. The binary designations, Taiwanese versus Mainlander, have lost their political saliency. This subethnic cleavage did overlap substantially with the national identity cleavage between pro-independence and pro-unification stands. However, most people, irrespective of their ethnic background, are for the status quo. Moreover, ethnic identity has evolved to a point where political labels (e.g., "Taiwanese" versus "Chinese") are no longer mutually exclusive. The political category of Taiwanese is also redefined to include all those residing in Taiwan, irrespective of the timing of their immigration into the island. In particular, the Mainlanders are now defined as "new Taiwanese." It remains true, however, that the DPP derives its electoral support mainly from "old Taiwanese" whereas the New Party and People First Party (PFP) have overwhelming support from the new Taiwanese. The Kuomintang attempts to present itself as the political party for all, a position that may allow it to collect votes from the supporters of the DPP and

PFP but that may also lead to the loss of supporters to the other two major parties (see Cheng and Hsu 2002).

15. Policy conflict was most acute on cross-strait and national identity issues but was evident in other issue areas as well, including welfare provisions to various social groups and the capital gains tax on land sales.

16. The Thai military intervened and ruled in the past. In recent decades, it has staged fewer coups but has played a role in cabinet formation (for the distinction between military intervention and military arbitration, see Taylor 2001).

17. Since Thailand began experimenting with democracy in the mid-1970s, it has had eleven elections and eighteen cabinets, on average a general election every two years and four months and a new government every sixteen months.

18. The role of the Senate has been constantly redefined to help to upgrade Thai "semidemocracy" since the 1970s, but the overall thrust remains unchanged: enhance separation of power in parliamentary system that by definition requires fusion of power.

19. Adversary politics actually can be very acute under parliamentary politics when political parties are well institutionalized and compete under SMD/plurality (see Finer 1975).

20. One may want to hold the relationship between the social elite and political parties constant here. Paul Hutchcraft (1998) argues that the fundamental difference between the Philippines and Thailand is that the landed elite has always overwhelmed the political process and thoroughly dominated political parties whereas the Thai social elite has never really captured the state elite, whether civil or military. A comparative political economy analysis is beyond the scope of this article. But the institutional analysis suggests that patrimonialism tends to thrive under presidentialism, whereas somehow it is tempered in a parliamentary system.

21. Such a bad combination also exists in postcommunist Europe (see Linz 1997).

22. Personalism is never lacking in advanced democracies, especially in presidential systems (see Mainwaring and Scully 1995: 22). But partisan difference is rarely submerged.

23. The problem is not limited to coalition-building per se; it may also result in a "democratic deficit." The coalition government that proves to be viable may not be what the voters would accept. All this led Israel to revise its constitution to permit a popularly elected prime minister.

24. The New Party elite bolted from the KMT in 1993, as did the PFP, in 2000. The New Party was subsequently absorbed into the PFP. In 2001, the Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU) was formed, mostly by disgruntled KMT elite and to some extent by the DPP elite. TSU has ideological affinity with the DPP (on the viability of third parties, see Cheng and Hsu 2002).

25. Election in the Philippines is understood in the instrumental sense (see Kerkvliet and Mojares 1991: 8); people can tolerate, even welcome, many rules and practices that are not legitimate, if they can only deliver economic goods and maintain peace and order.

26. Between 1988 and 1992, the allocation of at-large seats was based on the total seats each political party received in the SMD-plurality contest, and the leading party was given a small premium if it failed to win the majority of seats in the district contest.

27. The Philippines used to have a plurality-based but multiple-member district system under which voters chose parties and a party would win every seat in a district. This kind of bloc voting would encourage party affiliation and the use of party labels versus personal strategy in campaigning, but it also created the fear that one party would dominate and edge out the others altogether; hence, the rule was abolished in 1951. Single-member districts became the norm. Where multiple-member districts still existed, split voting was permitted; thus, voters could cast as many votes as there were seats and could do so across parties. After 1986, multiple-member districts no longer exist.

28. Cited in Leones and Moraleda (1998: 313–314).

29. Communication with Carolina Hernandez, February 12, 2002.

30. SMD prevailed in 1932–1947; subsequently a multiple-member district design, which was initially province-based, and, later, a three-member district design were used (see Limmanee 1998: 428).

31. There was no way to directly measure this without examining each individual ballot. But Allen D. Hicken (2002) convincingly infers from the electoral results that split returns occurred in an average of 61 percent of the districts nationwide, around 80 percent in the northern districts and less than 20 percent in the southern during the 1990s.

32. The KMT party leaders with high name recognition and dense local connections were supposed to campaign only for specific party nominees and only in designated subdivisions or responsibility zones within an electoral district. That way, the KMT's votes would be evenly distributed among all viable party candidates rather than unduly concentrated in a few high-profile candidates.

33. This essay has focused on the consequences, rather than the origins, of these rules, which obviously were products of political compromise or the outcome of some dominant political forces at the time the constitution was drawn.

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