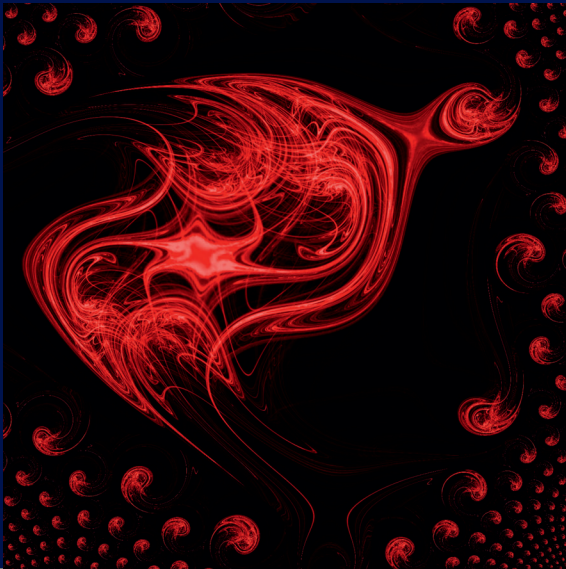


Łukasz Zamecki / Li-Jiuan Chen-Rabich (eds.)

The Democratisation Process of Poland and Taiwan: Comparative Perspective



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Poland and Taiwan: two parts of the world distant from each other, differing culturally and socially, and yet facing kind of similar challenges in the late 1980s and early 1990s – characterised by the transition from an authoritarian political system to liberal democracy. This book seeks to present the process of democratisation of Poland and Taiwan from the point of view of shared perspectives. Invoking the classical literature of transitology, it is possible to explore similarities and differences between the democratisation of Poland and Taiwan among socioeconomic factors, fragmentation in society, political culture, meso- structures (e.g. political groups, social movements), political institutions, historical and national- identity aspects, and international influences.

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The Democratisation Process of Poland and Taiwan: Comparative Perspective

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Foreword

As the representative of Taiwan in Poland, I am very pleased to learn of the publication of *“The Democratisation Process of Poland and Taiwan: Comparative Perspective.”* I appreciate the joint effort of the editors and contributors of this book in exploring different aspects of an important issue – the process of democratisation. They have endeavored to compare premises underpinning democratisation and the actual process between Poland and Taiwan. I am impressed by their in-depth and insightful observations and analyses, and would like to commend their collective effort and congratulate them on the impressive outcome.

It is my firm belief that Taiwan and Poland are like-minded partners as both countries share the values of freedom, democracy and human rights and embarked on the democratisation process at approximately the same time. In fact, both Taiwan and Poland are proud of their continuing effort to push for democratisation and could serve as good examples of how to build democracy. This book covers a wide range of issues related to the democratisation process in both Poland and Taiwan. It should be of interest to not only readers who are interested in the developments of Poland and Taiwan, but also those who are interested in the process of democratisation in general.

This book is especially meaningful because it is the outcome of collaboration between researchers from both Taiwan and Poland. It is a good example of the fruitful cooperation between Taiwan and Poland and is conducive to enhancing mutual understanding between the peoples of the two countries, while sharing with other countries their unique experiences in the democratisation process.

This year (2022) marks the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the Taipei Representative Office in Poland. As we celebrate 30 years of the growing mutually beneficial relations between Taiwan and Poland, this book reminds us of the original intent of both countries to learn, grow and prosper together. I wish to take this opportunity to express my profound respect and appreciation to all those who have contributed to the development of the bilateral relationship between Poland and Taiwan in the past 30 years. I look forward to closer bilateral cooperation for mutual benefits and the common good in the next 30 years and beyond.

Amb. Bob L. J. CHEN
Representative and Head of Office
Taipei Representative Office in Poland

Łukasz ZAMECKI & Li-Jiuan CHEN-RABICH

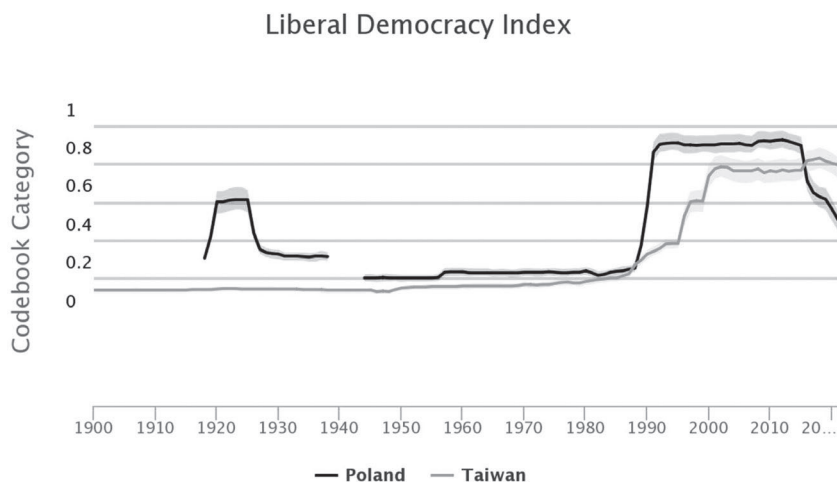
Introduction

Poland and Taiwan: two parts of the world distant from each other, differing culturally and socially, and yet facing kind of similar challenges in the late 1980s and early 1990s – characterised by transition from an authoritarian political system to liberal democracy. In both cases, the processes of democratisation fall within what Samuel Huntington chose to call democratisation's "third wave".

This publication's aim to compare premises underpinning democratisation – and the actual process – between the aforementioned two (N=2) political regimes. It might at first glance look like a flight of fancy on the part of the Editors to concentrate on only two political systems. In fact, though, as we shall seek to make clear, this idea may allow interesting conclusions to be reached as regards the above phenomenon, to the point where they may even serve as an incentive for yet-further research into governance systems. For, even as Poland and Taiwan have their differences, they still have in common the fact that their societies are of medium size (with 38M people in the former and 23.5M in the latter). And at the time of writing these are actually the world's no. 21 and 22 economies (in terms of GDP at current USD prices). Both now have rather polarised political scenes, and both (though especially Taiwan) have Presidencies of reinforced powers that therefore depart somewhat from more-classical models of parliamentary/cabinet political systems.

Furthermore, it is possible to point to the existence of similar factors capable of shaping the course of systemic transformation: Taiwan and Poland both passed through earlier periods of occupation by different states, and both experienced dynamic increases in levels of literacy in the years before the outbreak of World War II. The political history of the two regions was conditioned to a significant degree by the shape and process via which society's identity formed. While authoritarianism continued to hold sway (admittedly taking rather different courses in the two cases), both societies did go through numerous battles and struggles with the authorities, with the peak response in both cases being Martial Law (in fact for a substantially longer period in Taiwan than Poland).

Both polities succeeded in developing civil societies even in the circumstances of authoritarian rule; and systemic change proceeded even as super-power states were present in the neighbourhood and displayed hostility (as with the Poland–USSR/Russia and the Taiwan–PRC relationships). Furthermore,



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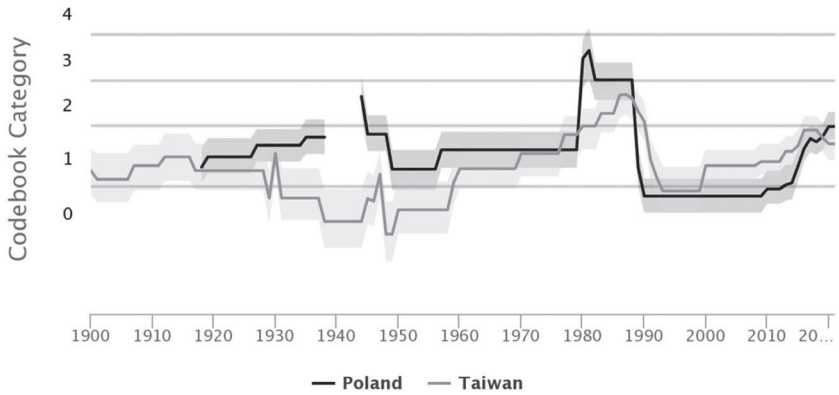
while non-democratic regimes were still in place, both societies obtained support from both their diasporas and those in charge in the USA (notably under Ronald Reagan's Presidency). The democratisation process was then associated with the development of more liberal-minded wings within the camps of the authoritarian rulers; and the peak of systemic transformation was fortunately reached without blood being shed.

Naturally, such factors are not unique to the democratisation processes of Poland and Taiwan, even as detailed analysis of this particular comparison often reveals substantial differences. But in each case there is nothing so strong as to constrain the motivation to go on comparing the transformations ongoing in the two political systems in the 1980s and 1990s.

Data collected by the V-dem may indicate some similarities in the pre-conditions of the democratisation process and the subsequent course of the democratisation.

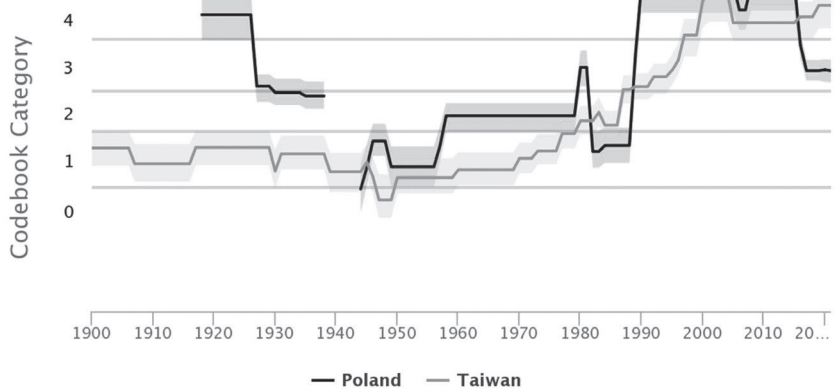
Rather weighty matters here are the differences in conditioning as democratisation commenced, though it is certainly the case that classical methods of comparison in the political sciences involving *the method of difference* and *the method of agreement* are entirely possible. The role of economic factors is obviously important, with Taiwan already displaying dynamic economic growth by

CSO anti-system movements

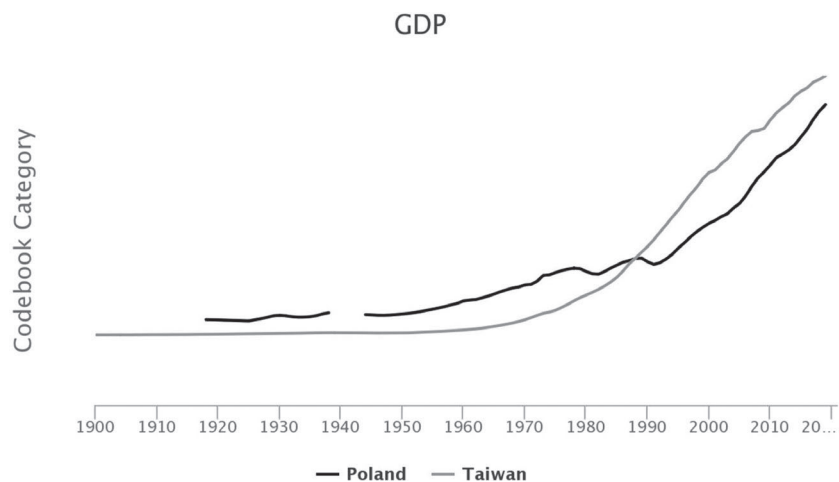


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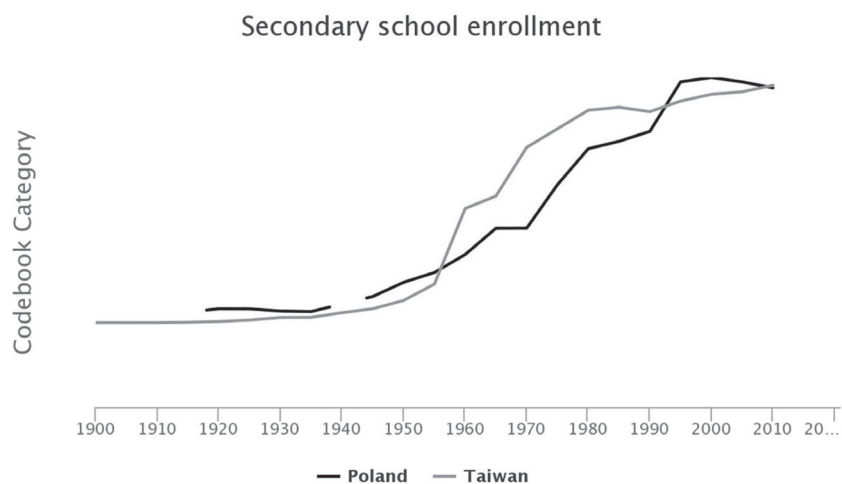
CSO repression



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the 1950s. At that time, Poland was receiving the dubious benefits of experimentation with central planning practised by its own regime, but definitely originating in Soviet circumstances. However, these are not differences large enough to preclude the application of modernisation theory in accounting for two processes of democratisation. Poland did experience a kind of economic collapse in the 1980s, while having experienced more sluggish economic growth than Taiwan in the years before that; but it still experienced a qualitative breakthrough in the 20th century where the development of education and infrastructure was concerned.

This book thus seeks to present the democratisation of Poland and Taiwan from the point of view of shared perspectives. Invoking the classical literature of transitology (cf. Berg-Schlosser 2012), it is possible to note several key theories that might account for changes and transformations in the direction of liberal democracy. These would relate to the roles of: socioeconomic factors; fragmentation in society; political culture; meso-structures (e.g. political groups, social movements); political institutions, historical and national-identity aspects; and international influences. In that regard, the configuration of analysis proposed for this book's analysis of democratisation has entailed:

1. Historical and identity-related perspectives on the democratisation process – Poland (Tomasz Słomka) and Taiwan (Li-Jiuan Chen-Rabich)
2. Social and economic preconditioning of the democratisation process – Poland (Ryszard Szarfenberg) and Taiwan (Mateus Lee)
3. Elites of power and Opposition in the process of democratisation – Poland (Daniel Przystek and Paweł Mrowiński) and Taiwan (Yang San-Yi)
4. The role of student movements in political transition – Poland (Rafał Chwedoruk) and Taiwan (Ming-sho Ho)
5. The geopolitics of democratisation – Poland (Agnieszka Bieńczyk-Missala) and Taiwan (Dustin Kuan-Hsiung Wang)
6. Changes in the political system during the democratisation process – Poland (Jacek Wojnicki) and Taiwan (Chin-Mo Cheng)
7. Challenges of the political transition – Poland (Adam Szymański) and Taiwan (Wei-feng Tzeng)

Closing remarks then collect together conclusions arising out of the comparison between the two polities. Similarities and differences are indicated, also in regard to the different or similar roles different variables are seen to have played. In the face of all this, we actually count on the comparison being worthwhile enough to encourage yet-further research, for example accounting for divergent paths

in the direction of consolidation that the two regimes displayed in the second decade of the 21st century.

Polish-Taiwanese comparisons have not been a regular phenomenon (though the article by Yu-Shan Wu entitled *Comparing Taiwan and the CEE Trio: The Impact of Social and Institutional Factors*, Taiwan Journal of Democracy, special issue, May 2013, may certainly be referred to). And first and foremost, we can suggest that a subject matter as broad and diverse as is to be found here cannot be accessed elsewhere. Needless to say there is far more work looking at the transformation in Poland as such (with works in English *inter alia* by Andrzej Antoszewski, Timothy Garton Ash, Grzegorz Ekiert, Tom Junes, Padraic Kenney, Jerzy Szacki, Charles Wankel and Włodzimierz Wesolowski); or else in Taiwan as such (with works in English *i.a.* by Cheng Tun-Jen, Chien-Kai Chen, Chao Linda and Ramon Myers, Chu Yun-han, John Franklin Copper, Dafydd Fell, Hung-Mao Tien, Fan Yun, J. Bruce Jacobs, Sunhyuk Kim, Teng-Hui Lee, Ian McAllister, Christian Schafferer, Shao-chuan Leng and Cheng-yi Lin, Shelley Rigger, Soong James, Su-Mei Ooi, Jung-Hsiang Tsai, Alan Wachman, Joseph Wong, Yu-Shan Wu, Wu Joseph Jaushieh, Nai-Teh Wu, Tsang S., Hung-mao T. Philip Paolino and James Meernik).

A plus-point of this study should be the insight offered into how precisely-defined factors and issues conditioned development in Taiwan on the one hand and Poland on the other. So it is with the chapter by Tomasz Słomka concerning historical and identity-related aspects of democratisation, which emphasises Polish democratic traditions and the way they were able to influence the building of a new regime. The history in question is not merely that between the Wars, as even-earlier democratic political thought in Poland also proved important. The author describes and sums up the experience, also perceiving the role of non-democratic Polish solutions offering a kind of negative role model for later modernisers. Słomka also notes how the experiences of Western democracies were taken on and taken up, as Poland developed its new systemic form.

Analogously, Li-Jiuan Chen-Rabich shows the reform process in Taiwan, as a result of which, Taiwan's democratisation seems obvious. Chen-Rabich notes that identity changes are correlated with the democratisation process. The importance of the "228 incident" for Taiwan's transition and identity or the role of particular reforms (land reform, education policy reform, etc.) conducted by the KMT for changes in the political landscape is underlined. Interestingly, Authoress present how the importance of Taiwan itself for KMT's politics has been raising.

The task of Ryszard Szarfenberg and Mateus Lee was to analyze the role of socio-economic factors in the process of democratisation. Ryszard Szarfenberg

presents not only possible socioeconomic factors of democratisation of Poland, but also recent de-democratisation. Basing on the theory of modernization, he indicates the links between modernization and democracy. Briefly characterize the role of economic, social, educational and cultural factors of modernization over the last 50 years. The economic crisis in Poland in the period of authoritarianism, uneven modernization, and significant phase nature of the process, will lead to more ambiguities conclusions when it comes to the role of socioeconomic factors in the democratisation process. Mateus Lee also studies Taiwan's annual data on democracy, education, national income, trade and the international democracy level and also finds Lipset's theory to be not fully supportive in the case of Taiwan.

Important area of seeking factors of democratisation processes is the attitude and behaviour of political elites (incumbents and opposition). A key attribute of the chapter by Daniel Przystek and Paweł Mrowiński is then how they present the roles of political elites in the process leading up to Poland's democratisation. This is seen through the prism of tensions between the Polish United Workers' Party governing Poland ("the Party") and the main Opposition force that was *Solidarność* – the "Solidarity" trade union. Alongside the communist elite, the authors point to the evolving existence of Opposition elites. Without development in line with growing experience, the latter would not have been able to play (or be effective in playing) the game that had to be played with the authoritarian system and its leaders.

Comparably, Yang San-Yi through the prism of people involved in the democratisation process, shows its incremental character – from Chiang Ching-kuo first democratic reforms, and Lee Teng-hui's directly elected presidency, through Chen Shui-bian's ethnic policy and democratic consolidation and Ma Ying-jeou new opening in relations with the PRC, to the current president Tsai Ing-wen. The Author underlines the role of the strategic interaction between the ruling party and the Opposition in the 1980s and 1990s in the process of democratisation.

Contentious politics and social movements are often filled by groups of youth (more ideological, with less to lose). Therefore, we have set the goal of identifying the role of student and youth movements in the democratisation process of Taiwan and Poland. For his part, Rafał Chwedoruk shows the role and significance of Opposition student organisations as part of the broader social movements appearing as Poland underwent its democratisation. By deploying theories of social movements, the author is able to conclude that students did not make any more fundamental contribution to the fall of the old system in Poland.

In contrast, Ming-sho Ho is able to prove that the student's actions have had an important impact on Taiwan's democratisation process. Although student's

activism was rather characterized by the short periods of intensive mobilisation followed by periods of quietude, youth movements were influential, to mention only the Diaoyutai Island Movement, the movements of the mid-1980s-1990s, and finally the Wild Strawberry Movement (2008) and the Sunflower Movement (2014).

When it comes to the role of external factors and geopolitics in the process of democratisation, Agnieszka Bieńczyk-Missala evokes theories regarding the importance to democratisation of external factors and agents. She thus stresses the role for Poland of change in the USSR (the Gorbachev-era transformations that signalled the possibility of change across the Eastern Bloc). And then there are the foreign actors “cheering on” Polish transformation, not least for co-operation in Europe. Attention is likewise drawn to emulative processes, i.e. the diffusion ensuring that changes taking place in one state go on to influence its neighbours.

Dustin Kuan-Hsiung Wang concentrates on international conditions of the democratisation process of Taiwan – geographic location, relationship with the USA or the issue of membership in the United Nations. These issues are important to “securing” Taiwan’s democratisation process.

Jacek Wojnicki and Chin-Mo Cheng goal was to present the most crucial challenges during the transition period. In a chapter entitled “Changes in Poland’s political system by way of democratisation”, Jacek Wojnicki offers a step-by-step presentation of the scope of change of Poland’s political system, beginning with the amendment of the Constitution of the Polish People’s Republic, going through the enactment of the so-called “Small Constitution” and finishing up with work on, and the ultimate adoption of, the new (1997) Constitution for the Republic of Poland.

Chin-Mo Cheng also presents electoral changes, party system alterations and constitutional adjustments. The Author illustrates the process of changes from the authoritarian ruling, the dissolution of one-party system, the amendment of Constitution, the changing party system, and the introduction of a semi-presidential system, to the consolidation of democracy and challenges to that process (also external factors influencing Taiwan’s politics).

Adam Szymański and Wei-feng Tzeng had the task of focusing on the challenges of the democratisation process. The first of the authors clearly focused on the current problem of weakening the quality of democracy in Poland. The reasons for this process are found in the process of political transition and the beginning of democratic consolidation. Among structural factors Szymański underline the establishment of the “tyranny of majority” and the process of excessive strengthening the executive power at the cost of the legislative and judiciary

power. As functional factors the Author see the deficits of the democratic political culture in Poland. While Wei-feng Tzeng highlights challenges regarding cross-Strait antagonism and China's influence (i.a. economic and possible military) what create also domestic challenges, such as the social and political polarization and occasional populism.

As a whole, this work will hopefully prove interesting to anyone studying democratisation processes, as well as to students of comparative politics and those dealing with systemic change in either Poland or Taiwan. Furthermore, as attention to the two polities' democratisation has rather given way to interest or concern regarding a certain de-democratisation, it is to be hoped that Poland will abandon any democratic backsliding, while Taiwan will see ongoing democratic consolidation; with this book then serving as a useful and uplifting point of entry into considerations of similarities and differences when it comes to the paths taken by Poland and Taiwan.

Literature:

Berg-Schlosser, Dirk. 2012. "The "State of the Art" in Empirical Democratic Theory." In: *Mixed Methods in Comparative Politics. Research Methods Series*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Part I: Poland

Tomasz SŁOMKA

Historical and identity-related perspectives on the democratisation process in Poland

Abstract:

The process of democratic transformation in Poland was influenced by a series of elements of a historical nature that encouraged the shaping of unique identity for change in the direction of democracy taking place in the Polish state and society. Here, considerations of these matters will be based around several main hypotheses put forward, i.e. that (1) the shape systemic solutions assumed was influenced by the relevant Polish democratic tradition (including constitutional notions) and by the protracted non-democratic experience (serving as an anti-role-model); and (2) the building of a democratic order drew on the experiences of Western democracy, with a willingness to reinforce the rooting of new solutions within the “family” of democratic states, and with integration with Euro-Atlantic structures thus also facilitated.

Keywords: *democratic transformation in Poland, Constitution, Second Republic of Poland, Polish People’s Republic, Third Republic of Poland*

1. Preliminary remarks

The process of democratic transformation in Poland was obviously influenced by a variety of historical elements that led a unique identity being conferred upon the change taking place in the country, and within its society, in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. While it is true that there was no direct injection into the systemic framework of the Third Republic of Poland of solutions from either the Second (1918–1939) Republic or from “People’s Poland” (1944–1989), these nevertheless constituted axiological points of reference (both positive and negative).

Equally, a further specific element of the democratisation process was reference made to the output of Europe’s “old democracies” as a new political and systemic order was put in place. This reflects the way the latter were regarded as entrenched and tested models for constitutional democracy thus essential from the points of view of both democratisation *per se*, and the Euro-Atlantic aspirations that Poland entertained for itself.

Bearing all that in mind, the considerations included here are based around two hypotheses, i.e. (1) that political and systemic solutions were influenced by both the democratic and systemic traditions of Poland (including of a

constitutional nature) and the country's non-democratic experiences (serving as indication of what not to do or follow); and (2) that the building of democratic order drew heavily on the experiences of Western democracies, as people sought to ensure that new Polish solutions allowed the country to become rooted within the "family" of democratic states.

The shape and specifics of a given state's political and constitutional order are seen to depend on constitutional and political tradition as conceived broadly (with this taken to embrace both certain principles associated with the system of political governance and the organs of state power, and for example the level of economic development). However, the notion of systemic identity also takes in a social factor, to the extent that the constitutional order must be rooted in society itself, and must in fact be adapted "to the real condition society finds itself in, as well as to its needs" (Baszkiewicz 1997, 58). Where this is not the case, a Constitution is likely to be rejected in just the same way as a human body rejects an unsuccessful transplant (Słomka 2012, 28).

On the other hand, the political and systemic order associated with government and governance can embrace many solutions from other Constitutions, as well as solutions of a more practical nature, where these are regarded as factors essential to one's own system, as it seeks to modernise and undergo transformation. Order in the political system of course depends likewise on the international system, political alliances entered into, the strength and significance of a given state in its relationship with other entities and polities active in international relations, and the inspiration of doctrine, via external currents present in legal and political thought but capable of inspiring those wishing to frame a constitution.

It is thus for example possible to hypothesise how many Polish lawyers and political scientists once took a lively interest in Italy's fascist state and its systemic solutions, with a certain fraction of this even finding reflection in Poland's 1935 Constitutional Act (Marszał 2007).

At the same time, a state's constitution becomes part of some "constitutional society", which reflects values and principles proper to many basic laws, as well as the legal orders they put in place. An ideal example of that state of affairs is the democratic state duly constituted under the law and run with respect for the rule of law ... as a principle that has in fact come to be regarded as fundamental to (and even automatic for) the governance system of each and every Member State of the European Union (Szymanek 2010).

This study is based around three main methods of research, i.e. the systemic, the comparative and the neo-institutional. Such an approach allows for the

presentation of a study spectrum as broad as is possible, with account taken of both the theoretical aspect and the political context.

2. Polish democratic traditions

The main segment to Polish democratic output of the 20th century was the time of onset of work to rebuild Polish statehood after World War I. This period is considered bounded on the one side by first elections to the Legislative *Sejm* (which also extended voting rights to women) and on the other by the May Coup of 1926. Following the parliamentary election of January 1919, Józef Piłsudski handed over his power as transitional dictator (Leader of the State) to the Legislative *Sejm*, given its status as a body elected democratically through the will of the nation. However, in February 1919, the latter passed a Resolution conferring upon Piłsudski the right to continue in the aforesaid office of *Naczelnik Państwa*. The instrument in question was the so-called “Small Constitution”, and it is characteristic that this did not even have the rank of Act of Parliament (*Ustawa* in Polish). For it was viewed widely as a transitional instrument, designed to confer standards upon state operations for only a brief period (literally of just a couple of weeks). In practice, however, it remained in force almost through to the end of 1922.

The Small Constitution ushered in an extreme variant of parliamentary government, given that the Leader had no right to dissolve parliament, no entitlement to deploy a legislative veto or announce Bills. The post also lacked a right of legislative initiative (of the kind enjoyed by both the *Sejm* and the Council of Ministers). And standing in contradistinction to the classical parliamentary model was the political accountability of *Naczelnik Państwa* before the *Sejm* – and this despite the institution of legal instruments of the Head of State needing to be counter-signed by a relevant Minister.

That said, the subject literature often underlines how systemic practice departed at least partially from the actual provisions of the Small Constitution. What was therefore achieved was a kind of compromise between the Legislative *Sejm* and the Head of State. Notwithstanding effort made in this direction, the parliamentary chamber had only a vanishingly limited influence on military affairs – which in practice remained solely in the hands of Marshal Piłsudski as Leader and Commander-in-Chief. This further implied that, in certain matters (most notably Eastern Policy), Piłsudski was *the* person deciding on the direction foreign policy was to take.

Equally, when it came to appointing and dismissing a Cabinet, a specific kind of equilibrium took shape (Ajnenkiel 1986, 118). The Supreme Leader had a

large (if not as yet decisive) influence in shaping both military policy and foreign policy; even as it needs recalling how Piłsudski's Poland was at war with Soviet Russia. That circumstance ensured situations in which the Leader's Decrees, while extending into topics beyond the directly war-related (beyond strategic or tactical military dispositions), nevertheless appeared without counter-signature, and thus with no *de facto* checks by other organs or authorities in or of the state.

In similar vein, the position of the Head of State was further strengthened by the July 1920 founding (by decision of the *Sejm*) of a special organ of parliamentary governance known as *Rada Obrony Państwa* (the Council for the Defence of the State). This was naturally enough headed by Józef Piłsudski (in his capacity as Leader). As the *ROP* was to decide in all matters linked to the pursuit and ultimate ending of the war, that meant subject-matter diverse enough to ensure a major real-life curtailment of the Legislative *Sejm's* entitlements.

And it would be that Legislative *Sejm* enacting a Constitution for the Republic of Poland in March 1921, and one that only in fact emerged after far-reaching and long-lasting bargaining among different political forces ultimately able to hammer out a compromise (or fudge) among themselves.

In reality, the legal and systemic position of the President was a casualty of the above situation. Fearing that Piłsudski would indeed be elected to that post, a right side of politics (and in particular a nationalist right) by no means keen on the Marshal made sure that the competences of Head of State were suitably restricted, even as such an approach in no way adhered to those parties' key doctrinal tenets (Krukowski 1990, 58–59).

The framers of the March Constitution took on board a separation of powers *a la Montesquieu*, nevertheless recalling more specifically what France's Third Republic had experienced in practice. They thus rejected the part of that package entailing ideal checks and balance between the three branches. This was the case as the Legislature enjoyed its advantage, with this denoting the *Sejm* and *Senat*. Remaining somewhat in the shadow of their political will was the Executive, with this taken as meaning the President and Ministers. The President was elected by the *Sejm* and *Senat* combined together in the National Assembly. The term served by the Head of State, resembling that in France, was of 7 years – and that provided for formal strengthening of the position *vis-à-vis* Parliament (with its 5-year term). The goal here was to safeguard harmonious functioning of the state.

The means of election nevertheless pointed to a not-especially-strong systemic situating of the President in relation to the Houses of Parliament; as well as the way in which his (s)election had been made dependent on the will political parties demonstrated. The President of the Republic possessed neither a right

of legislative initiative nor a capacity to veto Acts. However, an entitlement to dissolve Parliament (if with the consent of the *Senat*) was gained. Together with Ministers, the President signed Acts and then ordered their publication in the *Official Journal*. The President enjoyed the sole right to nominate the Prime Minister (in the capacity of Head of the Council of Ministers), and then Ministers at the latter's request.

That said, the model of the classical parliamentary system assumed by the Constitution could be set against actual constitutional practice in the years 1922–1926, showing well enough how, in this field also, there were far-reaching limitations on the opportunities actually available to the Head of State.

Each government had to enjoy the confidence of the *Sejm*, so – where the latter passed a vote of no confidence, the Prime Minister would offer up his Ministers for resignation, and the President would then be obliged to dismiss those Ministers from the posts they had held. This meant the President each time counting on the goodwill of groupings in the *Sejm* accounting for the parliamentary majority at the given time. On the other hand, there was no answerability of the President of Poland for his actions before Parliament.

In turn, any legal instrument from the Head of State (actually referred to as governmental) could indeed only assume validity where counter-signed by the Prime Minister and the Minister of relevance to the given area of legislation. But even then the President was accountable to the *Sejm* for the law that had been generated. The “slender and sparse nature of Constitutional provisions regarding counter-signature underwent a certain fleshing-out by means of court interpretation”.

In general, it came to be recognised that the Government was accountable for all official activities of the President, even where these were indeed part of the latter's representative function (for example involving speeches and discussions with Members of the Diplomatic Corps), and even “where the lack of written form of necessity denoted a lack of counter-signature” (Górecki 1993, 73). A best-available description of the position of the Head of State of Poland at that time would thus resort to the words “symbolic” and “neutral”; and it needs to be recalled how this model in practice saw the President confined to a function representing the state, and thus remaining beyond the main currents active in politics.

All this might nevertheless be set against known cases of post-holder Stanisław Wojciechowski seeking active use of the presidency to influence an unfolding political situation. Then there were actually cases of the President's somehow being “called to order” by both Ministers and leaders of groupings in the *Sejm* (Ajnenkiel 1991, 43–44).

The systemic practice of the early 1920s was characterised by the supremacy of Parliament (a so-called “Sejmocracy” or *Sejmokracja*), frequent changes of government, public disquiet, and ultimately of course a *coup* perpetrated against the country by Piłsudski – in May 1926. Shortly after that landmark event, the Marshal of Poland gave a press interview in which he accounted for his critical attitude towards the systemic model in operation hitherto: “In our case, a parliamentary crisis matters more than it would in other countries, because the whole nation [...] kept investing too much hope in what we call *Sejm*. So it is with more bitterness than elsewhere that we feel the failure experienced [...]. When the disease set in – by which I mean the disappearance of the separation between the Executive and the branch of administration that sat in judgment upon it, the sense of Justice had to disappear, because that does not exist where nobody is answerable for bad deeds [...]. In such a case, something in the nature of disorder had to emerge – just as it always has in Poland.” (*Nowy Kurier Polski*, 29 Apr. 1926).

It thus became clear how the period of democratic governments in Poland had been a fleeting one, albeit an interesting example of a capacity to construct a state based on solutions of the liberal-democracy kind, with account taken of transferable models rooted in the Western democracies that had proved most durable. A major role within these attempts was played by a Polish-own democratic thrust to political thought. This had made its presence felt as the first Constitution of the reborn Republic was being framed, with a purely symbolic bridging action effected between the political-myth-shrouded Government Act (i.e. Polish Constitution) of May 3rd 1791 and the building of a new political and systemic order. “The basic law from May 3rd was of no [...] substantive significance to the process whereby a Constitution was written on the eve of independence. However, it did play a huge political role and was understood in a symbolic way (Szymanek and Wyleziński 2007, 1119). The progressive tradition was invoked first and foremost by the liberal and left-wing circles that were independence-minded (notably *Polska Partia Socjalistyczna* and *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe*). The centre-left wanted to build a political order for the state based on the supremacy of a representative body (the *Sejm*), albeit one remaining “under the direct control of the nation”; as well as remodelled and redeveloped institutions of direct democracy, as linked with popular legislative initiative, a people’s right of legislative veto, and a local-government tier functioning in a democratic manner (Śliwa 1980). The *Centrolew* grouping acting in opposition to the dictatorship of Piłsudski also made its important democratic mark in the 1930s.

Emerging as a symbolic example of democratic views was the June 1930 founding by centre-left parties of *Kongres Obrony Praw i Wolności Ludu* – the

Congress on the Defence of the Rights and Freedoms of the People – which vowed to fight the *Sanacja* dictatorship, even as it also sought the reinstatement of a system based around parliamentary democracy. This democratic way of doing things also played its role in later decades. Thus, in the era of People's Poland, Opposition circles (including those of "Solidarity" in the 1980s) invoked at regular intervals such pre-War centre-left ideals as public participation and a renewed strengthening of local government.

That said, there is a clear need to distinguish between references to pre-War constitutional tradition and measures legitimising the authoritarian government, which used democratic models and notions of "progress" to build a scenography based on lies – as a democratic fig-leaf for a state rooted deeply in Real Socialism.

Particularly inherent to the democratic tide of that first period of functioning of the Polish state was a political right focused mainly around national democrats and Christian Democrats. This seemed convinced that the rules of the democratic state were a necessity, even as it displayed far-reaching self-restraint in the face of any better-developed role for democratic institutions as such, as well as guarantees with respect to the rights and freedoms of different kinds of minority in Poland. There was no consent on offer for progressive social solutions, even as there was questioning of many political solutions, not least the December 1922 selection of Gabriel Narutowicz for the office of President.

However, it needs to be noted that Narutowicz mainly shared the fate of a centre-left persecuted during the post-1926 period of *Sanacja*-related authoritarianism. While the independence-minded right was represented in an Opposition context in the circumstances of People's Poland, it was a Third-Republic element characteristic for the traditions of many groupings of a nationalist/populist profile – and all the more so from 2015 onwards.

3. The non-democratic heritage

In analysing Poland's 20th-century heritage of a non-democratic profile, it is worth pointing mainly to two key "models" of authoritarian government. The first of these relates to the aforementioned period of dictatorship of the country under Józef Piłsudski, and thus the time from 1926 onwards, with the basis being a mix of formal and real changes to the "March Constitution" that in essence achieved an impairment of its democratic credentials, ultimately finding further reflection in the Constitutional Act of April 23rd 1935, otherwise the "April Constitution".

The second model would then of course involve communist-era authoritarianism that can be seen to have assumed various different aspects – from elements

of a purely totalitarian nature (in the late 1940s and early 1950s in particular) through to modernisation in a liberal direction commencing in the mid-1980s. Over most of that time (following a constitutional transition period extending to 1952), the basis for the system of governance remained the Constitution of the Polish People's Republic, albeit amended many times over.

The 1926 Coup was pursued in line with a slogan of *Sanacja* already referred to above. Similarities to English words like “sanitation” should alert readers to the idea that *Sanacja* (often given as “Sanation” in English) was indeed suggestive of some healing or cleansing process involving the state governance system. Among other things, it involved augmented authorisations for the Executive. The passing of an Act amending the Constitution in this spirit took place in August 1926 (under the name of the August Amendment). It indeed did much to extend the remits of both President and Government. For example, at the request of the Council of Ministers, the President might dissolve *Sejm* and *Senat* without any need to seek the prior consent of the latter. As, in defined circumstances and to a defined extent, the President might also issue a Regulation with the power of an Act, the monopoly of Parliament in the creating of legal instruments of Act rank can be seen to have been broken. The Head of State post also had special entitlements *vis-à-vis* the budget conferred upon it.

However, in all of this, the true system of power was concentrated in the hands of Józef Piłsudski. The subject literature stresses how the person of Piłsudski became the supreme and indeed only authoritative source of power. Attention is further paid to the existence of a so-called “ruling group” of the *Sanacja* camp, meaning nothing more or less than the set of most-trusted individuals cooperating with the Marshal, who in fact obtained instructions and guidelines directly from the Leader, and thus exercised *de facto* power in the state in his name (Chojnowski 1986, 21 *et seq.*).

The concept ushered in was of the “strong Executive freed of parliamentary interference and in practice enjoying (given limited opportunities for action on the part of any political Opposition) full prerogatives” (Rydlewski 2018, 85). However, work anyway began on a new basic law, with entitlements for the Head of State modelled upon the authoritarian systems still prevalent on Europe (with even the solutions of Italian fascism accented strongly). The process of adoption of the new Constitution in fact took place with little respect shown for provisions in the still in-force March Constitution. It was only on April 23rd 1935 that President Ignacy Mościcki and his Government finally signed the only-then-passed Constitutional Act. This came into force a day later, as it was announced in Poland's *Dziennik Ustaw* Official Journal of Laws.

It would seem possible to hypothesise that the April Constitution was written directly under J. Piłsudski. More than that, the new systemic and legal conditions put in place – by Piłsudski – might indeed have encouraged that same Piłsudski into taking on the office of President of the Republic – something he had chosen not to in the immediate aftermath of his May Coup (despite the National Assembly already having chosen him). But standing in the way of ambition at this point was the Marshal's ill health, which went on to cost him his life on May 12th 1935.

In the light of the Constitutional Act, it was with the President “standing at the head of the state” that there rested accountability “before God and History for the fate of the State”. Indeed, the specific role the Head of State was to play in the new system was emphasised by a provision holding that there were brought together in the President of the Republic “unified and indivisible state authority”. That is suggestive of a rejection of the principle of the separation of powers, and hence of acceptance that state power was unified. Art. 3 of the Constitution expounds in much more detailed on how that principle looked in practice, noting that: “The organs of the State subordinate to the President are the Government, the *Sejm*, the Senate, the Armed Forces, the Courts of Justice, the State Control”. Prerogatives further assured the President of the freedom he needed to discharge the leadership function in respect of these other organs of the state, with this “manifesting the independent and autonomous state role played by the President ” (Bardach, Leśnodorski and Pietrzak 1976, 511). Under the Constitution, the said prerogatives included: the indication of who might stand for the office of President, the appointment and dismissal of the Head of the Council of Ministers (i.e. the Prime Minister), the appointment of one-third of the composition of the *Senat RP*, the pre-term dissolution of both *Sejm* and *Senat*, and the exercising of the right of pardon.

However, not achieving prerogative status, official instruments issued by the President required counter-signature by the PM and relevant Minister. Equally, far-reaching constraints on the role of *Sejm* and *Senat* were attested to by the equipping of the President with a power to issue Decrees. These were in fact of a dual nature, with the first, stand-alone kind of Decree relating to the organisation of the government and governmental administration as well as the exercising of supreme control over the Armed Forces. A second kind was then constituted by the Decrees with the power of Acts (by virtue of Art. 55 of the Constitution) which could be issued where the needs of the state justified that, on the basis of statutory authorisation. The exceptional nature of the latter – e.g. during a time of Martial Law – lay in the possibility of the Decrees in question being issued in all spheres of public life other than constitutional amendment.

The President also enjoyed the right to exercise a suspending veto on Acts, with this denoting a return of a Bill to the *Sejm* within 30 days, with a demand that this be looked at a second time. However, as this could only really take place at the next Ordinary Session of Parliament, that might even mean after a full year had passed. The right of veto was exercised on a counter-signatory basis, the function in large measure being to protect the government from intervention on the part of a law-giving body. The Prime Minister might turn to the President for a veto on an Act where he (the former) recognised that Parliament's passing of a given Act had been in some way baseless.

The 1935 April Constitution brought a U-turn in the "philosophy" concerning the Council of Ministers' political accountability. First and foremost, the government was answerable to the President and Parliament. The President might dismiss the Council of Ministers at any time, irrespective of the standpoint adopted by the Houses of Parliament. Nevertheless, a motion seeking to make a government subject to a confidence vote from the *Sejm* might only be advanced during an Ordinary Session, and indeed voting on it might not even be conducted at the same Sitting of Parliament as had brought the announcement. The person might also not be voted on at the same Session as the one that had seen the announcement made; and where the *Sejm* was persuaded by a motion, even as the President dismissed no Cabinet (or Minister) and did not dissolve the chambers of Parliament either, the motion passed to the *Senat*. Were the *Senat* also to pass a vote of no-confidence, the President might either dismiss the government, or dissolved Parliament (both chambers). Therefore, in this matter too, there was clear outlining of the Head of State's prevalence over Parliament.

The April Constitution also differed from the 1921 version in the solutions offered for the President's election. That was to be achieved by an Assembly of Electors called into being by *Sejm* and *Senat* together, but also including within its composition five so-called "Virilists" somewhat above politics; or else – by way of an extraordinary measure whereby a President leaving office nominated a candidate – through direct election and universal suffrage in a choice between two contenders in the presidential race. The subject literature stresses the linkage between this way of doing things and the very essence of the new system. "The resolving of the problem as to who will select the Head of State is linked with the philosophy the Constitution adopts. The March Constitution determined that the President would indeed be chosen by the National Assembly. That corresponded with the superior position of the chambers of the Legislature *vis-à-vis* the Executive. However, the 1935 basic act's basing of the system of supreme organs of the state around the authority of the President had to necessitate major change in the manner of his selection. And so direct elections were decided upon, in the

face of the Constitution's rejection of the principle of the supreme sovereignty of the nation also not seen in the best light by the framers. Ultimately, the April Constitution opted for a quite new and original system by which to appoint the Head of State, with this representing a compromise between three principles ... of designation, of selection by chambers of the Legislature, and of universal suffrage" (Górecki 1993, 75).

In practice, the systemic vision set within an authoritarian presidential model as outlined above failed to function in practice. As can be imagined, this was first and foremost a reflection of the lack of any further leader with the personality, authority and political positioning to sustain the exercise of wide-ranging and far-reaching presidential authority. In essence, there was only one Piłsudski. Thus, in practice, President in office Ignacy Mościcki had to share power with Gen. Edward Rydz-Śmigły, who was the General Inspector of the Armed Forces. And, given the weakness and marginalised nature of the then political parties, authority in the state rested above all with two groups (or more precisely political coteries). There was the "Castle" group associated with the President in office, and naturally enough a further group of acolytes surrounding Rydz-Śmigły.

The model for an authoritarian communist-era state constructed from the end of the Second World War onwards made its appearance via several different presentations at least. First there was a reference to "general principles" of the democratic pre-War March Constitution (to legitimise the new authorities by appealing to the idea of continuity of the state), and then application of elements of the total state, a "normalisation" marking the era of Władysław Gomułka, a liberal-clientelist stage characterising the era of Edward Gierek, and then a Martial Law regime under Wojciech Jaruzelski that ultimately gave rise to liberalisation.

The ideological sources of the new system gained definition thanks to Bolesław Bierut, whose contribution to a July 1952 constitutional debate involved a speech from the President of the Republic of Poland and Chair of the Constitutional Commission that was constructed in such a way as to base itself around two different "identity-related premises". For Bierut at the same time alerted people to the fact that: "the development of a national, people's Constitution for Poland free of cosmopolitan bourgeois solutions was made possible [...] by the turning point in the history of humanity that the Great Socialist October Revolution initiated". He further indicated the inspiration flowing from "the experiences and output of the Soviet peoples", while also reaching even further back into history – for the *Plebeian trend* represented by the activity of the Workers' Movements at home and internationally, as made manifest in the 1905 and 1917 revolutions.

Naturally, Bierut's ultimate invocations are of the thinking of Marks, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. The Constitution of PRL thus represented a synthesis of output of the Polish governance system, experiences from history and political thought (invoking of the traditions of the Polish Enlightenment, the Four-Year *Sejm*, the Kościuszko Rising, Polish Jacobins and so on), as well as the political, systemic, economic and social output of the Soviet-era state; and with the achievements of the international labour movement also reflected. The speech from B. Bierut offered an in-a-nutshell conceptualisation of the state's new systemic order, bringing together – of necessity – a legitimising “Polish-tradition” component (albeit superficial), as well as the model of Soviet-type constitutionalism already deeply embedded in Central and Eastern Europe (*Nauka o Konstytucji Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej* 1954, 5–9).

The Constitution of People's Poland was a basic law proclaiming a distinctly-novel type of system for a state that commenced with the building of the communist-era setup, even then making reference to several key principles. These further reflected a certain unification of the constitutional orders of the CEECs, given the common point of reference that was the 1936 Constitution of the USSR.

The character of PRL as a new type of state was already reflected in a well-developed and remodelled Constitutional Preamble. The foundations of the political system are as set out in the first Chapter, wherein the Polish state is defined as a people's democracy, i.e. a state “that had set off along the road to socialist transformation under which power might really come into the hands of working people” (Gebethner 1976, 6). An augmentation of the definition was provided by Art. 2, para. 2 of the said Constitution, whereby: *W Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej władza należy do ludu pracującego miast i wsi* (meaning that the People's Republic belonged to the working people of town and countryside – and with this denoting a principle as regards representation).

The workers were thus to exercise their sovereign authority by way of their being represented, by Deputies sitting in the *Sejm* of PRL, and by Councillors sitting on National Councils and elected by universal suffrage in equal, direct elections involving secret balloting. The Constitution provided for a combined representative mandate, with people's representatives answerable to their electorate and even capable of being dismissed by it while a term was still being served.

Yet a specific feature of basically the whole period of “Real Socialism” – through to 1987, or in other words the time of amendment of the Constitution and passing of the Act on Social Consultations and the institution of the

Referendum – was the lack of direct democracy, involving referenda, citizens' legislative initiative or popular veto.

Art. 4 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Poland in turn introduced a principle relating to the rule of law, in the light of which the law made in *PRL* was to reflect the will and interests of workers, even as compliance with that law was the basic duty of each organ of the state and each citizen. Furthermore, under the Constitution, the system of supreme organs of state authority was based on dual principles – involving the aforementioned representation, as well as unitary state authority. This Constitution has the *Sejm* as the supreme organ of state authority, it being clear that: "the *Sejm*, as supreme representative body and only direct representative of all workers, held its special position within the system of state authority as the only legislative body. It was thus under its direction and supervision that all remaining organs and bodies in the state were to act" (Moldawa 1991, 25).

The *Sejm* was elected for four-year terms by way of the supreme principle of electoral law set out in the Constitution. Up to 1960, there was in practice no constant number of *Sejm* Deputies, but rather one for each 60,000 inhabitants. However, following the December 1960 constitutional amendment, the *Sejm* was declared to comprise 460 Deputies. The chamber gathered for Sessions (called by the State Council at least twice a year). And the key tasks of the *Sejm* in the days of *PRL* entailed: (1) a legislative and system-shaping function; (2) an auditing and supervisory function (*vis-à-vis* other organs of authority and state administration; (3) a creative function (first and foremost in selecting the State Council, and appointing and then dismissing the Council of Ministers); and (4) a function in determining key directions to state activity (Moldawa 1991, 25).

A second organ, defined constitutionally as the leading one of state authority, was the Council of State (*Rada Państwa*) – as it were a collegial Head of State. In its personalised and term-related dimension, the Council was linked with the *Sejm*, as the former was selected by the latter from among the set of Deputies, if in fact at the first Sitting of the first Session of the newly-elected Parliament. Coming within the bounds of this collegial-type Head of State were the Council Chair, four Deputies, a Secretary and 9 (or from 1961, 11) Members.

It is possible to distinguish several functions of the Council of State, i.e. (1) as Head of State (*inter alia* offering supreme representation of *PRL* as regards other states, ratifying or denouncing international agreements, applying the right of pardon, and appointing judges as well as the Prosecutor-General); (2) as an organ enjoying a specific systemic relationship with the *Sejm* (i.e. issuing Decrees with Act-level powers between Sessions of Parliament, making changes to the composition of the Council of Ministers between Sessions, convening

Sessions of Parliament, taking legislative initiative, and achieving the signature of Acts passed by the *Sejm* by the Chair of the Council of State and the Secretary thereto); (3) as linked to the exercising of supervision over National Councils; and (4) as the guardian of state security (*i.a.* competences associated with states of emergency).

Thus, in terms of its position and role, the Council of State fit in with the model of “the collective President” making some reference to models of Soviet constitutionalism (Słomka 2004).

In turn, in the light of the Constitution of the Polish People’s Republic, the Council of Ministers (Government) was the supreme executive and governance-related organ of state authority. It was to the Council of Ministers that main functions of an executive nature were ascribed, making some kind of “executive committee” of the *Sejm* out of it, even as it was actually deprived of a function in creating state policy. Nevertheless, the Government was *i.a.* entitled to prepare a draft budget for the state, and a National Economic Plan (for several-year periods), to ensure the implementation of Acts of law, to supervise implementation of the said budget and Plan, to pursue tasks and exercise competences connected with defence of the state and public order, and to direct the work of Presidia of the National Councils. Under the first version of the July Constitution, the Council of Ministers comprised the Chair thereof (*i.e.* the *de facto* Prime Minister), Deputy Chairs, Ministers (with competences established by statute), and Chairs (determined by statute) of given Commissions and Committees exercising functions as regards the supervision of organs of state administration.

Through to the early 1980s, the Constitution of PRL was in fact amended numerous times. However, a key role was played by the amendment of February 10th 1976, in the light of which (according to the then subject literature) there was a more-precise formulating of “socialist goals emerging before society and the state [...] Civil rights were expanded in spheres both political [...] and socio-economic” (Sokolewicz 1978, 234). A change was made to the definition of Polish statehood (given that “the Polish People’s Republic shall be a socialist state”). A new regulation accented “the fact of the exit from the transitional stage represented by the period of people’s democracy”, as well as creating premises “for the building of a developed socialist society” (Gebethner 1976, 7).

Among further key changes from 1976 was the “constitutionalisation” of the party system, with the introduction of a provision that society’s leading political force in the building of “Socialism” was the Polish United Workers’ Party (*PZPR/Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza*). This change was an obvious reflection of the real-life process by which power in the state was exercised, under which decisions were taken in top bodies of *PZPR*, even as official (constitutional) bodies

of the state then converted these into Acts, Regulations, Decrees, and so on. It was here the joint action taken by *PZPR* and the other parties known as *Zjednoczone Stronnictwo Ludowe* (Peasants) and *Stronnictwo Demokratyczne* (the intelligentsia) that represented the basis for the so-called *Front Jedności Narodu* (“Front of National Unity”).

In turn, Art. 3a, para 2 offered one of the most controversial elements to the amendment, given that it provided for strengthened friendship and cooperation with the USSR and other socialist (i.e. communist) countries. This provision could therefore be interpreted as a form of self-limitation of the sovereignty of the Polish state – indeed one not even finding counterparts in the constitutions of other Eastern-Bloc countries.

The amended Constitution of the Republic of Poland had a particular systemic role to play in the 1980s, as it had a significant influence in changing the specifics of the systemic order in place up to that time. To put it another way, there was at this point an injection into the communist-era order of certain elements proper to the Constitutions of liberal democracies. For this would be the way to assess the strengthening – albeit of limited scope – occurring in the spheres of human and civil rights and freedoms. For, initially by way of an Ordinary Act only, a Supreme Administrative Court was put in place in 1980, while 7 years later Poland gained the world of *Real Socialism*’s first ombudsman – in the form of *Rzecznik Praw Obywatelskich* (the Commissioner for Citizens’ Rights).

There was thus now a first outlining of the idea of a state duly constituted and run in line with the rule of law. Even if this remained associated with the word “socialist”, it was still a reference being made to some real safeguarding of the principle of constitutionalism, given the 1982 establishment of the institutions of both the Constitutional Tribunal and the Tribunal of State. Finally, there was also a strengthening of the principle of the Nation as sovereign, even as we continued through to December 1989 with a formal reference to urban and rural working people.

Overall, it needs to be recognised that the systemic transformations indicated here, as combined with accompanying political and economic “erosion” of the system and development of opposition movements in society, did represent a genuine prelude to the ground-breaking Round Table talks convened in 1989.

4. Systemic models in the process of democratic transformation

A breakthrough moment in the building of a constitutional order for a democratic Third Republic of Poland involved the deliberations at the so-called

Round Table, which continued through from February to April 1989. These in fact followed on from certain attempts at reform made by the authorities of PRL from the early 1980s onwards (Jakubowski and Słomka 2012, 53–54). The Round Table attested to the possibility for a peaceful conference on matters of greatest importance to the state to be convened between what had hitherto been a persecuted Opposition and the authoritarian rulers of the country. And, by way of its “Stance in the matter of political reforms”, this paved the way for further systemic transformation.

To be clear, the Talks’ intended outcome was not in fact the total rejection of the systemic order in place through to that time, but rather – as the title makes quite clear – its reform. The intention had thus (in other words) been to pursue such systemic and political change as would allow for the emergence of a parliamentary democracy in which “socialism” would be pre-eminent. The bases for this were to be: (1) a multi-stage process of evolutionary-type change, (2) a departure from the state monopoly previously maintained by Marxist ideology (but still with plurality of political thought and values confined to the circles present at the Round Table, which is to say PZPR, *Zjednoczone Stronnictwo Ludowe*, *Stronnictwo Demokratyczne*, “Solidarity” itself and the Catholic Church – and hence with no account taken of many strands to Poland’s political opposition, not least the radical-right *Konfederacja Polski Niepodległej* (“Confederation for an Independent Poland”) not represented at the Round Table talks), (3) the retention of a leading role in the state for PZPR, albeit with pluralism permitted to the extent that people might now join together freely in associations and trade unions, (4) controlled (and hence still-restricted) freedom of speech/expression, with censorial mechanisms and institutions thus kept in place (though in truth fatally wounded at the Round Table and removed altogether in early 1990), and (5) maintenance of Poland’s previously-existing political, economic and military alliances.

As a consequence of the Round Table conference (and the amendment of the Constitution of the Polish People’s Republic dated April 7th 1989), it proved possible to establish a new system of supreme bodies in the state, within which there was a return to an office of President with attributes linked to authority as well as supervision/scrutiny, and to a *Senat* as the Upper House of parliament – albeit with the *Sejm* (Lower House) remaining the supreme body of state authority (in line with the principle of unity thereof). A National Council for the Judiciary (*Krajowa Rada Sądownictwa*) was established, to include representatives of the Judiciary, Legislature and Executive, who were to stand guard over the independence of the justice system.

Changes to the law on elections were also made, with the Opposition now permitted to stand against the Party in rivalry over seats in Parliament. In the case of the *Sejm* this was still in fact to be limited, with the contract continuing to assume that some seats would be allocated, rather than competed over at elections. In any case, the “Rubicon was crossed” in practice, at the elections to *Sejm* and *Senat* taking place on June 4th and 18th 1989, with these as far as was possible being lost to the political forces of the *ancien regime*, with the path towards fundamental change and the burial of the communist version of parliamentary democracy now taken.

This was in fact made clear in an amended version of Poland’s Constitution dated December 29th 1989, with a change in the nature of the foundations that the Polish state system post-1952 had rested upon. There was for a start a return to the country’s old name of Republic of Poland – as opposed to Polish People’s Republic (*Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa*), as well as to a crowned white eagle as national emblem (as opposed to an uncrowned version). The Preamble to the Constitution also lost any reference to this manifesting ideals of communism – which would obviously have stood in the way of an intensifying process of change in a liberal-democratic spirit. In the light of the new definition of statehood, the Republic of Poland had now become a democratic state governed legitimately in line with the rule of law, and serving to give real effect to principles of social justice.

The amended version of December also brought one more key case of redefinition, relating to who was sovereign in the state. Gone were the workers of urban and rural areas, with the supreme entity and object of state authority now being the Nation (or people) – and with this being understood as all citizens of the Republic taken together. Rejected in this way were all premises other than legal and political affiliation with the Polish state. Thus also ceasing to play a role here were criteria relating to classes and layers in society, with the effect that premises founded upon the doctrine of historical materialism were also dispensed with.

The December amendment of the Constitution referred in the fullest, most comprehensive way to the principle of political pluralism. The provision as to the (post-February 1976) primacy of the (Polish United Workers’) Party in the political system of the Polish state, albeit in cooperation with the *Zjednoczone Stronnictwo Ludowe* and *Stronnictwo Demokratyczne* parties, was replaced by a provision enshrining a principle of pluralism explicitly, and also making clear reference to political parties.

That said, a multi-party setup had become an element of systemic practice even before the amendment in question came into force. Many new political groupings had already made their appearance from spring 1989 onwards, and

had not faced any real-life repressive action from the state. This only evidenced the rapid real-life erosion of provisions in the basic law still in force, and hence the establishment of new constitutional space. There had thus been in-practice dynamism that had had to be responded to via formalised change.

Alongside the aforementioned constitutional amendment, the change in question also took the form of the 1990 passing of the Act on Political Parties – which actually faced widespread criticism on a number of grounds (Chmaj 1999, 32), not least the way it failed to regulate parties' roles at elections, while nevertheless providing that just 15 citizens would be needed to announce a party for court registration. The effect of the latter provision was for an “avalanche” of party-creation to take place, in which the said “parties” were mostly “more in the nature of special-interest groups involved in the articulation of narrow sectional interests, and proving unable (or in fact unwilling) to penetrate more widely into society” (Herbut 1999, 135).

The amendment made to the Constitution on December 29th 1989 was thus a true tipping point in the shaping of new systemic structures for Poland. The basic law no longer enshrined Soviet models, but rather those offered by states espousing liberal democracy, as based on ideas of democratism, legalism, constitutionalism and the protection of a broad catalogue of human and civil rights and freedoms.

Following the December amendment, further changes to the Constitution were not of such a comprehensive nature, instead serving rather as corrections or augmentations of systemic solutions that had already been ushered in. Particular importance can be attached to the effort to give real and tangible form to a democratic state founded upon and rooted in the rule of law that was constituted by the amendment of March 8th 1990. It was on this basis, after 40 years of absence, that local government based around the local-authority area known as the *gmina* was reinstated. This meant an end being put to the hierarchical system of National Councils specific to the Soviet system and era.

September 27th 1990 then saw the introduction of universal and direct elections to the post of President of the Republic of Poland – a change of more of a political nature also very much reflecting the dispute over leadership that had arisen within the only-rather-briefly unified “Solidarity” camp. The need here was less of a systemic one, and it had no rooting in Polish governance traditions. Universal Presidential Elections should thus rightly be regarded as an element of constitutional identity specific to the Third Republic only – and in fact one that rapidly gained acceptance on the part of society. This has been attested to by both the high turnouts noted at elections of this kind and the results of opinion-polling, which continue to make it clear that most people in Poland have no

desire to change the way in which the Head of State is chosen. That said, the model in question has to be seen as more and more of a mismatch, when the actual systemic and political roles of the holder of the office of President are borne in mind (Słomka 2021).

Possessing a significance marked by tradition was a systemic solution accepted in 1992 in the form of the Constitutional Act dealing with the mutual relations between the Republic of Poland's Legislature and Executive, as well as local and regional government (*Ustawa konstytucyjna o wzajemnych stosunkach między władzą ustawodawczą i wykonawczą Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej oraz o samorządzie terytorialnym*). This came to be referred to as the Small Constitution (*Mała Konstytucja*).

In Polish systemic conditions, this Small Constitution was an Act dealing with matters constitutional and systemic of a transient and incomplete nature, only supplying regulation on the most crucial areas of operation of the state (mainly the status, functioning and remits of its supreme organs). It was accepted that this would only apply until such time as a full and "fit-for-purpose" Constitution gained enactment. According to Tadeusz Mołdawa, such interim instruments relating to a system of governance arise in situations characterised by: (1) a constitutional vacuum (lack of any constitutional bases for the system to operate); (2) a lack of clearly-outlined systemic concepts, or else competing concepts not receiving majority support; and (3) a period of transition from one governance system to another – and typically from the authoritarian through to the democratic (Mołdawa 2007, 67).

The period between 1992 and 1997 may be termed that in which a "complex constitution" was in force. This comprised three key segments: (1) the Small Constitution of October 1992 as such; (2) the provisions of the July Constitution of 1952 still kept in force by the Small Constitution and *inter alia* regulating the supreme principle of the system of governance (e.g. that of the sovereignty of the people, political pluralism, etc.), the catalogue of human and civil rights and freedoms, the bodies representing justice and/or extending legal protection; and (3) the Constitutional Act of April 23rd 1992 on the means of preparation and enactment of a Constitution of the Republic of Poland.

From the point of view of systemic practice, the period in force associated with the Small Constitution was signified by the phenomenon of so-called *falandyzacja* of the law. The term in fact derived from Round Table participant Lech Falandysz – a Professor of Law and Administration – and it was taken to denote an interpretation of provisions and a management and utilisation of legal loopholes in such a way as to expand the scope of entitlements residing with state

organs and bodies. In the period in question this was first and foremost true of the institution of the Polish Presidency.

The aforesaid process by which a new Constitution for the Republic of Poland was prepared and enacted was in fact a protracted one – lasting longer than in other CEECs, despite their being in identical or highly-similar situations of transformation. However, in Polish conditions the dawdling seemed to be justified by the lack of any worked-out political compromise, with Parliament fragmented ... to the point where the “contract” *Sejm* (the one elected historically in 1989) had to be dissolved prior to the completion of the four-year term laid down in the Constitution, just as did the First-Term *Sejm* (Gebethner 1998). There was either no time (in the former case) or legitimacy and mandate (in the latter) for the process under consideration here to actually take place.

From 1992 onwards, a specific feature of the model for the adoption of a Constitution was the way it assumed that the two Houses of Parliament (forming the National Assembly) would participate equally in the process of draft-preparation, and then as the Constitution was voted on with a view to its being enacted. However, a condition for the basic law to come into force was and remains acceptance by the Sovereign in the context of referendum voting. This was in fact Poland's first resort to the mechanism of the compulsory national referendum, even as it was in fact a very strong one when it came to legitimacy being conferred on systemic solutions first adopted by Parliament. Those working to establish the new system of governance made a justified assumption that some democratic deficit might arise in line with the composition of Parliament (given the possible over- or under-representation of different political forces that became real in the 1993–1997 term).

The National Assembly would enact a Constitution at two or three Readings, depending on the course of action taken by the President. Were the latter to put forward amendments, then the National Assembly would first vote on adoption of the proposal (by an absolute majority of votes cast), before turning to adopt the Constitution itself by a 2/3 majority. Once the Constitution had been enacted in this way, the President would call a referendum to seek the people's approval for the new basic law. This would be deemed to have occurred where a majority of citizens participating gave the Constitution a “yes” vote. The Act made no reference to a threshold level of turnout that would or would not confer binding status on the popular vote. This was then a solution (exceptional in the case of Constitutional Referenda) needing to be viewed as counteracting adoption paralysis in the face of a voter-mounted boycott (which might equally well be incited by one political force or another).

September 1994 brought a First Reading of the draft Constitution at the National Assembly. Then in March 1997 the Constitution of the Republic of Poland gained its enactment at Second Reading. This became possible thanks to the shaping of a coalition seeking (in the face of a parliamentary term reaching its end) to achieve the rapid passing of the new basic law. That “Constitutional Coalition” was in fact made up of *Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej*, *Unia Wolności*, *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe* and *Unia Pracy*. This was then the first coalition of the Third Republic able to rise above deep divisions of an ideological and historical nature (given that it included both groupings arising out of the *Solidarity* camp and political forces deriving from the times of People’s Poland). At the other extreme, there was an “anti-constitutional coalition” made up of the largest of the then right-of-centre political groupings (emerging in the then term of Parliament and almost only represented at National Assembly level by *Solidarność Senatorów*) – i.e. *Akcja Wyborcza Solidarność* and *Ruch Odbudowy Polski*.

The consequence of the proposal on amendments received from President A. Kwaśniewski was an April 2nd 1997 Third Reading before the National Assembly. The greater part of what the President proposed gained acceptance, before a motion to enact the Constitution of the Republic of Poland in its entirety was put to the vote. As 497 Assembly Members took part, the relevant two-thirds majority stood at 332. In the event, 451 Members voted for, with just 40 against and 6 abstaining. This of course denoted final adoption of the new basic law by Parliament.

The following month (as soon as on May 25th 1997), a referendum called by the President was held to provide the public with their chance to approve the new Constitution. This meant a relatively brief, if intensive, campaign that nevertheless took on strong political aspects. In essence it exposed deep antagonism between the two coalitions referred to above, became very highly-charged indeed from a political point of view, and saw arguments applied that had rather little to do with constitutional merits. The inevitable impact was to lower turnout, to the point where 42.8 % of people entitled to vote actually did so (12,137,136 people). Within that group of Poles turning out to have their say, 52.7 % voted in favour of adoption, while 45.8 % voted against. Such was the Nation’s acceptance of the new basic law that its Parliament had adopted. Nevertheless, given the strength of the political conflict that had broken out, the legitimising role of the popular vote of acceptance needs emphasising. This is all the more important given that the 1993–1997 term of Parliament (and the *Sejm* in particular) included no seats at all for most of the right-of-centre groupings participating at the 1993 elections. In that context, it would be reasonable to refer to an over-representation of the centre-left in the then Parliament.

As has already been accepted here, each country's Constitution is in some way reactive to its systemic background and environment. To a greater or lesser degree, models and solutions – or indeed values prevailing within the system of governance – are “lifted” from other basic laws, or indeed other instances of systemic order.

States pursuing profound and far-reaching systemic change thus find themselves in a very specific situation, and all the more so where there is a discontinuity of the kind facing, not only Poland, but in fact every one of the CEECs. In the view of T. Mołdawa, the states in question shaped their new principles and institutions in three ways, i.e. by negation (of what had been enshrined in the circumstances of the communist-era states); by continuation – mostly by invoking own domestic traditions from the pre-War era; and by reception – in essence “the borrowing of principles and solutions applicable in Western democracies, most especially when it came to the system of rights and civil liberties and the means by which they could be guaranteed, as well as systems of government” (Mołdawa 2002, 149–150).

It is in the context of reception (albeit with a dose of continuation) that we can view the incorporation into the Constitution of the Republic of Poland of such fundamental principles as the state as common good and as a democratic institution duly constituted under and operating by way of the rule of law. These principles interdigitate and are mutually augmentative to the extent that there is no way to treat them as a set of autonomous features of a state and its political system independent of one another. The attention is here drawn to the principle whereby the democratic state under the rule of law should be treated as a particular kind of systemic “megaprinciple”, providing a “backbone” for the overall functioning of the Third Republic's political system.

The Constitution of the Republic of Poland defines the Polish state as “the common good of all its citizens”. It is of course no chance happening that this principle is to be found at the beginning of the first Chapter. As Krystian Complak notes, the common good is “the outcome of the coordinated actions of all (or at least most) members of the collective, uniting in a common effort to give rise to overall success” (Complak 2007, 48). It is hard to disagree that the lead function (indeed perhaps the very essence) of a contemporary liberal democracy revolves around the safeguarding of human rights and freedoms and thus an ensuring of that “overall success”.

It is in this way that the state establishes the primacy of the individual, even as this is unambiguously set within a society and community in which that individual is to play a role, acting jointly with others for the good of the state and

society (as entities that indeed serve in safeguarding satisfaction of that fundamental need of the human being known as security).

The democratic state constituted and governed under the rule of law is one “in which there are unhindered possibilities for the nation as sovereign to influence the composition and shape of state authorities, even as the latter are faced with real forms of accountability that have been assured” (Słomka 2007, 1200). This further denotes the perceiving – within the concept of the democratic state under the law – of the three key elements that are: (1) a means of organisation ensuring that all entities functioning within it (be these institutions of public authority, individuals, of society as a whole) are bound by the law in force, which further serves to set limits on their activities; (2) a legitimacy of the said institutions of state authority that flows directly or indirectly from the Sovereign; and (3) supervision and scrutiny on the part of citizens that is exercisable in relation to the authorities, as regards both law (via the institution of legal protection) and politics (via activity of those in authority being verified by way of elections, but also diverse other elements of direct democracy).

The canon of the democratic state will thus encompass the principle of legalism and checks thereupon. What is involved here is the aforementioned binding of both institutions of authority and citizens by the law in force. Organs of public authority may only operate as and when the law offers explicit permission for that. The law thus entails both a basis for activity on the part of authorities, and clear limits set upon that activity. “A lack of legal regulation authorising someone to take up a given task should be deemed tantamount to a proscription on the activity in question” (Zubik 2008, 51). At the same time, this results from the provision in Art. 7 of the Constitution, even as Art. 31, para. 2 lays down the scope of action of the individual by reference to the notion that: “Everyone shall respect the freedoms and rights of others. No one shall be compelled to do that which is not required by law”. Thus the individual, in the name of the natural right to liberty, enjoys broad freedom to act, even as this is by no means the case for institutions of public authority.

Standing guard over the principle of legalism have been both the common courts and the Supreme Court of the Republic of Poland (first and foremost in the role of court of appeal), as well as such bodies associated with investigation/prosecution and the maintenance of order as the Constitutional Tribunal (a scrutinising authority establishing legal norms in accordance with higher-order legal instruments and first and foremost the Constitution of the Republic of Poland, and hence a court sitting in judgment over the law); the administrative courts (resolving disputes surrounding administrative decisions) and holders of Ombudsman-type posts, with these being specialised organs checking upon “the

activity of the state in areas of possible threats to freedom and human rights and postulating the taking of action to eliminate or prevent violations” (Malinowska 2007, 57).

Poland in fact has two Ombudsman-type institutions as provided for in the Constitution, i.e. *Rzecznik Praw Obywatelskich* (often known as the Commissioner for Citizens’ Rights in English), as well as *Rzecznik Praw Dziecka* – dealing specifically with the rights of the child. These post-holders offer exceptionally interesting examples of the implantation into Poland of “alien” systemic solutions of a liberal-democratic nature – though in the case of the Commissioner for Citizens’ Rights this was (quite paradoxically) achieved prior to the fundamental political breakthrough, and hence in the circumstances of the authoritarian state of the communist era.

The Commissioner was thus to have been a specific element seeking to legitimise the *ancien regime* as a “decorative” piece of evidence that a communist country with a “renewed” form of the “rule of law” associated therewith in the mid-1980s was able to achieve liberal change regarding people’s rights and freedoms. In reality, the institution was quite significantly due some real change in the field in question.

An element particularly inherent to the principle of the democratic state duly constituted and operating under the rule of law is the principle of constitutionalism – as taken to denote that a Constitution enjoys primacy within the hierarchical system of sources of law (by virtue of Art. 8, para. 1 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland). Furthermore, in the light of the case law of Poland’s Constitutional Tribunal, the country’s basic law remained the supreme source of law even following Poland’s EU accession. For the Constitutional Tribunal, tasked in 2005 with determining the constitutionality of the Accession Treaty by virtue of which Poland acceded to the European Union, ruled that there was clear primacy of the Constitution over the state’s entire legal order, where the matter of the sovereignty of the Republic of Poland was concerned. Poland’s accession to the EU was thus without prejudice to Art. 8 of the Constitution, even as systemic practice would seem to have moved to resolve the incompatibility of Community Law on the one hand and Poland’s basic law on the other, in the context of the latter’s amendment – *vide* the 2006 Act amending the Constitution, as regards Art. 55 concerning the possibility of a Polish citizen being extradited.

It is in the same spirit that one might construe a Presidential proposal to have the Constitution extended by the introduction of a Chapter Xa concerning *Członkostwo Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Unii Europejskiej* (“Membership of the Republic of Poland in the European Union”) (Słomka 2011, 81–85; 2020).

It is further worth noting how a similar approach (also confirming the primacy of the basic law *vis-à-vis* Community Law) was taken by a CT judgment of 2010 concerning the Constitution's compatibility with the Lisbon Treaty.

The essence of the democratic state is the principle whereby the Nation is Sovereign (and thus serves as a legal and political category). It is so-defined unambiguously in the Preamble to Poland's Constitution wherein the wording includes "[...] We, the Polish Nation – all citizens of the Republic [...]". This is to say that, wherever in the Constitution the notion of Nation as Sovereign is used, it is a collective entity that is borne in mind, made up of persons affiliated with the Polish state in a legal and political manner, as citizens of the Republic of Poland.

No account is thus taken here of the nation perceived in terms of ethnic significance (Chrostowska-Malak 2010, 21). Art. 4 of the Polish Constitution provides that the Nation shall have supreme power vested in it. It at the same time lays down the forms the Nation's authority might take, by way of power exercised.

Poland's political system also features forms of both direct (representative) and indirect democracy. State organs in the nature of sovereign representatives are the *Sejm* and *Senat RP*, this reflecting the presence seated there of the Deputies and Senators deemed by Art. 104, para. 1 of the Constitution (and correspondingly Art. 108) to be "representatives of the Nation".

Thus, under Polish systemic conditions, the country's two Houses of Parliament have equal status (in this context at least), thereby differing from the UK's House of Lords or the American Senate. In turn, despite being the product of universal and direct elections, the President of Poland is not a said representative of the Nation, but rather the supreme representative of the Republic of Poland, i.e. the state as organised.

All this by the way leaves certain key problems with the notion of representation at the levels of local or regional authority. It would be hard to regard these as bodies representing the Nation (or nation), given that they operate at the level of the given unit of territorial division and administration, and obviously not the state as a whole. In essence, what we have here are organs representative of local or county-level communities (on the Council of a *gmina* existing at local level or that of the higher *powiat*), or else those in given regions (the Assemblies functioning in each Voivodeship, even as this regional aspect attributable to this unit of administration is also accompanied by a provincial aspect).

Key mechanisms of direct democracy present in Poland include referenda at national or more-local level, as well as popular/citizens' legislative initiatives. In the latter case, it would be necessary to refer to a quasi-direct form, given that a citizens' right to introduce legislation (unlike the form of the referendum)

“initiates the shaping of an expression of the political will present among the people” (Grabowska 2005, 22). Ultimately, the shape assumed by an Act is still determined by Parliament, i.e. the national representative body, though the motion is delivered by a group of at minimum 100,000 citizens. One of the cornerstones of the democratic state, usually present *expressis verbis* in each Constitution, is the principle of political pluralism. In the light of Polish constitutional provisions, political pluralism is associated with: (1) the freedoms to found a political party and for it to act – which exert an influence on state politics by way of democratic methods; (2) the freedoms to establish a trade union, association, citizen’s movement, assembly, foundation or other entity associated with the functioning of civil society, and to have those act; and (3) freedom of the press and of other media (also social media).

A kind of specific boundary to the operation of political pluralism is constituted by Art. 13 of the Constitution, whereby “those establishing the new system under the Constitution generate a marked narrowing of the zone of tolerated political activity, even as they fail to do this in a very precise way” (Boć 1998, 39). The provisions of Art. 13 are to offer a kind of guarantee of the state’s systemic security, and need to be read from the points of view of both potential contemporary threats to the constitutional order in place (as posed by totalitarian ways of acting, hatred on the grounds of race or nationality, violence in politics and the founding of covert structures) and the experiences of the near-past referred to rather explicitly in the Preamble to the Constitution, in which we read: “[...] Which recovered, in 1989, the possibility of a sovereign and democratic determination of its fate” – where that “which” is a reference to “our Homeland” (*ojczyzna* in Polish).

Further on it is noted how Poles are to be “beholden to our ancestors for [...] their struggle for independence achieved at great sacrifice” and “Mindful of the bitter experiences of the times when fundamental freedoms and human rights were violated in our Homeland”. The importance of the said Article is thus impossible to overestimate, when looked at in terms of the constitutional identification/identity of the Third Republic of Poland.

Political parties are a main element to the process by which power is exercised in a state. They are the fundamental unit of activity within the election process – in elections to the Polish *Sejm* above all, and they are seen to be most important from the point of view of the mechanisms of the Cabinet-and-Parliament system of governments that holds sway in Poland. The policy practice of the Third Republic is not in fact seen to depart from that in other democracies. The Polish system is a clearly multi-party one, with key criteria providing for the classification of Poland’s parties being socio-economic (*i.a.* the degree or level

of inclination when it comes to state interventionism in the economy); associated with “outlook” – not least the place within the state and society for religious values and churches, and in practice therefore matters like abortion and *in vitro* fertilisation, sexual minorities and orientations, and so on; associated with the view of Poland’s communist (Real Socialist) past – albeit with this now of ever-declining relevance; and associated with the view of the EU and integration, Poland’s place therein, and the model in line with which the Union is to evolve.

With the notable exception of the PSL “Peasant” Party, contemporary Poland now has little room for influence from parties with a pre-War tradition. Rather, the political system was very much shaped by the necessary responses to the challenges the democratic transition posed (also in the face of the other transitions needing to be made at the same time). In the 1990s, what was obviously reflected was the division into groupings hailing from the era of Opposition to the omnipresent authorities of People’s Poland, or else descending from that *ancien regime*. In turn, in the 21st century, the division started to reflect the experiences different groups in society had actually had with the period of transformation (with a basic divide into those who had benefited and those who had failed to do so, or in fact been harmed or lost out).

The 1997 Constitution of the Republic of Poland enshrined and in fact entrenched the model of Cabinet/Parliamentary Governments, with the Polish version basically entailing a rationalised system of parliamentary governments (Jaskiernia 2011, 57–63). The basic assumption here is that the pursuit of state policy is a matter for the Council of Ministers (Government and Cabinet), arising out of a majority in the *Sejm*. The Government offers a response of a political nature (solidaritously and individually, by virtue of the activity of individual members of the Council of Ministers), answerable before the *Sejm*; while the Cabinet is safeguarded against the omnipotent Parliament by the institution known as the constructive confidence vote. At the same time, the Cabinet is not outfitted with individual right of legislative initiative, in that it has no right to issue legal instruments at the level of the Act (*Ustawa*). The legislative monopoly thus lies with *Sejm* and *Senat*, and can only be thwarted by Martial Law (a Regulation of Act-level strength issued by the President at the request of the Council of Ministers). The Council pursues the Republic of Poland’s internal and foreign policies and enjoys a full remit, save where powers are reserved for other organs of public authority.

The President of Poland – as a second element to the Executive alongside the Government – is Head of State and political arbiter. He (or she, one day) does not participate in the process by which the state is governed, even as there is a task to be activated in time of crisis, with a view to harmonious functioning of the state

and continuity of authority being assured. The position of the President – which is to say his active rather than neutral participation in political processes – became one of the key aspects of, and hallmarks by which to identify, the Polish governance system post-1989. This was an expression of an expectation that the President would rise above (party) politics, and thus be an authentic arbiter gaining the necessary legitimacy thanks to election by universal suffrage.

This system of governments that took shape during the process of democratic transformation thus has its dual references – to certain ideals of parliamentarianism present during the Second Republic that nevertheless emphasise a relatively strong role for the Executive; but also to governance that reflects elements prevailing widely in systems of government across Europe. This therefore denotes *no* serious attention being paid at any time to the American (US) variant of Presidential Government – with this apparently not seen to reflect either the experiences or the socio-political realities of Poland.

5. Conclusions

It is possible to assign an identity to the Polish political and systemic solutions arrived at and pursued during the country's post-1989 period of democratisation, suggesting that there is both reference to historical experiences with Poland's own statehood, as well as a necessary reaching out to systemic models from beyond, in the situation of profound breakthrough denoted by the building of order in the Second Republic and the fall of communist-era authoritarianism, as well as the Polish state's deprivation of attributes of sovereignty as a political and system-of-governance order was put in place, with the appearance and development of communism. The authoritarian trappings of the then political system on the one hand operate as a negative example for democratic transformation, even as the relevant Polish political discourse does feature a major dispute as to any positive treatment of the role of the Piłsudski model from between the Wars and at least what can be seen as the "liberal" periods of People's Poland. At the same time, it needs to be accepted that the Polish democratic tradition is not a very long one, and was not exactly replete with experiences straightforwardly transplantable as contemporary solutions. It is furthermore hard to claim unhesitatingly that democratisation in Poland from the end of the 20th century onwards bore fruit in such a reorientation of citizen's attitudes and mentalities as would have allowed for their unequivocal identification with the democratic order, as well as the values and principles of constitutional democracy.

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Ryszard SZARFENBERG

Modernization theory in explaining the dynamics of democratisation and dedemocratisation in Poland

Abstract:

Democratisation and de-democratisation are fundamental processes in polity worlds. This is a case study of Polish democratisation and de-democratisation interpreted in the context of Lipset's modernisation theory complemented by the theories of cultural evolution proposed and tested by Inglehart and Welzel. These theories support argument that democracies are more sustainable when there is socio-economic development and transformations of cultural values from those related to survival and material conditions to self-expression and emancipatory values. Poland was one of the communist autocracies, and its socio-economic development suffered a slump at the end of the 1970s and its shadow was cast over entire decade of the 1980s. The transition from undemocratic rule by the communist party to full democracy took place in the 1990s. In the following decades, Poland's socio-economic development was impressive, although the cultural transformations identified by Inglehart and Welzel were less clear-cut. Despite conditions conducive to the sustainability of democracy, its indicators declined after 2015. De-democratisation is, however, shallower than in Hungary and its sustainability is questionable. It follows that there is confirmation of the expectation that under conditions of dynamic socio-economic development with even an incomplete cultural transformation towards self-expression and emancipation, the resilience of democracy to de-democratising politics is high.

Keywords: Democratisation, de-democratisation, resilience of democracy to de-democratising politics, modernisation theory

1. Introduction

Research on democratisation has been summarized relatively recently in 55 hypotheses grouped into several classes: leadership and culture, economy and society including Lipset's 1959 theory of modernization, the state and its institutions, and international factors (Coppedge 2012). In this review, Lipset's revision of the his theory several decades later, was also assigned to the other classes of hypotheses.

The beginning of the discussion on the relationship of multidimensional development with democracy and its consolidation in the social sciences is located

in Lipset's article from late 1950s (Lipset 1959). Decades later, Lipset summarised his approach in the broader context of the relationship between capitalism, religion and institutionalisation of democracy (1994).

Discussions of Lipset's theory and its empirical testing have generated much new knowledge about the relationship between development and democracy. Some of these results have been interpreted as undermining Lipset's framework (Przeworski and Limongi 1997), and the ambiguity of empirical test has been attributed to insufficient specification (Fritzsche and Vogler 2020).

Lipset's theory also had defenders who complemented it with a specific dimension of cultural transformations. This is the contribution of Inglehart and Welzel, who point to the crucial importance that development along with post-materialist and self-expression cultural changes leads to the consolidation of democracy (Inglehart and Welzel 2005). Sometimes development begins to be equated with the expansion of capabilities, as with Amartia Sen's concept: development as freedom (Sen 1999).

Aforementioned theories seem to be universal, not referring to any specific group of countries. However, we are interested in the interpretation and explanation of the last 50 years of Poland's political history. It is a post-socialist country of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), which was multidimensionally influenced by the model of the USSR, while not being one of its republics and retaining substantial autonomy. Of particular interest in the case of this type of countries is the analysis of Bandelj, Finley and Radu (Bandelj et al. 2015), who rejected Lipset's theory as plausible explanation of post-socialist democratisation. However, they did not take into account the process of cultural change indicated by Inglehart and Welzel. Nor did they refer to possible de-democratisation or democratic backsliding in this type of country, although they did mention it. Of course, there is a large literature that analyses democratisation processes in post-communist countries and in Poland in the broader context of systemic transition (Domber 2013).

De-democratisation as a universal phenomenon and also in Poland and Hungary has focused increasing attention of researchers in the previous decade and will continue in the future (Bernhard 2021; Haggard and Kaufman 2021; Lührmann and Lindberg 2019; Zamecki and Glied 2020). Even the concept of pre-conditions for illiberalism with references to Lipset's theory has been formulated (Scheiring 2021).

Poland is counted, together with Hungary, among the exemplary countries of the CEE where de-democratisation is more advanced (Ágh 2019; Sajó 2021). Especially in the case of Poland, this caused surprise due to the fact that its post-communist transformation in socio-economic, educational and institutional

terms was considered one of the most successful in the world (Tworzecki 2019). In light of the Lipset-Inglehart-Welzel (LIW) theory, one would expect democracy in Poland to be resilient to backsliding under such favourable conditions. After nearly two terms of government of Law and Justice (PiS), whose policies are interpreted as partial dismantling of the institutions of democracy, it can be concluded that Hungary's democracy backsliding seems to be more advanced after changing constitution and over 10 years of autocratic power.

The approach of the chapter is a case study whose limitations in the light of the desirable features of the democratisation theory are well known. It is thick enough, but a weak ground for generalisation and integration (Coppedge 2012, 257). Apart from its limitations, it still has some strengths highlighted in the methodological literature (Flyvbjerg 2006). However, the following text is rather a preliminary case study, as it covers a very long period of the complex, changing and multidimensional reality of one post-communist country.

After presenting Lipset's theory and what Inglehart and Welzel's framework contributed to it, chapter move on to discuss the theories explaining democratisation and dedemocratisation in post-communist CEE countries. Then focus will be on trends in economic, social, educational and cultural development in Poland over the last 50 years. In the next section periodisation of the last 50 years of changes in Polish political institutions will be presented. An interpretation of this periodisation in the framework of LIW theory and conclusion end the chapter.

2. Modernization and cultural change theory in explaining democratisation

Between Lipset's 1959 article and the time of writing these words (2022), more than 60 years of the discussions and research it inspired have passed. Lipset himself referred to it in later writings and statements in explaining the factors and processes that influence the institutionalisation of democracy (1994). The resurgence of interest in this theory in the 1990s was due to its critique by Przeworski and Limongi (1997), although this was a critique considered confirmatory (Boix 2003). Based on an empirical study, they questioned the impact of modernisation on transitions from autocracy to democracy. Later their results were challenged, but their contribution was that explaining transitions from autocracies to democracies using theories of modernisation and cultural change is a different issue than explaining with them sustainability of democracies.

However, the conclusion of a recent review of the results of empirical testing modernization theories is also that they are misleading (Fritzsche and Vogler

2020). This was explained by the high arbitrariness of the choice of independent variables, which is related to the multidimensionality of development, and the different dependent variables: the degree of democracy, the probabilities of moving from autocracy to democracy, the probability of avoiding the return of autocracy. Another type of criticism concerned the lack of a mechanism explaining impact of development on democratisation and sustainability of democracy. Interesting response to this problem was proposed recently by Clark, Golder and Golder based on Hirschmann's framework of exit, voice and loyalty in relationship between government and citizens who have more mobile resources (Clark et al. 2017).

Lipset's theory indicated that the likelihood of a democracy being sustainable depended on its effectiveness and legitimacy (1959). Effectiveness referred to the achievement of multidimensional improvements in material and immaterial circumstances, i.e. socio-economic development, by the people of a country. Legitimacy, on the other hand, referred to the ability of incumbent to deal with the inevitable multidimensional cleavages in society. Thus, if a state is democratic in the first period with a certain level of development and social conflict, the probability that it will also be democratic in the next period increases if the level of development increases and the level of social conflict decreases. Conversely, if that state in the second period has a lower level of development and a higher level of social conflict, the probability of it remaining a democracy decreases.

The mediator between development and social cleavages and democracy is legitimacy and several positive feedbacks. Thus, if the population of a country experiences an improvement in the economic situation and a reduction in the level of social conflict, the level of acceptance of the government and its regime is higher than if feelings of a worsening material situation and an exacerbation of social conflict predominate.

Including the social dimension in the concept of development as well, in particular the level of education, leads to distinguishing another channel: a more affluent and educated population will also value democracy to a greater extent. This aspect is highlighted by Inglehart and Welzel, who link economic and social development to the spread of post-material, self-expression and emancipatory values (Inglehart 2018; Inglehart and Welzel 2005; Welzel 2012). Lipset took into consideration that democracy requires a supportive culture, and even that cultural factors have a stronger influence than economic ones, but he mentioned the role of tolerance and religion only (1994). Welzel pointed out that a wealthier and better educated society values individual freedom more because it has the resources to exercise it (2012). If democracies, by definition, are supposed to

better protect, respect and realise citizens' rights, then modernisation and the associated cultural change should strongly facilitate it.

Lipset's modernisation theory indicated the independent variables related to development when the dependent variable was the sustainability of democracy. The question, however, is about reverse causality. Studies have found a positive effect of democracy on multidimensional human development (Gerring et al. 2021). A positive effect of democracy on emancipatory values could be through, for example, the channel of civic education. The interpretation of the relationship in both directions is thus of mutual reinforcement, i.e. of democracy's self-perpetuation. The literature has already presented a model of mutual positive combination of factors, which includes the theory of modernisation and the theory of Inglehart and Welzel (Abdollahian et al. 2012). Economic growth positively influences the transformation of social values (secularisation and postmaterialisation), which in turn positively influences the level of democracy, which positively affects economic growth.

It is difficult to understand the transition from autocracy to democracy without understanding what the relationships are between autocracy and socio-economic development with the rise of emancipatory values. Given that any incumbent needs a certain minimum of acceptance in society, it can be predicted that those autocracies that are accompanied by socio-economic development will prove to be more durable. Another condition for this relationship is a positive correlation between the material and nonmaterial situation in society and the level of acceptance for incumbent and the political system. In a nutshell, citizens who are satisfied with their personal and family situation in its various dimensions are less likely to rebel against incumbent autocrat and political system regardless of how it is organised. There is evidence that dissatisfaction with life especially for individuals with post-materialist values will lead to a greater propensity to participate in protests and boycotts (Cheng et al. 2021).

The mechanism of this relationship can be explained by a hypothesis linking the propensity to take risks and the level of satisfaction with one's situation: nothing to lose mentality (Aldama et al. 2019). In autocracies, oppositional activity is associated with a greater risk of repression and losses associated with it. Thus, there are mutually reinforcing factors: socio-economic development has a positive effect on the situation and its perception by citizens, which increases the negative effect of the threat of repression on the propensity for protest.

When we add a positive correlation between development and emancipatory values, the situation of the autocracy becomes complicated due to the fact that it, as well as its instruments in the form of the threat of repression, contradict growing freedom aspirations. The stability of autocracy is thus weakened compared to

democracy. The two factors interact in opposite directions. Improving the situation of citizens simultaneously reduces their willingness to risk protest for fear of repression, but it also increases their freedom aspirations, which are not only against the repressive side of autocracy, but also against it itself.

If we assume that autocracy ensures development, then its own conscious actions and other factors that inhibit the growth of freedom aspirations may be responsible for its sustainability. In the area of autocracy's own responses, one example is propaganda that argues for other values, such as communitarianism, and ridicules and devalues individual freedom. If a society has a more collectivist culture, the propaganda of the autocracy and the culture of the society reinforce each other. This is how the persistence of parts of autocracies accompanied by socio-economic development can be explained.

A low level of development should perpetuate autocracy due to the fact that then material matters are of greater importance to citizens compared to individual freedom. Welzel highlights this connection by pointing out that freedom aspirations in poor societies are weak (2012). However, one can look for the source of instability in autocracies in poor countries, as large areas of poverty in society make the risk of protest lower: rebels have little to lose. Hence, at least in theory, there are greater opportunities for opposition mobilisation, which will require increasing levels of repression for the autocratic incumbent. This in turn leads to a strengthening of radicalism in the opposition and may lead to an escalation of conflict that will threaten position of autocrat, although not necessarily the autocratic political system.

3. Democratisation and De-democratisation in the Post-Communist Countries of the CEE

Autocracies emerging after World War II in CEE countries were formed in quite specific conditions. At that time the sphere of influence was divided between the world powers. Central and Eastern Europe found itself in the Eastern Block under the USSR dominion. Economically, these countries were mainly underdeveloped economies with a predominantly agricultural sector, in addition to a low level of capital, which had been destroyed during the war. The Cold War required both powers to spend more on heavy industry and warfare.

Such a starting point for socialist autocracies based on the Soviet model favoured the ruling communist parties to prioritise economic development through rapid industrialisation and heavy investment in mining and heavy industry: extensive industrialisation (Fallenbuchl 1970). This required rebuilding infrastructure after the destruction of the war, building new industrial centres

and providing them with management and workers. The latter task was difficult because of wartime losses, post-war repression and emigration. It therefore required a policy of workforce management, basic universal and vocational education and health care, as this ensured a skilled and healthy workforce for the rapidly building heavy industry. Hence, some elements of social development accompanied the top-down planned industrialisation, with other typical processes, such as urbanisation by the creation of new socialist cities and the expansion of existing cities where industry was located (Szirmai and Váradi 2016).

From the perspective of modernisation theory, however, this was not a comprehensive economic and social development, but mainly an economic development with a profile that was not very friendly to the rapid growth of individual consumption and the living standards of citizens with accompanying cultural transformations. One can conclude from this that even if an autocracy pursues an ambitious industrial development policy, it does not necessarily have to be comprehensive development that is central to modernisation theory.

But let us assume that the economic development strategy of the socialist autocracy changes sometimes due to internal and/or external shocks. The autocracy maintains permanence, but economic development contributes more to the improvement of material conditions in society and individual consumption increases. All other factors pointed out by Lipset also improve. Then the condition assumed by the theory of modernisation, i.e. comprehensive development with the anticipation of an increase in post-materialist and emancipatory values, would already be fulfilled. However, the implementation and changes of economic development strategies take time, so the transition from a strategy of extensive industrialisation to a strategy of comprehensive development may take 20–30 years. The very consolidation of the effects of this change and the awareness of it in society also takes at least a few years. This requires the durability of autocracies for several decades, which was guaranteed by the two-block system in Europe and the domination and control of the USSR in the socialist autocracies under its influence.

However, if communist autocracies had productivity problems, the question arises how could they achieve rapid and more comprehensive development? In the case of Poland and the first half of the 1970s, the answer was to a large extent foreign loans. These later contributed, together with additional external factors (US monetary policy change), to deepen the economic crisis (Simatupang 1993).

Research applying Lipset's theory in the context of post-communist democratisation has shown weak support evidence (Bandelj et al. 2015; Lewis 1997). First, industrialisation, urbanisation and the spread of education are processes that took place within communist autocracies. However, they may have had

specific features compared to modernisation in the West. Secondly, the early 1990s were years of democratisation under conditions of economic crisis, mass unemployment and hyperinflation. Bandelj et al. pointed to several other factors that were crucial for post-communist democratisation: pro-reform governments, new democratic institutions, Europeanisation and ethnic composition.

There are already many theories of democratic backsliding with focus on Poland and Hungary and the rule of law (Zamęcki and Glied 2020). Some emphasise their top-down nature in Poland (Tworzecki 2019). Among the theories of backsliding there are also formal models explaining the re-election of a party with de-democratic policies in a society with an aversion to autocracy (Chiopris et al. 2021; Svolik 2020). This aversion may be stronger in post-communist countries, including Poland due to martial law and stagnation in 1980s. These theories point to the importance of political polarisation and uncertainty about the intentions of incumbent between narrow political interest and ideology. Given a choice between a party that may be a threat to democracy, but which has a similar stance in other areas of economic and social policy, voters decide to make trade-offs. When such a party wins power and its actions are still in line with the voter's ideological profile, the voter will continue to vote for it, despite the progressive de-democratisation.

4. The socio-economic development and cultural evolution in Poland 1970–2021

Poland in the period from 1918 to the third decade of the 21st century progressed from an underdeveloped agricultural country with a high percentage of illiterates to a highly developed economy and society with a strong industrial sector, universal quality schooling and a high share of tertiary graduates. Thus it could be predicted that if Poland was autocratic at first, there is a high probability that it became democratic during the developmental and cultural transformation.

From the above, it could be concluded that Polish democracy between 1918 and 1926 was an exception to the rule. It could be explained by a specific combination of factors, which, however, had little in common with the efficiency factors emphasised in Lipset's modernisation theory. On the other hand, that part of his theory which concerned the correlation of legitimacy and democracy through efficient conflict management in society may be applicable here. The Polish political scene was very unstable in the first years of independence (including the assassination of the president), so this may have been indicative of governments' problems in managing conflicts in an economically, ideologically and ethnically divided society.

Development in modernisation theory has several dimensions and the following will be a brief characterisation of four of them: economic, social, educational and cultural over the last 50 years in Poland.

The influence of economic variables on political variables in the context of democratisation theory has mainly been analysed by examining the relationship between various features of economic condition and dynamics. However, economic theories also include economic inequality as the main explanatory factor (Acemoglu and Robinson 2005; Boix 2003). The relationship between economic growth and inequality is also the subject of numerous theories and studies (Milanović 2018).

The verdict on economic growth in communist countries compared to major Western countries and their peripheries is quite clear. Successive decades since the 1950s have shown that the western countries and their southern peripheries were the relative winners (Vonyó 2017). The economic history of Poland in the period 1945–1989 leads to a similar conclusion. The period since the 1970s can be characterised as follows. The first years of this decade there was a rapid economic growth, but already from the mid-1970s there were signs of a slowdown. A very deep economic crisis occurred between 1978 and 1981 (Simatupang 1993). In the following years the situation improved somewhat, but the second half of the 1980s was also difficult and ended with the deep crisis of the late 1980s and early 1990s. Despite the crises in the centrally planned economy, the problem was not so much unemployment, but the growing foreign currency debt (Poland declared insolvency in 1981), rising prices and the shortage economy related to insufficient supply of goods to the market including food (Chase 1983; Kornai 1980). In the early 1980s, shortages were particularly acute and rationing of goods through a card system was introduced (Hraba 1985).

The turn of the 1980s and 1990s was characterised by hyperinflation, and between 1991 and 1993 unemployment rose from several thousand to several million. After economic reforms and the negotiation of foreign debt repayment in the second half of the 1990s, the situation began to improve. Hyperinflation was brought under control and unemployment began to decline, but another crisis came in 2001. In the later years Poland developed more steadily, being at the same time a full member of the EU since 2004, which also involved a lot of development aid from EU funds. The global crisis of 2008–2009 and the pandemic crisis of 2020 also affected the Polish economy, but to a relatively lesser extent (Bukowski and Paczos 2021; Polanski 2014). While the problem of unemployment was crucial for the first 15 years of democratisation, since 2006 its scale and political significance has been systematically decreasing (Hajder 2013). Polish

economic transformation is considered as very successful called as 'new golden age' or 'growth champion' (Piatkowski 2018).

In the social dimension, let us turn our attention to population processes (Śleszyński et al. 2018), which in Poland have been characterised by a transition from a young to an ageing society, from an emigration to an immigration state, and from a state with a dominant rural population to a dominant urban population. Urbanisation in Poland, however, had particular characteristics and was called flawed, urbanisation without modernisation, or socialist cities (Węclawowicz 2016; Węgleński 1992).

After the Second World War Polish society transformed from ethnically very diverse to nearly homogeneous (Jasińska-Kania et al. 2009). As in other countries, there was a post-war baby boom, echoed in the first 1980s, when a record number of children were born. The 1990s and beyond were already characterised by very low fertility rates and increasing life expectancy, which led to an increasingly rapid ageing of the population. In the decade 2021–2030, this process will be one of the fastest in the world. Poland has been an emigration country for most of its history. The last large wave of emigration occurred after Poland accession the European Union. However, the situation changed in the decade 2011–2020 due to economic immigration mainly from Ukraine. This process was further reinforced due to mass refugees influx from Ukraine due to the Russian military invasion in February 2022.

In the educational dimension, it should be noted that after World War II Poland essentially reduced the number of illiterates in the post-war period (Budnik 2016). However, the percentage of people with higher education degrees was relatively small and the gap between Poland and West European countries increased until the 1990s. The share of the population with higher education increased slightly in the decade 1960–1970 (from 3.8 % to 4.6 %), the next decade brought a slightly larger increase (7 % in 1978), and at the end of the 1980s the percentage was 9.4 % (Szafrńska 2007). The increase between 1970 and 1988 was thus twofold. During the period of democratisation and full democracy, there was a fundamental increase in the number of people in higher education and the proportion of the population with tertiary education quadrupled from 10 % in 1997 to 43 % in 2017 (OECD Data).

In the cultural dimension, the main question is whether Polish society in 1970–2021 can be characterised in terms of the transition from materialist to postmaterialist values, and from survival to self-expression values according to Inglehart and Welzel's theory. The first research on this subject was conducted in 1980 (Inglehart and Sieminska 1988). The results were that Polish society was undergoing a process of post-materialisation, which was associated with

post-war economic growth. Measurements of the value orientation of Polish society in 1989, 1997 and 1999, however, gave a surprising picture of the reversal of the postmaterialisation process (Siemieńska 2004). At the same time, it was found that younger generations showed a greater postmaterialisation orientation: “those who were young in the 1980s remained less materialistically oriented...” (Siemieńska 2004). It was also emphasised that religiosity was negatively related to postmaterialist values. It was predicted at the time that with improving living conditions and an increasing proportion of people with higher education, the percentage of postmaterialists would increase.

There is evidence that this is what happened, although there was still a divide between generations and residents of large and smaller cities (Swadźba 2014). However, when the orientations of young people in Germany and Poland were compared, it was found that Poles were clearly more materialistic, and Poland was counted on the map of values orientations as Catholic Europe (Gardawski 2021).

5. 50 years of Polish socialist “democracy” and capitalist democracy

Not including “gentry democracy” of the 18th century, democracy in Poland began with the reconstruction of the sovereign state in 1918 after the century of partition by the three European powers. The first episode of de-democratisation started already in 1926, when a military coup took place (Rothschild 1962). As a result, the executive power of the president was very much strengthened and the role of parliament was greatly diminished. Elections continued to be held (1928, premature 1930, 1935 and 1938), but the importance of the opposition to the party supporting the government diminished and anti-opposition repression increased in 1930s (Morawiec 2019).

During World War II the Polish state ceased to exist due to the occupation by Third Reich and the USSR. After the war it was rebuilt again but within changed borders and with a changed social composition of the population compared to those of 1918–1939. However, full democracy was not restored and after a short post-war period the political system was dominated by one party, which emerged from the forced unification of the socialist and communist parties (PZPR) in 1948. However, elections were held ten times from 1947 to 1985, and in each after 1948 the ruling communist party (PZPR) received more than 50 % of the vote. Next to it were the United People’s Party (ZSL), which received a quarter of the votes, and the Democratic Party with around 8 % of the votes.

The communist autocracy in Poland, in terms of the degree of application of various types of repression, was obviously not a uniform period. There was

the Stalinist period (1944–1955), which was characterised by a very high level of repression of all manifestations against opposition (Kemp-Welch 1999). In the years 1956–1957 short liberalisation begins (Kemp-Welch 2008). Subsequent decades were marked with short episodes of increasing repressions during the social unrests in 1968–1970 and during martial law (1981–1983). Social protests in Poland until the turn of the 1980s were suppressed by force with the exception of protests in 1980, which were peaceful and ended in agreements between new independent trade union (NSZZ Solidarność) and the ruling party (Modzelewski 1982). However, the next wave of strikes in 1981 was suppressed by force under martial law.

Democratisation did not occur until the late 1980s. The first partially free elections took place in 1989, in which the ruling communist party was defeated. These were preceded by social protests and negotiations with opposition forces, known as the Round Table (Shnabel 2020). The first non-communist government headed by Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki was formed in 1989. However, signs of democratisation were already visible in the second half of the 1980s. New institutions characteristic of democracy were introduced: the Constitutional Tribunal, which began to rule in 1986, and the Ombudsman, who has been active since 1988. A radical reform liberalising economic activity was introduced by the last communist government in 1988.

The next elections in 1991 were already completely free and democratic, and in 1997 the National Assembly adopted a new Constitution. It established fully democratic institutions with several veto points in the Constitutional Tribunal and the President, as well as a decentralised system of local government and public administration and restrictions on public debt.

Initially, post-communist and more generally left-wing parties won the elections (1993 and 2001), but after 2005 a system of two main right-wing parties competing with each other and governing for more than one term emerged.

Signs of de-democratisation appeared after 2015, since PiS's victory after two terms of the PO-PSL coalition (2007–2015). These consisted mainly of violations of the principle of independence of the judiciary (including the takeover of the Constitutional Tribunal and National Judicial Council which appoints judges) and the domination of public media by pro-government propaganda. Especially the first case became a subject of conflict with the European Union due to rule of law violation (Pech et al. 2021).

The process of evolution of the organisation of power in Poland can be structured using the following periodisation: (1) the developed communist autocracy of the 1970s and its crisis; (2) the experience of martial law and partial democratisation of the communist system; (3) the radical democratisation of the political

system with de-etatisation of the economy and decentralisation of power and administration in the 1990s; (4) the consolidation of democracy and capitalism through advanced Europeanisation in 2000–2015; (5) manifestations of partial de-democratisation after 2015.

6. Discussion

The deep economic crisis of the late 1970s and early 1980s and the stagnation of the 1980s, compounded by the debt crisis, together with internal political factors, led to a transition from an undemocratic system of Communist Party PZPR domination to fully free elections and democratisation in the 1990s. Economic factors combined with external political factors in the form of the weakening of control by the USSR and concessions by the ruling party in 1989, as well as the unification of the opposition and its victory in partially free elections, appear to be key as explanations for the transition to democracy in Poland.

However, from Lipset's theory of modernisation with the contribution of Inglehart and Welzel, it follows that the sustainability of democracy will correlate with socio-economic development, as well as the process of educational advancement and the post-materialisation of the cultural orientation of society. From a review of development processes in Poland in the previous sections, one can draw conclusions about the rapid modernisation and progressive postmaterialisation of Poland in the last 20 years. Although in the case of cultural transformation Poland is less advanced than typical Western countries both in terms of secularisation and post-materialist orientations. The theory suggests that modernisation and postmaterialisation will contribute to the consolidation of democracy. In addition, it has been institutionally secured in Poland through democratic institutions with numerous veto points and accession to the Council of Europe and the European Union with their pro-democratic values and human rights protection systems.

Assuming that the leaders of the Law and Justice party after 2015 consciously aimed at de-democratisation similar to that in Hungary, they have so far failed. There is a preliminary evidence that democracy in Poland has proved more resistant to the politics of de-democratisation. Without the generous child benefit introduced in 2016, it is likely that PiS would have lost the elections as early as 2019 (Gromadzki et al. 2022). There were no indications of electoral fraud in the parliamentary elections in 2019 (Markowski 2020) and several explanations why PiS won the second term (Gulczyński 2021). The hypothesis, then, is that unfinished secularisation and post-modernisation, together with additional internal and external factors, create an opportunity of victory even for parties that

pursue de-democratisation, but the success of this politics is highly uncertain in the Polish context.

The political scene in Poland after 2005 has been dominated by two parties with a right-wing profile originating from the anti-communist opposition. It can be predicted that the competition between them will be more polarising than if it was a competition between parties that are less ideologically similar, e.g. left-wing and right-wing. Emphasising differences seems more important when the competing parties ideological profiles are similar, coming from the same ideological camp. The area of competition is also important for polarising potential, as cultural and moral issues may divide the electorate more than issues of economic nature. The latter are also less important in post-communist societies, where class divisions are less salient than other issues, among which are various worldviews and identities (Zarycki et al. 2017).

Of course, explaining why the Polish political scene has moved from normal polarisation to populist or extreme polarisation is much more complicated (Enyedi 2016; Gulczyński 2021; Kopecký et al. 2022). Psychological and cultural factors have also been included in explanations of support for authoritarians and political conflict (Skarżyńska 2018; Zybala 2019).

Under such conditions, there is a top-down partial de-democratisation (Tworzecki 2019), which encounters strong political and social resistance (Fomina and Kucharczyk 2016) and stops at increasing executive influence over the main judiciary institutions and public media. The strength of this resistance can be explained by the LIW theory of advanced modernisation and cultural evolution, but also by other factors such as the mobilisation of the opposition and rule of law violations confirmed by ECJ and conditionality introduced by the EU for National Resilience and Recovery Plans and Multiannual Financial Framework 2021–2027.

7. Conclusions

The case study aimed at explaining the dynamics of democratisation and de-democratisation of the political system in Poland over the last 50 years is a great challenge. Focusing exclusively on the processes of socio-economic development and cultural evolution leaves some other crucial factors out of consideration.

An explanation of the democratisation of the late 1980s and early 1990s must take into account the economic and social crisis of the late 1970s and early 1980s, the political repression during martial law, the developmental stagnation in the second half of the 1980s and the concessions made by the ruling party to the united opposition in 1989. The 1980 agreements can be interpreted as critical

juncture leading to the Round Table talks in 1989. The subsequent democratisation takes place against the background of another economic crisis in the early 1990s, which was, however, temporary. Social costs of transition was not negligible, but in Poland less harmful than in many other post-communist economies (Ghodsee and Orenstein 2021).

The later years were dominated by the policy of consolidating democracy and Europeanising Poland, which was shared by all governments and supported by the majority of society. Developmental processes after Poland's accession to the EU progressed rapidly, and with them cultural changes. LIW theory suggests that these should positively correlated with the sustainability of democracy in Poland. This can be evidenced by the post-2015 PiS government's difficulty in implementing de-democratic reforms despite the very favourable economic conditions in 2015–2019 and the increased voter support gained through the strategy of polarisation and policy of expansion of family benefits. This was not enough to win a constitutional majority in 2015 and 2019 and given the pandemic situation and increased inflation in the 2020–2022 period, the chances of such a majority seems to be much less in 2023 election than in 2019.

Hungary's path of democratic backsliding was much more effective due to enormous electoral victory in 2010, which gave the incumbent the power to change the constitutional rules to its advantage. The question is, if there were similar paths of modernization and cultural evolution in Poland and in Hungary, then strategies of political actors and specific events will be the explanation why backsliding in Poland is less advanced than in Hungary.

It seems to be promising way to further the research and develop comparative case study design with those two post-communist countries to check the hypothesis of Poland's higher resistance to democratic backsliding due to mainly political and institutional factors.

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Daniel PRZASTEK & Paweł Marek MROWIŃSKI

Elites of power and opposition. Poland's 'drama of democratisation' in four Acts

Abstract:

The main objective of the chapter is to show the process of democratisation in Poland at the end of the 1980s and the importance in this process of the elites of both the authorities (the Polish United Workers' Party) and the opposition (primarily associated with the Independent Self-Governing Trade Union "Solidarity"). The main hypothesis assumes that the elites (both of the authorities and the opposition) played a key role in the democratisation process at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s. At the same time, this led to a rift between the elites and the rest of society, which in the long run gave rise to anti-elitist attitudes and discourse.

The chapter will consist of four main parts. In the first part, the most important theoretical and methodological approaches present in the study of democratisation processes and the concept of elites within political science (with particular emphasis on the findings of G. O'Donnell, P. C. Schmitter, L. Whitehead). The second part will be devoted to the identification of power elites and the opposition in the 1980s: their emergence, position, influence and socio-political significance. In the next – third – part we would like to look at Polish democratisation within its traditional four-stage scheme: (1) liberalization as an opportunity to start the democratisation process; (2) erosion of the non-democratic regime; (3) transition; (4) consolidation of democracy. The last part, which constitutes the conclusion of the chapter, will be devoted to the current (since 2015) phenomenon of anti-elitism both in the public sphere and in the discourse of power.

Keywords: democracy, democratisation, transition process, political elites

1. Introduction

In this Chapter we seek to analyse Poland's process of democratisation (transition from a non-democratic regime of 'Real Socialism' to a democratic one), as commenced with at the end of the 1980s. Utilising the metaphor of the 'drama of democratisation' (after Whitehead 1999), we here present the above process within the framework of four traditional Acts, i.e. Act I – liberalisation offering an opportunity for the process of democratisation to commence; Act II – erosion of the non-democratic regime; Act III – transition; and Act IV – consolidation of democracy. Particular significance in such a 'theatrical analysis' will need to be ascribed to the main actors in the drama, which are political elites. While some of these were in power (i.e. in the Polish United Workers' Party – *Polska*

Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR), others were in Opposition (under the banner of the famous *Solidarity* – or in full *Niezależny Samorządny Związek Zawodowy „Solidarność“*).

The main hypothesis here is that elites played a key role in the process by which the Polish political system was democratised. At the same time, or rather over time, their superiority and status as overriding led to a certain discordance between the elites considered to have arisen from scratch on account of the transition itself and the rest of Polish society, which came to develop an anti-elite attitude and discourse. Under the first hypothesis, further research questions posed relate to:

1. the way in which political elites playing a key role in democratisation actually made their appearance;
2. the influences generating – and then operating to increase the significance of – an anti-elite mood present in public discourse.

This Chapter divides into four main parts, of which the first (of a theoretical and methodological nature) presents the key conceptualisations and perspectives present in research into democratisation processes in general; as well as the roles political elites play within these. A second part – constituting a specific kind of Prologue to the four-Act democratisation process – has been devoted to identifying the 1980s elites of power and opposition in Poland (in terms of their appearance, positioning, influences and socio-political significances), as well as presenting relations between the authorities and the Opposition during the period leading up to Poland's transformation. The third part then seeks to look at Polish democratisation as such, within the framework of the four-Act scheme referred to; before the last part – an Epilogue – devotes itself to the anti-elite stances present in both the public sphere and the power discourse (from 2015 onwards) – as a phenomenon representing a certain kind of aftermath to the socio-political transformation the country achieved in the 1980s and 1990s.

However, here at the end of this Introduction, we are constrained to emphasise that this Chapter can only represent a synthetic conceptualisation of the subject matter outlined. The primary aim here is to point to the most important stages, phenomena and political actors in Poland's democratisation – as elements defining and shaping the process. This is not then, cannot be, a true and exhaustive analysis of all of the associated aspects.

2. Democratisation as conceptualised theoretically, and the role of elites in the transformation process

There can be no doubt at all regarding the groundbreaking nature of Samuel Huntington's *The Third Wave* (Huntington 1993), which through to the present day constitutes a point of entry into the analysis of democratic transformations. The researcher not only identified a periodicity to successive waves of democratisation (i.e. 1828–1926; 1943–1962; post-1974), and pointed to moves away from democracy (in 1922–1942 and 1958–1975), but also developed key assumptions making up a transition paradigm. Firstly, Huntington distinguished three versions – of transplacement, transformation and replacement – with these based on the criterion of the commitment of groups of political actors, including in particular the elites in authority or in opposition. Secondly, Huntington focused in on a 3-stage process of democratisation, involving the fall of the non-democratic regime, the founding of the democratic regime and then the latter's consolidation. Thirdly, the political scientist emphasised the roles of a variety of different determinants of democratic change.

Both the scope and scale of changes were sufficient to ensure that, by the mid-1990s, academic work looking at democratisation began to aspire to sub-discipline status as transitology (Schmitter 1995) or considology (Schedler 1998). The huge interest in the phenomenon of democratic change across the world (as also evidenced by the present monograph) gave rise to a host of different theories and concepts (Cichosz 1998, 35). While the subject literature defines the transformations in question using a wide range of concepts and notions (revolution, 'refolution', transformation and transition), we seek to avoid a certain kind of terminological chaos in this Chapter by deploying the term democratisation in regard to the phenomenon of transition from a non-democratic to a democratic regime, as well as attendant change in almost every social or political sphere¹. This denotes a reference to the regime's very name, and undoubtedly offers a simplification and unification when it comes to the semantic fields associated with the research process (Kubas 2018, 110).

Democratisation can also be conceived of in terms of its being a durable, dynamic and unending process heading in the direction of the establishment of governments duly constituted under, and functioning in line with, the rule of law; consensus as to how political conflicts might be solved, and broad public

1 For a broader treatment of "terminological negotiations," see Mikucka-Wójtowicz 2014, 26–33.

participation (Whitehead 2002, 27). It is usual for researchers to indicate three main phases of the process²: the fall of the non-democratic regime, transition, and the consolidation of democracy (Whitehead 1999, 84).

According to Phillippe C. Schmitter, democratisation comprises: the liberalisation of an authoritarian regime, followed by transition and consolidation (Schmitter 2014, 45). In turn, Dankwart Rustow pointed to: a stage of preparation (in which political and social conflict makes its appearance and is revealed), a stage of transformation (commencement of institutional-building) and a stage of consolidation (in which legal standards are supplied and democratic principles taken on board) (Rustow 1970).

Analysing the democratisation process exemplified by the Czech Republic and Hungary, Sebastian Kubas points to four basic phases, of: (1) liberalisation; (2) the erosion and fall of the non-democratic regime; (3) transition; and (4) consolidation. However, as the researcher notes (while invoking Guillermo O'Donnell and Schmitter, as well as Samuel Huntington), the fact that liberalisation should be considered a stage separate from the erosion of the system (at best proceeding in parallel to it) does not suffice to say that a qualification of this kind is a precondition for democratisation to commence. Moreover, it is not inevitable that it will always lead to it (Kubas 2018; O'Donnell 1986; Huntington 1993). In a further part of that Chapter, Polish democratisation is looked at by reference to a 3-stage conceptualisation, i.e. as augmented by a liberalisation phase.

It is worth noting how a phenomenon of key importance to the democratisation process is a mobilisation of broad tiers in society. That mobilisation, also termed a 'rebirth of society', represents an important factor exerting pressure on non-democratic authority (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986; Przeworski 1991).

Alongside the process of democratisation and its consecutive phases, a key notion (as the Chapter title makes clear) is that of the elite. As Krzysztof Łabędź notes 'the means of taking over from the Communist Party (within which a key pre-condition was the shaping of Opposition political elites) combined with the course of many ongoing political processes and the emergence in a large part

2 It is worth noting that theoretical considerations on democratisation also feature more fully-developed models. Angel Rodriguez-Díaz distinguishes as many as seven phases, i.e. (a) the initiation of transformation and proposing of new strategies; (b) the mobilisation of societies; (c) liberalisation; (d) pre-election negotiations and the determination of main principles of transition; (e) democratisation and open elections; (f) the enactment of a new Constitution; and (g) the end of the transition (Dobek-Ostrowska 1998, 14).

of society of a refusal to participate in political life as key factors encouraging analysis of that political life from the point of view of the way in which elites are conceived' (Łabędź 1992, 143). The role of elites is all the more important as it is these very 'political leaders who have a real capacity [...] to mobilise, integrate and coordinate social efforts, ensuring that the interests and needs of members of the community are pursued' (Nocoń 2004, 58). For this reason too, a look taken at democratisation Polish-style, by reference to elites both ruling and in Opposition, would seem of cardinal importance if the whole process of transformation is to be understood³.

In the opinion of V. Pareto, revolutions are almost always transformations of elites. Old elites are deprived of their privileges, and indeed of the very status of being an elite, with their place being taken by representatives of the rebelling masses (Pareto 1991). However, as we strive to show in the context of the Polish 'refolution' (of. T. G. Ash), no phenomenon of elite replacement actually took place. The conciliatory nature of the democratisation process (above all Poland's 'Round Table' talks and agreement) ensured the onset of a process involving both the reproduction and the convergence of elites, with this *inter alia* denoting that those ruling pre-1989 were to some extent able to hold on to their positions (Pawlak 1992, 33–34).

Such a conceptualisation is in line with the perspective of J. Highley and R. Gunther, who drew attention to a transition from a non-democratic to democratic regime (in the elite context) that proceeds via two main stages – first a deal between different elites, and then the convergence thereof (Highley and Gunther 1992, 11). For his part, Philippe C. Schmitter noted that, where transformations proceed thanks to agreements reached between rulers and Oppositions 'there is likely to be a much greater continuity in the composition of political elites' (Schmitter 2018).

3 However, it is further noteworthy that, as with other phases and elements of democratisation, opinion on the roles played by elites is also divided. Some researchers (*inter alia* Juan Linz, Larry Diamond or Wolfgang Merkel) draw attention to the proposal that it is not elites, but in fact societies, that play the key role in transformation processes. While recognising the existence of controversy over this matter, I incline in this chapter to the view (espoused by a majority of experts) that a leading role may still be assigned to political leaders (Kopecký and Mudde 2000, 521–2; 533–4).

3. Prologue

Despite the fact that main events for Polish democratisation occurred in the late 1980s and early 1990s (through the symbolic talks at the Round Table and partially free elections in that same year of 1989), the genesis of the whole process needs to be looked for in the years 1980–81. That period should be seen as offering the Prologue to the ‘drama of democratisation’ we present further on in this Chapter. However, in advance of that we must first devote a section to the main actors in the process.

A constitutive event for the later process of democratisation in Poland was the September 1980 emergence (following a series of strikes in the summer of that year, and a series of agreements between the strikers and the authorities) of the famous *Solidarity* trade union – i.e. the *Niezależny Samorządny Związek Zawodowy „Solidarność”* (Paczkowski 2015, 10–16). While this did not represent the first form of institutionalised Opposition in the circumstances of the Polish People’s Republic (PRL)⁴, it was still a landmark event, indeed in the history of the whole Eastern Bloc, as well as just Poland. The emergence of this independent trade union, its subsequent legalisation (in the face of obstacles put in the way of that by rulers), and its growth into a movement in society encompassing nearly 10 million people (Touraine 1983; Osa 2003) did all ensure a major breach of the (PZPR) Party monopoly hitherto firmly in place; and what is more in almost every sphere of socio-political life. ‘Huge social activation ensued from August 1980 onwards [...]. A governance system whose very essence had been the monitoring and controlling of society and its government by authorities organised hierarchically and involving the Party and the administration cracked and then crumbled as week followed week. That authoritarian control over society no longer proved possible, as that society organised itself spontaneously through *Solidarność*. There was then no way to head off demands

4 In the years post-1947 the first manifestation of institutionalised Opposition in Poland was *Komitet Obrony Robotników* (the “Workers’ Defence Committee”). This made its appearance in September 1976, at the initiative of Opposition circles of varying ideologies, and as a follow-on from workers’ protests staged at Ursus (Warsaw) and Radom in the June of that year – which were pacified brutally, and with participant workers subject to subsequent repression. The co-founders of KOR, engaged in extending legal and financial support to strikers, decided upon a completely open and transparent form of activity, on the basis of well-developed nationwide structures and a press mouthpiece (published independently). For more on this subject, see: Friszke 2011; Skórzyński 2012.

regarding change in every sphere of life. The authorities thus backed off, confining their area of control to the administration, the *Milicja* as police force, the armed forces, the prosecution service and the media ... but still losing control over society. People stopped being afraid of it [...] and, as they gradually began to feel their own strength, they desired ever-greater change – in essence the appearance of a new, self-governing social system of governance' (Friszke 2014, 7).

The emergence of *Solidarność*, as a breach of the order that had governed relations in Polish society, gave rise to almost unhindered Opposition activism, in regard to some enforcement of respect for civil rights by the rulers. Certain foundations were also laid for a civil society. Given the socially-activating and motivating aspects, as well as the 'loosening-up' of what had hitherto been a society crippled by its own acceptance of curbs and limitations, the terms 'Carnival of Solidarity' and 'Festival of the Oppressed' have been deployed to describe the trends observable during the '16 months of freedom' involved here (Barker 1986). Indeed, there are certain researchers for whom it was this very tactic of the 'self-limiting revolution', as well as the rejection of violence from the political struggle, that served as the key basis for the later agreement it proved possible to reach; and the process of actual democratisation that followed on from that (Świeca 1999).

Nevertheless, loss of governing monopoly and a worsening state of the economy did still push authorities seeking to destroy *Solidarity* structures into their December 1981 decision to use force to put down the peaceful revolution that had been proceeding⁵. Thus was Martial Law brought in across Poland, during the night between December 12th and 13th. A consequence was the arrest and then internment of almost 10,000 people recognised as 'posing a threat to public order'. Naturally, these were first and foremost *Solidarność* activists. The union itself underwent *de facto* delegalisation – though *de jure* this was only achieved a year later.

Curbs introduced at this point related to movement (*i.a.* by way of enforced curfew), communications and transport. Publication of most press titles was also suppressed. Each and every manifestation of resistance in society (be it a strike or other kind of protest) was then pacified in a brutal manner – by the *Milicja* on the one hand and the military on the other (Ash 1983, 265–269). Society slipped into apathy, where it was not simply motivated to leave Poland altogether

5 Analysis of the causes, legal framework and practical reality of Poland's period of Martial Law goes far beyond the scope of this Chapter. For more on the subject, see Mażewski 2012; Paczkowski 2006.

(as thousands did). Those left behind participated in a so-called 'internal emigration' whereby they mostly just withdrew from involvement in any social or political aspect of life. Thus, as Martial Law was maintained in successive months from December 13th 1981, and then even after it was suspended on July 22nd 1983 – 'Poland was a country ever normalising but never achieving a state of normality. Martial law had succeeded in subduing the workers' opposition and in assuring the regime of a certain raw stranglehold on the country; but it had utterly failed to address the serious, underlying problems that had led to national crisis in the first place'. Equally, it needs to be recalled that: 'in the Orwellian language of socialist Eastern Europe, *normalisation* refers to the reestablishment of Leninist norms in all spheres of national life' (de Weydenthal, Portrer and Devlin 1983, 296).

The brutal suppression of the *Solidarność* revolution by the authorities gave rise to mutual enmity and a lack of any trust between the Opposition and in-power elites, and so it was the overcoming of this that had to represent a major aspect of the later agreement reached, as also representing the basis for further transition (Friszke et al. 2019, 17–43).

Alongside the events outlined above, a matter of key importance to the later process of democratisation was a crystallising-out – mainly by way of entrenchment – of the positions taken by elites of power and Opposition. This phenomenon was mainly significant due to the role elites are known to play in democratic transformations. It is political elites that become the group shapers of the rules of transformation, conferring a dynamic upon it and also having 'real possibilities to integrate broad swathes of society around social and political values they have espoused and shaped' (Nicoń 1999, 111).

Identification of the elite on the ruling side (which played such a major role in the 'drama of democratisation') would seem to be a much simpler task than the equivalent process in relation to the Opposition. 'Within the framework of the Party system present in People's Poland for more than 40 years, there was time enough for a specific political elite to take shape over the decades, as characterised by far-reaching internal institutionalisation, and together with it being decreed by the central authorities what the scope in society might be in relation to defined posts whose occupancy would condition affinity with the elite in question, called the *nomenklatura*' (Kostka 2006, 87).

For her part, Hanna Lisicka divided that *nomenklatura* in Poland (as a system modelled on Soviet solutions) into two main types – i.e. the ruling and non-ruling elites. The former included the First Secretary and Secretary of PZPR, as well as Members of the *Politburo* (meaning 'Political Office') and Central Committee. The remainder of the *nomenklatura* offered a kind of backup from which

new members of the ruling elite might derive at any time. Members were posted in all the strategic spheres of life (Lisicka 1992, 39–40)⁶. In the context of consecutive acts of democratisation, the ruling 'nomenclature' would be seen as of key significance – all the more so where these were *Politburo* Members⁷.

On the other hand, the emergence of *Solidarność* in 1980, its legal activity, and then its dismantlement through the introduction of Martial law in December 1981 served to crystallise Opposition elites. It is worth noting that, unlike in the case of the ruling elite, its Opposition counterpart was not founded upon posts held or jobs done, but rather on experience, service and the possibility for society to be mobilised under it, thanks to certain personal qualities being present. While egalitarianism lay at the heart of what *Solidarity* stood for, a tier of leaders did gradually emerge and arise out of a somewhat disordered and decentralised

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- 6 The conceptualisation resorted to by the researcher in some degree invokes the traditional division from Gaetano Mosca – into a 'ruling class' *sensu stricto* (the power elite), as well as *sensu largo* (the socio-economic support network for that elite). Cf. 1939, 50–53. In any case, the author herself makes closer reference to the classical concept on elites from Vilfredo Pareto. In analysing the phenomenon by which the Party elite was recruited – through the prism of the institutional career path in the Party – it is possible to point to several main tracks of promotion: work in the Party apparatus, activity in the youth movement, a career in the state or economic administration and higher education, as well as service in the military or security apparatus. For more on the *nomenklatura* in People's Poland see Czerwiński 1992; Paczkowski 2000; Wrona 2018.
- 7 From among the *BP* members selected at the 10th Congress of *PZPR* (running from June 29th to July 3rd 1986) those later capable of being seen as crucial to the democratisation process are Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski (in the years 1981–1989 First Secretary of the Party), Kazimierz Barcikowski (Deputy Head of the Council of Ministers in the years 1985–1989 and Deputy Chair of the Council of State), Zbigniew Messner (1985–1988 Head of the Council of Ministers), Florian Siwicki (Minister of Defence in the 1983–1990 tenure), Czesław Kiszczak (Minister of Internal Affairs in the years 1981–1990), Alfred Miodowicz (1984–1991 Chair presiding over the trade-union umbrella structure *Ogólnopolskie Porozumienie Związków Zawodowych*). In later years, further figures co-opted on to the *BP* were Mieczysław Rakowski (who headed the Council of Ministers in the years 1988–9) and Stanisław Ciosek. They were joined by certain younger-generation Party activists (like Aleksander Kwaśniewski and Leszek Miller) informing the ruling elite *sensu stricto*, which conferred shape, tempo and scope on the first Acts to our 'drama of democratisation'.

social movement, as the development of institutions proceeded and the aforementioned boundary events took place⁸.

Equally, it needs to be recalled that the elite of *Solidarność* was – almost from the very outset – characterised by its unusually diversified nature – ideologically, in terms of its programme, and in relation to individual experiences. ‘These differences, that were to be seen then and did really split the Opposition, were mainly related to tactics to be deployed in the struggle against the previous system. There were many occasions on which differences in ideas were externalised and collided with one another, such that real conflicts had to be either papered over or suppressed, given a prevailing conviction that a requirement for the battle with the common enemy was a retention of unity’ (Łabędź 1992, 145). And while this is yet-further subject matter extending far beyond the scope of this Chapter, it is worth saying what the main ‘factions’ within the independent trade union actually were⁹.

A first group, a kind of core of *Solidarity* (in the first years of its existence in particular) comprised workers leading the strike called at the Gdańsk Shipyard in August 1980. Most of those concerned had been linked with the ‘Free Trade Union on the Coast’ (*Wolny Związek Zawodowy Wybrzeża* – active from 1978 onwards). This represented one of the first forms by which workers were able to organise as they enjoyed the support of Opposition activists in Poland’s so-called Tri-City (of Gdańsk, Gdynia and Sopot) (Kołodziej 2012). Here it is worth pointing out Bogdan Borusewicz, Andrzej Gwiazda, Krzysztof Wyrzykowski, Bogdan Lis, Anna Walentynowicz and first and foremost Lech Wałęsa at the head of NSZZ ‘*Solidarność*’. However, as time passed, and a struggle for power within the union took place, this at-first rather uniform group began to splinter

8 The road travelled by *Solidarność* coincides almost entirely with the classical conceptualisation of social movements, by which we are dealing with an indistinct disquiet or dissatisfaction from which there then arises a somewhat-lost, disorganised, but also enthusiastic and ever-more-widespread social movement. This movement then takes on more-defined reform, with leadership, organisation, formulated doctrine and dogma all making their appearance (Park 1924, 865).

9 However, it is worth noting that, even within the “factions” identified by us, there were internal conflicts, and different standpoints and stances adopted. Furthermore, the groups referred to did not represent closed sets, as in many cases the boundaries between them remained fluid. Thus our aim here is not mainly to engage in full and detailed analysis, but rather to point to certain “pedigrees” of Opposition elites, with a view to the reader understanding better what the differences between them might have been.

noticeably, and in fact descended into deep conflict. This was particularly visible along the Wałęsa–Gwiazda/Walentynowicz fault line (Friszke 2014, 558–567).

A second circle doing much to shape and influence tactics involved activists of the aforementioned *Komitet Obrony Robotników* (Workers' Defence Committee) that had acted in support of striking workers in the summer of 1980. It is possible to discern division lines of fundamental importance within this camp too, as some Committee activists originated in left-wing, revisionist circles that (in the second half of the 1980s in particular) proposed that a form of agreement with the authorities could and ought to be reached. These people included Jacek Kuroń, Adam Michnik, Jan Józef Lipski and Jan Lityński. On the other hand, the co-founders of KOR formed a right-of-centre, independence-minded Opposition group later on opting for radical tactics in their fight against the ruling Party. These people included Antoni Macierewicz and Piotr Naimski¹⁰. Ideological differences of the kind indicated grew further in the late 1980s, as was most fully visible when figures met at the famous Round Table¹¹.

A further group of representatives of Opposition elites was linked together by the Commission of Experts to the Gdańsk-based Inter-Factory Strike Committee (*Międzyzakładowy Komitet Strajkowy*). This body played a key role in developing an agreement with the Government side. It comprised representatives of the intelligentsia as well as academia, even as some members originated with lay-Catholic circles, notably *Kluby Inteligencji Katolickiej* (Friszke 1997). Indeed, this circle of experts supporting the development of the August 1980 agreement (and then playing a broader role in the Opposition elite) included Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Bronisław Geremek, Waldemar Kuczyński, Andrzej Wielowieyski and Lech Kaczyński (Friszke 2014, 47).

Though only cursory, the above review of Opposition elites of the 1980s shows the marked differentiation that was present, as well as the potential for conflict and bones of contention that came out into the open, and grew in strength, during the period of Martial Law, and as *Solidarity* went underground¹². As Krzysztof

10 For a broader treatment of the Opposition's pre-1980 political geography, see Friszke 2011, 439–457.

11 To put things as generally as possible, the first (left-of-centre) circles were very much responsible for sitting down to talks with the authorities, and were then willing to ensure that what was agreed at the Round Table talks had its legitimacy. The latter were in turn consistent in rejecting all of these options.

12 It is worth noting that the authorities themselves saw the chance for divide-and-rule of the Opposition, finding various ways to ensure that conflict was inflamed, and divisions enhanced, within *Solidarność*.

Łabędź would note, ‘in the “freedom break” taken in 1980–1981, the process by which the *Solidarity* political elite was selected proceeded in line with democratic models, but was very much based around recognition of certain given people’s capacities to lead, with this sometimes even boiling down to an ability to send a crowd marching in the right direction’ (Łabędź 1992, 146). Thus only a part of the Opposition elite actually belonged to it by dint of true competences.

This situation outlined by the researcher changed markedly at the end of the 1980s as the Citizens’ Committee of *Solidarność* was taking shape. Most of its members were present at the Round Table talks in 1989. Indeed, it was this very question of participation in agreements with the authorities that decided on membership of different Opposition elites in the late 1980s and early 1990s (as we shall learn in the further part of this Chapter).

By now knowing the Prologue to this ‘drama of democratisation’ as well as the key political players, we are ready to move on to our core subject matter, which comprises the consecutive ‘Acts’ making up the process.

4. The four Acts to Poland’s ‘drama of democratisation’

Poland’s ‘drama of democratisation’ comprises four main Acts, i.e. I – liberalisation of 1985–1989, II – erosion of the democratic regime in the years 1985–1989, III – the transition of the years 1989–1997, and IV – the consolidation from 1997 onwards. It should of course be stressed that the points in time separating the different stages are adopted as a matter of convention and may not be precise. And in that two matters can be seen to be of particular importance. In the first place, leaving 1989 aside, it is difficult to point unambiguously to core events that might constitute fundamental boundaries between one Act and the next.

Beyond even that is the fact that processes considered characteristic for democratisation’s different phases are seen to have gone on in parallel in Poland, thereby ensuring that one Act overlapped with another, without displaying more clear-cut separation. This proves particularly visible with the first two steps – of liberalisation and erosion. However, we recognise that some kind of conventional chronology of events is essential if we are to appreciate the complex and multi-stranded nature of this country’s democratic transformations.

Liberalisation

There are certain researchers who are convinced that liberalisation is a process separate and distinct from democratisation. This is mainly a reflection of the way that the phenomenon of the self-repair of the non-democratic regime by its

elite does not always lead to democratisation, and not unusually (often where the effects of the system's transformation are positive) actually gives rise to a process of self-destruction. It is our view that the liberalisation pursued from the mid-1980s in Poland, by the communist elites, did help further erode the regime that it was originally supposed to assist.

Under the process by which the liberalisation of a non-democratic regime takes place there is a concessioning of certain civil rights of a kind that has not taken place hitherto – even as the undeniable authority and dominance of the existing rulers remains in place. In this regard, Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan distinguish characteristic phenomena as follows: a limitation of media censorship, consent to activity on the part of associations autonomous *vis-à-vis* the authorities, the emergence of institutions safeguarding human rights, an amnesty for political prisoners, the facilitation of returns to the country by political emigrants, relative tolerance of the Opposition and attempts to improve the economic conditions present in society (Linz and Stepan 1996, 3–7). Looking back at events taking place in Poland in the mid-1980s, it is possible to make out almost all of the phenomena pointed to by the above researchers.

The progressing erosion of the system and worsening mood in society forced the ruling elites to launch a limited liberalisation via the introduction to Poland of institutions not hitherto present under 'Real Socialism'. What was involved here first and foremost was the Constitutional Tribunal (founded 1985), as well as – two years later – the office of what is known in Polish as *Rzecznik Praw Obywatelskich* – a kind of Ombudsman, but typically given in English as Commissioner for Citizens' Rights (Alberski 2010; Bartoszewicz 2013).

As recently as in the 1960s, institutions of this type were still being treated as 'alien to the class-based essence of the socialist system' (Gebethner 1989, 29). But, ushered in in the mid-1980s, these were to help remedy social unrest and disquiet, while also attesting to the respect for human and civil rights that PRL could demonstrate – in the eyes of Western public opinion above all¹³. The ruling elites, by calling an institution of the Ombudsman type into being, intended to dislodge the Opposition's monopoly where the safeguarding of civil rights was concerned, while also offering a figleaf or bridge when it came to relations between citizens and those in power (Łuczak 2012, 534).

13 Similar proposals in the early 1980s had flowed out from legal circles. It was at the same time that the founding of the post of Commissioner for Citizens' Rights (*Rzecznik Praw Obywatelskich*) was proposed by *Solidarność* (Bartoszewicz 2013, 189).

In parallel with these institutional manifestations of liberalisation, there was also an impact in the economic dimension. The worsening economic situation and attendant decline in the quality of people's lives forced those in power to take steps to make the drastically-bad economic conditions better. The responsibility fell to the Government of Zbigniew Messner, who was nevertheless replaced as Head of the Council of Ministers (in November 1985) by General Wojciech Jaruzelski¹⁴. An improvement in the state of the economy was to follow on from: steady decentralisation of enterprise management, the reform of central economic institutions, price reform, the redevelopment of the banking sector and the emergence of a capital market (Grala 2005, 2008). Given an improvement in the socio-economic situation in September 1988, Messner was replaced by Mieczysław F. Rakowski, who continued with the previous reforms, also expanding their scope to include the liberalisation of economic activity (via the so-called Wilczek Act), the easing of regulation, closure or restructuring of state enterprises and legalisation of trading in currencies.

The aim of this economic policy was a limited injection of market principles into the economy of PRL, an opening-up to foreign capital and servicing of the gigantic foreign debt, even as the top role for the communist elite ruling in the state and society was maintained. Certain researchers suggest that the source of inspiration here was actually the Chinese model of market communism, even if the authors themselves were then much more willing to invoke New Economic Policy as pursued by the Soviet Union back in the 1920s (Przeperski 2021, 332).

In the context of economic reform as well as the liberalisation of the non-democratic regime, a particularly important matter came to be legitimisation with the public, as well as a simultaneous search for some kind of social cover for the changes. This goal was to have been served by the May 1987 Act on Social Consultations and the Referendum (the *Dziennik Ustaw* Official Journal of Laws of 1987. No. 14, item 83). By virtue of that law, a Poland-wide referendum was called for late November 1987, posing key questions in essence translatable as follows: (1) Are you in favour of full implementation of the programme now

14 'The appointment of Zbigniew Messner freed Jaruzelski of responsibility for the ever-worsening state of the economy. [...] Jaruzelski judged that his stepping-down from the post of Premier would serve as some kind of de-Partying of government, and this did actually bear fruit in a more friendly Western stance towards Poland and the problems its economy was facing. At the same time, the assuming of office by a little-known person, at just the time of potential collapsed of the economy, put a potential fall-guy in place – a person on whom society's dissatisfaction might safely be focused' (Łuczak 2012, 533).

laid before the *Sejm* seeking the economy's radical recovery, and intending to achieve a clear improvement in living conditions, knowing that this will require passing through a difficult two- or three-year period of rapid changes? And (2) Are you for a Polish model seeking the far-reaching democratisation of political life, which has as its aim a strengthening of local government, an extension of civil rights and an increase in the level of participation where the governance of the country is concerned?

While a majority of those voting said 'yes' to both questions (1 – 66 %; 2 – 69 %), the turnout (of 67 %) was such that there was a failure to meet conditions set out in the Act (whereby a positive answer had to be supplied by more than half of all those entitled to vote in Poland). This left the result of the Referendum as non-binding (Jaskiernia 1995)¹⁵.

However, from the point of view of further stages of democratisation, the key element to liberalisation (whose effects proved to be the most tangible for those in power) was action in regard to the political Opposition. Emerging as key here was a decision to extend an amnesty to political prisoners that was taken in September 1986, with the result that more than 200 Opposition leaders and activists found themselves free again (not least among them the famous faces of Bogdan Borusewicz, Bogdan Lis, Jacek Kuroń and Adam Michnik) (Friszke 2002, 75; Skórzyński 1995, 24–5).

And while Opposition circles (and most notably those linked with *Solidarność*) remained decimated and much-weakened, the mid-1980s still witnessed 'a growing mood of rebellion in society' (Wnuk-Lipiński 2002, 13). Thus, taking full advantage of the amnesty, the Opposition lodged a set of new demands with those in power. *Solidarity* circles 'emerged from underground' and began to act in the open – if still illegally. At the end of September 1986, Lech Wałęsa convened an Interim Council of NSZZ '*Solidarność*' that, being 'the first openly active organ of Polish resistance to the introduction of Martial Law' became 'a body managing and coordinating all *Solidarity* Opposition circles' (Łuczak 2012, 572–3). This body/organ in fact became a haven to resurrect an Opposition structure that would go on to sit down to talks with the elites of power in 1989¹⁶.

15 The idea for a referendum to be held emerged within the power elite as early as in summer 1984 – 'maybe public life would be enlivened by some referendum [...] in the socio-economic development matter that is important to everybody?' – so wrote Gen. Jaruzelski to Government Spokesman Jerzy Urban (Dudek 2009, 110).

16 With the calling into being of the Interim Council, it was possible to make out a clear division among Opposition activists that was centred on the former leader of *Solidarność* acting in a manner in line with the law and seeking to reach agreement with

Beyond that, the rulers of Poland maintained a liberal course in the face of 'the moderate part of the Opposition', *i.a.* consenting to legal publication of the monthly entitled *Res Publica*, as well as to the activity of discussion clubs and minor-level associations (Dudek 2009, 92–3).

The activities of the ruling elite as outlined above in regard to the second half of the 1980s were seeking to achieved some truncated liberalisation of socio-political life, and could not be said to come out of nowhere. Rather they were the result of transformation ongoing in the Soviet Union and owing to its leader Mikhail Gorbachev. Having come to power in the USSR to counteract erosion of the system, the new KPZR First Secretary decided on steps to improve the economic situation so as to allow the Communists to hang on to full power. The programme of renewal pursued is widely known as *Perestroika*, and it was this very change to domestic policy in the Soviet Union (including a cessation of Moscow interference in the internal affairs of Eastern-Bloc countries) that helped liberalise Poland too, only to result in the erosion – and then the fall – of the entire system (Paczkowski 2015, 287; Dobek-Ostrowska 1998, 18).

As Sebastian Kubas notes, liberalisation is linked to 'an attempt to dull the pain of the crisis appearing in the non-democratic political system. With that aim in mind, the power elite use a means they are themselves in control of to implement institutional solutions not present in well-functioning form in a non-democratic regime [...] If the authorities maintain control over both policy and society, then what is retained is a non-democratic regime, while if they are not able to do that, then we are dealing with the onset of erosion of that non-democratic regime' (Kubas 2018, 131). Indeed, the aforementioned elements serving a liberalisation of 'Real Socialism' by the PRL authorities did not, and probably could not, in any way address their system's progressing erosion. This happened, not merely because the significance of Opposition elites rose steadily, and because PZPR was incapable of managing the state effectively, but also because of external factors, above all *Perestroika* in the USSR.

Erosion

A make-or-break constituent phase of democratisation (as opposed to liberalisation) - without which the process as a whole has no chance of success – is the

the authorities, and others whose aim was just to bring down the system without any agreement with the Party being reached.

erosion of the non-democratic regime¹⁷. In the opinion of Andrzej Antoszewski, this is 'the phase of political development contained between a manifest loss of reproductive ability of political relations guaranteeing the persistence of a defined regime on the one hand, and on the other, the introduction of rules that serve to negate the latter' (Antoszewski 1992, 34). In turn, Marzena Cichosz drew a distinction between open and concealed forms of erosion. Under the first, an Opposition taking shape delegitimises authorities and their right to rule. Open erosion most often goes hand in hand with liberalisation. The second kind of phenomenon is based on an accumulation of negative relations between society, those in authority and the economy, with the result being each element blocking the others to a point at which the whole system loses its capacity to function (Cichosz 1998, 57).

In essence, this might be called a period in which the political system is not able to serve its functions, while authorities cannot (despite trying) meet the new expectations of citizens, or address tensions in society, or restore even the previous equilibrium state – 'in connection with that, there is a change in the configuration of relationships in the public sphere, even as new entities in public life that had not been present before make their appearance' (Kubas 2018, 131). In the context of the final chapter of *PRL* history, we may state that almost the entire 1980s (from the time *Solidarność* came into being) constituted a period of ongoing erosion of the system of 'Real Socialism', even if that did assume varying intensities from one period or year to another. The greatest strengthening of the process was nevertheless to be noted in the second half of the 1980s, with the process manifesting itself economically, socially and politically.

A key issue of decisive significance to the erosion of the system was the economic crisis experienced by *PRL* from the end of the 1970s onwards. In truth, Poland did note an increase in GDP in 1983 (for the first time in 5 years), but the mid-1980s situation was still very bad indeed. Levels of foreign debt (the legacy of the economic policy pursued by First Secretary Edward Gierek as leader from 1970 to 1980), the militarisation of workplaces during Martial Law, the economic sanctions imposed upon *PRL* by the West and (above all) the failure of central planning in the economy, all ensured that by 1985 it was already clear that the country was entering a drastic slowdown (Dudek 2007, 107). Moreover, the condition of the economy in the late part of the communist era was also being influenced by business conditions in the USSR, given that this was the main trading

17 The erosion phenomenon might also be termed delegitimation, destabilisation, collapse, deconsolidation and pre-transition (Pridham 2000, 62).

partner. The aforementioned attempts to reform the Polish economy failed to yield the anticipated effects, and indeed sparked an increase in inflation. This led to a major reduction in the (already-low) standards of living experienced by most Polish people. That gave rise to a second front along which the system was being eroded – a crisis in society manifesting itself in a fast-deteriorating public mood.

As 69 % of Poles were offering a negative assessment of the state of the economy by April 1987, that was a worsening by 23 percentage points in comparison with the December 1985 situation (*Spółeczeństwo i władza* 1994, 65; 268). ‘The indicator of optimism through the year [...] showed only deterioration, with the value at the end of the year worse than the one at the beginning. The results obtained in March and May 1987 were in fact the worst in the whole history of polling up to that time, and that had been done since the mid-1950s’ – thus read an analysis carried out at the Party’s Department of Propaganda on the basis of data from the *OBOP* polling institution (Dudek 2007, 113).

Mirosława Marody, seeking out the main reasons for the deteriorating mood in society, chose to indicate three main ‘types of experience of broadest social scope’. The first of these was of worsening inflation that reduced ‘the tangible achievements of the individual and his or her family’. Second to that, in the opinion of the researcher, was ‘a sense of disproportion between the effort put into achieving and securing a decent stand of living, and the actual results of doing so’. This linked up with a worsening situation as regards supplies, particularly (of course) in comparison with Western countries, but anyway even if some of the region’s other ‘people’s democracies’ were considered. A third experience entailed a widespread conviction that ‘the ways of taking action offered to the individual by the system were not leading anywhere’. That kind of conviction did much to negate any possible faith people might have had in the governing elite (Marody 1995, 54).

The economic crisis with its attendant worsening public mood was overlain by a political crisis that only accelerated the erosion of the system. This first and foremost reflected a steady rise in the significance of the *Solidarity* Opposition, as well as a wave of strikes that Poland had to deal with in 1988.

Even at the beginning of that year, the circle of advisors closest to General Jaruzelski were alerting him to the hopeless mood now prevalent in society, asserting that: ‘The mood has now sunk below the red line, meaning that we have passed the critical point for some kind of explosive outpouring. That will not actually happen, because rebellious tendencies present in society are being suppressed by stabilising elements of various kinds (the experience of history – above all December 12th 1981, the role of the Church, the decline in influence

experienced by the Opposition, and apathy)' (*Memoriał* 2004, 130). But in any case, this assessment for the authorities was not borne out by the facts, as the position of the Opposition emerged as ever-more-favourable. There was a steady rebuilding of *Solidarity* structure, to the point where April 1988 brought strikes in 20 different places of work and higher-education establishments. Alongside an improvement in people's standard of living, postulates that *Solidarność* should be legalised also now made their appearance (Paczkowski 2003, 125–6). While the magnitude of all this was not very impressive, it did still represent a reason for illegal Opposition structures to go on developing (Dudek 2009, 143). The size of the next wave of strikes, of August 1988 (Dudek 2009, 164–164), then forced those in power to act on the proposal from the *Memoriał* authors dating back to January 1988, whereby 'a dramatic U-turn was made, in which words were few and deeds many' (*Memoriał* 2004, 139).

On August 31st 1988, and so 8 years on from the signing of the August Agreements, a meeting took place between Interior Minister General Czesław Kiszczak and Lech Wałęsa in the matter of talks that might be held in future between the Government and the Opposition (Dudek 2009, 172–3). Negotiations over the future Round Table talks (as to their formula, makeup of delegations and possible scope for change) were carried on from autumn 1988 onwards between tightly-defined elites on both sides, *inter alia* at Magdalenka close to Warsaw (Trembicka 2003, 138). These led to an agreement on the talks, whose later progress at the Round Table then drew on the same formula from Magdalenka to get past the impasse pertaining between the two parties¹⁸.

As has already been stressed, as early as 1980–81, the elite of *Solidarity* was already riven by major conflicts and divisions that only deepened while Martial Law remained in force. However, issues of this kind became still worse at the end of the 1980s, just as preparations for those Round Table talks were being made. It is possible to discern two alternative standpoints of key importance. The radical Opposition symbolised as *Solidarność Walcząca* (the so-called 'Fighting Solidarity' set up by Kornel Morawiecki in 1982) sought to stage a general strike and simply topple the regime by revolutionary means¹⁹.

18 Later on (post-1989) these informal and elite-related tales came to be surrounded by a number of myths, legends and conspiracy theories that began to reflect upon the entire venture that was the Round Table agreement (as we shall see in the Epilogue to this Chapter).

19 Radical circles also became more active as the Round Table talks were being run. On February 25th 1989 at Jastrzębie a so-called *Kongres Opozycji Antyustrojowej* was organised, the name primarily implying a meetings for members of the Opposition

Standing in opposition to that form of opposition was the group gathered around Lech Wałęsa via his Citizens' Committee of *Solidarity* that had made its official appearance in December 1988. Bringing together over 100 Oppositionists – and notwithstanding controversy aroused among certain activists – this represented a structure that could facilitate future negotiations. It was in the Members of the Committee that we may discern the true Opposition elite – the one ready, willing and able to join the ruling elite in commencing with the next phase – of transition (Łuczak 2012, 581–590; Paczkowski 2015, 291–2). A split between a moderate Opposition and a more radical options is present in the work of most researchers considering the democratisation phenomenon (Cichosz 1998, 43; Dobek-Ostrowska 1998, 24; Przeworski 1991, 54–66)²⁰.

It was actually this marginalisation among radicals – be they government or Opposition – that represented a key pre-condition for the commencement of the Round Table talks that signalled the arrive of Act III in Poland's 'drama of democratisation' – involving transition.

Transition

Transition, as taken to denote a period between the erosion of the old system and the consolidation of the new one, is without doubt a moment of critical

entirely against the system, or even against systemic or system-related solutions. However, this radical part of the Opposition proved too weak to break through into wider swathes of society, even as it was able to influence those assembled around the Round Table. This was a factor mobilising those in search of agreement, given the possibility that a breakdown of the negotiations might lead to a more vigorous outburst of dissatisfaction in Polish society (Skórzyński 1995, 229).

- 20 Similar divisions were in fact present in the ruling elite as well. A key bone of contention in late 1988 and early 1989 related to the legalisation of *Solidarność*, and the onset of negotiations with it and other elements of the Opposition. Conservatives and reactionaries opposing such transformative steps were joined in their criticism by the aforementioned Alfred Miodowicz (head of the pro-government *OPZZ*), who actually attacked the idea of an agreement with the Opposition from an anti-elite standpoint. He emphasised that 'persecution of the working class' had been ongoing, with a desirable struggle to improve the lot of the workers now being substituted by 'talk of an agreement between elites, as the elite in power talks to the elite in Opposition. One of the aims of this is to ensure society's acceptance of yet-further belt-tightening' (Dudek 2009, 226–7). Nevertheless, the leaders of *PZPR* and Gen. Jaruzelski himself proved capable of overcoming the resistance to *Solidarity* being legalised, and a process of negotiation with the Opposition was entered into (Dudek 2009, 231–3).

importance to the success of the entire democratisation process. It centres around a series of political happenings on differing scales, even as the whole is characterised by huge uncertainty and risk, as well as a certain amount of chaos. And it is out of this heady mix that a new social and political reality may make its appearance. A key moment that influences the whole structure of a transition is its launch, even as the means of governing following the first competitive elections emerges as equally important (Kubas 2018, 142). The goal of a transition is to put the bases for a civil society in place, to set conditions for elections and generate constitutive systemic rules, and to usher in democratic procedures and institutions (Ágh 1998, 7–8). 'Transition is a phase that relates to democracy's sphere of axiology, even as it is not able to operate freely, given that democracy is only now developing and still lacks a consolidated form' – so wrote Sebastian Kubas as he invoked a key proposition from Geoffrey Pridham (Kubas 2018, 143; Pridham 2000, 19).

A particularly important aspect, given the stance adopted at the outset here, relates to the role of political elites. The transition in fact brings a new power elite into existence, with this apparently seen to comprise members of both the old-regime's elite and the Opposition elite. An elite that has broad autonomy and enjoys the confidence of society to at least some extent, has an particular role to play – shaping and implementing a democratic institutional model and contributing to consolidation of a new political system (Kubas 2018, 144; Wasilewski 2001, 136–9).

A last problem – to be seen in the subject literature – relates to duration, which in fact proves a matter particularly hard to determine. For his part, Laurence Whitehead claims the phase may last several months, or even a decade (Whitehead 2002, 48). In the opinion of Atilla Ágh, the transition in the CEECs did indeed extend to a length of around a decade (Ágh 2001, 98). In turn, Geoffrey Pridham is of the view that only the onset of this phase is identifiable, while the ending process is protracted and overlaps with the onset of functioning of the new democratic political system (Pridham 2000, 19).

In the case of the Polish transition too, we come across the issue of how to more closely define the time-frame for the process. The point of onset seems to be relatively clear, as it is widely seen to be marked by the symbolic talks at the Round Table, as followed by the first partly-free elections since the Second World War, which were called for June 1989. A much greater problem is encountered with determining the end of this phase. For the purposes of the present Chapter, we accept that the cut-off point for the transition came with the enactment of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland in 1997, with this offering a systemic basis and framework for the socio-political system persisting through to the

present day. Additionally, we would like in this place to throw into sharper relief certain reservations regarding our analysis of the transition phase. Given the way in which that process is multi-stranded and has many layers, our Chapter cannot and does not pretend to offer either holistic or more profound treatment of the subject matter that we deal with. Rather it is merely selected aspects that are covered.

The Round Table talks²¹ (held between February 6th and April 5th 1989) represented an unprecedented event in the history, not only of Europe, but also of the whole world. As Elżbieta Matynia wrote, in seeking to draw out the performative dimension to the agreement – ‘the Polish Round Table should not merely be perceived as the first example of this kind of velvet revolution – only happening at the end of 1989 in the rest of the region. [...] It became a new space [...] in which both those who still exercised power and those who sought to change the system by which they did so, constructed and tested out a new formula for the pursuit of profound political change. In this local public space the word generated in the process of dialogue revealed its performative potential, expelling violence on the one hand, and helplessness and lack of agency on the other. The very fact that the formulae mobilising mechanisms for a peaceful transition from dictatorship to democracy were developed locally (with no external involvement) helps ensure a status as an extremely precious political solution in the context of a century scarred by war, genocide and refined forms of despotism’ (Matynia 2009, 99–100).

21 Andrzej Garlicki, as a “biographer” of the Round Table, was also willing to apply a theatrical metaphor as he sought to identify 27 individuals exerting the greatest influence on the agreement that emerged. He pointed to two “Directors” who did not even take part in the sessions, even as they determined both the form taken and the shape of what arose from it. These were of course Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski and Lech Wałęsa. Others were then divided into leading roles or supporting roles, with the first group comprising Gen. Czesław Kiszczak, Stanisław Ciosek, Aleksander Kwaśniewski, Władysław Baka and Janusz Reykowski. On the Opposition side, the leads were Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Bronisław Geremek, Adam Michnik and Jacek Kuroń. In turn, the supporting cast were Alfred Miodowicz, Leszek Miller and, Ireneusz Sekuła (for the government) and Witold Trzeciakowski, Andrzej Wielowieyski, Władysław Frasyniuk, Zbigniew Bujak and Aleksander Hall (for the Opposition). The historian further notes how representatives of the Catholic Church, i.e. Father Alojzy Orszulik and Archbishop Bronisław Dąbrowski served during the talks in (very important if discreet) “stage-hand” roles (Garlicki 2004).

For the Polish transition, the talks became, not only a symbol of transformation, but also – and above all – a framework for agreement, and a transition shoreline. There was here a unique kind of contract between the power elite and the Opposition. Among the series of stances present here those in need of particular recognition involved the legalisation of NSZZ '*Solidarność*', the restoration of the Senate RP and the office of President (as elected by the National Assembly created by the chambers of *Sejm* and *Senat* acting together), and partly-free elections²².

In the opinion of Antoni Dudek, the authorities sought to use the 'electoral contract' to build the Opposition into the political system of PRL, while simultaneously attaining compliance with the idea that 'Jaruzelski's people would maintain control and supervision over the key areas of functioning of the state' (Dudek 2009, 251). However, notwithstanding this optimism on the part of the ruling elite, the June election results emerged as a total failure for them²³. Not only was the Opposition strengthened, but the process of transition was also accelerated. And while the First Secretary of the PZPR – General Wojciech Jaruzelski – was elected President by the National Assembly in July 1989 (if by a majority of just one vote), as early as in September 1989 it proved possible to form a government under first non-communist Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki²⁴.

There can be no doubt at all that the coalition government headed by the *Solidarity* politician made sure that the systemic transformation (of such key importance to the first stage of transition) only gathered strength as 1989 came

22 In accordance with the law in force, 65 % of *Sejm* seats were to go to PZPR and satellite parties, while the remainder were to be filled by way of the free election held. In contrast, the election to the *Senat* was entirely free and unfettered (Paczkowski 2015, 295).

23 The Opposition took 99 out of 100 *Senat* seats, as well as 161 of the 460 seats in the *Sejm*.

24 The Ministries in a position to exert force – i.e. those with National Defence and Internal Affairs portfolios remained in the hands of members of the Party, i.e. Gen. Kiszczak, and Gen. Florian Siwicki. This should be seen as part-achievement of a proposal from Adam Michnik – actually made on the pages of the Opposition's *Gazeta Wyborcza* newspaper (the name actually means "Election Paper" in one translation) – in an article *Wasz prezydent, nasz premier* ("Your President, our Prime Minister"). The fact that the election might actually allow *Solidarność* politicians to steer certain ministerial policies was down to the existence of a very broad coalition formed from the Opposition in cahoots with satellite parties of the PZPR, i.e. the Peasant Party *Zjednoczone Stronnictwo Ludowe*, as well as the more urban *Stronnictwo Demokratyczne* (Dudek 2016, 51; 57–67).

to a close. The first amendment to the Constitution came along in April 1989 (as a direct consequence of the Round Table Agreement), and was a kind of break with the systemic change in the state that had occurred through to that time ... in terms of content and the political circumstances underpinning the enactment that ushered in important systemic elements (Rogowski 2009, 312).

This would in fact be the first in a series of changes to the Constitution that were of a systemic nature, and took place in the years 1989–1991, leading to more-profound socio-political transformation in Poland²⁵. In December 1989, a further amendment came along, with this undoubtedly having the greatest system-changing credentials. Even as it repealed the first two Chapters of the PRL-era Constitution and its Introduction, it at the same time brought in ‘bases of the political and economic system’, while also restoring the traditional name (*Rzeczpospolita Polska* as opposed to “Polish People’s Republic”) and the emblem of the Polish state. The new Chapter first in synthetic form presents the main systemic principles, referring significantly to Polish constitutional principles and thus more generally invoking Polish constitutional tradition. However, first and foremost, the amendment brought in a principle as regards the sovereignty of the nation and forms by which it might be exercised by representatives. A parliamentary system of governments is also set out there (Rogowski 2008, 313–330).

A particularly important amendment of the Constitution was that from the end of September 1990 (Dudek 2016, 119–121), which saw growing political muscle allow for the curtailment of the term in office as President that Gen. Jaruzelski would ultimately serve. The Act on the Presidential Election was passed, and under it this was to take place by way of universal suffrage²⁶. On October

25 The number of changes made to the Constitution over such a short period of time (7 over two years) points to the dynamic characterising political change at the beginning of Poland’s period of systemic change. In turn, the choice of that method in achieving systemic change arose out of acceptance on the part of almost all political groupings counting for something on the Polish political scene, as well as a certain type of principle when it came to the constitutional continuity in the state, even in the face a critical assessment of the 1952 Constitution.

26 In accordance with a *Sejm* Resolution of September 21st 1990 “after considering political and systemic change that has taken place in Poland”, there ensued a shortening, not merely of the term in office of the President, but also that characterising the two Chambers of Parliament. For its purposes, the new elections to the *Sejm* and *Senat* were to take place before the end of the First Quarter of 1991, while the Head of State was to be elected in or before December 1990 (*Monitor Polski* of 1990, No. 36, item 289).

2nd, the Speaker (*Marszałek*) of the Sejm announced that such elections would be called for 25th November 1990. These were then won (albeit in the second round) by the first Chair of NSZZ „*Solidarność*“, i.e. Lech Wałęsa, who was sworn in on 22nd December 1990 (*Bitwa o Belweder* 1991)²⁷. It was in such a way that the first stage of transition reached its symbolic end.

Most of the systemic solutions, principle and norms that were the subject of successive amendments of the Constitution (in the years 1989–1991) found their reflection in the Small Constitution (enacted on April 23rd 1992). At the same time, these systemic frameworks and principles later offered a basis for the April 1997 basic law that has remained in force through to the present day.

The acceleration of the transition arising out of the emergence of Tadeusz Mazowiecki's Government also dynamised change within the elite in existence through to that point. It was the years 1989–1993 that would emerge as the period of institutionalisation and consolidation of Polish political elites – ‘1989 needs to be regarded as a breakthrough time. It was at that time that we had designated the main axis along which the division line between Polish political elites would run for a number of subsequent years’ (Klepka 2010, 262).

At the end of January 1990, First Secretary of PZPR Mieczysław F. Rakowski (who had replaced Jaruzelski in the post in July of the previous year) decided that it was now time to lower the flag on the PZPR (i.e. ‘the Party’) – which had held the reins of power in Poland for half a century. In its place there came *Socjaldemokracja Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* (SdRP) as headed by Aleksander Kwaśniewski. This joined election campaigning as the dominant element of a coalition under the better-known name SLD – *Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej* (i.e. the Democratic Left Alliance)²⁸. Nevertheless, from both a legal and an institutional point of view this party was continuing on from PZPR and thus honouring its legacy in some sense at least.

While this transformation and re-institutionalisation of the old elite can indeed be regarded as a process of limited complexity, the same may not be said

27 The 1990 Presidential Elections had one more key aspect influencing further change, i.e. the breakdown and fragmentation of the *Solidarity* elite during the election campaign and term in office of Lech Wałęsa.

28 Some activists decided to form part of *Unia Socjaldemokratycznej Polskiej*, which came into existence having separated itself off from PZPR. However, the party, headed by Tadeusz Fiszbach, never came to play any more major role in political life. So, after a relatively short time, most of its activists moved on to the left-wing *Unia Pracy*, which nevertheless also included politicians with *Solidarity* roots – key among them first leader Ryszard Bugaj (Słodkowska 1997, 27).

of the *Solidarność* elite, which entered a process indeed characterised by both complexity and conflict. As has been noted already, Opposition circles in Poland had certainly had their internal spats, but did – through to 1989 anyway – persist with a relatively stable and permanent-looking structure, given in particular the existence of a ‘common enemy’.

But in the first period of real-life transition, this could no longer hold, as the entire social movement fell apart, giving rise to a number of different political parties of distinct ideologies and values (Wasilewski 1994, 15–6; Wnuk-Lipiński 1993, 162). Thus the first years of transformation saw 10–20 new groupings of larger or smaller size come into existence and persist for varying lengths of time. Examples might be *Porozumienie Centrum*, *Zjednoczenie Chrześcijańsko-Narodowe*, *Kongres Liberalno-Demokratyczny*, *Unia Demokratyczna* (joining with KLD in 1994 to form *Unia Wolności*), *Konfederacja Polski Niepodległej*, *Unia Polityki Realnej* and *Partia Wolność* (respectively the Centre Understanding/Agreement, Christian-National Unity, the Liberal-Democratic Congress (later becoming the Freedom Union), Confederation for an Independent Poland, Real Policy Union and Freedom Party). Furthermore, *NSZZ „Solidarność”* all the time existed, not just as a union, but also as a political force. By the end of October 1990, some 154 political parties had already registered their activity in Poland (Chmaj and Żmigrodzki 1995, 24).

One of the main causes for the disintegration of what had just recently been ‘the Opposition’ lay in the fact that the unified *Solidarność* structure apparently visible to the outside world did have its pre-1989 factional divisions and ideological currents. Once the old system had fallen, these divisions made (were freer to make) themselves more visible. Indeed, a major matter dividing Opposition circles related to the very issue of how to relate to the previous system, even as dispute also surrounded proposed changes of shape in line with the transition foreseen, as well as the assumed length of that process. It is widely felt that the moment of disintegration arrived with the 1990 Presidential Election campaign, as well as the conflicts between the circles surrounding Lech Wałęsa on the one hand and Tadeusz Mazowiecki on the other (Dudek 2016, 103; Klepka 2010, 265). As Antoni Dudek puts it: ‘in this process, the personal ambitions of the two politicians truly played a very important role, though it would be a far-reaching simplification to try and see the causes of the crisis in this way alone. For behind the most visible row between the personalities there lay concealed two never-fully-articulated visions of how the political system in Poland might be transformed’ (Dudek 2016, 103)²⁹.

29 In 1990, these conflicts would ensure that the people’s unexpected choice of person

The consequence of the disintegration of the *Solidarity* elites Parliament formed as a result of the first fully free elections in October 1991³⁰ was extremely fragmented, and the resulting government coalitions were unstable, short-lived and – in any case – of minority status only³¹. The result was for the First-Term *Sejm* of the Republic of Poland to be dissolved ahead of time (in fact as soon as in May 1993). And the September 1993 elections ultimately called were now on the basis of a new electoral law that did introduce the idea of the threshold (a certain not-insignificant percentage of all votes cast needing to be won for any MPs to take seats in Parliament, meaning a departure from truly proportional representation where percentage support was small). The result of that was for just 6 parties to make it into the *Sejm*, with the winners – just 4 years on from democracy – being a post-communist party with democratic in its title – the Alliance of the Democratic Left (*Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej*). This now went into coalition with the Peasant Party now slightly name-changed to *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe*, and – wisely enough, perhaps – it was the *PSL* leader Waldemar Pawlak who actually headed the whole government as PM³².

This striking and in some sense shameful loss suffered by post-*Solidarity* parties was only further emphasised two years later, when the 1995 Presidential Elections saw Lech Wałęsa himself lose out to *SLD* leader Aleksander Kwaśniewski (Jasiewicz 1996). Thus, a mere 6 years into the transformation, society's swing (as it were back) to the left had given that option power in various high places, and this was more than a little due to the pain endured with the economic transformation of Poland. The old Opposition elites had actually been rejected by a society dissatisfied and indeed fed up with what the *Solidarity* governments had been able to achieve thus far; and latterly also with that camp's dire inability

making it through to the second round of the Presidential Elections was not Tadeusz Mazowiecki at all; but a populist known as Stanisław Tymński, who had been unknown to pretty much anybody before that time (and ultimately went on to lose in the head-to-head with Wałęsą).

- 30 While Poland indeed kicked off democratic change in the entire Eastern Bloc, the October 1991 elections actually represented some of the last anywhere across the CEECs to achieve first full democracy of the people.
- 31 The fragmentation of the *Sejm* was also much influenced at this time by the lack of any electoral threshold, ensuring therefore that 11 Election Committees competing for seats in the 1991 Parliament did indeed win one ... if no more than one.
- 32 While undergoing two changes of Prime Minister, this coalition did manage to persist through to the end of its term (in 1997).

to bury the hatchet in the interests of broader potentially-governing coalitions being put in place (Wiatr 1993, 88).

In seeking to sum up and evaluate the transition phase to Poland's democratisation (even in a cursory fashion), we need to pay attention to several core questions. Undoubtedly beneficial to both the then in-power and Opposition elites was the way in which the Polish changes proceeded entirely peacefully and bloodlessly. There can be little or no doubt that the political agreement reached in 1989 protected Polish society against chaos; and a more revolutionary course of the kind for example witnessed in Romania.

The main goals of the transition were to determine conditions under which elections would take place, as well as constitutive systemic principles, and the ushering-in of democratic institutions and procedures. There can be no doubt that this emerged as a success in the Polish case (even if perhaps just a partial one). The seven first amendments to the Constitution put in place the systemic framework for a state duly constituted in law. On the other hand, the lack of a political consensus ensured that a basic law did not appear in its entirety at that point, merely a provisional legal solution in the form of the 'Small Constitution' of 1992. Full success came 8 years from the Round Table – in 1997.

However, a further success pointed to by researchers centred around the reinstatement of local and regional government, the development of local politics, and the decentralisation of power. The changes accomplished in this sphere provided formal bases for full activity in society, and that meant foundations upon which a pluralistic civil society in post-1989 Poland could be built (Wojtasik 2013, 54).

Equally, notwithstanding undoubted successes for the Polish transition, there were a number of failures whose consequences are still to be observed in the public sphere. Above all, a negative phenomenon of this Act in the Polish 'drama of democratisation' involved the disintegration and fragmentation of post-*Solidarity* circles. This was associated with personal conflict and mutual recriminations, but also and first and foremost with a decline in the quality and standard of public debate. The divisions emerging in the first period of transition would go on to determine Poland's political life in years to come; with some aspects still highly visible today on the party-political scene.

Among different negative phenomena characterising Polish democratisation and revealing themselves particularly clearly during the transition were two casting the longest shadow on the final outcome (and also the way in which it is assessed from today's standpoint). These are the economic transformation and 'decommunisation', and the recollection of them to this day (indeed probably even more now) is present as a core element of contemporary anti-elite discourse.

Economic reform was not unnaturally found to be an important aspect, alongside far-reaching political change. The Poland entering the 1990s was a state in economic crisis. There was hyperinflation, a very severe budget deficit, and indebtedness to foreign countries. The state of the economy was thus a key challenge facing the government of Tadeusz Mazowiecki. And the person charged with the economy's transformation was Mazowiecki's Minister of Finance – Prof. Leszek Balcerowicz. Key directions of change lying at the heart of 'the Balcerowicz Plan' (as implemented via a whole package of laws relating to the economic system, passed at the end of 1989) were a reduced role for and share of the state in production and investment activity; a lifting of all monopolistic practices and permitting of market self-regulation; a reduction in the scale of the welfare state (or 'nanny state' – depending on a person's point of view); an introduced income, monetary and fiscal policy that was restrictive in nature; and the creation of an institutional infrastructure servicing markets (*Polityka gospodarcza* 1995).

At the outset, these reforms garnered quite a lot of support (both political and social). However, rather rapidly, certain negative phenomena started to make an appearance in association with the so-called shock therapy (as the Balcerowicz Plan was rapidly starting to be called). These served to enhance levels of frustration and dissatisfaction of both a social and political nature. It did not take long for the huge social costs of radical reform to become apparent, with unemployment and growing poverty observed, along with public protests in consequence. Structural unemployment arose, and there was a drastic decline in living standards among Poles. In the early 1990s, privatisations, the restructuring of industry and the abrupt close-down of the State Farms all led to the appearance of enclaves of poverty across almost the entire country.

So it was that Oppositionist, *Solidarity* activist and historian Karol Modzelewski recalled the above phenomena by reference to 'frustration and aggression on the part of millions of people hurt by the transformation blew up in the faces of the political elites that had initiated and then pursued the 'Great Change'. In the decisive phase of transformation, the reformers had made use of the myth surrounding *Solidarność* as political cover. That was effective, but there is no such thing as a free lunch. The myth was used up in the process, and what was left over were people who felt injured or wounded, and indeed cheated. And it was these same people [...] who had once been the stronghold of the great *Solidarity*' (Modzelewski 2013, 409–410).

A second key problem for the transition, not fully resolved as of the 1990s, involved decommunisation and attempts to disclose and uncover negative phenomena from the former times. This settling of accounts with the past proved one of the more major challenges for the newly-democratic CEECs in general

(not just Poland in particular). Part of society demanded that there should be an unequivocal process bringing to accountability and to heel the institutions, founders, politicians, judges, and officials of the old security apparatus.

However, despite the public debate, political proposals and attempts (not least under Jan Olszewski from 1992) to do away with Tadeusz Mazowiecki's 'thick line policy', the first period of transformation did not really see any broader-scale disclosure process. In fact, this only really commenced in 1997, but even then in a shape and form – involving institutions and public space – that failed to satisfy critics, given the lack of any clear settling of accounts or break with the pre-1989 past (Krotoszyński 2014). For right-of-centre parties and circles in particular, this came to offer clinching evidence of nothing less than 'collusion' between ruling and Opposition elites.

Consolidation

The Final Act of democratisation – consolidation – resembles all the other items of terminology used as titles here in facing definition-related difficulties, even as the subject literature offers a series of different (better- or worse-developed) conceptualisations (Kubas 2018, 150–161; Szyja 2013). Andreas Schendler, rejecting the more-developed perspectives, instead chooses to epitomise meaning in the most-simplified fashion. In his opinion, the consolidation of democracy may be linked above all with re-education as to the possibility of the regime breaking down, with the previous system being returned to; and hence convictions as to durability. He thus views consolidation as a capacity to achieve systemic goals in regard to stability, durability, resilience, reliability (credibility) and invariability (Schendler 1998, 91–2).

The removal of uncertainty as to a turning-back of the process of democratisation, activeness and engagement on the part of citizens and the political elite, and a certain acceptance of democratic behaviour as routine, are all further elements of Larry Diamond's take on the matter at hand (Diamond 1999, 64–71). In turn, Andrzej Antoszewski draws attention to the shaping of models of political behaviour not extending beyond the framework of democratic rules as constrained by normative activity (the passing of a Constitution, shaping of an effective electoral system, defining of forms of government, introduction of a binding catalogue of rights and freedoms) as well as acceptance of new social norms (as the new systems gains legitimacy while the old one loses it). In consolidation, there is thus widespread acknowledgment of such fundamental traits of liberal democracy as cyclical elections, a lack of discrimination in the electoral

struggle, the exercising of civil rights and freedoms, and free access to a variety of different sources of information (Antoszewski 2000, 60–1).

It needs to be recalled that consolidation is a protracted process, resembling transition in potentially lasting several years, or even 10+ years. Many researchers draw attention to the multi-stage nature of the process (Pridham 2000, 249). For his part, Atilla Ágha distinguishes between two key stages. The first, following on directly from the transition phase, though also continued with during it, sees the establishment of democratic institutions, as well as progress made with the developments by which democratic political conduct becomes routine. The second stage, at which consolidation enters its mature phase, entails remodelling of society in a democratic direction (Ágh 2001, 99).

In here bringing together various different conceptualisations, we may state that consolidation 'links up with the stabilisation of institutions and democratic procedures, as well as with a development of democratic mentality within both political elites and society – with the result that the democratic regime undergoes ongoing legitimisation. The main result of the consolidation of democracy is the securing of stability and continuity' (Kubas 2018, 152).

And in conclusion, it is worth noting how consolidation may encounter major problems and obstacles that in fact do go on posing more of a threat of the non-democratic regime indeed making its return. However, it is at this point that the fact that institutions and democratic mechanisms are now in place is able to combine with the (growing) support extended by society to ensure that negative phenomena can be counteracted (Kubas 2018, 158–159).

There can be no doubt at all that (from the institutional perspective at least) a key moment and consolidation stage was the April 2nd 1997 enactment of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland, as remaining in force through to the present day. While the transition did bring a series of amendments to the basic law dating back to 1952 that remodelled the state governance system and the whole political system – as well as enactment of the so-called Small Constitution (as a kind of summary of the first years of transformation), it was the 1997 Constitution that provided for a holistic encompassing of systemic matters and the relations between different powers and authorities, as well as an extension of guarantees to a catalogue of civil rights and freedoms.

The first drafts for a new Constitution made their appearance as early as at the time of the so-called 'Contract' *Sejm* of 1989–1991. However, that work was governed by a conviction that a Parliament arising out of not-fully-free elections lacked the moral and political authority (or right) to enact a basic law (*Projekty konstytucyjne* 1991). The parliamentary session that followed on (in the years 1991–1993) gave rise to no fewer than 7 drafts (of which one was a 'Presidential'

one put forward by Lech Wałęsa). The remainder were under the authorship of different political parties. Hence, this time round, enactment of the Constitution was thwarted by political fragmentation in Parliament, as well as the consequent impossibility of creating the kind of durable coalitions needed to ensure the voting-in of one or other of the drafts in the context of the overarching National Assembly (Chruściak 1997, 16–18).

Work accelerated following parliamentary elections in 1993, with power taken (more than a little paradoxically) by the post-communist Democratic Left Alliance (*Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej*) and the Peasant Party by then known as *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe*. Alongside the proposal from the governing coalition, the constitutional debate was also entered – from a strong position – by a so-called citizens’ draft (as endorsed from outside Parliament by the post-*Solidarity* right in the shape of the parties known as *Akcja Wyborcza Solidarność* (basically the trade union’s political party) and *Ruch Odbudowy Polski* – the ‘Movement for the Reconstruction of Poland’). This attracted more than 1 million signatures.

However, in the face of the government’s rejection of solutions set out in this ‘*Solidarity*’draft, right-of-centre circles began to campaign actively against the government-sponsored draft of the Constitution. Among different aspects facing its criticism were the Preamble text (with its lack of apparent respect for natural rights and law as superior to that which is made, as well as a lack of reference to the safeguarding of human life from the moment of conception, along with the implied possibility of certain competences of state organs and bodies being conferred upon international organisations). Reservations were also expressed by the Catholic Church, *vis-à-vis* moral doubts as regards the draft (Dudek 2016, 361).

A matter of particular importance for the enactment of the new Constitution was the agreement reached between the governing (*SLD-PSL*) coalition and the left-of-centre parties *Unia Pracy* and *Unia Wolności* (Gebethner 1998, 23–7; 36–7; 55). It was this constitutional compromise that allowed the new basic law to be passed by the National Assembly. However the truly key moment entailed the Constitutional Referendum held on May 25th 1997 ... for which just 42.86 % of voters turned out. Within that group, 53.45 % proved to be in favour of the new legal solution (i.e. under 6.4 million people). This nevertheless sufficed from a formal point of view for the Constitution to be adopted, even as it did in truth represent very limited support for what was and is a key normative instrument (Piasecki 2005, 24–43). ‘It emerges yet again that only half of all Poles are in any way at all interested in public affairs, and are anyway highly divided over them; with the rest showing no interest whatever in the shape of the system of governance in the state that it has been their fate to live in’ (Dudek 2016, 362).

Low turnout and the tiny prevalence of proponents over opponents of the new Constitution (with the difference between the 'for' and 'against' camps as small as 330,000 people) ensured that right-of-centre critics would begin to undermine the legitimacy of the whole thing, even as they pointed clearly to its 'post-communist' pedigree.

It is here worth offering a brief characterisation of that April 2nd 1997 Constitution of the Republic of Poland, taking particular account of its systemic solutions and values, as well as the civil liberties and rights it enshrined.

The new Constitution defines the Republic as 'a democratic state ruled by law and implementing the principles of social justice' (Art. 2). In turn, those framing the new law recognised as fundamental principles the sovereignty of the nation, the inviolability of civil liberties and rights and a tripartite separation of powers.

In line with the latter, the legislative function is to be discharged by the *Sejm* and *Senat* (with the former enjoying systemic primacy), while the Executive is headed by a President elected for a five-year term by universal suffrage. Nevertheless, that role is curtailed in comparison with what it had been in the Small Constitution of 1992. In turn, the position of the Head of the Council of Ministers (i.e. the Prime Minister) is strengthened, given the *de facto* role as key post within the Executive.

In essence, this basic law brought in a Parliament-and-Cabinet system in which the Government is answerable before Parliament in its role representing the sovereign authority of the nation.

Nevertheless, the Constitution retained certain institutions already in existence, including the Constitutional Tribunal, Tribunal of State, Supreme Court, Supreme Chamber of Audit (*NIK*) and Commissioner for Citizens' Rights; even as it also enshrined two new organs – *Rada Polityki Pieniężnej* (the Monetary Policy Council) and a Children's Ombudsman in the form and under the title of *Rzecznik Praw Dziecka* (Skrzydło 2014). Beyond that, in Art. 2 of the 1997 Constitution we also find a broad catalogue of freedoms and rights enjoyed by the citizen, as balanced by certain obligations and duties (Stecko 2018).

'Democratisation is a process involving transformations that not only usher in, but also steadily improve and perfect, the set of institutions, procedures, rules, principles and values associated with democracy. This process is monitored and evaluated, to make it possible to determine the degree, scope and depth of rooting of democracy in a given state and society' (Kubas 2018, 491). On the one hand, it is possible to assess democracy's consolidation by using descriptive analysis – albeit one that is complex and of a multi-aspect character. However, as editorial issues preclude a research process of that kind, it is rather necessary to

deploy quantitative analysis, as with *The Economist Intelligence Unit's* so-called *Democracy Index*³³.

When it comes to the research of this kind done across the 2006–2020 period, it emerges that Poland received its most-favourable (7.47) assessment in 2014. However, the result averaged for the period overall leaves the country in the second-level ‘flawed democracy’ category. Equally, through the 2006–2015 period, Poland’s result never fell below 7, while from 2015 onwards there was an accelerated process by which the country’s democracy started to head firmly in the direction of the ‘hybrid system’ (Tyrąła 2019, 71).

Where results for the *Index* are looked at in terms of the different sub-categories, it becomes clear that Poland does best in the *Electoral Process and Pluralism* category. At no point since the research began has the value for that fallen below 9. *Civil liberties* are found to lie in second place, with the 2006–2015 results always constant at 9.12. A fall post-2015 is then made clear, with the 2020 value being the lowest so far, at 7.06. In contrast the *Political Culture* category has been associated with a mean result as low as 4.5. ‘A democracy manifesting a low-level political culture [...] such as Poland, does have flawed functioning. It is this that has helped ensure rather poor working of civil society in the country, weak social capital, and a low (and falling) level of public confidence in either politicians or democracy, as set against growing trust in authoritarian approaches. Polish society is thus among those in which citizens are most alienated ... from each other. That means a prevalence of apathy and lack of trust and low turnouts at elections’ (Tyrąła 2019, 72–3). The researcher further opines that an incomplete consolidation of Polish democracy has also been influenced by the antagonistic nature of political rivalry in the country, the aforesaid low level of political culture and social capital, steady growth in neo-authoritarianism, and partial political exclusion (Tyrąła 2019, 76–79; Gdula 2018; Ost 2007; Sekuła 2009).

In summing up this Act IV of the ‘drama of democratisation’, we can note that Poland remains (stuck) at the consolidation stage. This makes it clear that the founding of democratic institutions and a political system is not enough to justify claims that democracy has been consolidated, given that ‘the human factor’ emerges as of key importance. Political culture, participation and the

33 The *Index* position gains its diagnosis by reference to 60 indicators grouped into the categories of: (1) electoral process and pluralism, (2) functioning of government, (3) civil liberties, (4) political culture and (5) political participation. On that basis, different states are categorised as full democracies (where 8–10 points are achieved), flawed democracies (6–7.9), hybrid systems (4–5.9) or authoritarian systems (below 4).

development of civil society all have a decisive role to play in any true completion of the democratisation process.

5. Epilogue

'The discourse on the transformation is a highly-polarised one. The dominant features are two contrasting and in fact incompatible narratives concerning both the way in which systemic change was brought about and the people responsible for doing that. [...] an important place in that discourse is taken by negative statements seeking to re-evaluate (or indeed devalue) systemic change – for example by playing down the Round Table and what followed as a 'rotten consensus, betrayal of the ideals of *Solidarność*, and an overly high price paid for transformation' (Tatarenko 2019, 315).

One such narrative holds that the transformation was pursued in line with an agreed principle that society was consenting, with the result that little attempt was (or needed to?) be made to hold the power elite of the previous regime accountable for its mistakes. This position was espoused as early as in August 1989 by Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki, whose *exposé inter alia* noted that *Rząd, który utworzę, nie ponosi odpowiedzialności za hipotekę, którą dziedziczy. Ma ona jednak wpływ na okoliczności, in których przychodzi nam działać. Przeszłość odkreślamy grubą linią. Odpowiadać będziemy jedynie za to, co uczyniliśmy, by wydobyć Polskę z obecnego stanu załamania* (Gazeta Wyborcza 1989 no. 8, 3). Typical English versions of the core part of that statement hold that: 'We split away the history of our recent past with a thick line. We will be responsible only for what we have done to help extract Poland from her current predicament, from now on'; though in Polish it was set in a still-wider context of unwillingness to accept responsibility for what had gone before, given the particular circumstances in which it had been given for Mazowiecki and his Government to act.

From that reasonable admission it was a short step for critics (notably right-of-centre) to (re)interpret that 'thick line' as a desire to resist settling scores with the past even where that might have been fully justified, proceeding via a process of active decommunisation by investigation and disclosure (Tatarenko 2019, 314). From there it is only a next short hop to a second narrative whereby the transformation was a betrayal of *Solidarity* ideals, or indeed 'collusion between elites at Magdalenka'. This anti-elite phenomenon was pushed along and catalysed readily enough when people looked at – and sought to interpret – the social consequences of the so-called 'Balcerowicz Plan' referred to above. Most Poles apparently experienced a deterioration in standards of living at that point (even as the changes had been introduced to achieve the opposite – at least ultimately).

Unemployment was soaring, and what came to be thought of as ‘rogue privatisations’ were taking place.

A motif of betrayal has been particularly crucial to this right-of-centre discourse. Basically: ‘the anti-elite mindset on the right encompasses equally well the post-*Solidarity* elites and those who had once been Party Members and managed nevertheless to get themselves elected at consecutive elections from 1989 onwards. These people then face one of the harshest accusations – regarding betrayal. This is now one of the leitmotifs reached for most often and with most emotion as the right pursues its narrative’ (Kulas 2018, 25).

A further key detail of this discourse is the way that the ‘betraying elite’ is set against ‘the people’, ‘folk’, ‘the nation’ or whatever other way it might be expressed – where these are seen to be entirely worthy and noble, if readily betrayable. ‘The people are presented as the ones preserving Polish identity, guarding the “innocence” of Polish culture, serving as the true sovereign, but denied the right to be represented. They are subordinated, and cannot – or at least previously could not – make their voices heard, given that there was no elite in place to represent them’ (Kulas 2018, 30).

Needless to say, it is a matter of key importance that the *Law and Justice* Party (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*, PiS) has the motif of betrayal by the elites as a leading element to its narrative. And it has now won two parliamentary elections in a row (in 2015 and 2019). The party’s politicians live and operate within a version of events whereby they *do* – at long last – allow the people to express their views and needs, and make them manifest, as well as finally offering the people a defence – perhaps with come-back – against the aforesaid betraying elites. ‘The main theme espoused by PiS in the last election campaigns was an absolute rejection of the transformation process in Poland. PiS claimed in its narrative that the whole period after 1989 was established by corrupt elites. The entire 27 years of modernisation and building of liberal democracy is thus written off as a failure. Poland post-1989, in the PiS perspective, is claimed to have been under the influence of a shady post-Communist network. This alliance is claimed to have included former security operatives, Communist Party members and liberal post-*Solidarity* forces, who were said to be controlling political, economic and cultural activity. “Post-Communist Poland” was said to be ruled by a corrupt “pseudo-elite.” The transformation was said to disadvantage a large part of the population and create a privileged class’ (Kinowska-Mazaraki 2021).

As PiS took power and office in 2015, that fact saw to it that what had once been a minority view regarding the transforming events of 1989 now became the mainstream ‘official vision of the past’, gaining presentation by both those

in power as such, and their pro-government public and private media (Kulas 2018, 27).

Against that background, it must be worth noting that the right-of-centre anti-elite discourse surrounding 1989 that is present in the media and maintained by the government itself still fails to find much reflection – or purchase – where public opinion in the matter is concerned. With more than 30 years having passed by, *CBOS* polling found that most Poles (68 %) were ready to state that the changes of the late 1980s and early 1990s had brought 'more benefits than costs'. Equally, a mere 5 % of the population were ready to swing behind the reverse claim that 'the changes brought more costs than benefits' (Tatarenko 2019, 307).

In line with the research done from 1994 onwards, the most negative consequences of the transformation were assessed as involving the mid-1990s, when Polish society had to struggle with economic problems arising out of record unemployment and inflation. However, as Poland acceded to the European Union, there was an increased number of positive opinions regarding the events of 1989 (some 15 years earlier). We would thus seem justified in claiming that this is linked with improved quality of life among citizens, as linked with dynamic socio-economic change in the context of the accession (Tatarenko 2019, 307; Kolasa-Nowak 2010).

When age differences are looked at, it is clear that opinions are most likely to be negative among those who faced the transformation period aged 20–30 (and are thus in the 50–60 year age group as of now), or else were already elderly. The assessment of change is obviously much influenced by the life experiences of those surveyed, which are doubtless sufficient to shape or even determine the way in which they perceive democratisation. In the face of that, there would seem full justification for saying that a majority of Poles have an unambiguously positive perception of the transformation.

Research by *Niepodległa*, as commissioned by *Narodowe Centrum Kultury*, revealed that – among a series of key events from Polish history – it was the systemic transformation in the face of the ousting of communism that was the number-2 event likely to evoke the greatest pride among Poles. 18 % of those surveyed pointed to this (while 19 % ensured that 'the election of Karol Wojtyła as Pope' was the top-rated answer).

Indeed, there can be no doubt that the twin events of the emergence of 'Solidarity' and the clinching of peaceful agreement at the Round Table should be seen as the most important moments in Poland's modern history. The 1989 events symbolising Poland's democratisation acquired a model significance for other CEECs, but in fact also for many other corners of the world in which democratic transformation started even later. There was an undoubted key role in

this whole process for elites – be they in power or in Opposition. While the former determined to start with a limited liberalisation of their non-democratic regime, and then initiated negotiations, the latter drew on radical stances in the context of a self-organising revolution, but then joined the negotiation process anyway, ensuring that that might kick-start actual democratic change and transformation.

However, the Round Table talks marked only a first step along the road to democratisation. And, as we have sought to demonstrate here, that road has been a very bumpy one, replete with negative phenomena ensuring a lack of full consolidation of democracy, despite 30 years having passed since the June 1989 elections.

And, while there are a number of influential factors here, it would seem that the political elites may have a lot to answer for. That would be a key paradox of the Polish ‘drama of democratisation’. While on the one hand, the actions of the elites in question have been of decisive importance in ensuring successful performance in one ‘Act’ after another; on the other it is the conflict characterising the political struggle, and the highly antagonistic dimension thereto (as first seen even during the transition period) that have left Poland’s process of democratisation as a non-completed one. As a democratic community we remain ‘under construction’, and it is clear enough now that all citizens taken together (rather than just any elite) will determine how much longer that building process is going to take, and even what the ultimate effects of that are going to be. Since the foundations are in place, it is high time that the citizenry of Poland pushed on more determinedly with further work on the building site.

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Rafał CHWEDORUK

The role of student movements in Poland's process of democratisation

Abstract:

This article discusses the activism of Polish students circles in social movements in time of democratisation at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s. It focuses an analysis of students oriented movements and anticommmunist illegal political movements and anarchists and new social movements. The struggle opposing the communist system is discussed in the context of the evolution of Polish intelligenstia as a social strata at the last decade of authoritarian regime. This paper deals with the various actions from the repertoire of contention. The process of radicalisation the students circles is explained by various factors. This study then asks further questions about how the institutionalization of independent organizations affected the conservative and antiliberal reaction among the large part of former students activists. It concludes that the students movements cannot be considered in the case of Polish as an independent actor in process of democratisation.

Keywords: democratisation, social movements, students movements, Polish anti-communist Opposition

1. Introduction

Social movements played a significant role in the 20th-century history of Poland, and a matter of particular focus for those researching the matter has been the wave of worker protests, and the emergence of a trade union of more than 9 million members, that took place in 1980. By that time, Poland had accumulated a legacy of rebellions of such strength that even the dismantling and delegalisation of *Solidarność* as a union could not stifle conspiratorial activity from time to time bursting through as open forms of opposition. "It was preceded by years of patient organising and massive clandestine work on cultural, political, and even economic levels (with underground publishing houses and networks of distribution)" (Ekiert and Kubik 2017, 201).

Today's research into social movement concentrates on their activity within democratic states; and only more rarely has the matter been considered in the face of the stark reality of situations in which democracy is simply absent. The same processes in fact lie at the sources of both social movements and democratisation, and the same process can encourage citizens to establish movements

(Tilly 2019, 129–31). What is more, contemporary Poland is perceived as the product of systemic transformation pursued with success. The attendant process of democratisation commenced here at more or less the same time as the corresponding phenomenon in Taiwan – at the half-way point through the decade of the 1980s.

That said, there are many participants in Polish events of the late 1980s who feel that that was actually a period in which society lay rather dormant and passive, with this actually indicating limited direct linkage between progress made and the activity of movements in society, even as there was a greater degree of involvement on the part of political elites, in the face of what was actually a consensual model for change or indeed transformation. A question thus arises as to the reasons for social movements to decline in significance... at the precise time when a democratisation process was (only) in its early phases.

It is true to say that young people in general and students in particular can form core and key parts of many different movements and protests that arise in society¹. And this was indeed the case for post-War Poland too. “Student politics played a far greater role in forging people’s life stories compared to the relatively minor place it occupies in the hitherto historiography of Communist Poland” (Junes 2015, XVIII).

Here at once it is important to recall the historical specifics of Eastern European societies, in which the intelligentsia (and most especially that in Russia or Poland) was treated as a separate and autonomous stratum in society, not merely as a component part of the Middle Class. Indeed, there was an association here with a particular kind of Messianism, and a feeling of responsibility for and before both nation and state. Likewise, in the course of the Second World War, the intelligentsia was the focus of particular action by the Nazis threatening the very existence of that grouping as a extermination.

Post-1945, the intelligentsias within the societies of the CEECs represented an *avant-garde* associated, not merely with intellectuals in the specific sense, but also with people of higher education more generally (Saxonberg 2001, 52–3). In the post-War period such people enjoyed a specific lifestyle, level of education and aspirations in the direction of leadership. However, in People’s Poland (the Polish People’s Republic, PRL) the situation was rather as it was in other communist states, in that an egalitarian policy was pursued, by which industrial workers,

1 For more on the traditions of student movements in Polish history, see Wankel, Charles. 1992. *Anti-Communist Student Organizations and the Polish Renewal*, New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

for example, received incomes not departing much from those achievable in professions requiring higher (tertiary) education².

Still, completion of studies in higher education did offer prospects for employment in managerial posts, with this in practice denoting easier access to many goods and services (in a context of these actually being in short supply). Equally, the recruitment process for studies in higher education – notwithstanding the authorities' efforts to improve levels of access to the children of peasants and workers – still ensured an over-representation of families within the intelligentsia when it came to people who actually became students. Furthermore, post-War Poland's social cleavages with their foundation in culture gained further reflection in asymmetrical participation where social protest was concerned. This truth made itself felt particularly when the students' protest of March 1968 is set against a kind of protests by workers that arose in Poland in December 1970.

In the same way, where youth sub-cultures were concerned, it usually did not prove possible to overcome the basic cleavage in society between the intelligentsia and the workers. At the same time, the former grouping did feature far-reaching cleavage when it came to attitudes manifested towards the system. This in part reflected the aspirations of people who had been educated, not merely the way they actually lived their lives day-to-day. For "the inevitable and progressing westernisation of intellectual life in Eastern Europe made educated people more aware of the political limitations imposed upon them" (Hamilton and Hirszo-wicz 1993, 231). This meant that the public protests mounted by young people enjoying (the specific) student status represented activity clearly and closely targeted against the system in place.

This article thus seeks to present and expound Poland's student movement as a movement within society present also at the time of the country's democratisation; along with its *modus operandi* at a breakthrough time for Poland, and an attempt made to identify different periods and stages to the activity of those involved. This all links up with matters of the main strand to anti-communist Opposition in Poland – which is to say the element that in fact passed over into government as the period of democratisation advanced.

Political opportunity structure needs to be seen as having a certain structure and structuring that can be of particular interest to those researching social

2 In the context of differences between the conditioning in Poland and Taiwan, the former can be said to exhibit far-reaching cultural homogeneity in the wake of the Second World War.

movements. The idea is actually quite broad though, ensuring that a wide variety of different components have been ascribed to it. For political opportunities can take the form of both structural factors (such as the situations as regards demography and/or the economy) and political context. For the author of this kind of concept, Peter Eisinger, matters of key import were the changes in the political system, indeed with each event or social process within that category seen as capable of changing the way the establishment thinks (McAdam 1999, 40). For his part, Sidney Tarrow pointed to three factors influencing context and political opportunities alike, i.e. the strength of the state, the main strategies pursued by the ruling elite or clique – above all in the face of social protest, and the overall structure of the regime and the potential role protest might play within that, and in connection with its transformation (Tarrow 2011, 175–76).

The chances a social movement enjoys are thus influenced by the openness of the political system, coalitions entered into, and matters of repression or non-repression. By adopting a perspective associated with the structuring of political opportunities, we emphasise the social factors acting against the social movement from the outside in, as well as their influence on the movement, and the ultimate success (or lack of success) enjoyed. It is thus factors beyond the control of the movement that are here involved and invoked.

Where political opportunities are lacking, the resources inherent or intrinsic to a movement, and even the state of deprivation that prevail, cannot suffice to ensure a mobilisation. Social movements are of course active, but not in an entirely free or unconstrained way, as they may not be separated from circumstance and context (Bloom 2014, 360). For the aforementioned Eisinger, the conditions underpinning the emergence of a movement and the overall political climate are and must be linked closely. Place and time of course exert their influence on movements (Eisinger 1973, 28).

When it came to the student movements in Poland, internal factors were the main determinants – given very small numbers of people involved, limited social scope, and the short duration of protests. And the actions taken by such movements in the period of democratisation were from the outset reactive *vis-à-vis* change in the political system. From the side of the system, a signal was sent out “to social or political actors which either encourage or discourage them to use their internal resources to form social movements” (Tarrow 1996, 54). Indeed, the actor has to react to the action of the state, as well as the changing possibilities on offer. The situation gains interpretation and chances undergo a certain filtering. The success of a movement is then decided in the face of an external, objective extension of opportunities, in association with actual organisational issues and the subjective reception of chances that present themselves.

This core concept of the structuring of political opportunities indeed attracts the interest of researchers, in line with its applicability to the studies of social movements in non-democratic states (Osa 2003, 77)³, including those present in the Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs) in the years 1988–89⁴.

There is naturally a rich and abundant literature on Poland's transformation and democratisation processes. However, this does not really extend to the matter of the movements and protests present in society in the years 1988–9, given the lesser interest researchers show in this, as compared with the matter of the *Solidarność* movement of 1980–81. Pretty much the only work in English to take account of the role of student movements in Poland's democratisation period is that by Tom Junes dating from 2015. That work presents the history of student circles and associated movements in post-War Poland, including as the old system came to an end. Significantly, that happens within the context of a single chapter also including the events of 1980–81 (Junes 2015, 231–52).

The subject matter of student circles mainly appears in the context of works of political history, the subject of analysis being entities that were subject to institutionalisation, above all in the form of *Niezależne Zrzeszenie Studentów* (NZS – the Independent Students' Association), which was the first student organisation in Poland to win its independence from the state authorities⁵. Many relevant works dealing with the matter were in fact authored by participants in the events involved. There is also plenty of information in work addressing the Polish "Opposition" as conceived broadly, with students and their autonomous organisations

3 For this issue as it concerns the social movements in South Africa, see Marsh and Kristin. 2001. "Compromise in South Africa: Class Relations, Political Opportunities, and the Contextualized 'Ripe Moment' for Resolution." in *Political Opportunities Social Movements, and Democratization*, edited by Patrick G. Coy, *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change* 23 (August): 37–68, Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing Limited. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0163-786X\(01\)80017-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0163-786X(01)80017-3). As in Poland so also in South Africa the authorities wanted to restrain international pressure by the expedient of partial political and economic liberalisation.

4 The application of this concept to the realities of the CEECs can be seen in Ekiert, Grzegorz and Jan Kubik 2017. "The Study of Protest Politics in Eastern Europe in the Search of Theory.", in *The Routledge Handbook of East European Politics*, eds. Fagan Adam, and Kopecký Petr, 197–209. New York: Routledge.

5 The work by Wankel which was published in English was concerned with the NZS in the years 1980–1981. Never published was a Master's Thesis as follows: Rymcza, Marek. 1990. *NZS jako ruch społeczny w latach 1986–1989*, MA: University of Warsaw.

treated as part of the broad “movement of movements” that *Solidarity* and the anti-communist Opposition are taken to represent.

Research on social movements first arose as an approach drawing on Max Weber’s work, or else that of Robert Michels, with the focus being on institutionalisation, as well as the division of progress into stages, as the “institutions” adjusted (or at least sought to adjust) to changes in the surroundings (Della Porta and Diani 2006, 150). For his part, Herbert Blumer invoked the work of Carl A. Dawson and Warner E. Gettys in developing a classical concept for the division into stages. This sees the time in existence of a social movement divided into the four stages of social ferment, popular excitement, formalisation (bureaucratisation) and decline (Blumer 1951, 203). Subsequently, following a series of different corrections and adjustments in line with more complex bases, the concept found application in work by various authors, with account now taken of emergence, coalescence, bureaucratisation and decline (Christiansen 2009, 15–6).

Drawing on such a concept to consider the activity of Polish student movements in the context of Poland’s democratisation, it is possible to arrive at the following division into periods:

- Emergence state.

This extends from 1984 through to the time of the breakdown in influence of the Opposition to the system in Poland, with an amendment to the Higher Education Act made, and a change of generation at universities taking place. The stage in question may also be defined in line with socially isolated contestation of the system and the maintenance of resistance structures⁶.

- Coalescence stage.

This coincides with the years 1988–9, which were of such key significance to the democratisation process. It was in the first half of 1988 that local protests in society began to break out in Poland, even as the year 1989 regarded as so symbolic in terms of status was a time of democratisation that saw negotiations take place between the state authorities and the main strand to the Opposition. These were then followed by partially-democratic parliamentary elections and the coming into being of a government dominated by politicians once forming the anti-communist Opposition. In the case of student

6 Here it would be possible to invoke a stage to the activity of social movements in Taiwan described by Ming-sho Ho as that of fermentation (in the years 1987–1992) – see Ho, Ming-sho. 2010. “Understanding the Trajectory of Social Movements in Taiwan (1980–2010)”, in: *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* 39, No. 3 (September): 5.

movements, this was a phase of mobilisation and protest that can be considered to have started with March 1988 protests.

– Institutionalisation stage⁷.

This proceeded from September 1989 onwards, as the *Niezależne Zrzeszenie Studentów* association came to be legalised, under what was then a first government led by a PM and politicians hailing from the anti-communist Opposition. This stage can be characterised as a time in which the student movement received an injection of ideology and party status, even as it underwent fragmentation from a political point of view.

– Decline stage.

This was mainly achieved via a “satellisation” of the main student organisation arising out of the anti-Communist Opposition, as well as activity of the conservative right. The process continued through from autumn 1993 and took in post-election changes in the party system in Poland.

2. The emergence stage. Socially-isolated contestation of the system and the maintenance of resistance structures

In the stage, the organisation of a social movement is only just beginning – in the circumstances of widespread dissatisfaction in society. Those contesting the situation are not yet in a position to set up an organisation of any permanence, or to engage in much collective action (Christiansen 2009, 16). However, agitators are already in action, as are those engaged in the dissemination of relevant propaganda (Della Porta and Diani 2006, 150). When it comes to Poland's student movement, a specific feature manifested itself in the way that the formal “date of birth” was 1981, even as the delegalisation of the *Niezależne Zrzeszenie Studentów* (NZS) occurred with the declaration of Martial Law in Poland in December 1981⁸; as well as in the circumstances of the succession of generations of students at tertiary-education establishments that complicates matters when it comes to continuity of activity and personnel, operating at the centre of a myth regarding the existence of a huge movement that was present in the years

7 By “institutionalisation” we may understand: “the process by which something becomes a permanent, routine, and legitimate feature in a newly democratized society. Social movements are institutionalized insofar as they are increasingly tolerated by officials, are accepted by the public, and become the modular way for a variety of societal interests to stake their claims” (Ho 2010, 10).

8 The state of Martial Law was suspended after it had been in force for a year.

1980–81. Thus the emergence stage where Opposition student movements in Poland were concerned was in parallel a form of both revitalization and *emergence*.

Whatever the social movement or protest, a matter of major significance will be previously-existing networks and organisations, given that these serve as a foundation and base for a movement, bearing in mind the stimuli to solidarity that embedded structures can offer. At the outset, a main sources of resources for a movement is offered in this way, as is an organisational context (McAdam 1999, 43–7). The network creates alternative channels of communication, allowing for a focusing of resources, limiting the risk that individualised struggles with the system will break out, and taking the place of the public sphere were participants are concerned.

An ongoing debate among researchers relates to the adequacy of the notion of civil society when it comes to the networks of contacts present in communist states, albeit enjoying independence from the then authorities. Operations founded within and upon such independent networks were connected, not only with the political context, but also with a wider one, in the face of limitations on any possibilities for society's interests to be articulated, as well as the centralisation of political power (Osa 2003, 78–9).

In this regard, conclusions arrived at by Maryjanne Osa in relation to her investigation of the Polish anti-communist Opposition show that the existence of a network and of allies needed to come before the movement itself (Osa 2003, 100). This idea indeed found its full confirmation in student circles. By the second half of the 1970s, first appearances had already been made by illegal organisations participated in by young people in academia. Workers striking *en masse* in 1980 – and gaining the backing of the intelligentsia for that – represented a new situation. “Then the existence of *Solidarity* offered all other potential pretenders (including students) new political possibilities to undermine the hegemony of dominant groups” (Wankel 1992, 2). The precedent set as the *Solidarność* trade union was legalised set in motion social activity on the part of a great many different circles in society. And following victorious protests, the *Niezależne Zrzeszenie Studentów* was actually legalised.

However, the (1981) imposition of Martial Law in Poland then denoted a return to delegalisation for independent organisations. The protests arising in the first days of Martial Law ended in failure, and the same was true for attempted student strikes in Wrocław, Gdańsk and Kraków (Zakrzewski 2020, 23). However, through to 1984 various different parts of Poland (large cities in particular) continued to witness cyclical street protests organised by Opposition circles. A peak of Opposition activity is in fact considered to have come along in 1982–3

(Tomasz Dohnalik, *in*: Kobos 2020, 31). But that gave way to a wave of passivity and apathy in society.

Where social movements are concerned, a weakened or impaired level of mobilisation represents a time for action within a larger network of movements (Della Porta and Diani 2006, 247). Indeed, Opposition-minded students often operated within Underground organisations not associated with their places of study. Opposition structures did persist at certain tertiary-education establishments in Kraków and Wrocław, as well as (partially) in the Polish capital. The NZS existed within a diversified Social Movement's Organization, but more in a symbolic manner than as an organisation of nationwide scope. Thus for example in Wrocław: "the NZS changed from being a mass organisation at the time of its legal activity through to its being a narrow circle of people linked socially" (Kopińska and Kopiński 2010, 237).

However, major and fundamental change would come to the aforesaid Political Opportunity Structure in the middle of the decade, in the face of ostensible stagnation in society and stabilisation of the political regime. An improvement of the mood in society coming along in the years 1982–85 was linked with a stabilisation of the economic situation and a decline in Opposition activism, but this failed to quell the feeling of uncertainty in Poland's ruling apparatus. "On the PRL side the sense of triumph over the Opposition evaporated in the face of fears as regards the poor ongoing situation of the country's economy" (Friszke 2006, 159–60). Indeed, the mid-decade period brought breakdown and collapse, with the prevailing mood in society now being the worst it had been at any time from the 1950s onwards. Centres engaged in analysis on behalf of the authorities forecast potential outbreaks of conflict in society (*Zespół Prognoz Wydziału Propagandy* 2002, 65–7). In the wake of consolidation of the ruling elite around General Jaruzelski (in a manner distinguishing the Polish transformation from the one in Taiwan), the Communist Party now strived to chip away at the country's international isolation. This was done in connection with information incoming from the Security Services regarding a weakening of the Opposition; and it represented a basis for change, including even an amnesty for political prisoners that was brought in in 1986.

A second element to the new Political Opportunity Structure involved ideological change in the Opposition movement itself. Within an Opposition camp diversified in the wake of the delegalisation of the "Solidarity" trade union, there had been ongoing ideological evolution and radicalisation in particular circles, with a rebirth of different ideological traditions (Jan Szczerba, *in*: Pleśkot and Spalek 2011, 130). For example, there had been a flourishing of the anti-communist fascination of many Opposition activists with the Conservative

right of the Western world, notably that operating in the UK and USA, i.e. under Margaret Thatcher on the one hand and Ronald Reagan on the other. As one of the then students recalled, in respect of a discussion on the subject of Hannah Arendt: “this type of liberal or conservative thought from the West was highly renowned at that time” (Paweł Lisicki, *in*: Pleskot and Spalek 2011, 84).

A strengthening of the anti-system social tensions was favoured by a cultural factor operating (persisting) within Polish society, i.e. Occidentalism. The post-war, socially-accepted reform of agriculture, industrialisation, nationalisation of industry and migration to urban areas⁹ had failed to limit the expectation horizons of younger generations. From the 1970s onwards, travel to the West began to happen more frequently, including summer trips made by students. A well-educated society with growing consumer aspirations was ever-less-willing to accept ideological and historical justifications for the system’s problems and failures. In addition, in the groups in society of key significance to protest (involving the youthful inhabitants of large cities), the affinity for any kind of socialist ideas was most limited. “We had a sense of Poland being doubly-backward” – a student activist recalled (Paweł Lisicki, *in*: Pleskot and Spalek 2011, 84). The most important aspect to the change in Political Opportunity Structure thus related straightforwardly to generational change.

A factor changing opportunities for social movements among students came with the Higher Education Act. In 1982, against the background of 1980–81 social activity, the Polish Parliament passed an Act democratising higher education, strengthening the role of students in establishing academic bodies, and extending the autonomy of the relevant establishments and institutions. Junes perceived a paradox in a communism that repressed student circles in the Martial Law context, but at the same time enacted legislation to liberalise higher education (Junes 2012, 395). Thanks to that, in the years 1983–85, legal student council (*samorząd*) came to offer a camouflaged form of activity for members of the NZS (Podorzecki 1988, 5–8). Many a University Rector extended *de facto* tolerance to Opposition activity within his or her given institution in higher education, even personally defending students of their institutions where these were held by the authorities following street protests (e.g. Chałaszevska-Chilczuk 2014, 137–9).

In July 1985, the ruling communist elites developed ideas and then attempts that would entail the reversal of some reform, *inter alia* through a curtailment of

9 The drastic and abrupt nature of post-War modernisation in Poland resembles Taiwan’s “economic miracle”, though it took place in the circumstances of a non-market system.

democracy at universities, as well as a verification of the political leanings represented by their staff. The Act was forced through, but the whole situation merely reinforced the mood of contestation (Zakrzewski 2020, 27)¹⁰. Large establishments engaging in tertiary education began to play host to protests against the Act, with referenda for example being called. As one participant in the then events recalled: "Pretty much everybody was involved in underground political activities. I remember that all Opposition activity intensified once the Higher Education Act had been adopted: there was legal resistance via the university student councils as well as bottom-up from Underground structures that quickly linked up with the NZS" (Andrzej Herman, *in*: Pleskot and Spałek 2011, 81).

The favourable situation at higher-education institutions on the eve of the changes – as the struggle for the *samorząd* as an expression of autonomy was being engaged in – is conveyed by a text from a Szczecin-based activist: "in the face of the overall passivity of most students, there is an active attitude from certain individuals or small groups rising up thanks to the selection process. So the passive whole has been able to choose representatives for itself who know how to behave" (*Peryskop. Pismo studentów i absolwentów szczecińskich uczelni* 1985).

A further key aspect to change linked up with demography and generations shift. A return to the universities and polytechnics came about rather dramatically. In the years 1984/5, the establishments operating in higher education were vacated by a last generation still having its own experience of the NZS operating legally. Thus new year-classes came in, and by the 1986/7 academic year they formed the majority (Junes 2012, 398–9). One student leader at the University of Warsaw recalled how tranquility at such establishments present in the years 1982–85 had its origin in Oppositionists' fears about what any protests would mean for the limited autonomy that had actually been achieved; as well as in a kind of "fixation on working class" whereby it was now an article of faith that the struggle with the authorities would ultimately be resolved by the Working Class as well as street protests (Piotr Skwieciński, *in*: Pleskot and Spałek 2011, 93–4).

There was a growing sense of the need for change, a fatigue with underground political activities; and that coincided with the generational change referred to (Kopiński and Kopińska 2010, 245–9). The young generation of rebels no longer remembered the brutal realities of World War, or even the tragic events of 1956 in Hungary and 1968 in Czechoslovakia (Kenney 2002, 4). They had also been spared some of the experiences of Opposition leaders, and even their older

10 See also Chałasewska-Chilczuk 2014, 149–150; Kopińska and Kopiński 2010, 241–245; „Ostatnie 10 lat PRL na Uniwersytecie Warszawski (kalendariusz oporu)“.

colleagues now finishing their studies. As one participant from the rebel generation said of its predecessors: “there was the trauma of the major *Solidarność* of 1982–3, when it emerged that the people would not protest, would not come to the defence. The people put up with Martial Law, many activists took offence at the people, and – I shall be mean here – limited themselves to protests at banquets at the embassies [of Western countries-R.Ch.]” (Zuzanna Dąbrowska, *in WiPnięci. Uczestnicy ruchu Wolność i Pokój o sobie*, 73).

Young people who experienced Martial Law while at primary school had been left with no illusions about the system. So that generation of students was characterised by radicalism. “We came out of High School energised. We did not feel that sense of catastrophe” – said one leader of the movement (Piotr Ciompa, *in*: Pleskot and Spałek 2011, 300)¹¹. Another NZS activist drew attention to the change in the class context in higher education, offering capital-city circles as an example. “In the first half of the 1980s, the tone was set by ‘good’ Warsaw families. But in the second half, the floor also began to be taken from kids from the ‘not-so-good’ and often non-Varsovian environments (...). So there was now something in the air that was far more linked to class” (Piotr Skwieciński, *In*: Pleskot and Spałek 2011, 109–10).

Kenney termed the years 1986–89 in the CEECs a “Carnival of Revolutions”. Many social movements participating in these events would prove hard to categorise in line with standard models, with that carnival denoting disruption of the political and social hierarchies in existence previously (Kenney 2002, 4). From autumn 1986 on, it was possible to note a revitalisation of student circles, with NZS structure reborn or newly-emerging at around 30 institutions and establishments in higher education (Kowalczyk 2008, 14). Action was mainly engaged in by reference to personal ties, with – as one activist put it – “a basis in spontaneous volunteer rganization” (Paweł Lisicki, *in*: Pleskot and Spałek 2011, 289).

In Warsaw through to spring 1989, the NZS was a conglomerate of independent groups invoking the myth of the huge rganization. Through to March 1988 there was not even a list of members, though it did prove possible to coordinate activity of the rganization at different tertiary-education establishments across the capital. On the wave of rebirth of structures operating within and between institutions in higher education, January 1987 brought a rally of delegates to Gdańsk from within that city, but also from Wrocław and Warsaw, as well as Katowice, Łódź and Radom (i.e. 21 institutions in total). This was rganizati

11 See also: Jan Szczerba, *in*: Pleskot and Spałek 2011, 101–12; Tomasz Ziemiński, *in*: Pleskot and Spałek 2011, 105.

as the Second NZS Congress and it saw new authorities elected. This started a coordinating action to rebuild structures still functioning in secret. The new generation kept up the tradition of ways of protest activism at higher-education establishments, with underground illegally press printed and distributed (and no fewer than 50 titles published under the aegis of the NZS in the second half of the 1980s). Books were also brought out, and attempts were made at interviewing people and broadcasting by opposition pirate radio. Meetings took place in this and other ways between activists and Opposition leaders (Zakrzewski 2020, 54–8).

Equally, the rganization at national level remained a loose confederation of informal groups that delegated representatives to meetings. However, a key element of integration was the presence of delegates from several cities in the course of the Summer 1987 Pilgrimage to his native Poland made by Pope John Paul II (Kowalczyk 2008, 9–14).

The NZS of that time was not based on political ideology (Tomasz Ziemiński, *in*: Pleskot and Spalek 2011, 134), and this was a matter for dispute within the rganization being built up at that time. In general, it can be stated that attitudes more distant from those of the conservative right represented the Warsaw local NZS organization and centres in the north of Poland. Activists from the capital city were responsible for the ideological pluralism present in the NZS and *per saldo* it was a model of this kind that was adopted. More-conservative views represented a contribution from centres in the south of the country (Wrocław, Kraków, Katowice and Lublin) (Kopińska and Kopiński 2010, 272–6), while it is also worth recalling the diversification of different local structures, e.g. with Warsaw seeing more sympathy for right-of-centre views thanks to activists from the Polytechnic as well as such Faculties of the University of Warsaw as Chemistry, or Economics¹². Within the ranks of the national-level authorities, 1987 had witnessed the eruption of a row over the permissibility of abortion (Chałaszevska-Chilczuk 2014, 155)¹³.

12 See Andrzej Herman, Krzysztof Czuma and Paweł Piskorski, *in*: Pleskot and Spalek 2011, 134–143. Left-wing attitudes were mainly ascribable to activists from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University Warsaw, and denoted a fascination with the democratic tradition of the Polish Socialist Party, as well as sympathy for Oppositionists who had left-wing views and arose out of dissident circles and the Communist Party.

13 See also Andrzej Papierz, *in*: Pleskot and Spalek 2011, 146.

But most activists were not interested in participating in ideological disputes, as an Opposition activist and NZS members from the Polytechnic recalled, saying: "At that time I was only interested in fighting the Commies and I cooperated equally well with factions identifying with socialist or nationalist ideas, and so I did not even try to make such categorisations. In fact that was probably a feature of most of us activists" (Cezary Karwowski, *in*: Pleskot and Spalek 2011, 118). A standard feature of the then Underground was parallel activity of the most-committed activists in several organisations at the same time. Thus, in Warsaw, over a whole decade, students played important roles in one of the most important local organisations called *Grupa Oporu Solidarni* (Resistance Group „In Solidarity“). This was known for the spectacular street protests.

However, from 1986 on a new phenomenon seemed to be being hosted. It emerged that an attraction for the younger generation was the ideological anti-communism represented by various different (usually rather small-scale) Underground parties and organisations (Jones 2015, 215). The list of groupings engaged in local-level cooperation with the NZS included the hard-line anticommunist Confederation for an Independent Poland (*Konfederacja Polski Niepodległej*) – actually the first anti-communist party established in 1979. To be added to that were "Fighting Solidarity" (*Solidarność Walcząca*), as well as the so-called Inter-Factory Workers Committee „Solidarity“ (*Międzyzakładowy Robotniczy Komitet „Solidarności“*) Polish Socialist Party-Democratic Revolution (brought together anti-communist socialists, and even some anarcho-syndicalists and Trotskyites). In each of these cases there was abundant activity on the part of young people (at least by Underground standards).

An end was again put to large-scale organisations and mass events at this stage; and this could not be comprehended by the young generation, all the more so as it was imposed by the state, but also in some way by the Opposition (Kopińska and Kopiński 2010, 271). Thus the defiant repertoire of contention the movement might involve itself in now came to include a new form (if probably harking to the actions of socialists of the 1905 Revolution). This was the very visible if flash-mob protest mounted by small (10–20 strong) groups of people that kept themselves hard to identify (and pacify) from the point of view of the then Police. This technique made it possible for even a small circle of people to engage in activity (Andrzej Papierz, *in*: Pleskot and Spalek 2011, 216–7).

The appearance of new generations at institutions of higher education was linked with one more change of conditioning of the activities of social movements. The communist system was characterised by a high level of institutionalisation of public life, with a strong desire to control over various forms public activities even indeed over the most apolitical-looking. By the standards of the

Eastern Bloc as a whole, Poland was actually a relatively “liberal” country (in the general sense of the term), but many different organisations existing in society had been subject to both bureaucratisation and centralisation. Communist Party-dependent, and subject to injections of ideology since the 1960s, they had somehow converted into interest groups. “Thus, by the mid-1980s, Poland had an “incomplete” civil society with relatively dense organisational structures both formal and informal at various levels and in all functional domains. The incompleteness flowed from a lack of autonomy and legally delineated public space guarded by enforceable rights and liberties” (Ekiert and Kubik 2014, 47).

That situation was basically the same in student circles, which had seen the 1982 reactivation (and hence activity on a legal basis) of the *Zrzeszenie Studentów Polskich* (ZSP) – the Association of Polish Students. Junes would later describe this as a “sponsored organization” (Junes 2015, 213). They engaged in activity not associated with politics, making use of the economic opportunities that a legal status made possible. Thus, for example, at the University of Warsaw, at the Faculties of key importance for the Opposition, the ZSP was in a minority among students (Robert Pastryk, *in*: Pleskot and Spalek 2011, 307).

The *de facto* result in Poland was for independent, apolitical, collective action to take the form of contestation; and in practice this could take place either via organisations associated with the Church, or else in a manner entirely independent of the adult world – i.e. by way of subcultures (Junes 2015, XXIV–V). And in fact the 1980s marked an apogee for the development of youth subcultures, with Punk playing the most major role here – even becoming a mass phenomenon and a rather durable one (that ultimately offered a canvas for the return to Polish public life of an anarchist movement ... after a break lasting 40 years). As one female Opposition activist in the second half of the 1980s recalled: “our music is *Dezerter* [which is to say one of the best-known Punk-rock bands, that adopted the strongest anti-system stance, R.Ch.]. Don't be afraid to not be afraid. We were not afraid to not be afraid, and that is why we did what we did” (Zuzanna Dąbrowska, *In WiPnięci. Uczestnicy ruchu Wolność i Pokój o sobie*, 74).

It was with Punk that experiences of Western counter-culture and new social movements made it through to Poland, and that found its reflection in protests that the student generation took part in. There was linkage with the logic of bearing witness¹⁴, as opposed to forms that had hitherto prevailed in Opposition protests, which is to say the logic of numbers or of damage. An activist of the older NZS generation has spoken of the initial consternation at things like

14 For more on this notion, see Della Porta and Diani 2006: 176–178.

sitting [sit-in, R.Ch.] given that the older hard-liners were still emphasising action of the old-fashioned kind, predicated on physical violent clashes with the security forces (Jan Szczerba, in: Pleskot and Spalek 2011, 211)¹⁵. However, as the new generation came through, the protests were enriched by events of the *happening* [performance protests with humor and irony – R.Ch.], which mocked official propaganda in its traditional, pompous form. From 1987 onwards, Wrocław had a particular role to play, with this city hosting one of the most active centres of post-Martial Law Opposition. It was also the birthplace of the illegal *Pomarańczowa Alternatywa* (“Orange Alternative”), as a main animator of anti-establishment performances. And it was precisely action of this kind that allowed the durable fear of authority to be broken (Kopiński and Kopińska 2010, 350–9).

It would not be long before further new content enriched the repertoire of contention with innovative forms of action. The Opposition had focused in on socio-economic matters, and on undermining the legitimacy of the regime. Conversely, that had meant avoidance of topics that would leave circles vulnerable to far-reaching criticism (things like matters of the military and defence). However, that changed in the rebel generation of the 1980s. Public protests, social protests, began to encompass the hitherto-eschewed problems of conscientious objector refused to perform the military services and the environment.

1984 saw protest erupt around Szczecin-based student and NZS member Marek Adamkiewicz, who declined to swear an Army oath and received an irrevocable prison sentence. It was then against that background that a *Wolność i Pokój* (“Freedom and Peace”) movement was formed, with this comprising young activists from various Opposition circles that obviously included NZS students. Indeed, activity in defence of conscientious objection to compulsory military service brought together different generations of Oppositionists, as well as NZS activists. The specific nature of the situation – and the hybrid model characterising this movement – is attested to by rows over just what was motivating Objectors. While for some there was a straightforward pacifist source of inspiration, “the main motive for support from the NZS side was recognition of the anti-Communist and anti-Soviet ‘no’ that these kinds of gesture represented” (Kopińska and Kopiński 2010, 375)¹⁶.

15 In regard to the internal discussions within the movement regarding these forms of protest, see Andrzej Papierz in: Pleskot and Spalek 2011: 226–227.

16 For more on *Wolność i Pokój* and the NZS, see: Smółka-Gnauck 2012, 50–59; Junes 2015, 224–227.

Where matters environmental were concerned, a breakthrough moment in Poland came with the 1986 accident at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in the then USSR. This generated a wave of youthful opposition participated in by student groups, who focused in on Polish plans to commence with the construction of nuclear power plants – above all at Żarnowiec close to the Baltic coast. By 1988, small environmental groups and semi-anarchist small groups of opposing counterculture youth were already engaging in street protests, and in the following year a series of related performance protests were held (Smółka-Gnauck 2012, 128–54).

The Opposition student movement encompassing certain elements of the younger generation was thus able to serve as a unique meeting place for youth counter-culture, with its anti-political aspect coming together with anti-communist ideology, and with colorful performance protests seeking to dispense with communist propaganda for example encountering young activists' participation in commemorations of historical anniversaries actually no less pompous than those of different worlds of politics under the aegis of the communist state. Those studying student movements are ever wont to note how new social movements refer to the defence of the autonomy of the individual, offer up praise for decentralisation, while at the same time seeking a rejection of traditional politics and its associated institutions. In Poland, the repertoire of actions – and in part the objectives – dear to the hearts of new social movements were associated with appeals for parliamentary democracy and an independent nation-state.

Junes came up with the concept of the “classical” student movement, which would thus depart from the model of new social movements or in society, or indeed from the social movements active in Poland post-1989. The “classical” student movement featuring a generational bond would undergo modification as one generation follows another at an institution of higher education. Under the realities of a non-democratic state, a movement of this kind may be openly political, or may camouflage its political goals beneath an apolitical surface (Junes 2012, 390–1).

3. Coalescence stage. Mobilisation and protest

A further stage in a social movement is the time at which generalized discontent assumes more concrete form, as manifested widely thanks to collectivisation and coordination. It is at this point that constant leadership becomes more discernible, and action strategies appear. This finds its reflection in demonstrations, for example; with some of them attracting mass participation (Christiansen 2009, 17–8).

A key stage to the activity of the student movement – at which it achieved peak social mobilisation capacity – brought further change in the structure of political opportunities. As early as in 1986, circles in the gray area between the authorities and the main Opposition were beginning to feature enigmatic ideas regarding an anti-crisis pact that would denote enhancement and advancement of civil liberties and legalisation of elements of the Opposition in exchange for shared responsibility where economic reform was concerned. In autumn 1987, the state authorities held a referendum, again in the search for legitimisation *vis-à-vis* accelerated economic reform of a liberal character. The low turnout and result not suggesting unequivocal support for unpopular decisions only made plain the weakness of the governing communist elites. And that paved the way for at first informal and then later formal and publicised negotiations between the rulers and the mainstream Opposition.

An aspect of a democratisation process is the establishment of networks of independent social organisations and institutions (Tilly 2019, 139); and the Polish case offers full confirmation of that. The amnesty was followed by actions to reveal and encourage public awareness of what were formally illegal commissions of the *Solidarność* trade union [in the model of Industrial union-R.Ch.] at the level of company. The disclosure, even in accordance with the then law, denoted the authorities' consent to legal activity through to the time when the court threw out the motion concerning legalisation. By the beginning of 1988, the authorities were estimating that the durable circles of Opposition activists now extended to some 16–17,000 people, with around 40–50 active organisations beyond the main strand to the Opposition. The development of the NZS had also been noted (*Zespół Prognoz Wydziału Propagandy* 2002, 74–7).

An element to the change of structuring was once again a matter of demography. Junes used the term *generacja'89* (89' Generation), by that understanding the last PRL generation of students, of which a majority actually completed their studies after the system had fallen (Junes 2015, 249). However, a more-precise term would involve *generacja'88*, for in that case the student movement reach the highest intensity of mobilization, even as 1989 would bring a dramatic and abrupt breakdown of all that, as the transformation was not a revolution it might ascribe to itself, being rather a work of an earlier generation of political Opposition. For, as Junes notes, 1989 meant, not only an end for communism, but also an end for “student politics” (Junes 2015, 253). Thus students being the social basis for mobilization of the years 1985–87 completed their studies in 1988–90, while younger generations formed the basis for a new, still-wider mobilisation.

From spring 1988 onwards there was what participants themselves termed “an NZS counter-offensive” whose symbolic start came in March, in Warsaw

and several other cities; and marked the anniversary of the 1968 student protest. Mobilisation of the movement was facilitated by a growing sense of own power in student circles. That linked up with an awareness that activity being undertaken was no longer being suppressed (Andrzej Szozda, *in*: Pleskot and Spalek 2011; Pawel Lisicki, *in*: Pleskot and Spalek 2011, 312). Furthermore, at the level of each individual institution in higher education it had also become perceptible that the Communist Party and its allied student organisations were weak, where these were supposed to offer backup to the authorities (Witold Przytock, *in*: Pleskot and Spalek 2011, 103).

Indeed, a sense of strength and empowerment combined with a new strategy on the part of the *Solidarność* trade union to inspire overt activity in the light of a large amount of discussion that had first been engaged in. "In 1988, everything was overt. People in action could be seen, and they were not afraid", as one Opposition student activist recalled (Andrzej Herman, *in*: Pleskot and Spalek 2011, 245). So at universities and colleges real-life NZS activity was commenced with. Information boards went up, recruitment of new members began to take place in the open, and Opposition press also made its appearance (Zakrzewski 2020, 32). So it was that in March, 900 people at the University of Warsaw signed up to a now-visible NZS („*Ostatnie 10 lat PRL na Uniwersytecie Warszawski (kalendarium oporu)*").

The areas belonging to establishments active in higher education in fact enjoyed (still enjoys) a special legal status that was well symbolised in the case of Warsaw, with it thus being highly symbolic when youthful Oppositionists departed for the world outside the orbit of the University – as when an activist of the illegal Polish Socialist Party began selling Opposition literature (books and periodicals) outside the University gates in spring 1988. The person in that way qualified for activity off the University site from the legal point of view (Andrzej Szozda, *in*: Pleskot and Spalek 2011, 352).

The then mobilisation extended beyond the largest cities, in which the sense of security and a direct link with the main current of the Opposition had always been greater. Thus from 1988, the NZS commenced with activity in somewhat smaller centres, not least Białystok (Kietliński 2014, 15–16) and Opole (Patelski, 2010, 261–5). As time passed, spring 1988 became – in the main urban centres in particular – a time of permanent activity both on-site and off-site. In the years 1988–89, student activists in Warsaw proved capable of organising several manifestations each week. The authorities reacted in various ways, but they no longer tried to disperse each and every protest (Tomasz Ziemiński, *in*: Pleskot and Spalek 2011, 193).

In April 1988, much to the surprise of both the authorities and the Opposition, workers' strikes began in several cities. The extent and duration proved to be limited, but they were associated with other new phenomena. The strike organisers and their social base were young workers from the generation of 20- to 30-year-olds, i.e. people who were not leaders of the 1980 strikes, or else did not take part in them at all. Worker protests resonated with student activists. On May 8th, activists from different parts of the country met on a pilgrimage in Częstochowa, and took a decision to coordinate protests. On May 10th, attempted actions were mounted in 10–20 academic centres across Poland (Zakrzewski 2020, 32). *Solidarity* activities lasted 10+ days, comprised sit-down strikes or boycotts of lectures, as well as leaflet-distribution sessions.

At this time, student slogans of protest were of a dichotomous nature. They expressed solidarity with striking workers in general, though also put forward proposals solely related to the situation at establishments of higher education. Wrocław was most active, and it was there that one-day sit-down strikes took place – at the University and the Polytechnic, but in fact with six institutions protesting, more than 1000 individuals (Kopińska and Kopiński 2010, 283–91). Things were similar in Gdańsk, with its particular symbolic significance for the Opposition. It was there that several hundred people went on strike at the two key institutions. After four days, these protests died down, this reflecting a threat of disciplinary liability being imposed, as well as violent pacification of strikes. A feeling of isolation was also being experienced, and there seemed only poor prospects for the protest to grow wider (Beger 2007, 27–8)¹⁷. Warsaw meanwhile witnessed a one-day strike and manifestations at both the University and the Polytechnic (today's University of Technology) (Chałaszevska-Chilczuk 2014, 160–1).

Different actions in support of the strikers were resorted to in Szczecin, Katowice, Toruń, Kraków, and the Catholic University of Lublin (*KUL*). In the summer of 1988 there was another limited wave of workers' strikes, though the holiday-season circumstances ensured that there was only the odd case of support being extended by protesting students. Warsaw was the site of short strikes and protests at the end of August (Marek Gessel, *in*: Pleskot and Spałek 2011, 375). The students were the only group in society coming out in support of the workers' protests. However, the factor of solidarity between generations made itself apparent (Jones 2012, 399). "The fact that the 1988 strikes were among

17 Also read the stories related by Kwidziński, Wojciech, *in*: Książek 2019; Krawczyk, Dariusz, *in*: Książek 2019; Pietkiewicz, Agnieszka, *in*: Książek 2019.

our peers working in factories was not by chance. They very often came out against their own *Komisja Zakładowa* [Solidarity Trade Union Commissions in companies-R.Ch.]. Of course, nobody wants to remember that now (...). They were people of the same age – the ones who came out on to the streets and on strike. It was a generational identity” (Zuzanna Dąbrowska, in *WiPnięci. Uczestnicy ruchu Wolność i Pokój o sobie*, 73).

Autumn 1988 saw confirmation offered regarding the activation of some students – especially visible in terms of street protests. More than once these made their presence felt under the NZS banner, and it was that time that brought the last wave of brutal repression of street protests (Kurpierz 2012, 309–18). Opposition circles of students at that time secured their first success tangible as regards academia. In October 1988, there was a University of Warsaw mass boycott mounted by students in regard to Military Studies¹⁸, and – contrary to the expectations of those behind the protest – this spread out across the whole country, lasted through to mid-November, continued in spring, and brought partial success in the form of a liberalisation of the rules on the training (Zakrzewski 2020, 33).

In January 1989, *Niezależne Zrzeszenie Studentów* had a chance to present itself in a fairly untypical way to “an audience” around the country, on TV, when members from Warsaw engaged in polemics in the context of a transmitted public meeting called at the Central Committee of Polish United Workers Party building, in the presence of one of the leaders of the ruling party. Given that this individual was Leszek Miller, it can be noted that here was somebody who would go on (from 2001) to be Prime Minister of Poland (Piotr Skwieciński 2011, in: Pleskot and Spałek, 355).

The beginning of Poland's political-breakthrough year of 1989 brought a further escalation of protests by a student movement encouraged by judicial rejection of the registration of the NZS. In general, the January-March period featured a growth of strikes and protests in Poland (Dudek 2014, 243). The February 17th and 24th protests in Kraków were dominated by young people... and they ended with the violent riots and protesters clashes with the *Milicja* witnessed for some years. The mood can gathered when it is realised that a rebellious crowd was actually able to surround a building in which the Minister of National Education

18 At that time in Poland students did a period of military service shorter than that applying to men in general. However, in the last years of their academic studies they were required to participate in special classes relating to defence that were given by officers of the professional armed forces.

was paying a visit (Gałaszewska-Chilczuk 2014, 177). Meanwhile, in Warsaw, a feeling of empowerment combined with identification of the University campus as a place inaccessible to the apparatus of repressive violence to give rise to a situation in which a *Milicja* patrol probably finding itself on the site by chance came to find itself “held” (even “apprehended”) by a crowd of students¹⁹ (Marek Gessel, *in*: Pleskot and Spalek 2011, 385).

The Opposition student movement had come through its period of growth. In autumn 1988 there were around 20,000 members studying at over 70 different institutions of higher education, with more than 100 various publications issued (Anusz 2000, 88–90). That September brought the 3rd NZS Congress in Gdańsk, and the formal decision taken there to overt activities and structures. Declared aims at this point were academic autonomy, reform in respect of military training, provide the social protection for students, and postulates regarding party pluralism. In these connections, an application was submitted formally to court, to have the NZS as it operated on a nationwide basis legalised. In October, that was associated with actions taken at universities, etc. to ensure that information on the NZS was supplied. Sign-ups were also possible, indeed encouraged, in this campaign, with hundreds of new members gained in this way (Gałaszewska-Chilczuk 2014, 165–9).

At the same time, even as the highest intensity of mobilization was reached, it became clear that there were signs of an upcoming demobilisation and diversification of Social Movement Organization. In the first place, there were many student activists readily enough aware that society as a whole did not see university-specific experience of the intelligentsia milieu as anything particularly representative. A participant in Gdańsk-based activity showing solidarity with the workers recalled that “the atmosphere of the 1988 strikes was completely different from that of August 1980. Martial Law and the time that followed had extinguished hope in many Poles that something might ever change. That was especially visible as you travelled around the Shipyard area, with people on trams looking out dispassionately on workers out there that were protesting” (Michał Skwarło, *in*: Książek 2019).

Furthermore, as they paid visits to the south of Poland, emissaries of student circles came away with the feeling that miners did not trust them. The atmosphere was tangibly different out in the provinces (Wojciech Świdnicki, *in*: Pleskot and Spalek 2011, 378). A Kraków activist, summing things up in the wake of the 1988 strikes, looked at the declining interest in resistance on the part of

19 *Milicja* was the name of the Polish National Police in communist period.

society, and thus claimed that the ruling Communists: "had already won by that time, given that there was a considerable decline in the level of public engagement, with a sense of hopelessness beginning to hold sway" (Tomasz Dohnalik, *in*: Kobos 2020, 31). This could be set against the calling felt by leaders in the Opposition as a whole, in the face of the weakness of support for workers' strikes (Piotr Ciompa, *in*: Pleskot and Spalek 2011, 387).

Away from Wrocław, a second factor was the limited extent and duration of backing students were able to offer. In and of themselves, the strikes were more a manifestation of attitude than a form of pressure applied (Kopińska and Kopiński 2010, 284). Protesters at the University of Warsaw remembered the atmosphere of the "picnic" or "carnival" – with lack of real discipline a universal feature (Paweł Piskorski, *in*: Pleskot and Spalek 2011, 358; Marek Gessel, *in*: Pleskot and Spalek 2011, 360–2; Robert Pastryk, *in*: Pleskot and Spalek 2011, 363). A student of the then Gdańsk Polytechnic observed at the time that the strike had ended in the face of a lack of the necessary emotions and determination (Maciej Ławryniuk, *in*: Książek 2019).

A third factor signalling a crisis for the movement involved the emergence of internal differences among activists. In Warsaw there were disputes over the end of protests in May, as well as the limits of cooperation with other Opposition entities (Jacek Rybak, *in*: Pleskot and Spalek 2011, 369–70). The NZS Congress was not participated in by representatives of higher-education institutions in Kraków, Katowice and Bydgoszcz (Zakrzewski 2020, 34). Furthermore, there was constant tension between the sense of affiliation with the Opposition and students interests oriented agenda of the NZS.

Indeed, participants at the then rally who hailed from Wrocław sought to reduce the role of their organisation to functions of a typical trade-union type, so argument broke out over whether proposals of a more generally social nature should even be put forward. A compromise was entered into, but it was true to say that the subject matter in the programme declaration was dominated by matters of higher education (*Program NZS uchwalony na III KZD w Gdańsku* 2000, 208–10).

Democratisation extended civil liberties, while also leading the government to enter into relationships with those who had protested against it (Tilly 2019, 138). The fears expressed and made manifest by the rulers of Poland were not motivated by the strength of the Opposition, but rather by a loss of control over a weakening economy. It was for this reason that, as they made contact with Opposition leaders, they were not seeking the annihilation of opponents as had earlier been the case (Saxonberg 2001, 7). There was thus a forging of contacts between an Opposition stronger than those in other countries of the region, and state

leaders who were more pragmatic than elsewhere. The ruling part, as it sought to choose between different scenarios for its reaction to Opposition activity – ranging from “full exclusion”, via “total procedural integration” and “formal inclusion” through to “informal co-optation” (Junes 2015, 222–4) decided on an integration-based scenario. In February 1989, following several months of informal negotiations, an official start was made to the famous “Round Table” talks. These negotiations between state authorities and the Opposition (unprecedented anywhere in the Soviet Bloc) were of course able to define the opportunities for political activity in a new way.

The very idea that a weakening Communist Party would be negotiated with provoked internal division in the anti-Communist Opposition. The main strand, of course assembled around *Solidarity* leader Lech Wałęsa and his Citizens’ Committee Movement (*Komitety Obywatelskie*), was ready to bear the idea of compromise in mind, and was thus opposed by a diverse and fragmented “opposition within an opposition” refusing to accept this possibility. Alongside the historical leadership of *Solidarność* elected to that role in 1981 and opposing Wałęsa in person and the way he had usurped the leading role, there were also opposing groups within which a key role was played by a young and radical generation of activists born in the 1960s. To be mentioned here are “Fighting Solidarity” (*Solidarność Walcząca*), the PPS Democratic Revolution options and various circles made up of anarchists. Internal “discussions” and divisions came about, *inter alia* in the “Fighting Youth Federation” (*Federacja Młodzieży Walczącej*) of importance to High School pupils; as and when members was invited on to the Team dealing with youth matters at the “Round Table”. The effect of that would be organisational atrophy (Noszczak 2012, 406–10).

The student movement meanwhile had to face up to what might be termed the problem of maintaining a bargaining constellation of options favourable to the movement (McAdam 1999, 44). From the moment of the November refusals to register nothing changed – even though, carried away by the wave of liberalisation, the communist authorities had actually legalised organisations close to the Catholic Church. The matter of the legality of the NZS even began to be taken up at the level of the highest (Communist) Party authorities. The leaders of the movement were disappointed by the attitude Opposition leaders displayed towards the legalisation.

The Fourth Congress of the NZS commencing on April 22nd 1989 then made the scale of the movement’s problems clear, with deep internal divisions on show when it came to the organisational model for the upcoming institutionalisation, as well as the lack of any joint strategy by which changes ongoing in the state might be reacted to. The main NZS centres – of Warsaw, Gdańsk, Wrocław and

Poznań – opted for the model of the one, nationwide association, even as others (with Lublin at their head) went for a choice receiving the support of one in four delegates whereby there would be independent association at the levels of given establishments in higher education (Zakrzewska 2020, 37). The weeks prior to the gathering had been full of discussions on what attitude or stance should be taken to the “Round Table” talks. There was a meeting with Lech Wałęsa on that basis.

Ultimately, the national leadership of the NZS voted by a 9-6 majority for participation in the negotiations. Thus, six members of the national or local authorities of the movement found places for themselves in sub-teams of the Round Table talks. However, some measure of the weakness of the movement's bargaining position was made plain when no NZS representative obtained an invitation to the main, official representation of the Opposition Committee at the negotiations. Nevertheless, the talks had a special team dealing with youth affairs, and one of the subjects of discussion (and of splits) was the re-legalisation of the NZS.

Equally, while representatives of the ruling camp wanted a broad discussion on social issues and matters of the upbringing of children and young people, NZS representatives focused their attention on the legalisation issue (Gałaszewska-Chilczuk 2014, 175–6). The negotiations failed to resolve issues of military training, the prospect of a new Higher Education Act has been postponed to the future.

In the event, the NZS authorities chose not to sign up to the “Round Table” agreement. Parallel, in spring, the epigones of street protests continued their activities. The “Carnival of Revolution” still ongoing, and with students and student-related circles playing a prominent role in that, via a range of street performances and protests up to and including violent street riots outside the Consulate of the Soviet Union in Kraków. Thus the spring of 1989 was still seeing the NZS enjoying growing popularity among students in tertiary education, *inter alia* thanks to postulates seeking to fight against political indoctrination lectures, military training and the enforced learning of Russian (Gałaszewska-Chilczuk 2014, 171–81; Kopińska and Kopiński 2010, 312, 368–70; Polak 2007).

On April 20th there was a march in Warsaw under slogans relating to legalisation, and that was followed almost immediately by one of the largest-ever student strikes. However, a feature here was the small number of people – and large number of establishments – taking part. Maybe the strength of these circles was made clear, but its unity was not (Kopińska and Kopiński 2010, 327). A Nationwide Strike Committee was established in the May of 1989, with strikes and protests lasted between 23rd and 31st of the month, albeit with peak activity achieved

between 24th and 26th. At that point, it took in 44 establishments in higher education, though internal opponents of the NZS leadership from the smaller cities chose not to take part (Zakrzewski 2020, 38; Gałaszewska-Chilczuk, 184–90).

In Warsaw, this strike encompassed the Polytechnic and the University. And a notable feature was that the sit-down strike of several hundred people at the University of Warsaw was very much able to continue thanks to the commitment shown by members of radical Opposition parties critical of the “Round Table”. In Wrocław, the proposal that legalisation should take place gained the support, not only of that city’s numerous radicals acting against the system, workplace-level Committees of *Solidarność* and a large number of academics, but also of the ZSP and the *Stronnictwo Demokratyczne* (Democratic Alliance pro-communist ‘satellite’ party) coalition against the Party.

In contrast, in Poland’s second city of Łódź – as firmly associated with the textile industry and (thus) with more limited sympathy for the Opposition, NZS activists launched a sit-down strike in one building of Łódź University, fully aware that the level of public interest in their action was vanishingly small. There were just over 100 participants, and hence far fewer than could be seen in the country’s other large academic centres; but a kind of compensation for that came with the more-extreme measure adopted, i.e. a hunger strike (Wojtczak 2009, 113–20).

A key issue for movements erupting in society relates to relationships with external sponsors whose level of extended support is likely to correspond with expectancy regarding achievement of their own goals (McAdam 1999, 55–6). In this case, protesting students came under strong pressure from mainstream Opposition leaders to limit their protests and call off the strikes (Gałaszewska-Chilczuk 2014, 177; Kopińska and Kopiński 2010, 315).

Beyond that, the lack of a strategy for the movement in the face of renewed political opportunity structure made itself felt as early as at the time of the election campaign. The NZS did indeed call upon people to support candidates of the anti-communist Opposition, but they at the same time undermined that call by stressing the semi-democratic character of the election. That meant decisions to participate or not being left up to individual members of the organisation (Zakrzewski 2020, 37). The participation of NZS activists in the election campaign was decentralized.

The student movement did play its part in the wave of fluctuating social protests in the autumn of 1988 and spring of 1989. The extent was limited, but the role as regards political negotiations being entered into was a stimulatory one. However, the role was not autonomous, even if it did truly concern an *avant-garde* for the Opposition. In the years 1980–81, the NZS had been just one part of a

movement, but by 1988–89 it was in the vanguard of change. The significance of protests for the democratisation process was made clear in strengthening of bargaining power of the Opposition *as a whole when it came to negotiating* with the authorities that was now possible. Analyses authored by the Security Services confirmed how the strikes (including of an “academic” nature) increased the Opposition's strength (Dudek 2014, 245).

In a circumstance of conflict between the state and a social movement, a key aspect of analysis relates to whether that given movement is in any way able to limit the choice of action available to the state (Bloom 2014, 361). In our case, the student movement proved able to convince those needing to be convinced that there was now no alternative but to enter into negotiations. However, on the downside, the movement's leaders were not able to identifying the political opportunity the shifted structuring offered; with a consequent threat arising to the movement and the activists of the young generation.

Indeed, the disorientation groups of leaders experienced can be exemplified by episodes from early 1989 when – at an open meeting with Lech Wałęsa called in Wrocław – there was a clear contrast between the enthusiasm shown by the audience for the leaders of *Solidarność* and the views manifested by leaders of the NZS locally (Kopińska and Kopiński 2010, 304–8). A similar situation applied in Warsaw (Kaliski 2016, 330).

Though partially democratic, the election of June 4th 1989 delivered results that generated widespread consternation. They were received as a *de facto* referendum on the governments of the (Polish United Workers') Party, and they made it clear that the latter's leaders had lost any legitimacy they might conceivably have had. While the turnout was not as high as had been expected, and while leaders of the Party actually obtained relatively good results, the clear winner overall here was the Opposition, and further change could be held back. While it was true that the leader of the Polish People's Republic up to that time – General Wojciech Jaruzelski – now became President of Poland, the government that came into being in September was the first with a non-communist Prime Minister who for many years was a well-known anti-communist opposition activist.

The old divisions within anti-communist circles then underwent modification, with those that had always contested the concept of the “Round Table” coming to be marginalised rather rapidly. And in the months following on from the election, the issue of the independent student movement ceased to provoke any more major interest. Many of its activists developed the feeling that they had been treated instrumentally by the Opposition, even as they had actually represented that movement's vigorous and most active part. And that impression

was only deepened by the lack of any registration in a period of several months following on from June 4th.

4. The institutionalisation stage. The ideologization of social movement and entryism into student movement, as well as political fragmentation

At this stage, movements in society achieve a high level of organisation, coordinate strategies, and give rise to bureaucracy. "Social movements in this stage can no longer just rely on mass rallies or inspirational leaders to progress towards their goals and build constituencies; they must rely on trained staff to carry out the functions of organizations" (Christiansen 2009, 18). They now have ongoing, facilitated relationship with political elites, even as formalisation intensifies problems with continuing activists' emotion work that collective action demands. The student movement in Poland coordinated actions between one institution and another, locally and nationally. In this way, durable and stable elites were created, and began to formalize organizations at each level.

However, it is here possible to refer to delayed progress with bureaucratisation, i.e. to a peak of development of the student movement that preceded a process of bureaucratisation held up by both legalisation issues and the continuation of street-protest and strike-related strategies, notwithstanding changes in the political opportunity structure in Poland.

The formation of a government precedent-setting in terms of its composition, which heralded far-reaching reform of both state and economy represented consequences of the election result of June 1989. The political opportunity underwent further qualitative change at this point. Social movements have a significant role to play in the democratisation process – for example as destabilisation of a regime takes place. The experiences of the CEECs show how one sign of democratisation is a weakening of civil society and the appearance of new political actors (Della Porta and Diani 2006, 246–7).

Faced with an abrupt weakening of their ability to mobilise, social movements operating within a network of such movements may face a problem with the loyalty of their own elites. "Leadership splits during downturns in mobilization, and the resultant processes of disintegration and realignment cause others to disappear. In the case of SMOs [Social Movement Organizations], whose life expectancy is short and whose aims are limited, an interest in the organization's continuing existence may not even develop. In other words, their members' first loyalty continues to be to the movement, and the organization is simply seen as a temporary instrument for intervention" (Della Porta and Diani 2006, 151). "For

the more radical students, the NZS ceased to be a point of reference, with moderate leaders switched political affiliation from NZS to Citizens' Committees" (Piotr Ciompa, *in*: Pleskot and Spalek 2011, 151).

However, it was not just a case of some leaders being co-opted into the new system; as there was also in fact a disappearance of activity through a large part of the membership base. "The NZS started to experience a rapid decline in significance, as the appearing *Solidarity* movement began to absorb students, with the NZS circumvented" (Piotr Skwieciński, *in*: Pleskot and Spalek 2011, 386). Registered at last in September 1989, the NZS became for a short time one of the largest organisations active within Polish society, with 80,000 members as of 1990, even as only a couple of hundred activists manifested any activity (Paweł Piskorski, *in*: Pleskot and Spalek 2011, 312). And as *generacja'88* left University after its five years of study, the numbers of NZS members began to decline dramatically.

The reasons for the student movements to become strong (lying mainly in a lack of legality and of possibilities for collective interests to be articulated) disappeared. Registration issues turned the NZS in the direction of radicalism, and this did not make it any easier to recruit new members. Younger members did not identify with the old conflicts divided the movement's elite, maturing a few years earlier. Support at the level of the individual universities and polytechnics emerged as passive (Kopińska and Kopiński 2010, 332). From autumn 1989 onwards, the elite of the movement was involved in an ongoing search for a remedy to the previous phase in existence, not drawing conclusions from the changed political opportunity structure.

Other entities in the anti-communist Opposition, representing a basis for the network of independent movements of the 1980s, also emerged as actors not recognising the structure now in place. Following its re-legalisation, the *Solidarity* trade union managed to gain for itself a membership base less than one-seventh the size of that from the years 1980–1981. A natural reservoir of membership for the NZS, the organisation known as *Federacja Młodzieży Walczącej* (the Federation of Fighting Youth) was paralysed by internal conflicts, not building any interest among new political actors and practically ceasing to exist in summer 1990 (Noszczak 2012, 409). Critical of the "Round Table", the radicals of the underground movement (like Fighting Solidarity or the Polish Socialist Party) ended up with no role whatever to play²⁰.

20 Paradoxically, the structure was better recognised by anarchist and punk circles, which did not wish to go into the new system, but engaged in anti-fascist activity (in the face of abrupt and dramatic development of the extreme right at the level of sub-cultures and

The NZS did not resolve the dilemma of dual functions in the life of the student/social self-organisation in defence of interests plus political organisation forming part of the anti-communist network. Formal organisations prevail in the postcommunist democracies, with examples being NGOs, unions and professional groupings (Ekiert and Kubik 2014, 51). The last-generation elites of the student movement experienced no problems with adjusting to operate as corporate associations in the circumstances of the new chance to act legally. “It became necessary to learn how to operate in line with a new formula, within completely legal structures, albeit ones burdened by a host of different formalisms” (Tomasz Ziemiński, *in*: Pleskot and Spalek, 414). As other leaders recalled: “I had a feeling that the time of tensions, emotions and illegality, and indeed the fun associated with that, were coming to an end. The time had now come for organisational work... and that was no place for me” (Robert Pastryk, *in*: Pleskot and Spalek 407).

A last success of the NZS in the academic field was a further November 1989 boycott of compulsory military trainings for students that in fact signalled an end for that way of training. Nevertheless, a decline of political subjectivity of the movement came with its dissatisfaction with the way the Ministry authorised in matters of education failed to treat it appropriately as work was being done on a new Higher Education Act (in 1990). The results included an intellectual debate set against the background of an attempt to introduce tuition fees, as well as the representation of students on the various bodies run by establishments active in higher education (Patelski 2010, 313–29). The NZS entered into an open rivalry with the ZSP at tertiary-education institutions, and it sought to inherit a larger share of the assets following on from organisations legal even in the PRL era. As one of the leaders of the NZS in Warsaw noted, the ZSP persisted by being active in mediation at work and the rendering of travel-agency services, while the NZS so lacked instrumentation that it had to stick with “activity of an ideological and historical nature” (political memory; *działalność ideowo-historyczna*) (Paweł Piskorski, *in*: Pleskot and Spalek 2011, 425)²¹.

A further irony of this story is that many former activists of the ZSP during the time in existence of Polish People’s Republic became influential politicians of left-wing parties post-1989. Meanwhile, NZS-ZSP differences and struggle for

small political parties at least), as well union activity to some extent, the aim being to defend workers’ interests in an economy heading into a process of the rapid transition to capitalism.

21 See also: Patelski 2010, 319–320; Kietliński 2014, 21–22.

hegemony at universities and polytechnics were resolved by turnover of the generations, as well as a decline in membership affecting both, with bodies of the *samorząd* type also taking on quite a lot of the functions of student associations (Kopińska and Kopiński 2010, 403).

In parallel, the NZS and circles close to it continued to try and engage in activity using old protest form. Autumn and winter 1989 brought series of street riots outside Consulates of the USSR, with attempts also made to occupy the buildings of a PZPR that was now at the end of its time in existence. The symbol of the "end of an era" was the way in which a post-*Solidarity* government deployed units of the *Milicja* against young radicals (Noszczak 2012, 409). The period also saw the NZS and others organise events to show solidarity with the struggles other nations were now engaging in against their own communist governments. In Spring 1989, as parties in Poland were meeting the Round Table, there was a clear and noticeable fall in the level of public interest in different performance protests in public space – the reason seemingly being the end that had been put to *Milicja* options for curbing or counteracting what was happening (Kopińska 2010, 356). Street protests and activity more generally were starting to disappear altogether by 1990.

In a new reality in which democracy was institutionalising and political pluralism in Poland was guaranteed, the NZS ceased to be an non-ideological organisation. And it was in fact an ideologization and a turn to the right that ensued in the Association. Thus, the 7th Congress held in the March of 1991 spoke up for both the free market and Christian values (Anusz 2000, 131), denoting clearly enough that a liberal-conservative identity had been taken on, in parallel with the turn also taken by the greater part of the Opposition elite of the older generation – as early as in the mid-1980s. The paradoxical nature of the situation the organisation was now in was made manifest in the disintegration ongoing in parallel to the ideologization, but not in a manner symmetrical with the main division in post-*Solidarność* circles.

The last act of political unity the *Solidarity* movement proved able to engage in was the local-election campaign of May 1990, which in fact represented the first completely free and democratic elections in Poland. Riven with internal disputes against this background, the NZS did not go into these elections as a defined entity. Rather there were some regions in which members campaigned via the post-*Solidarity* (and ultimately victorious) lists of *Komitety Obywatelskie* candidates (Kopińska and Kopiński 2010, 413–21; Patelski 2010, 329).

And shortly thereafter a fissure would open up dramatically within the main current of the old anti-communist Opposition. The two factions and electoral blocks that now took the stage were the one supporting Prime Minister

Mazowiecki (in which liberal-democrat circles played a leading role), as well as the one crystallising around *Solidarność* leader Lech Wałęsa, that criticized the political and economic reforms that were underway – as not dynamic enough. This coalition first and foremost attracted people (including politicians) on the right of politics. Paradoxical as it might now seem, the foundation stone of the Wałęsa electoral block was the party led by Jarosław Kaczyński going by the name of *Porozumienie Centrum* (Centre Agreement), which was ready to define itself as Christian-Democrat, and was in particular strongly anti-communist.

Even more remarkably, perhaps, Wałęsa was also backed by what was then a small party called *Kongres Liberalno-Demokratyczny* (Liberal-Democratic Congress) – which was notable for the involvement within it of Donald Tusk. What Poles insist(ed) on calling “Liberals” (though this has little to do with British or American associations with the term) were involved here, and offered a radically pro-capitalist viewpoint invoking concepts from Hayek and Friedman. The Liberal Democratic Congress has become associated with the family of Christian-Democratic and conservative parties from Western Europe, and not with the Liberal International.

At the outset these parties were able to cooperate, and – following the 1991 Parliamentary Elections, the “Liberal-Democratic Congress” won for itself the Prime Ministerial post in a post-*Solidarity*, right-of-centre coalition government. However, while the NZS had overcome its internal disputes to come out in favour of Lech Wałęsa’s (successful) Presidential bid; and thus offered confirmation of its turn to the right, it rapidly became a venue for *rivalry* between *PC* and *KL-D* – which continued through to 1993. Ultimately it was the aforementioned “Liberal” side that prevailed, as one leader after the other within the movement was a member of *Kongres* (Kopińska and Kopiński 2010, 403).

5. The decline stage

A movement’s decline might be linked with the consequences of repression by the state, co-optation, actual success with activity and the achievement of goals, or ultimate failure. In the face of these fates for the student movement, an opinion hitting the nail on the head would seem to be the one that: “not all social movements end in defeat through repression or co-optation; some decline because they are successful” (Christiansen 2009, 19–20). However, the decline of Poland’s student movement – faced with the various fates listed above – would seem to have departed partially from the categorization adopted in the model. It is possible to speak of a fragmentation of co-optation, given that many of the movement’s members (including its elite) became integrated into the new

system, above all the political parties and structures of the state administration (up to and including its Special Services).

Still, it cannot be said that the organisation as a whole experienced full co-optation. But anyway, the role in public life weakened, even as its popularity at institutions of higher education also did. There was a fragmented co-optation, i.e. many members, including the elite of the movement, were integrated into the new system, primarily political parties and state bureaucracy (as well as secret services). However, the NZS was not fully co-opted, its role in public life weakened, as did its popularity at universities. After the institutionalization process, this association did not become a participant in the party system, unlike numerous non-party organizations, such as the trade union "Solidarność", which established its own committee in parliamentary elections, and as legal until 1989, the post-communist federation of trade unions and the ZSP, which joined composition of electoral coalitions under the aegis of the post-communist social democratic party.

Therefore, in the case of the NZS it is more possible to refer to the co-optation of individuals then, but not the community as a whole. The paradox here lay in the fact that the lack of full integration was associated with the maintaining of anti-communist radicalisation of the movement following democratisation of the system, with a view lingering on among some younger-generation right-wing activists that this was merely a façade democracy in Poland as a state that was actually a continuation of People's Republic of Poland.

Alongside the elements of co-optation it is possible to refer to a success, in that a contribution was made to the achievement of goals of a political nature (the democratisation of a state rendered independent of the Soviet Union), even as this success was erased from awareness by part of the movement's elite.

The 1993 election victory for the post-communist Social Democracy and the Peasant Party combined with the Presidency of Aleksander Kwaśniewski (an actual ZSP member in the 1970s) to change Poland's party system, reinforcing a tendency for consolidation within the post-*Solidarity* right (which had been permanent internal divided from 1991), in line with cooperation with its liberal-democrat rivals. Thus 1997 brought victory for the right in a new coalition, power then being taken in cooperation with a party grouping united liberals. Weakening politically and deprived, the NZS also had an ever-shrinking social base at its disposal, with this largely now being confined to just a couple of cities and had experienced a generational change. Following by a crushing by-election defeat suffered KLD²², with parliamentary representation lost, a further turn to

22 The case of the NZS-KLD relationship represents an aspect of similarity between the

the right ensued, with a consequent strengthening of anti-communist sentiment and rhetoric, and intensifying criticism of the system transformation.

At the 1995 Presidential Election there was NZS support extended to two candidates that were unequivocally to the right, i.e. Adam Strzembosz and Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz. However, that was followed by support for Lech Wałęsa in the second round of voting. Cooperation was then entered into with a uniting right in the so-called “Solidarity Electoral Action” (*Akcja Wyborcza Solidarność*), with this encouraging debate internally. In 1998, the NZS acceded to *European Democratic Students*, as associated with Conservative parties (Kopińska and Kopiński 2010, 441–55). And from that time onwards NZS might ultimately be treated as a social movement. “NZS ceased to play an extraordinary role, despite the appeal of its political foundations myth” (Junes 2015, 254)²³.

“The NZS generation did its service in the struggle against communism, though it was not given to it to experience full autonomy. Only individuals broke through” (Jan Szczerba, *in*: Pleskot and Spałek 2011, 390). So it was that Poland’s anti-communist circles of students failed to follow the path similar to their Hungarian opposite numbers, who did indeed go on to become an independent political force. As is implied above, only individual leaders of NZS origin took key politicians roles in Polish politics. From among the national leadership of NZS as of 1988 (the 14 people that were elected, or co-opted following the Congress), the post-1989 fates at different elections (within the framework of post-*Solidarity* parties) were for four people to become MPs (two each in the “liberal” and “conservative” parties – in the Polish senses of those terms). Two of these were Deputy Prime Ministers (Przemysław Gosiewski and Grzegorz Schetyna), while another individual made a career in diplomacy. A *sui generis* epitaph for the student movement had to be written where and when some of its leading activists joined counter-intelligence in 1989, with a view to hunting down former Officers of the SB (*Służba Bezpieczeństwa*) Security Services (Jan Świdnicki, *in*: Pleskot and Spałek 2011, 420–23; Andrzej Papierz, *in*: Pleskot and Spałek 2011, 423–4).

Polish and Taiwanese movements, given that the main political partners of the student circles identified with the notion of liberalism (albeit with the version in Poland undoubtedly linking up with a more Conservative interpretation of the liberal tradition).

23 Conflict regarding independence from the right was still ongoing in the 21st century.

6. Closing remarks

Engaged against the Communists as it might indeed have been, the 1980s student movement did not actually bring down the system (Junes 2015, 249). *NZS* was an epiphenomenon of the development of the anti-communist opposition, but the student movement lacked both available resources and a political will to achieve autonomy. An inability to identify any political opportunity structure via the student movement lay in the cyclicity typical and natural for that social activity. Successive generations, especially in the realities of illegality, could easily adopt the historical myths of big social protest. It was more difficult to maintain organizational continuity at a time when the conditions of collective activity were changing rapidly.

And, while tertiary education did undergo steady democratisation, a role was anyway played by the class-affinities of the movement. It was more or less encompassed by – and confined to – the world of the big-city intelligentsia. This was made clear by the failure of any and every attempt to animate emergence of independent liberal/conservative-type parties from 1989 onwards. The cleavages arising in the Poland of that time left no space for a synthesis of ideas on economic liberalism and cultural traditionalism originating in the Anglo-Saxon world. That kind of synthesis had been shaped with the involvement of young elites in the student movement, and that just emphasises the alienation actually present. There was no de-radicalisation of the movement once June 1989 had come and gone, with activists sensitive to, and indeed apparently willing to embrace, criticism of the transformation process as a steered and in fact empty or guided and façade democratisation.

In 1989, in an *ex post* article in the bulletin of one of the university organisations, the author recalled that in the organisational chaos and uncertainty as regards the political situation “we were learning moderation” (*Rok rzeźbienia*, 1989). In this sense, the movement did not change its objective, even in the decline stage, in the face of views prevailing precisely in those strata of society from which a greater-than-average part of the membership base recruited. Also, ultimately, once radical neo-liberal reform had begun in the last months of 1989, there were further public protests surrounding socio-economic issues and the group of interests of different sections of the Working Class, or the Peasantry, even as the intelligentsia was very much among the beneficiaries of transformation.

It is also worth recalling the marked anti-state and anti-politics tendencies in Polish society, as only strengthened by individualism and ideological praise for capitalism in the dialogue of the late 1980s and early 1990s. As libertarian ideas

continued to spread among young people these might all link up readily enough with disillusionment with the reality of a new state immediately thrown into crisis. One activist looking back noted how: "it suddenly turned out that many of us had no desire whatever to involve ourselves in politics"... and the way in which, was treated by Opposition elites only contributed to that (see Andrzej Papierz, *in*: Pleskot and Spałek 2011, 386–387).

The student movements in both Poland and Taiwan felt themselves to be entities of emancipation giving expression to the expectations, not only of students, but also of the Middle Class more widely. However, in Poland they ultimately had to recognise and reconcile themselves with the hegemony of "the Great Go-Between" that was an Opposition centred around *Solidarność*. Taiwan's *Wild Lily* was autonomous action on the part of students, that later demonstrated the courage necessary to cut itself off from the *Democratic Progressive Party*. In contrast, Poland the moment symbolizing the peak of mobilization and the autonomy and separation *vis-à-vis* the Opposition overall and as a whole. Ultimately the NZS never lived to see a *Wild Lily* moment of its own, despite tens of spectacular events taken within what must be seen as a heterogeneous repertoire of actions.

The student movements of Poland and Taiwan did operate in times and circumstances of democratisation, and in a similar environment within society; and there was an association with *avant-garde* protest of the Working Class that also saw the Middle Class activated. Further similarities relate to the conglomerate of pro-democracy slogans, and the experiences within the New Social Movements including where the growing awareness of environmental issues was concerned. Nevertheless, the axiology of the Polish movements, though pluralist and thus capable of inspiring a variety of political stances and attitudes, was ultimately just a bridge leading towards different forms of conservatism, with the field on which internal post-1989 conflict played out being nothing more or less than the level of virulence of anti-communism... in the circumstance of the communist system having collapsed.

As they continued to strive for, and be in the vanguard of, political change, the student movements achieved for themselves, more or less unwillingly or spontaneously, the status of Herald of the neo-liberal transformation of the economy, and indeed life in society as a whole. They never really lived to see the development of some continuity in the field of student-circle protest. Indeed, from the point of view of international comparative research into social movements, a factor specific to the Polish case concerns the axiological foundation and amalgam of progressive goals, as well as a repertoire of actions typical for emancipation movements on the one hand, and a conservative ideology on the other.

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Agnieszka BIEŃCZYK-MISSALA

International factors underpinning democratisation in Poland

Abstract:

The article will refer to two theoretical concepts: systemic exhaustion (communism and USSR) and the liberalism and its attractiveness (USA and promotion of human rights and democracy).

Favorable international circumstances and the shift in international order enabled Poland the democratic transformation. Among international factors which need to be analyzed are: crises of communism ideology and dysfunction of the real socialism system, reforms of Mikhail Gorbachev and their impact on the demobilization of the Eastern bloc and its collapse, the US policy of human rights and democracy promotion, the US engagement and the support for reforms in Poland, the contribution of international institutions, especially the Council of Europe and the European Union, attractiveness of liberal values, transferred by Polonia community and mass culture.

Keywords: democratisation, international factors of Polish transformation, European inter-governmental organisations, systemic exhaustion, liberalism

1. Introduction

While the wave of democratisation that took place in Poland was mainly the result of internal processes, it was also influenced greatly by international factors. In fact, it was favourable international circumstances and a shift in the order internationally that allowed for Poland's democratic transformation, and that fact should not be understated. In discussing this truth, the present chapter touches upon such international factors as the erosion of the competition between the powers that had characterised the Cold War, the crisis communist ideology went through in the face of the dysfunctional nature of the system of "Real Socialism", and the reforms embarked upon by Mikhail Gorbachev ultimately impacting upon the demobilisation and then collapse of the Eastern Bloc; as well as US policy on human rights and the promotion of democracy, US engagement with and support for reform in Poland, the contribution of international institutions (especially the Council of Europe and European Union), and the attractiveness of liberal values as diffused by state and non-state actors.

2. Preliminary remarks

The international situation experienced by Poland in the 1945–89 period was the consequence of geopolitical change induced by the Third Reich's defeat in the Second World War. But the state of affairs put in place was in fact a fake one, given that Poland – as a state attacked by Nazi Germany on September 1st 1939, numbered among the Allies, and making an important contribution to the defeat of Germany within the Axis – was nevertheless left in no position to exert an influence on the shape of its post-War borders, which were imposed upon the country and nation in just the same way as was its new political and economic system.

Though sometimes even overlooked now, the Red Army's occupation and subordination of lands in eastern Poland from September 17th 1939, as well as the later reappearance of that Army in the new "liberating" context of the march westwards through Poland into Germany were enough to leave it inevitable that Poland would for decades be subordinated to the Soviet Union. In practice, that state of affairs largely met with the silent acceptance of the Western Powers (allies of Poland, i.e. the USA, UK and France). A factor superficially helping to sanction that was the promised, but entirely falsified parliamentary elections, which were held in Poland in 1947.

As further years passed, the relations between the key states deteriorated steadily, so as to pass into the historical circumstance known universally as "the Cold War" – in which the Soviet Union, along with states that were little more than its vassals, lined up in the so-called Eastern Bloc, in opposition to the United States and a number of states summarised as "The West" – occasionally even in spite of the actual geography.

And as this Cold War rivalry was playing out, a Poland also sandwiched by Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic remained firmly within the sphere of influence of the USSR, enjoying the status of Member of both Comcon (the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance) – from 1949, and the military Warsaw Pact – from 1955. But *de facto* both the state's domestic policy and its foreign policy were always made with the say-so of (or simply dictated by) the Soviet superpower. Equally, that was a circumstance consistently failing to gain the acceptance of Polish society, which continued to manifest whatever determined efforts to oppose the communist authorities it could muster at any given time. And that was enough to ensure an ultimate outcome of democratisation for Poland.

The communist era's supreme manifestation of resistance on the part of society was Poland's *Solidarność* – a movement (essentially a trade union) always

pressing for democracy to be ushered in, in the country, along with renewed respect for human rights – up to and including the exercise of the right to self-determination. Such activity naturally met with efforts at suppression by Poland's authorities – the nadir in this respect being the introduction of Martial Law on December 13th 1981.

Given the limited possibilities domestically, it was always clear just how greatly important favourable international conditioning would be... and in fact was. However, this had its roots in both East (as the communist system became more and more dysfunctional and crisis-hit) and West (as free-market democracies continued to enjoy their successes), as well as at a level pertaining between those two Blocs. Ultimately, the rivalry there began to dissipate, as the international atmosphere improved, and relationships started to arise, between both the main powers and the states belonging to the two Blocs they maintained. Nevertheless, no rebalancing would prove possible, with the result that the Eastern Bloc fell, and the Soviet Union collapsed (in December 1991).

This article thus represents an attempt – and opportunity – to answer a question as to the true nature of the role changing international conditioning actually played in Poland's democratisation. Which international factors helped influence and shape change in the country? What then was the leverage exerted, and the linkage forged, when it came to Poland facing the international situation and external factors? Also, what were the ways in which the evolution of these was able to influence the democratic transformation that did ensue? What role did the engagement and commitment of Western states and international institutions play – especially when it came to the promotion of human rights and democracy? And what was the nature of the gradual opening up of some key organisations to new Member States located in Central and Eastern Europe?

The process of democratisation actually posed a major challenge to academic thinking. For his part, Francis Fukuyama (1989) ascribed a status as supreme model of development to liberal free-market democracy, assuming therefore that (all) societies would strive in the direction of this kind of state (Fukuyama 1992). A side effect of that would be international relations tending towards cooperation. The equally famous and influential Samuel P. Huntington (Huntington 1991) saw the democratisation of Central and Eastern Europe as marking the culmination of a third wave of such democratisation (this having begun with Portugal's "Carnation Revolution" of 1974). Mentioned among causes here was a loss of legitimacy for authoritarian regimes, in the face of economic crisis; the recognition of human rights-related concepts by the Catholic Church; and the onset of a process whereby the foreign policy of the USA also began to account for liberal values. The attention was further drawn to the "demonstration effect"

as a factor helping to account for the wave of democratisation. It was put more or less straightforwardly that *Solidarność* in Poland (and the increasing chances it enjoyed to actually win in its conflict with the communist authorities) served as an influential, emboldening example for other societies, which also then determined to stand up against their own authoritarian regimes.

Through his research into the history of democratisation, John Markoff identified several international factors therein. What are involved here are processes external in nature that are nevertheless ongoing within states in a horizontal dimension (giving rise to change as regards dependence and authority), as well as vertically (in the sense that they operate in cross-border fashion). Beyond even that, we are asked to focus on both emulative processes, operating via diffusion, by which democratic success in one state influences neighbouring ones, and support processes – entailing the appearance of external actors engaged to varying degrees in the promotion of democracy (Markoff 1994).

These concepts have been deployed in this study's analytical processes, as well as in its drawing of final conclusions.

3. The breakdown of the rivalry between East and West

Taking into consideration the dependence of both the domestic and foreign policies of post-War Poland on the USSR, as well as the state's (unwilling but *de facto*) affiliation with the Eastern Bloc, Cold War-era democratisation of Poland could never have taken place. Furthermore, what was actually a central positioning along the E-W axis between the Soviet Union and the GDR "unfortunately" ensured Poland some key significance when it came to the strategies pursued by both the USSR and the entire Warsaw Pact (Kuźniar 2009).

The essence of the Cold War lay in rivalry between the USA and USSR, in dimensions that were simultaneously military, economic and ideological, and were characterised by open hostility and a lack of trust. A key element was struggle in relation to spheres of influence, in Europe certainly, but also in the world as a whole. The Soviet Union pursued a policy of the subordination of states, even as it purported to foster worker-led revolutions around the world, in line with an apparent certainty as to the superiority of communism over capitalism. The USA sought to hold the process back, initially by pursuing a doctrine of containment owing to President Truman and entailing the conferment of both economic and military assistance to states facing the communist threat. Later the US adopted a foreign and security policy seeking to achieve active change in the situation.

Consequences of the Cold War included the Arms Race, which involved, not only the superpowers themselves, but also more widely NATO and the Warsaw Pact. This all manifested in huge financial outlays on arms and the restocking of arsenals. A key role in military capacity was played by nuclear weapons, and the means of delivering them. Shortly after the USA (in 1945), the Soviet Union developed a nuclear potential of its own (in 1949), as then followed by the United Kingdom (in 1952) and France (in 1960). The development of armed forces, and especially the possession of nuclear arsenals, ensured the attainment of a certain balance of forces – indeed of terror – the deterrence successfully pursued being an important factor in the avoidance of actual, open military conflict between East and West. Simply put, resort to non-conventional weaponry by either side was believed to expose it to revenge attacks from the opponent at least as severe as the one that had been launched.

The Superpowers also assigned huge sums to the Space Race, as well as – by the way – to the construction of medium-range and intercontinental missiles. A tipping-point aspect to the ongoing Cold War rivalry came with the Soviet Union's armed intervention in Afghanistan beginning December 27th 1979. This drew a sharp international reaction, as well as leading to a November 1980 (and a further November 1984) election victory in the USA for the more-hawkish Ronald Reagan. A further aspect not without its significance was the then-fortuitous capacity of the West to consolidate around Reagan's America ... and firmly against the USSR. Key players here were UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and (at first West) German Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

In the event, the open-ended Afghan invasion mounted by the Soviets and not apparently accompanied by any exit strategy gave rise to major costs, with issues of money as opposed to weapons limiting the Soviet Union's capacity to act as a true rival for the USA. In the face of that reality, the West was only encouraged to press ahead with new technology and thereby accelerate an arms race with limited actual conflict that only one of the sides could win. So it was that, in 1983, NATO states took a decision to deploy medium-range missiles to Western Europe that was responded to by Moscow with its SS-20s. America's next step then saw a deployment around NATO of *Pershing II* rockets and Cruise Missiles. This was concrete evidence offered that the Reagan administration was able to achieve a steady increase in outlays on defence and weaponry – evidence that reached a new peak with the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), known popularly as *Star Wars*, and anticipating a defensive missile response in space. While the USSR might indeed have had a military potential as gigantic as the one at the disposal of its American rival, it did not (could not) take up any further economic challenge. Indeed, during the Reagan Presidency, the USSR passed further than

ever into a financial crisis that made defence cuts an inevitability, as money had to be assigned to other policies.

In truth, however, things had begun to change previously, and in other, broader ways. Periodic bilateral and multilateral talks had taken place between East and West with a view to some easing of tensions, and the development of constructive solutions to limit and reduce amounts of military hardware. Effects of that process included the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks and Treaty (SALT), the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, and the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START). Reduced tensions and greater cooperation also arose with the August 1st 1975 signing of the Helsinki Final Act, in the context of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. The outcomes were new dimensions to the relationship between the Blocs, as regards the so-called baskets of security, the economy and humanitarian issues.

The talks also led to the adoption of a rather ground-breaking Declaration laying down principles by which relations between states might progress. The circumstances of key significance to the ending of the Cold War were then put in place at the Stockholm Conference convened through the years 1984–1986. The efforts also denoted progress in the resolving of certain regional conflicts, not least those that had long afflicted Afghanistan, Angola, Namibia and Nicaragua.

US President George (H.W.) Bush heralded an actual ending of the Cold War in 1988, with such intentions gaining confirmation in a Joint CSCE Declaration set out in the November 20th 1990 Charter of Paris for a New Europe. In that document, participating states declared that an end had been put to the Cold War confrontation and division in Europe, with a new era of democracy, peace and unity therefore heralded (*Paris Charter for a New Europe* 1990).

It was nevertheless the erosion of Cold War rivalry that actually led, not to reconfigured relations between sustained Blocs, but to victory for the Western World in general and the United States in particular, with this proving an important factor in Poland's subsequent democratisation. The position and influence of the West strengthened further as states wrested control from a Soviet Union increasingly preoccupied with its own internal problems.

4. The crisis in the Soviet system and *Perestroika*

So it was that one external factor in the democratisation of Poland involved the economic crisis in the USSR, which shaped its leaders' appetite for reform. From the early 1980s onwards, Eastern Bloc states were able to feel the symptoms of structural crisis ever-more acutely, with negative phenomena arising out of the sheer dysfunctionality of the centrally-planned economy, as well as the East's

faith in self-sufficiency, which led to autarchy, and thence to backwardness and a threat of economic collapse. The economies of states operating under “Real Socialism” proved ineffective, with their low productivity, high levels of energy-intensiveness and waste, severe degradation of the natural environment, and backwardness when it came to technology (Smaga 1992, 294). They were also consumed by corruption, and overbearing Party control and influence.

The USSR and other states of the Eastern Bloc experienced major falls in levels of economic growth, with the crisis made worse still by the sanctions imposed on the Soviet Union internationally, in retaliation for its intervention in Afghanistan. These not least included an embargo on exports of grain and technology, but they were compounded in Poland’s case by specific, Poland-related sanctions hitting home once Martial Law was introduced in the country in 1981.

The level of indebtedness of the communist countries did nothing to ease their situations. There was also a faltering in the production of steel, always of such cardinal importance to the economies in question, while increased OPEC oil output meant reduced revenues for the USSR, in the context of a decline in the value of fuel exports. There was then no choice but to curb investment outlays, and – in the context of perilously low levels of innovation in the centrally-planned economies – the effect was to further widen the technology gap between East and West, all the more so as the Information Age was now coming on in leaps and bounds. And where burdens arose, it was states’ societies that were left to bear much of the burden, with consumer spending also curbed in consequence.

Emerging as another dimension to the overall problem was the fossilised system by which power in the USSR was exercised, and handed on. The first half of the 1980s brought as many as four changes of leadership there. The long-serving Leonid Brezhnev died aged 75 on 10th November 1982, only to be followed to the grave in rather rapid succession by Yuri Andropov, who succumbed aged 69 on 9th February 1984, and Konstantin Chernenko, who died aged 73 on 10th March 1985. This made clear enough the aged and unfit nature of the hard-line conservative elite that was the Soviet “Old Guard”. Indeed, things had evidently reached the point at which even governance within the existing setup was becoming difficult, let alone the introduction of any meaningful (updating) change.

Ultimately, things did move on as, immediately on 11th March 1985, with the backing of Andrei Gromyko, the post of Secretary of the Communist Party in the USSR now fell to a 53-year-old Mikhail Gorbachev – a charismatic man who indeed advocated economic reform (Gorbachev 1987). He will now be forever associated with two of his programmes that also became buzzwords, i.e. *Pere-stroika* (typically translated into English as “reconstruction” or “restructuring”,

though also connoting enhanced market orientation) and *Glasnost* (given as “openness”). There was thus an implication here that certain principles of the free-market type might begin to suffuse management of the Soviet economy, even as a measure of pluralism and open debate could also be implemented.

However the pursuit of reform proved difficult, given the double-whammy of deeply-entrenched authoritarianism in the exercise of all power and severe economic crisis. This was all the more the case as Gorbachev only had partial change in mind, never intending to take his foot off the brake more than somewhat. Thus, while the leader did replace certain figures in the Party’s main bodies, with people more in his style, he did not decide on free elections, himself becoming President by virtue of an *ad hoc* decision. When it came to the economy, Gorbachev could not bring himself to support farm de-collectivisation, or even the lifting of price subsidies. The inevitable consequence was for the reform proposed and in part pursued to fall short in any more-rapid delivery of the hoped-for outcomes.

Gorbachev’s policies were thus associated with growing criticism of his regime. And against that background an uncomfortable and revealing one-of-a-kind greatly undermining the power of the USSR was the serious, and indeed tragic, nuclear accident and incident developing at Chernobyl in April 1986. This seemed to imply clearly – to inhabitants and outsiders alike – that the regime had lost control of the situation domestically. It seemed the communist system was unable to discharge even its most basic social and economic functions. *Glasnost* – open debate – was a core part of the initiative Gorbachev was taking, even as it actually catalysed nationalism hand in hand with complaint. The Soviet Republics began to imagine themselves independent, and the leader in fact met them half-way, as he postulated a real extension of rights to them, and entitlements as regards their equal status.

The need to implement reform and manage the complicated internal situation in the USSR had two key consequences. First, Gorbachev came back to the negotiating table along with the United States, when it came to cutting stocks of strategic weapons, but also a moderated tone in CSCE-centred consultations. Second, the USSR lost/relinquished its capacity to control the course of events in states of Central and Eastern Europe now mired in their own crises, and desperately seeking ways to improve their situations. Gorbachev was not interested in a resort to force against those protesting at finding themselves in a steadily worsening life situation. Speaking at the UN, he merely confirmed that all states had the right to search and strive freely for their own socio-political system. It was therefore possible to interpret that as a green light for systemic transformation in Poland and the remaining CEECs.

Indeed, Poland's crisis-hit authorities did draw their own, necessary conclusions from Gorbachev's stance, seeing the change he had embarked upon as permission for negotiations of their own – with Lech Wałęsa in particular and "Solidarity" in general. In 1986 they issued the amnesty for political prisoners the USA had been pushing for (and on which they had made economic aid dependent). Thus 1988 brought talks preparatory to the famous sessions convened at the so-called "Round Table" (*Okrągły Stół*)... which would ultimately decide to let the country proceed with its development of democracy. The changes were pressed for in the face of a dire economic situation only made worse by the aforementioned Western sanctions over Martial Law. Price rises and shortages of goods gave rise to further outbreaks of strike action, thus making further change all the more inevitable.

The systemic crises faced by Real Socialism were not just matters of states' internal situations, as they also concerned the system that had taken shape within the Eastern Bloc as a whole. This above all reflected Bloc-wide relationships between states that were actually entirely dependent on the USSR. The fact that this one state was more equal than the others could not be reconciled with one of the core UN principles fundamental to the international order – the one concerning the equal statuses of all countries as sovereign.

Dependence on a dominant, indeed domineering, USSR thus stood in the way of any development of free and effective internal or foreign policies of the other subordinated states, ensuring their *de facto* isolation in the international arena. The USSR did not permit free debate, let alone free elections, and did not hesitate to resort to force in the name of the unity of the (its) Bloc. Examples of the latter kind of intervention came in Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968, while serious thought was also given to an involvement in Poland in 1981. All of this ensured a superficiality to the relationships pertaining between the states, as well as a lack of trust. In the event, the system emerged as simply non-functional, while being actively detrimental in civilisational and economic terms, and even when it came to security.

Equally, the CEECs in general and Poland in particular lived with the gnawingly insecure feeling that no form of liberation could ensue if ever war between East and West finally broke out, given that the main theatre for that war would be their own territory. Even a conventional conflict of that nature would have had consequences nothing short of catastrophic, to say nothing of the damage a nuclear exchange might have wrought. It was thus almost miraculously fortunate that what actually happened to undermine the maintenance of Eastern Bloc structures was neither of the above outcomes, but in fact a normalisation of

relations between the USA and USSR, and thus an opening-up of Western-type possibilities for the CEECs.

Member States of the Warsaw Pact first launched a discussion on changes of functioning within that Alliance, in the new circumstances of equal rights between states and a democratisation of governing principles, but in the event such actions proved mere stepping stones towards the dissolution decision taken on July 1st 1991.

Equally (or perhaps even more) unsustainable were the principles for cooperation pertaining in the case of COMECON. This was not least due to the fact that all accounts between Member States were actually settled on the basis of transfers in Roubles.

The opening-up of the economy to free-market principles naturally meant a need for modified rules of commerce. However, it was in fact a unilateral decision from the USSR that ushered in a new payment-settlement system whose consequence was the breakdown of trade within the Eastern Bloc, as followed by the dissolution of COMECON on June 28th 1991.

Relations between the Soviet Union and the other states of the former Eastern Bloc also needed reformulation, with a very concrete dimension to that being the withdrawal of Soviet forces. This happened immediately after the total breakup of the USSR into 15 independent states, and the outcome for Poland and its region was a marked change of geopolitical situation. Now the neighbours of Poland that had existed as states at least on paper were joined by countries that had been Republics within the USSR. New neighbours of the latter profile were Lithuania, Ukraine and Belarus, as well as the Russian Federation itself (as successor state to the USSR). Meanwhile, in the West, Germany achieved reunification, following the effort and debate there in regard to the right to self-determination.

5. The outcomes of the ideological confrontation

A key aspect of the Cold War order was ideological confrontation. In the case of the states forming "The West" this was a matter of liberal values (i.a. human rights and democracy), as well as governments duly constituted under the rule of law. This approach was very much an effect of – and response to – the terrible cruelty of World War II; and hence a determination on the part of Western decision-makers that peace and unity in Europe might hold sway were common values also to hold sway. Pride of place among these went to respect for human dignity and human rights. Appropriate standards came to be referred to in all of the Constitutions of Western states, while respect for human rights was intended

to be a *sine qua non* condition for Member status in both the Council of Europe and the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development).

Thanks to provisions set out in the Charter of the United Nations, human rights had indeed become part and parcel of the post-War international order – an emanation of this being the development of what were deemed “universal” standards as regards human rights – in the context of a developed international system seeking to safeguard them. Inspirations as regards these solutions came *inter alia* out of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s concept of four freedoms, i.e. freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want and freedom from fear. These were used in the formulation of that first international catalogue of human rights known as the UN’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights – as adopted on 10th December 1948. The Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc states subordinated to it (Poland include) abstained from voting at that point, in this way revealing their scepticism vis-à-vis liberty and human rights.

Indeed, ideas as regards the rights of the individual, and all the more so democracy, were alien to the ideology of communism, which instead lionised, on paper at least, the subordination of individual need to that of the class of workers in town and countryside. While there was space for certain social rights (albeit understood in a particular way) – notably the need to secure work for all, personal and political rights could not be reconciled with the communist system, as *de facto* founded upon and around a single party and hence just a pretence of democratic mechanisms (with elections even rigged and their results falsified); as well as resort to means of controlling society, up to and including through the use of violence. At international fora, the appearances that were kept up based themselves around the apparent existence of separate independent states alongside the Soviet Union, with all maintaining in chorus that matters of human rights remained for each such state to decide, being internal affairs not up for international debate.

The reluctance of the societies in Central European countries to accept such standards was made clear by the way their protests were stifled by force. And that mood was read effectively enough by the United States, not least because Advisor to several American Presidents Zbigniew Brzezinski was in a position to play a key role, he being a diplomat of Polish origin and an expert on the region in question. He advocated a hawkish position towards the USSR, i.a. as regards respect for human rights. So it was that the administration of President Jimmy Carter (1977–1981) came to include human rights in its official programme of foreign policy, deploying these instrumentally in the struggle against the Eastern Bloc. At the outset, states in Western Europe rather tended to distance themselves

from this. However, as time passed human rights also became a constant element in their foreign policy programmes too (Higgins 1987, 572–574).

The attractiveness of democratic values favoured their spread, with the carriers being media (notably such radio stations as *Wolna Europa* and *Voice of America*), but also culture and person-to-person contacts (with a major role played by the Polish diaspora, as well as the slightly greater opportunities for people to meet in the aftermath of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act). The Catholic Church played a key role, as a global propagator of rights – all the more so under (Polish) Pope John Paul II; and there was also a developing system of human rights protection internationally, which ensured as steadily growing significance for the rights in question.

Where the between-Bloc situation was concerned, the promotion of human rights in both principle and practice was again helped along in the 1970s by the aforesaid Helsinki Process designed specifically with E-W dialogue and cooperation in mind. As Western states raised matters of human rights at its Sessions, these might find their way into the CSCE's aforementioned Final Act. That was then adopted by Heads of State and Government on 1st August 1975. The document's key part was the *Declaration on Principles Guiding Relations between Participating States*, whose 7th and 8th items respectively provided for respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as the equal rights and right to self-determination of peoples (as with the EU Treaties this was the word used, rather than nations, countries or states).

It was within the right to self-determination that a particularly key premise was enshrined. This was not so much about independence *per se* as about sovereignty and democracy, with societies determining and deciding on their political and economic systems. Signatories to the Act recognised that respect for human rights 'is an essential factor for the peace, justice and wellbeing necessary to ensure the development of friendly relations and co-operation among themselves as among all States' (CSCE Act 1975). Also provided for was cooperation in the achievement of objectives set, as well as a readiness to encourage other organisations and entities into joining the effort. The result of that call was the emergence of many NGOs and opposition movement in communist states, with these not least taking the form of so-called Helsinki Committees (Rotfeld 1990, 47–50).

Provisions as regards human rights were a price the USSR had to pay for the resolving of certain Conference questions relating to maintenance of the political and territorial *status quo in Europe*. The USSR's acceptance of these brought consequences it had not foreseen, given that there had been a setting (even a laying-down) of standards that the societies of Eastern Europe might now aspire to. The inclusion of human-rights protection among the rules of international

relations gave a potential justification for this kind of subject-matter to gain consideration at international fora. Thus, at the review sessions forming part of the Helsinki Process, the US laid its major emphasis on the review of adopted principles regarding human rights. That tended to bring out defensiveness and a lack of goodwill on the Soviet side, ensuring that the meetings inclined towards the confrontational.

A significant next step was then the linkage made between the extension of credit to Poland in the 1970s and a taking-up of commitments regarding an international dimension to the protection of human rights. This had to incline Poland to ratify (as it did in 1977) the UN's International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights, and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Meanwhile, against that general background, individuals, organisations operating in a budding civil society and Opposition circles – in Poland and other CEECs – were now in a position to invoke the commitments on human rights their authorities had in fact taken on. They gave constant reminders that the right to self-determination was among those now needing to be exercised, with this meaning opportunities to co-decide on given states' political and economic systems. More-concrete demands arising out of that in turn related to social rights (wage levels in a position to secure the dignity of workers, and a right to found trade unions), as well as fundamental rights apparently enshrined constitutionally (such as the right to freedom of speech and free media). The ultimate manifestation came with the famous "postulates" advanced by the Strike Committee of Poland's *Solidarność* on August 17th 1980.

What was naturally of significance here was the willingness of the USA and other Western countries to extend active support to the groups fighting to have democratic principles introduced in their countries. The assistance organised related *i.a.* to families subject to repression, while also providing grants, and seeking to ensure that states' potential future elites were invested in. A further kind of moral support came in 1983 as legendary Solidarity leader Lech Wałęsa was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, albeit *in absentia*.

Breakthroughs in the ideological confrontation came in the 1980s, as an end was put to Martial Law in Poland 1983, and as tensions relaxed between the USSR and USA, with the two sides again ready to talk to each other. At the CSCE review session held in Vienna between November 4th 1986 and January 19th 1989, it was agreed that the scope of human-rights protection might be expanded, in line with the so-called "Human Dimension". Also agreed to was a diplomatic mechanism by which information on violations of human rights might be exchanged (*Dokument końcowy KBWE z Wiednia*, 1989). A "Human Dimension" meeting convened in Moscow in 1991 then yielded a historic declaration.

At that forum, all recognised by way of consensus that human rights were not a matter of exclusive competence for states – as the Soviet Union and its subordinates had maintained solemnly during the Cold War – but were rather a justified matter of interest to the international community as a whole. This denoted an acceptance of a Western approach to the concept of human rights by the states of the collapsing Eastern Bloc.

6. A wave of democratisation in the CEECs

Poland was the state in the region in which democratic processes were most bottom-up, and of such an intensity that they served as a major inspiration to the other communist countries. Yet it was still the fact that other CEECs became part of the wave of democratisation that left Poland's chances looking greater too, as they generated strong further positive feedback of a pro-democratic nature.

Poland's "Round Table" talks bore fruit in an accord on the organising of partially-free elections scheduled for June 4th 1989. These in turn brought to office a government having its origins in Opposition circles, and led by just such a figure... in the shape of Tadeusz Mazowiecki. In December, the Polish Parliament voted in certain revolutionary amendments to the Constitution that confirmed the presence of a democratic system in the country, while abolishing key provisions as regards the lead roles to be played by the Communist Party, and by friendly ties with the Soviet Union.

Similar processes occurred more or less soon after in Hungary, the GDR (with the effect that the door to German reunification was opened), Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and Romania. This was not arranged or coordinated at regional level, being rather outcomes arising from similar domestic and international processes. But – as has already been noted – this wave of democratisation's immediate gathering of pace and rapid expansion of range acted to increase the chances of success in each country (including Poland), and in the region as a whole.

However, even pre-1989, Opposition groups were organising certain small-scale meetings and discussion sessions, with a view to new forms of co-operation taking shape. One example was the October 1981 founding of Polish-Czechoslovakian *Solidarność*, whose activists came from *Charter 77*, as well as Poland's KOR ("Committee for Social Self-Defence" – created from the Workers' Defense Committee) and "Solidarity" as such. The goal was information-exchange and the sharing of experience in respect of pro-democracy initiatives either side of the border, as well as the repressions experienced. The numerous meetings of this kind featured such activists and intellectuals as Vaclav Havel,

Ján Čarnogurský, Petr Uhl, Adam Michnik, Zbigniew Romaszewski and many others.

The fact that the same aspirations were held by many did much to favour the change that was the hallmark and achievement of the whole region, also facilitating the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact (over which Polish politicians worked closely with counterparts in Hungary). Bilateral relations gained regulation in treaties of a good-neighbour profile, that nevertheless stressed respect for human rights and democratic standards, and thus made it clear that the directions change was following were the same. This had an undoubted influence in consolidating pro-democratic change, strengthening reform internally and encouraging a re-evaluation and updating of foreign policy (Howard 1992). It also strengthened the West's faith in Poland and the region – a faith that had inevitably been dented (along with any particular fondness) in both the US and Western Europe over the long and tragic years of communism.

A steady process of building democracy in the CEECs was called for by Krzysztof Skubiszewski, as the region's first Minister of Foreign Affairs in the context of a post-communist democratic government. He fully appreciated the importance for peace and freedom of the CEECs being free and democratic, and thus located in improved geopolitical positions.

The prospects for states in the region to undergo democratisation were by no means obvious, requiring both determination and cooperation on the parts of elites, as well as the mobilisation of societies that bore the costs of transformation (Friedman 1993, 483; Huntington 1991). All of the states under consideration were able to regain full sovereignty, usher in parliamentary democracy, and make successful efforts to transform their economies from the centrally-planned to the free-market (even though this was not turbulence-free). They strove to reconfigure their relations with the USSR, and then with the Russian Federation as successor state; and they then produced revaluations of their foreign policies in the direction of integration into Western European and transatlantic structures. This kind of scenario gained the support of the United States, which saw change in Poland as a key factor in the democratisation of Europe as a whole. Thus, in a Joint Declaration it was noted that "The United States attaches great importance to the strengthening and securing of Poland's democracy and independence, considering this to be indispensable in a new independent and free Europe" (Declaration on relations between Poland and the US, March 20, 1991).

7. The enlargement of Western institutions

The consolidation of the democratisation process in Poland took place in circumstances of major economic difficulty, including as regards high levels of unemployment, hyperinflation, and periodic declines in levels of popular support for the process of transformation in general. Problems experienced lay in a lack of experience when it came to creating law and founding democratic institutions, the lack of strong civil-society structures, as well as political radicalism (Forsythe 1994; Müllerson 1994; Góralczyk, Kostecki and Żukrowska 1995). On the other hand, an aspect emerging as helpful was an ongoing openness of Western states and institutions to the idea of supporting in the democratisation process Poland and countries throughout the region – which further developed into a readiness to enlarge to include new Member States. This all insured that democratic values continued with their process of diffusion.

At least a cautious interest in the (successful) democratisation of Poland was manifested from the outset by the USA, which felt that this might be the key to pro-Western change in the region as a whole. Promotional activity was thus engaged in, at CSCE meetings for example. The aforementioned Paris Charter was largely drawn up by the United States of America (Korey 1993). There we may read that: 'Ours is a time for fulfilling the hopes and expectations our peoples have cherished for decades: steadfast commitment to democracy based on human rights and fundamental freedoms; prosperity through economic liberty and social justice; and equal security for all our countries.'

It was thus made clear that the "New Europe" was to be a Europe of democracy, peace and unity. And against that background it can come as no surprise that Poland's Minister of Foreign Affairs Krzysztof Skubiszewski was happy to base his whole foreign policy around a 'return to Europe' catchphrase (Millard 1996). In subsequent years, this took on increasingly concrete form with the looming prospect of Poland integrating into structures like the Council of Europe, European Union and NATO – with all of this tangible enough to catalyse further democratic change. A huge role here was played by the linkage made between the promise of membership and the achievement and maintenance of high standards in safeguarding human rights and democracy.

The highest degree of openness and reflex was shown by the Council of Europe – as a body whose principles were focused around the achievement of greater unity among members through the real incorporation and heeding of human rights and democracy. From January 1985 on, this had in operation a Council of Ministers of Foreign Relations dealing with East-West matters. Trips taken by Marcello Oreja, the then Secretary-General, and Louis Jung, as Chair

of the Parliamentary Assembly, made it clear that the Council had detected new challenges and was intending to take them up. In 1988, there was a positive reception for the Report from Catherine Lalumière regarding the situation in countries of the region, as well as the prospects for them to be accepted into the organisation. In the following year, financial mechanisms were mobilised in respect of the *Demosthenes* Programme, which sought to assist with the propagation of democratic ideals and the pursuit and observance of human rights in the CEECs (Lalumière 2002, 11).

In the case of Poland, the launching of cooperative ventures with the Council of Europe represented a chance for the process of democratisation to achieve success, as standards regarding human rights were taken on board, and state policy made more credible-looking. Just four days on from Poland's June 1989 "contract election", the country gained for itself Special Guest status vis-à-vis the Council of Europe. And in just the first few months after that the authorities were already taking on the first legal commitments, acceding as Poland did to the European Cultural Convention – ETS 018 – on 16th November 1989; the European Convention on Transfrontier Television – ETS 132 – on 7th September 1990; and the Anti-Doping Convention – ETS 135 – also on 7th September 1990. Warsaw also played host to the Conference of the Culture and Education Committee in December 1989, as well as the European Forum of Young Parliamentarians (13th–14th February 1990).

Poland was the first of the CEECs to submit an official request to be accepted into the Council of Europe, also thereby committing itself to ratifying its key Convention – on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. Membership required recognition of principles as regards the rule of law, respect for the rights and freedom of all coming under states' jurisdictions, and cooperation in making the Council's objectives a reality. There was nevertheless more to it than simply submitting a declaration to the above effect. While the Report from Sir Geoffrey Finsberg prepared for the CoE Parliamentary Assembly offered a positive appraisal of the development of the situation in Poland (noting the achievements of *Solidarność*, the Round Table talks and examples of the fruits of their labours including proper adoption of the separation powers, political pluralism, recognition for the independence of courts, and a readiness to take on commitments arising out of Council membership), it was nevertheless recognised that fully free parliamentary elections would need to take place for requirements to be met in full. The Committee of Ministers was thus advised to accept Poland into the Council of Europe immediately after such election had taken place – providing of course that Observers nominated by the Office of the General Assembly were

able to attest to those elections being run in line with principles the Council's Statute had laid down.

The consequence was Poland's acceptance into the Council of Europe on November 26th 1991, following the parliamentary election. It was as the 26th Member State and the second of the CEECs to join, after Hungary. The country at the same time commenced with the process seeking to ratify the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, thereby also recognising the jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights. That meant a presence within the world's most effective regime protecting and safeguarding human rights, which also recognises the right of petition at the level of the individual. Case law of the Court then went on to contribute to a raising of relevant standards in Poland. The correction of domestic law was further served by the *Demo-droit* Programme, while the *Temida* Programme took the form of training assistance for Judges, Prosecutors and Police Officers alike, helping them acquaint themselves with the legal solutions already in force – and enforced – in the West (Drzemczewski 1994).

Accession to the Council of Europe was of exceptional importance to Poland's image, confirming as it did the irrevocable nature of the reform ongoing domestically, but also representing a motor force behind further transformation. For many legal and political changes were ushered in specifically with CoE membership in mind, even as the fact of accession was also significant to EU and NATO integration.

Newly-devised and developed formulae for relations between Poland and the remaining CEECs acknowledged the values the Council of Europe holds dear. For its part, the CoE confirmed in December 1989 that the undertaking of political and economic reform, and the pace at which that would be pursued, would serve as conditions underpinning any invitation to the states in question to begin talks over Associate status.

In turn, the message coming out of the North Atlantic Council meetings held in Turnberry in June 1990 was that cooperation with Warsaw Pact states would be embarked upon in a spirit of liberty, democracy and justice. Similar postulates were enshrined in the November 1991 Declaration on Peace and Cooperation, which held out the promise of help in institution-building, and invoked faith in democracy and rights. The need to strengthen democracy in Candidate States was also indicated in the *Partnership for Peace* Programme announced at the 1994 NATO Summit, in the name of cooperation with Members of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC).

Ultimately, the matter of respect for human rights and for democratic standards embraced criteria for membership of both NATO and the EU. In the former

case, they were made quite precise in a *Study on NATO Enlargement* released in Brussels on September 28th 1995 and for example including acceptance of the principles set out in the Washington Treaty – as regards democracy, the freedom of the individual and the rule of law, as well as a free-market economy and civilian control over the armed forces. In turn, and for their part, the EU Member States affirmed their attachment to these same kinds of values in the famous Copenhagen Criteria specially formulated for states seeking EU Membership – in the context of a European Council convened on June 21st and 22nd 1993 (Harasimowicz and Pietras 1994). Matters covered there included stability of the institutions guaranteeing adherence to democratic principles and the rule of law in the given Candidate Country, as well as respect for human rights in general and the rights of minorities in particular. Similar requirements were set out in the Treaty of Amsterdam dated June 17th 1997, in the part thereof comprising the TEU. It is made plain there that countries seeking EU membership must respect EU principles, with the precise wording (in Art. 6.1) being: “The Union is founded on the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law, principles which are common to the Member States”.

It was thus rightly that Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Krzysztof Skubiszewski laid repeated emphasis on the importance of his country's pro-democracy reforms to its strategic success over efforts to join NATO and the UE. The latter were in turn viewed by Poland's authorities as offering the best chances of guarantee for the country's independence and security, with stability of economic and civilisational development also ensured in this way. There was an awareness of the importance of human-rights values and democratic standards to the countries of Western Europe and to the USA, it being considered that any other circumstances arising in Poland's domestic situation might have negative impacts on the country's attempts to pursue its interests. Official information on Poland's foreign policy issued on April 29th 1993 (in respect of Skubiszewski's *Sejm* speech of the same day) confirmed the cardinal importance of a determined pursuit of reform to ensure Poland's status as a kind of role model for democratic transformation, while also establishing its identity as a serious partner that could really count for something.

Paradoxically perhaps, Poland reacted to a situation in which governments changed in quick succession by heeding Skubiszewski's signalling of the vital need for continuity of foreign policy in close linkage with the country's newly-acquired status as a democratic state. He recalled how Western countries' changes of government did little to change key foreign-policy priorities and directions. Meanwhile, Poland's situation internationally was identified as somehow “brittle”. On September 29th 1993, the Minister wrote how reckless or

irresponsible steps might result in destabilisation, destroying what Poland had achieved in its relations with the world, and in its striving in the name of stability in its region of Europe.

A propagation and extension of democracy was one of the goals of the 1991–2001 administrations of President Bill Clinton, with the policy viewed as in line with American interests (Forsythe and Rieffer 2000, 988–1011). Respect for human rights and democratic standards were identified as an element to the maintenance of peace and stability in the world. This was among the issues regulated in the NATO Enlargement Facilitation Act of 1996 (aka the Third Brown Amendment). This extended support to a NATO enlargement embracing Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. In the USA, the assessment of Poland's meeting of criteria was *inter alia* a matter for the Congressional Committee on Security and Cooperation in Europe. In that body's 1997 report, positive reference was made to Poland's adherence to international standards in human rights, democracy and the rule of law. There was also a favourable assessment of the courses elections had followed, the independence of the judiciary, and the functioning of an Opposition. On the minus side, the outdated nature of certain legal solutions was pointed to. But in any case, Poland received a positive recommendation when it came to its accession to NATO, and on 16th December 1997 the Accession Protocol was signed up to. Formal membership of the Pact followed on, on March 12th 1999 (Ajnenkiel 2001).

In the context of Poland's Associate status with the European Communities, and then its full integration into the EU, matters of the respect for human rights and democratic principles came to represent an even more important, indeed *sine qua non* condition. In the *Europe Agreement establishing an Association between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Poland, of the other part*, mention is made of the need for the aforesaid principles to be heeded, along with an obligation that Poland's legal system be approximated to the EC model (Parzymies 1997, 30). The legislature in Poland was to create law that met democratic and human-rights standards, while foreign policy in the rights dimension would need to have regard to EC positions. Indeed, at the fora represented by both the CSCE/OSCE and the UN Human Rights Commission, Poland generally voted in the same way as EU Member States, seeking in this way to demonstrate its credibility as a future EU Member State; and indeed its reliability.

In the *Commission Opinion on Poland's application for Membership of the European Union* there was a generally positive assessment in regard to the meeting of political criteria by Poland, with it being noted that: "Poland presents the characteristics of a democracy, with stable institutions guaranteeing the rule of

law, human rights, and respect for and protection of minorities" (Agenda 2000). Nevertheless, certain shortfalls are referred to, *i.a.* corruption phenomena, a judiciary not characterised by effectiveness, a Constitutional Tribunal whose remit is regarded as too narrow, limitations on press freedoms, and lengthy processes involved in the conferment of refugee status. Overall, it was felt that political criteria linked to a democratic system could be assessed more favourably than other criteria on economic competitiveness and adjustment to conditions in respect of economic and monetary policy (Smithe 2001, 38). To a significant extent, progress was seen to be attributable to Poland's membership of the Council of Europe, as well as efforts made by the country's elite.

As Poland's EU membership negotiations were in progress between March 1998 and December 2002, the progress achieved was the subject of regular opinions from the Commission published in annual reports to the European Council. Note was there taken of successive human rights instruments taken on by Poland, as well as legal changes made domestically. It was regularly stressed that Poland needed to pursue its fight against corruption, and to streamline the operations of the judiciary.

Each time a report was issued, the Polish authorities had the task of analysing it, and presenting a programme of action by which the situation could be improved. The process of integration into the European Union became a specific kind of "applause" received for a country pressing on with its democratic reform. But that country had no choice but to ensure its internal law was adjusted to EU standards. And where rights were concerned, that meant *i.a.* civil rights, consumer rights, copyright and rights of workers (including non-discrimination on the grounds of gender).

Integration with the EU also had its influence on the shape of the Republic of Poland's new (1997) Constitution. This was intended to show how this was now a state with an organised and stable democratic system. Indeed, as it worked on the content of a new basic law, a Constitutional Committee worked steadily to set the standards provided for in the draft, against those in force throughout the EU Member States. Effort was thus made to prevent situations of collision arising, between domestic law and that of the EU (Parzymies 1997). In consequence, when it came to systemic solutions, as well as the regulation of human rights, the content of the Constitution met European standards. The European Commission also opined to that effect in its 'Agenda 2000', stating that the means of regulation provided for in the RP's 1997 Constitution helped preserve and safeguard the institutional balance already put in place.

Poland's May 1st 2004 EU accession represented key confirmation of the success Poland had experienced with democratisation – the same kind of success

as had also been achieved by most other CEECs. At the same time, it seemed to be offering proof that the Western model of development had become ubiquitous (Kuźniar 2009, 209), while also attesting to the enlargement of the area of the world comprising democratic states configuring their relations with respect for sovereign equality... even as that also denoted progressing interdependence.

Democratisation in Poland, as well as other CEECs, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, was not just a simple case of states transforming their systems in the direction of society's full participation in public life and the exercise of power. Rather, it was linked with the severing of ties imposed by the Soviet Union, and with the regaining of sovereignty. This in turn denoted change in the geopolitical system shaped and entrenched in the post-War period.

The systemic transformations in Poland and in the remaining states of the Eastern Bloc have attested to the major importance of international conditioning. Polish society had long before developed a conviction that the system had to change, and had thus made ready to introduce democratic mechanisms; but it was the international conditioning, and notably the tight linkage with the USSR, that left any effective pursuit of such a process looking impossible. The impulse arising internally proved insufficient – indeed in the 1980s it led to the imposition of Martial Law and to the delegatising of “Solidarity”.

Likewise, it was only external factors of both a horizontal and vertical nature that allowed democratic change in Poland and other states in the region to succeed. What was involved here was the way in which the Soviet Union ultimately lost out in its rivalry with the USA, as well as the way in which the ideas and solutions the USSR had imposed came up short; and simply could not allow for any move forward. The communism that had always been lacking in terms of democracy or ethical legitimacy also ultimately emerged as dysfunctional from the point of view of societies, states and the entire Eastern Bloc, which therefore experienced erosion and collapse, like the USSR itself, losing any possibility of leveraging the situation in Poland.

Democratisation took place, not only within states, but also in the relations between them. The regaining of sovereignty allowed for a reconfiguration of relations, as well as for the making of new, sovereign choices as regards foreign policy. The democratic authorities of Poland were decisive in their support of a pro-European and pro-transatlantic option in Polish foreign policy. The linking of future CoE, EU and NATO membership with a condition of making progress in the fields of human rights and democratic standards influenced decision-makers in Poland and the shaping of an internal democratic order. At the same

time, Poland obtained huge financial support from the EU within the framework of the PHARE Programme – to a value of almost \$1.7bn (designed to support EU candidate states). It could also count on a writing-off or restructuring of its debts, as well as fresh lines of credit from Western states and financial institutions.

In its democratisation, and its decision to join the Western world, Poland had elites perceiving the huge potential benefits as regards civilisational progress, economic development and security. At the same time, pro-democratic reform meant a need to meet conditions for the membership which Poland aspired to in different organisations already being cooperated with more and more closely. It was in this way that both democratisation and integration with the West were at one and the same time an end and a means to that end. And in all of this, Poland was earning for itself a reputation as a state in which it really had proved possible to transform out of authoritarianism into democracy. Naturally the country strengthened both its image and its real position in Europe in this way. And in later years, the promotion of human rights and democratic standards became an integral part of Poland's foreign policy, allowing it to play a role of its own in the process by which positive values are diffused.

The factor favouring consolidation in Poland entailed a change in the international order achieved at this time and denoting a shift from a bipolar to a unipolar system, in which the main superpower was a USA convinced of its exceptional nature, including as regards respect for human rights and democracy. The rank of these values was raised as the democratic world was joined by Poland and the other CEECs, and the enthusiasm aroused by this process of diffusion was so great as to incline Francis Fukuyama to advance his thesis regarding "the end of history". More specifically, he understood this as an exhausting of options alternative to democracy and the free market (Fukuyama 1989), as well as a premise underpinning international cooperation founded upon liberal values. Over a longer time perspective those views emerged as overly-optimistic. In the 21st century we have been noting symptoms of a crisis for liberal democracy and a weakening of the position of the West, with the international order again becoming subject to transformation.

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Jacek WOJNICKI

Changes in Poland's political system by way of democratisation

Abstract:

The article discusses the issue of the transformation of the Polish political system after 1989, i.e. in the course of the thorough process by which the state became democratic. The time limit extends back to the final decline towards extinction of the Polish People's Republic – a communist-era state with an undemocratic political system; as well as the years in which the Third Republic of Poland took shape as a democratic state. The main research question revolves around the scope of change achieved in the political system, as well as its (possibly) linear nature. Account is here taken of political and systemic premises, as well as those of a historical nature relating to the formation of the democratic state and its political institutions, as often modelled on solutions arrived at by consolidated democracies in the West.

Keywords: *democratisation, free elections, constitution, parliamentarism, transformation*

1. Introduction

This article deals with post-1989 transformation of Poland's political system, i.e. that relating to a far-reaching process of democratisation of the state. This is then the final period in existence of the old Polish People's Republic (as a state from the communist era with a non-democratic political system), as well as the first period in which the Third Republic – a state with democratic credentials – was shaped. The main research questions here thus concern transformation of the political system, as well as the (possibly or potentially) linear nature of that change. Account is here taken of political and systemic premises, as well as the historical shaping of democratic and systemic state institutions often modelled on the solutions present in consolidated Western democracies.

In this analysis, democratisation will be the term applied to a process of transformation taking in the political system, the law, public life, and so on – all in a spirit shaped by democratic principles (Bańko 2005). The several research methods applied included historical descriptive analysis, analysis on a legal and institutional basis, and resort to comparative methods. These have all served to present the evolution of the Polish state's political system, with an indication given as to the key phases of systemic change. Analysis from the political-science point of view has concentrated around determinants and limitations present in

the democratisation process in the country, and its political system. Furthermore, this article refers mainly to Polish literature, in regard to the country's most recent political history, but also political science and constitutional law.

2. The genesis of transformations in Poland's political system

Transformations of the Polish state's political system began in the early 1980s. The inadequacy of the communist country's socio-economic system combined with growing public dissatisfaction with governments (above all the one then headed by Edward Gierek) to find an outlet in a powerful wave of strikes called in August 1980 and resulting in near-paralysis nationwide. The consequence was for the state authorities to have to agree to the emergence of a trade union independent of the Communist Party and going by the name of *Solidarność* after its one-time strike bulletin. Heading the union was electrician from the Gdańsk (Lenin) Shipyard Lech Wałęsa.

It should here be stressed how *Solidarność* would soon become a mass organisation of almost 10 million members (out of a total early-1980s Polish population of 35 million). This discharged several key functions in the then socio-political system, and hence as a trade union first and foremost representing the interests of its workers; but also as broad socio-political movement helping to voice the demands and needs of the nation. This was therefore a new situation in a political system lacking a legal opposition (be that either in Parliament or beyond) since 1947, with the only force in the state independent of its authorities being the Catholic Church. But a new mass socio socio-political force had now taken shape, independent of the Communist Party and the structures of its state authorities (Paczkowski 1995; Roszkowski 2003; Friszke 2003; Karpiński 1985)

The period in question came to be known as "the Solidarity Carnival", and inaugurated an appearance of different concepts seeking change in the political system, even if all of these still came within the framework of modifications to a still-existing and ongoing communist state. Among issues raised were the restoration of the institution of President in place of a collegial head of state in the form of the State Council, the establishment of a Constitutional Tribunal checking for concordance between Acts and other legal instruments of lower rank with the Constitution, and the reinstatement of a Tribunal of State with a remit to stand in judgment upon high officials of the state.

A further key matter that then started to be raised in official discourse was possible (desired) change in the field administration; up to and including a postulate that some form of local government might be reinstated in place of

what were solely at that time territorial emanations of organs of the central-level state administration. Some of these ideas came from the so-called *Stronnictwo Demokratyczne* – as an already-legal grouping of people from the intelligentsia, as well as the world of the arts and crafts, and in some cases also academic circles – as linked or not linked with *Solidarity*.

The December 1981 introduction of Martial Law (given that the Constitution did not provide for the notion of a State of Emergency) did little to put the system out of its misery. The explicit goal of the resort to the military was to defend the existing system of authority and state structures. But, even as the economic situation continued to worsen, the geopolitical configuration began to change seismically (as symbolised ideally by the coming to power of Gorbachev in the USSR in March 1985). To be added to that was a high level of ongoing activity manifested by Polish-born Pope John Paul II (elected 1978).

All of these factors supported the breakthrough that came to fruition at the end of the 1980s. Noting the deterioration in the public mood, and anticipating a further worsening of the economic situation (symbolised by two waves of strikes in spring and summer 1988), the authorities – this time – decided to escape from the situation through a leap forwards as opposed to backwards. This approach was manifest in a proposal that “round table” (later “Round Table”) talks be held with an Opposition considered to consolidate and gather first and foremost around the person of leader of *Solidarność* Lech Wałęsa (by then also familiar as the awardee of the 1983 Nobel Peace Prize, with the result that his status as a moral authority around the world was further enhanced) (Paczkowski 1999; Kowal 2012).

3. The onset of the systemic transformation in Poland

By virtue of the so-called April Amendment, Parliament indeed amended the in-force Constitution of the Polish People's Republic dating from 22nd July 1989 (the *Dziennik Ustaw* Official Journal of Laws RP of 1989, No. 19, item 101). Among new aspects ushered in at this point were provisions agreed upon by the authorities and the Opposition around that Round Table (convening in the February-April 1989 period) (Trembicka 2003).

The structure of leading organs of state authority was indeed subject to change in this way, with the office of President of Poland returning to Poland's Constitutional Order after an absence of 37 years. This was in fact modelled on solutions then in force in the Constitution of Finland, having been chosen by way of indirect decision at the National Assembly (i.e. a joint sitting of both Houses of Parliament in Poland – *Sejm* and *Senat*). This kind of procedure was as foreseen by

constitutional provisions dating back to the Second Republic (1921–1939). The President's term in office was set at 6 years (longer than the term of Parliament) – with this fact alone pointing to a particular role to be played in the system of authority in the state, i.e. one that would be “above and beyond Parliament and the day-to-day political struggle” (Mołdawa 1998; Mojak 1994).

A second key systemic change related to a modified structure of the Polish Parliament, with an Upper House restored under the traditional name from the past of *Senat*. This was to comprise 100 Senators (in line with a situation in which the Lower House or *Sejm* had 460 Deputies). The terms and means of election of the two chambers were brought into line with each other (every four years, under a majority system). However, it needs to be stressed that the *Senat* was founded in such a way as to be in a lesser position than the *Sejm*. Its role was confined to co-participation *vis-à-vis* the legislative function (with a right of legislative initiative and a possibility to make amendments to a text passed on from the *Sejm*). There was also a co-deciding role in the procedures electing the Head of State, but also other key state officials at the highest level (e.g. the Commissioner for Citizens' Rights as a kind of Ombudsman-plus, or the Head of the Supreme Chamber of Audit). The fact that the *Senat* was in a weaker position within the parliamentary structure was further emphasised by its being deprived of a role in the appointment of the government (Council of Ministers), as well as by the absence of any parliamentary scrutinising role.

Furthermore, the final say where the content of Acts of Parliament was concerned lay with the *Sejm*, which could deploy a 2/3 majority to vote in the original version of a Bill, thereby rejecting any amendments that the *Senat* might have made to it (Mojak 2007, Leszczyńska 2015).

At this point it is important to stress that the government system as so-designed did not arise out of a thought-through strategy for some reorientation of systemic models, being rather a manifestation of tactics deployed with varying degrees of agility by the parties negotiating at the Round Table. The systemic model adopted would thus need to be described boldly using the term “hybrid”, given that it linked elements of a system of uniform state power (by which the *Sejm* enjoyed primacy), certain features of the Parliamentary-Cabinet system, and solutions deriving from Presidentialism.

A key figure in the structure comprising the top organs of power remained the President, who would be in a position – and would indeed be expected – to check upon and monitor the process of steady systemic change. The closing date for this was set at 1993, by which time it was foreseen that there would be or would have been fully democratic elections. Through to that time, the basic concept was for *Solidarity* representatives to operate as a force for opposition, now

within Parliament, learning the ropes where actual governance was concerned, but also keeping a close eye on the work the (same) government and state administration continued to do (Garlicki 1996; Ajnenkiel 2001).

Parliamentary elections took place on 4th and 18th June 1989, and were indeed still lacking in certain features characteristic for free, democratic examples of the genre. Nevertheless, there was genuine rivalry, and a real choice to be made, for the first time since before the elections the Communists had rigged back in 1947. Thus, the elections to the lower house or *Sejm* were in line with a contract providing that 65 % of all seats would go to the then government-coalition side, with the remaining 35 % available to society, as it were. In contrast, voting for Senators was entirely open, with nothing assumed in advance as regards the allocation of seats.

Participants in these parliamentary elections could basically be assigned to three groups, i.e. (1) the list of candidates from the then-governing coalition involving the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR – “the Party”), the parties known as *Zjednoczone Stronnictwo Ludowe* and the aforesaid *Stronnictwo Demokratyczne*, and three more minor groupings of secular Catholics; (2) the list of candidates fielded by *Solidarity's* Citizens' Committee; and (3) the list of candidates of other political groupings such as the Pilsudski-ites of *Konfederacja Polski Niepodległej* (the “Confederation for an Independent Poland”), the Christian Democrats of *Stronnictwo Pracy*, the libertarian *Unia Polityki Realnej* (“Union for Real Policy”) and independents (Gebethner 2022; Piasecki 2012).

The elections were indeed a success for candidates of the *Solidarność* Citizens' Committee, with seats brought to almost every single KO “S” candidate in the first vote (in which a requirement to gain over half of the valid votes cast in each constituency had represented a further potential hurdle). So *Solidarity* would in the event field 160 Deputies out of a maximum for the “society” side of the election equal to 161, as well as 92 Senators (from among the 100 *Senat* seats).

On the side of the governing coalition, the first round of voting for Deputies' seats resulted in success for just 3 candidates, but even then it might be worth noting that these people actually enjoyed the support of the *Solidarity* side. The magnitude of the disaster that had been experienced was further illustrated by the “National List” aspect to the election, which featured 35 key politicians from that side of the fence, and included such figures as Prime Minister Mieczysław F. Rakowski as well as “Round Table” host (General) Czesław Kiszczak – the Minister of Internal Affairs.

The second round of voting, which took place on 18th June 1989, actually granted further seats to Lech Wałęsa's candidates, the one exception being a

single hopeful for the *Senat* who lost out to a local businessman (Hall 2011; Karpieński 2001).

The configuration of seats in the bicameral National Assembly (i.e. *Sejm* plus *Senat*) was as follows: 300 seats for the Coalition and Government side, and 260 for the “Solidarity” side. In fact, however, a kind of unstable equilibrium actually made its appearance, given that there were a dozen or more Deputies from among the 65 % who declared themselves open to new possible political solutions, including those of a coalition kind. This configuration of circumstances ensured that the pressure for just such further new political solutions was maintained, and that meant an acceleration beyond what had been anticipated by the Round Table scenario for political change.

A first step saw a combined sitting of the Houses of Parliament on July 19th 1989 make a selection of a new President, not least with more than a dozen Solidarity-side Deputies and Senators concurring. The President would thus be none other than Wojciech Jaruzelski, the in-place leader of the Communist Party, official “face” of Martial Law, and Chair of Poland’s collegial-style Council of State (Raciborski 1997; Zieliński 1993).

Less than a month later, on August 17th 1989, a government coalition formed up, comprising the *Obywatelski Klub Parlamentarny* plus two allied groupings already referred to – *Zjednoczone Stronnictwo Ludowe* and *Stronnictwo Demokratyczne*. The head of the government constructed on this coalition basis was Catholic activist and Wałęsa co-worker Tadeusz Mazowiecki (Domarańczyk 1990). It is worth noting how this was the first non-Communist Polish Prime Minister in post-War political history, and the first since 1947 anywhere in Central Europe.

To safeguard interests of a geopolitical nature (Poland’s role in Warsaw Pact structures) as well as a political nature, the participation of several Ministers from the Party (*PZPR*) was also assured, though not as official coalition members from the governing camp. So it was that the new government was elected by the *Sejm* at its sitting of September 12th 1989. It is worth paying attention to the political configuration present within the framework of this pioneering Polish government. Among 18 Ministerial portfolios, only 8 were reserved for politicians from the Polish United Workers’ Party hitherto in power. 11 Ministries were thus taken on by *Solidarity* candidates.

Furthermore, Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki gave a speech at a *Sejm* sitting in which he presented, not only the programme of the government, but also a new governance philosophy. This was based on two key socio-political processes – the building of a democratic state and of a social market economy (Sygit 1998, Sadecki 2009).

4. Successive phases to systemic change

The second important amendment of the Constitution from 1952 came on December 29th 1989, and denoted a drawing of systemic consequences from the changing political situation in Poland [the *Dziennik Ustaw* Official Journal of Laws RP of 1989, No. 75, item 444]. Alongside its symbolic elements, this did bring significant systemic change. For a start it restored the name of the country from history, i.e. the Republic of Poland – and in addition it brought back a crowned (as opposed to uncrowned) eagle as the national emblem. The nation is then defined as the sovereign of state authority, with this notion taking the place of the ideologically-charged previous notion – in line with which sovereign status was ascribed to the working population of town and countryside. Provisions relating to the primary role in the state of *PZPR* (the Polish United Workers' Party) were removed as were invocations of alliance between Poland and the USSR plus other communist-bloc states. In truth, provisions worded in these ways were not perhaps as old as might be imagined, given their appearance by virtue of the February 1976 amendments to the Constitution that in fact echoed provisions already in place in other states of the Eastern Bloc.

Political pluralism was now affirmed as a constitutional principle, with this taken to denote freedom of establishment and action on the part of political groupings. Being in line with the democratic constitutionalism present in the democracies of the West, the above provision was of a kind making its first appearance in Polish constitutional law. Further key provisions related to the socio-economic system, with equal status now assigned to the private, cooperative and state forms of ownership (where the last had previously enjoyed privileges). Such change was especially important in the context of the far-reaching economic reform restoring market institutions that went by the name of Balcerowicz Plan. The latter in fact took effect on January 1st 1990 (Mołdawa 2018; Ajnenkiel 2001).

The third key amendment to the 1952 Constitution was that achieved on March 8th 1990 and related to matters of local government (the *Dziennik Ustaw* Official Journal of Laws RP of 1990, No. 16, item 94). The provider of the new system was here restoring self-governing local authorities at the lowest level of administration known as the *gmina*. This served as a basis for change in the state's administrative structure, with a process of decentralisation of state authority now commencing. The solution for Polish local government was modelled on provisions of the Council of Europe's 1985 Charter on Local Self-Government, as well as (for reasons both historical and substantive) the regulations enacted in the two Western European states of France and Germany. The first election to self-governing Councils at the level of the *gmina* was held on May 27th 1990,

with this day since taken as symbolising the rebirth of non-central tiers of administrative authority in Poland (Regulski and Kulesza 2009).

Here it is also worth noting that, on July 28th 1990, Poland's first Act on Political Parties was passed (the *Dziennik Ustaw* Official Journal of Laws of 1990, No. 34, item 312). This was modelled on the liberal solutions present in Germany, and it assumed the registration of political parties by the Warsaw Provincial Court, as opposed to some other registration procedure. This helped reinforce the constitutional principle of political pluralism, defining what parties were and the tasks they were to perform in a democratic state.

So it was that a pluralist political scene took shape in Poland in the 1990s. And within this, it was possible to identify (and draw a distinction between) several party groupings, i.e. (1) those of a post-communist profile; (2) those of a post-*Solidarność* nature; (3) those with a longer tradition from Polish history; and (4) new groupings.

The first category included parties arising through a transformation of the parties operating legally during the time of the Polish People's Republic (PRL). Thus *Socjaldemokracja RP* was the innocuously-named entity that "the Party" transformed itself into in January 1990, while *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe* came into being in the May of that year, albeit with only a minor name change from *Zjednoczone Stronnictwo Ludowe* (meaning that what had been the "United" party of the people or peasants now became the "Polish" party of that ilk). A positive feature of this grouping (apart from its established structure and assets) was the presence of young leaders like Aleksander Kwaśniewski, Leszek Miller and Waldemar Pawlak.

Political parties of the second category were those arising as the broad socio-political movement that was *Solidarność* broke apart rather rapidly. What then appeared were ideologically quite diverse parties that actually avoided that particular word and were often rather in the nature of alliances or groupings. So there was *Unia Demokratyczna* (the Democratic Union) under Tadeusz Mazowiecki, *Porozumienie Centrum* (the "Centre Agreement") with Jarosław Kaczyński, *Kongres Liberalno-Demokratyczny* (the Liberal-Democrat Congress) with Donald Tusk and Jan Krzysztof Bielecki, and *Solidarność Pracy* with Ryszard Bugaj.

In turn, the groupings with longer history included those parties that had been in a position to operate legally even during the communist era. These were then various incarnations of the Polish Socialist Party, *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe* (the Peasant Party), the Christian Democrat-type *Stronnictwo Pracy*, *Stronnictwo Narodowe*, and so on.

In turn, new groupings fitting into none of the above groups could be taken to include the Piłsudski-ite *Konfederacja Polski Niepodległej* (Confederation for

an Independent Poland), the libertarian *Unia Polityki Realnej* (Union of Real Policy) and a variety of different groupings splintering off from the environmental movement (Wojtaszczyk 1998).

September 1990 brought an amendment to the Constitution involving a change in the manner of electing the President (the *Dziennik Ustaw* Official Journal of Laws of 1990, No. 67, item 397). The direct elections ushered in at this point were modelled on solutions that had been applied in France since 1962. Candidates also needed to be over 35, and remain in full possession of all of their political rights. These candidates would only be in a position to announce themselves if they had first gained the backing of at least 100,000 citizens. The presidential term was set at 5 years. The elections were to be run by the Marshal of the *Sejm*, even as the President would be taking his oath before the National Assembly. The victorious candidate had to obtain more than half of the valid votes cast. Where no definitive result emerge from the above, a second round of voting involving the two candidates with the highest levels of first-round support would take place 14 days later.

On that basis, first Presidential Elections by universal suffrage were organised for November 25th 1990, even though a resolving of the situation indeed came only with the second vote run on December 9th. The President elected having received 75 % support was Lech Wałęsa, that famous leader of *Solidarność* back in the 1980s. Wałęsa swore his oath in front of the National Assembly at its ceremonial sitting of December 22nd 1990 – the day on which he also made his first official speech to Parliament in his new capacity (Dudek 2007; Karpiński 2001; Hall 2011).

Parliament also undertook work on a new Constitution, with separate Constitutional Committees being established in both the first chamber (the *Sejm*) and the second (the *Senat*). The drafts originating from the two sources differed markedly from each other, with the *Sejm* version envisioning a Parliamentary-Cabinet system. For its part, the *Senat* draft strengthened the entitlements of the Head of State while emphasising the significance of the Catholic Church. By autumn 1990, both drafts were ready, hence the initial idea of a new Constitution being enacted on the 200th anniversary of the proclamation of Poland's first Constitution – dated May 3rd 1791. However, by Spring 1991 there was a clearly prevalent mood holding that a Parliament not deriving from fully free and democratic elections lacked the legitimacy to pass the legal instrument of greatest importance to state and nation.

That matter was then resolved thanks to a decisive stance taken by President Lech Wałęsa, whose ceremonial speech to mark the aforesaid 200th anniversary

announced that enactment of the new Constitution would be a task for the Parliament to be elected in October 1991 (Dudek 2007; Karpiński 2001).

Sure enough, fully free and democratic elections came along on October 27th 1991, with a proportional formula applied. On the one hand, this made it easier for political groupings to gain seats; but on the other it gave rise to a Parliament very much sub-divided.

At this point it is necessary to take a look at the background to the democratisation of the political system. Fully free and democratic parliamentary elections were ushered in in November 1922. However, the governments of the “Sanation” period from as early as 1926 on were not like this, and nor of course were the ways in which post-1944 communist governments came to power either free or competitive. It was in this way that those establishing the Election Ordinance offered a justification for the adoption of a proportional formula for the first democratic elections to Poland’s legislature. In response, lists of candidates were announced by 111 socio-political organisations and groupings. 29 of these went on to win parliamentary seats, but there were some 10–20 parties represented by just a single Deputy. A more serious corollary of that was that the two “largest” groupings in Parliament each took just 12 % of the vote. The parties in question here were *Unia Demokratyczna* – the centrist grouping of none other than first democratic PM Tadeusz Mazowiecki, as well as the post-communist *Socjaldemokracja RP* as led by Aleksander Kwaśniewski and Leszek Miller.

On the other hand, a majority voting formula applied to the *Senat* again resulted in *UD* being the largest party represented, with 21 of the 100 seats (Gebethner 1993; Raciborski 1997).

In December 1991, a Constitutional Committee under the aforementioned Tadeusz Mazowiecki was called into being – with the three key legislative tasks of preparing a Constitutional Act on the means of enacting a Constitution; making ready the provisional solution from Polish tradition going by the name of “Small Constitution”; and beginning work on an all-embracing constitutional order. As was alluded to above, the splits (indeed far-reaching fragmentation) present in Parliament did not make these things any easier. Furthermore, after 18 months (at the end of May 1993), Parliament was dissolved before its term was up by the then President, Lech Wałęsa.

Overall though, the work on the Constitution as it actually arose did not emerge as especially flawed. Two main instruments of law were in fact made ready, as planned; i.e. a Constitutional Act on the means of enacting the prospective Constitution; and the so-called “Small Constitution” (Ajnenkiel 2001; Kallas 2007; Chruściak and Osiatyński 2001).

The first of these Constitutional Acts was passed on April 23rd 1992 (the *Dziennik Ustaw* Official Journal of Laws RP of 1992, No. 67, item 336). The right to come forward with a draft Constitution was in this way obtained by the President, or else a group of at least 92 Members of the National Assembly. In April 1994, the above options were augmented by the possibility of a Citizens' Draft being put forward, where this was approved by at least 500,000 citizens (the *Dziennik Ustaw* Official Journal of Laws RP of 1994, No. 61, item 251).

A second fundamental question related to the running of a Referendum to approve a Constitution. This matter was resolved in such a way that, for the first time within the systemic tradition of the Polish state, the Constitutional Act was to receive the approval of the whole nation by way of universal suffrage. This was in and of itself to offer up proof that the political system had democratised, and thus cut itself off definitively from the past – be that the recent past of PRL or the further past of the inter-War “Sanation” period (Garlicki 1997; Mołdawa 2018).

October 17th 1992 then brought the enactment of a Constitutional Act on mutual relations between the Legislature and the Executive, as well as on local and regional government [The *Dziennik Ustaw* Official Journal of Laws RP of 1992, No. 84, item 426]. The need for a Constitutional Act of this type to be prepared reflected several different (both political and systemic) premises. In the first place there were the experiences with imprecise legal regulations deriving from the three earlier amendments of the Constitution (of April and December 1989 and of September 1990), and notably with the way those had been used to reinforce the entitlements to exercise authority ascribed to President Wałęsa. In the second place, there was the desire to “tidy up” the constitutional order through the introduction of one main applicable regulation dealing with the interrelated nature of the leading organs of power (Parliament, President of Poland and Government). In the third place, there was an indication as to the essence of decentralisation processes and the systemic position of local and regional government. And finally, there was the receding prospect of an all-embracing Constitution being enacted, making it all the more necessary for some kind of systemic “band-aid” to be applied in the interim period (Kruk 1993; Kallas 1993).

After several decades of absence (going back to 1952), the system-provider brought in a principle of the separation of powers into a legislature (*Sejm* and *Senat*), an executive (President and Council of Ministers) and a Judiciary in a position to dispense justice via independent courts and tribunals. The position of the *Senat* as a chamber weaker than the *Sejm* was maintained, as was made manifest in its lack of influence on the pursuit of scrutinising functions *vis-à-vis* the government, as well as the lack of participation in the process by which the Council of Ministers was appointed.

In fact, the creative function of the *Senat* was also very much confined to the most important state offices. The weakening of the *Senat*'s position as regards lawmaking was expressed in a lowering of the qualified majority needed for the *Sejm* to reject Senators' amendments passed down to it. As has been noted, it was by virtue of the April amendment that the two-thirds qualified majority was decided upon, though currently this is reduced to an absolute majority of those Deputies actually present at the relevant debate (Garlicki 1997; Skrzydło 1993).

A new way of appointing governments was introduced, with this entailing the alternate involvement of the Head of State (in the first, third and fifth steps) and the *Sejm* (in the second and fourth). In total, the procedure by which a government was created might last up to 108 days, irrespective of whether this was following the resignation of a government in the course of a parliamentary term, or directly following a Parliament's being constituted.

The adoption of such solutions arose out of the aforementioned excessive fragmentation of Parliament in the wake of the autumn 1991 election. The last step was to have been the President's establishing of a Council of Ministers for a period of 6 months, with this time being available for the Council to seek and win a confidence vote in the *Sejm*, or else organise pre-term elections. At the same time, an obligation was introduced requiring consultation with the Head of State in respect of the appointment of the country's three most important Ministers (of Foreign Affairs, National Defence and Internal Affairs). However, constitutional practice as witnessed in the years 1992–97 pointed to abuse of this Presidential competence, given the way this in essence converted (in the face of at-best passive resistance from a succession of Heads of Government) into the Head of State actually indicating the candidates (his candidates) for the three Ministerial chiefs. And, just to be clear, it is notable that this (mal)practice was as much characteristic for President Kwaśniewski as it was for his predecessor in the post Lech Wałęsa (Kallas 1993; Szmyt 1995).

At the end of this analysis of the key systemic instrument in question, it is important to point to its representing the (albeit inconsistent) introduction of a systemic institution new to Poland arising out of German practice – of the so-called constructive confidence vote. This denoted that the announcement of such a vote in relation to a Cabinet in office has to be linked with the simultaneous naming of a candidate for next Head of Government. This in turn reflects years of observation of that fact that it is far easier to build a so-called negative majority in Parliament than a constructive one. The solution referred to had as its aim a strengthening of the position of the Cabinet in office – as was the case in German practice post-1949. It is also linked with a reinforcement of the political

and systemic position of the Head of Government (of course the Federal Chancellor in the German case).

A lack of consistency to the Polish regulation is manifested in the possibility of a group of Deputies announcing both a vote of the normal kind and one that follows the "constructive" formula. The First *Sejm* made use of both instruments of power *vis-à-vis* the Cabinet (first in relation to that of Hanna Suchocka in May 1993 – normal, and second in relation to Waldemar Pawlak's government in March 1995 – constructive). This ensured that the position of Head of Government was not strengthened more markedly, even where a 7-party governing coalition was in power (as with the Cabinet of Hanna Suchocka in the July 1992 to May 1993 period) (Skrzydło 1993).

5. Work on an all-embracing constitution for the state

Work on an all-embracing Constitution for the Polish state was begun for the third time in the context of the new Parliament elected in September 1993. Symbolically, the latter might in fact be thought to recall the *Sejm* elected in June 1989, as no fewer than 2/3 of all seats were taken by groupings originating in "People's Poland". Thus 303 Deputies represented either the post-communists of SLD (*Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej*) or else the agrarian-party "Peasants" of *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe*. That left just 157 seats going to no fewer than four separate centrist or right-of-centre groupings. Even the largest of these (*Unia Demokratyczna*) could field just 74 MPs.

It was Aleksander Kwaśniewski who headed the Constitutional Commission called into being in November 1993 (Tomaszewski 2007; Gebethner 1998).

The three main areas of dispute afflicting the work on the new Constitution revolved around: (1) the position within the system and competences of the President of the Republic of Poland *vis-à-vis* top organs of state authority; (2) the position of the Catholic Church and the means of defining Church-State relations (a divide over whether the hallmark was to be cooperation or autonomy), and (3) how to determine the catalogue of socio-economic rights that were to be in the new constitutional instrument.

Indeed, as the Constitution was being made ready, several fundamental compromises were entered into, but in order for Poland's new basic law to gain enactment at all. In the first place, there was an agreement reached between the largest post-communist grouping (SLD) and the post-Solidarity UD, in the matter of both factions' consent to the development of a democratic state with a free-market economy. And secondly, two centre-left groupings were also invited into the constitutional compromise, i.e. *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe* and *Unia Pracy*.

The subject of the compromise was agreement to the idea of the Constitution encompassing a broad catalogue of socio-economic rights. A third compromise made far-reaching reference to the axiological sphere – the role of the Catholic Church in the most recent history of the country and its society, and account taken of the national traditions derived directly from Poland's First and Second Republics (Garlicki 1997; Chruściak 1997).

The fruits of more than 200 Constitutional studies was the preparation of an extensive (longest-ever) Polish Constitution, running to 243 Articles. This gave effect to a hybrid Parliamentary/Prime Ministerial government model influenced by solutions arrived at in the German version revolving around the presence of a Chancellor. In the Polish context, efforts were made to weaken or limit the entitlements of the President, given a drawing of conclusions based around the experiences with Lech Wałęsa as (a deemed-to-be overactive) President of Poland in the years 1990–1995.

The post of Polish President in this way lost the right to supply opinions regarding three key Government Ministers. Many official acts of the Head of State also now came to require counter-signature on the part of the Head of Government. However, there was a strengthening of the position of the Prime Minister (in his/her capacity as Head of the Council of Ministers), as well as the government as a whole – albeit not to such a degree as would allow the model adopted to be termed a Chancellor-like or semi-Chancellor-like model.

This reinforced position of the Polish Premier owed much to the obligatorily introduced (aforementioned) institution of the constructive confidence vote, which was designed to serve as a stabilisation *vis-à-vis* the durability of a given government within the *Sejm*. Indeed, when we compare governments' lengths of time in power pre- and post-1997, it is clearly possible to note the stabilisation of a succession of Cabinets – with both Jerzy Buzek and Donald Tusk in his first government lasting for almost the entire parliamentary term – as something that had not happened previously in Polish systemic practice.

The procedure underpinning the founding of a given Council of Ministers came to be simplified, with just three constitutional steps now needed. The initiative in calling a government into being now fell within the remit of the President of Poland, while the difference came down to the majority required in the *Sejm* for a vote of confidence to be received – absolute in a first voting, relative in the third step (the second step being where the *Sejm* indicates both PM and government, with this again requiring an absolute majority). In the third step it is again the role of the Head of State to indicate the candidate for Prime Minister, and then to swear in that PM's Cabinet.

And for the record, it might be worth noting here that so far (through to 2021) only the Cabinet of Marek Belka was appointed by the President by way of the third Constitutional step – in June 2004.

The new constitutional regulations also reinforced the position of the Constitutional Tribunal within the Polish system. Its judgments checking on a law or Act's status as constitutional or not ended up as final (having previously been voted on in the Sejm, which was in a position to reject by way of a 2/3 qualified majority).

The Constitution of the Republic of Poland was endorsed by a decisive majority (more than 80 %) of votes at a ceremonial sitting of the National Assembly on April 2nd 1997 (the *Dziennik Ustaw* Official Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland of 1997, No. 78, item 483). An approving Referendum was then run on May 25th 1997, this being the first such session of voting in the history of the Polish system. Votes in favour of the Constitution were cast by more than 52.5 % of those voting, if only on a 42 % turnout. The Constitution then received the signature of the President of Poland on July 16th 1997, with this then entering into force three months later, in this way commencing with a new stage in Poland's systemic transformation.

6. Summary

The Polish systemic changes form part of the process of transformation taking place more widely in the formerly-communist CEECs. The pursuit of these was in essence dependent on three factors being present – a reforming wing in the ruling government camp, strong opposition structures with a democratic way of looking at things (this being true of *Solidarność* in the Polish case) and a favourable geopolitical environment. This last was present thanks to a policy of greater openness proposed from 1985 onwards by new, younger leader of the Soviet Union Mikhail Gorbachev.

The political breakthrough was associated with the success of Solidarity-related groupings in the semi-competitive elections to *Sejm* and *Senat* held in June 1989. An important political event conferring a faster tempo on the systemic changes was then the establishment of post-War Poland's first non-communist government, led by Tadeusz Mazowiecki. However, the systemic changes proceeded via three stages. First there was a process of amendment of the Constitution in force, dating back to 1952 (via the April, December, March and September amendments). Then a provisional Constitution was made ready and given the name taken from Polish tradition of Small Constitution. It was thus only the period at the end of the parliamentary term that brought preparation and enactment of a

new Constitution modelled on the democratic constitutionalism of Western Europe, if also drawing on Polish systemic tradition. The systemic model adopted assumes a Parliamentary-Cabinet system with strengthened position for both the Council of Ministers and its Head (i.e. the Prime Minister). This has been designed to safeguard systemic stability, as well as democratic institutions, against any dictatorial tendencies that might arise.

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Adam SZYMAŃSKI

Democratisation in Poland in the 21st century – New or old challenges?

Abstract:

Poland is one of the EU members, which faces in recent years the so called “democratic backsliding”. It refers to the deteriorating state of (liberal) democracy in this country. It is particularly important for a political scientist to find out what is behind this process. It is possible only with going over the political transition from the undemocratic to democratic regime and the democratic consolidation in Poland with a toothcomb. The author of this chapter takes this approach and tries to answer the following questions: Are the current problems of Poland with democracy a consequence of failure of the democratic consolidation or unfinished political transition beforehand? If the former is the case, what factors dysfunctional for the democratic consolidation have contributed to the current state of democracy? If the latter – what challenges, which Poland faced during the transition, have not been overcome and are still obstacles for the progress in democratisation? Their answer requires a use by the author of the democratisation theoretical framework to date, including the list of factors making the democratic transition and consolidation possible.

Keywords: democratic backsliding; democratic consolidation; democratic transition, institutions, political culture

1. Introduction

Poland belongs to the countries that made a substantial progress in democratisation after 1989, with a help of the external actors, including first of all the European Union. However, it is one of the EU members, which faces in recent years the so called “democratic backsliding”. It refers to the deteriorating state of (liberal) democracy in this country specified by Nancy Bermeo as “the state-led debilitation or elimination of the political institutions sustaining an existing democracy” (Bermeo 2016, 5). It is particularly important for a political scientist to find out what is behind this process. It is possible only with going over the political transition from the undemocratic to democratic regime (which occurred in Poland within the process of political transformation after 1989) and the democratic consolidation, which began at the turn of the 20th and 21st century, with a toothcomb (Antoszewski 2016, 180).

The author of this chapter takes this approach and tries to answer the following questions: Are the current problems of Poland with democracy a consequence of failure of the democratic consolidation or unfinished political transition beforehand? If the former is the case, what factors dysfunctional for the democratic consolidation have contributed to the current state of democracy? If the latter – what challenges, which Poland faced during the transition, have not been overcome and are still obstacles for the progress in democratisation?

The research claim that will be verified in this chapter is that both the stage of transition and democratic consolidation have contributed to the current state of democracy in Poland. The issues – both structural and functional – that have its roots in the transition period or at the beginning of the democratic consolidation have been a fertile breeding ground for the Polish problems in the democratic consolidation in the recent decade.

The theoretical basis of this study serves the verification of this main research claim and consists of the following components: (1) the framework on democratisation – first of all the conceptualisation of democratic transition and consolidation, including their meaning and factors deciding about success and failure of these processes (Antoszewski 2016), (2) new institutionalism approach (mainly the historical institutionalism and the concept of causal chains) (Pierson 2004) and (3) the concept of political (democratic) culture (Almond and Verba 1989).

The author of this chapter takes the qualitative approach. The single case study of Poland has been chosen to highlight the problems with keeping the liberal model of democracy of all Central and East European countries, in which we observe nowadays the deterioration of the state of democracy. The process-tracing method will be used to track the processes and chains of events contributing to current shape of political regime in Poland. The system analysis in turn will serve investigating the institutional factors (elements of the political system understood as a set of interrelated institutions) influencing the state of the Polish democracy. Different data sources will be used to indicate the state of democracy in Poland (EIU democracy index) and the problems of the democratic culture in this country (surveys).

The chapter will start with outlining the theoretical framework of this study. It will be followed by a brief diagnosis of the state of democracy in Poland. The main part of the text will be devoted to the question of what went wrong in Poland and will consist of two parts on institutional and functional issues.

2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this chapter consists of several components.

First of all, the theories of democracy or rather democratisation will be used in the study. Firstly, the conceptual framework concerning the process of transition – i.e. change from the undemocratic to democratic political regime will be taken into consideration. The indicators of the successful transition will be particularly useful in this regard. Two approaches dominate in the literature to date. According to the empirical approach, the successful transition means the existence of democratic institutions, e.g. competitive elections, successful opposition (in terms of winning elections) or adoption of the democratic constitution. The interpretative approach in turn pays often attention to attitudes of elites and society who accept the democratic rules and do not think that coming back to an undemocratic regime is possible (Antoszewski 2016, 165–166).

Secondly, the concept of democratic consolidation and factors deciding about its success will be used in the study. Most scholars agree that it is about the political process, which is based on the gradual increase in the coherence of the existing democratic political regime (after the transition from the undemocratic regime) in two dimensions: (1) mutual adjustment of the regime components in the normative dimension, i.e. correction of institutional developments from the transition period and introduction of the democratic rules for relationship between incumbents and opposition, or state authorities and unelected institutions (e.g. army or Church); (2) decreasing the discrepancy between the democratic norms and political attitudes as well as behaviour (Antoszewski 2016, 182).

The conditions of effective consolidation of democracy proposed in the literature are first of all functional – economic (the role of economic growth and welfare), social (the role of middle class and level of education) and cultural (the role of political culture of elites and society and historical aspects) (e.g. Vanhanen 1992; Lipset 1994; Beetham 1994; Diamond 1996, 2002; Szymański 2017) or structural – first of all statehood, peace, working of the particular political regime and its institutions and the external environment as well as actor-centred – strategies of the political actors (e.g. Lijphart 1991; Fink-Hafner and Hafner-Fink 2009; Møller and Skaaning 2011; Szymański 2019). It must be underlined that they are not exclusive but rather complementary approaches, which taken together can give the full picture of effectiveness of the democratic consolidation (Antoszewski 2016, 203).

We can notice that both in the case of political transition and democratic consolidation the most important factors are either structural (first of all institutional – in domestic or international dimension) or functional, with the most frequent acknowledgment of role of the political culture. We will then focus in the study on these factors, which requires the use of additional theoretical tools.

On the one hand, the historical institutionalism and its approach to the institutional change will be helpful to explain the institutional factors being behind the problems in democratisation in Poland. Paul Pierson proposes in this context an useful analytical approach that is based on the assumption that to explain the institutional change – which belongs to the factors influencing the state of democracy, including Poland – a researcher must look at the past and analyse the causal chains, i.e. how subsequent events and processes and connections between them lead to the observable outcome (institutional change) (Pierson 2004).

On the other hand, the classical concept of the political culture will be useful in this study. It is in the context of democracy about the knowledge of elites and society of democracy and its rules as well as their attitudes towards democracy and behaviour that confirms a particular attitude towards democratic rules and institutions (e.g. participation in elections, different forms of direct democracy, political parties or civil society organizations) (Almond and Verba 1989).

3. State of Democracy and Democratisation in Poland

Poland began the democratic transformation in 1989 – five years before the EU membership application in 1994 (Błuszkowski 2007). At the end of the 1990s, when it was involved in the EU pre-accession strategy and conducted the accession negotiations (since 1998), it began already the democratic consolidation. The transition to the democratic regime was proved among others by conducting several competitive elections, in which we observed the alteration of power (parliamentary in 1989, 1991, 1993 and 1997; presidential in 1990 and 1995; local in 1990 and 1994) and adopting the democratic constitution in 1997.

The development of relations with the Union facilitated progress in the democratic consolidation. Poland had to fulfil the so called Copenhagen criteria of membership. It was in the political dimension mainly the respect for democratic rules, rule of law as well as human rights and rights of minorities. It conducted substantial reforms under the EU influence at the turn of the new century in order to fulfil these membership criteria. Both the political transformation and EU accession process progress contributed substantially to progress in the consolidation of the democratic regime and improvement of working of the state institutions, although there were some problems with transfer of the EU democratic norms and rules – e.g. with application of rule of law, creating good administration and adoption of effective anti-corruption instruments (Wojtaszczyk and Adamowski 2001, 23–25; Tomini 2015).

The progress in democratisation was awarded among others by the Polish accession to the EU in 2004. Poland seemed to be on the right path to advanced

consolidation of democracy. As the Table 1 below indicates, at the end of first decade of the 21st century the country got quite good results – 48th rank and 7.05 overall score in EIU democracy index (within 0–10 scale).

Table 1. EIU Democracy Index – Poland 2010–2020 (0- worst score, 10 – best score).

Category/ Year	20 10	20 11	20 12	20 13	20 14	20 15	20 16	20 17	20 18	20 19	20 20
Overall score (10=best)	7.05	7.12	7.12	7.12	7.47	7.09	6.83	6.67	6.67	6.62	6.85
Electoral process and pluralism	9.58	9.58	9.58	9.58	9.58	9.58	9.17	9.17	9.17	9.17	9.17
Function- ing of government	6.07	6.43	6.43	6.43	5.71	5.71	5.71	6.07	6.07	6.07	6.07
Civil liberties	9.12	9.12	9.12	9.12	9.12	9.12	8.24	7.65	7.65	7.35	7.06
Political participation	6.11	6.11	6.11	6.11	6.67	6.67	6.67	6.11	6.11	6.11	6.67
Political culture	4.38	4.38	4.38	4.38	6.25	4.38	4.38	4.38	4.38	4.38	5.73

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), www.eiu.com

The satisfactory state of democracy was confirmed in next years (overall score in EIU democracy index – 7.12 in 2011–2014) but the period 2015–2020 has brought the change, reflecting the development of process of democratic backsliding in Poland. In 2015 the overall score of the EIU Democratic Index as well as category “Functioning of government” – concerning among others the control over the government (by institutions and citizens), its autonomy, accountability and transparent work as well as corruption – went down, with small improvement in 2017–2020. It belongs to most problematic categories singled out by EIU Democracy Index.

In 2016 in turn we could observe the decline of scores in categories “Electoral process and pluralism” – concerning the electoral integrity, working of political parties (including the role of opposition parties) and civil society organizations

as well as “Civil liberties” (among others freedom of expression and media, freedom of religion, personal freedoms and equality under the law and minorities rights). However, while the former category was still at high level (above 9.00) and did not change in the years 2017–2020, the civil liberties were at increasingly lower level. While it was 8.24 in 2016, in the period 2017–2018 – already 7.65, in 2019 – 7.35 and in 2020 – 7.06.

The most problematic category is the “Political culture”. However, interestingly, it had been at the same very low level since 2010, with exception of 2014 and, surprisingly, 2020. The last date can be explained by the rise of pro-democratic behaviour of the Polish society, e.g. in the form of protests – as the reaction to undemocratic steps taken by the incumbents (Deneka 2021). Therefore, it could not be treated as an evidence for some improvement of the state of democracy in Poland. The data shows that the most important deficit is in the Polish case the perception of democracy, no matter if Civic Platform or Law and Justice governs in the country (Civic Platform governed in the period 2007–2015, Law and Justice has been holding the power since 2015).

All EIU reports from 2010 to 2020 define the Polish political regime as flawed democracy, i.e. democracy with some deficits (not full democracy then), but this country was in recent years closer to group of states with hybrid regimes (with a mixture of democratic and authoritarian components). In Central and Eastern Europe Poland was on 9th position (after Estonia, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Hungary). Since 2015 it has been closer to “hybrid regime” (overall EIU score – 5.99–4.0) than “full democracy” (overall EIU score – 8 points and more).

4. What Went Wrong?

The key question is: What are the reasons for this negative change in the democratisation process in Poland after 2015? As it was mentioned above, the author of this text assumes that the key factors belong to either structural issues – mainly institutional (both domestic and international, first of all related to the EU) or functional aspects, in the Polish case first of all connected with the question of state of the democratic political culture. Their roots are in the process of political transition and/or at the beginning of the democratic consolidation but their fruits already at the more advanced stage of the latter process.

Interestingly, Poland is not the *sui generis* case in this regard. Pavel Dufek and Jan Holzer prove, reviewing the academic debate on democracy in Central and Eastern Europe that these categories dominate among factors behind problems

and dilemmas in the democratisation problem in the whole region (Dufek and Holzer 2016).

Structural (Institutional) Issues

Many current problems in the process of democratisation in Poland and other Central and East European countries have their roots in institutional developments.

Domestic structural (institutional) factors can first of all: (1) increase the risk of deformation of the majority rule meaning the establishment of the “tyranny of majority” (Sartori 1987) – including the domination of incumbents and governing party/parties in the political system and weakening a role of the opposition and (2) strengthen extensively the executive power at the cost of the legislative and judiciary power, leading to weakening of checks and balances system and to the so called executive aggrandizement (Bermeo 2016, 10).

These processes have been gradually developed in Poland (and in other Central European states such as Hungary) in the second decade of the 21st century but the structural factors that contributed to it, emerged and were developed at the turn of 20th and 21st century. It was then already after the period of transition which looked satisfactory from the institutional perspective. Poland managed to build the parliamentary system with stable institutions, strong position of the bodies elected by the people and the aforementioned fair and competitive elections, to apply the rule of law and to adopt the fully democratic constitution. However, it was followed by the development of some institutional factors that later would contribute to the problems in the process of democratisation.

One of these factors was a concentration of the party system, producing a decrease in the number of parties in the parliament. While in the 1990s the number of parties over the threshold for parliamentary representation in Poland fluctuated between five and nine, this number decreased to four in the 2007–2010 period (Olson and Ilonszki 2011, 239). This had much to do with: (1) elevated electoral thresholds – five percent for single parties but eight percent for coalitions as well as (2) the required number of deputies necessary to form parliamentary party groups – i.e. 15 (Olson and Ilonszki 2011, 241–242; Mansfeldová 2011, 139). This process was accompanied by a rising party system polarization that strengthened the two largest parties and developed two ideological blocks, although both rather on the right side of the political scene. It was since 2007 the Civic Platform (PO) and Law and Justice (PiS) (Mansfeldová 2011, 143).

The concentration of the party system and bi-polarization had the impact on the changing relationship between the executive and legislative power. The

executive power and incumbents were increasing its position in the parliament bodies at the cost of Sejm and Senat (two chambers of the Polish parliament). The government deputies used questions or interpellations as a way to publicize government policies. Changes in the internal rules of parliament strengthened the position of the government and the governing parties in the legislative process at the expense of the parliamentary opposition. An increasing number of government laws were approved while opposition proposals were blocked (Zubek 2011, 184–188).

All these factors resulted in a gradual development in the second decade of this century of so called majoritarianism – understood in a pejorative way as the aforementioned “tyranny of majority” which limits a possibility that other majority will emerge – first of all through the electoral process as well as the social and political pluralism. The favourable condition was a particular political situation in 2015 – i.e. power being assumed by the government with a dominating coalition partner – Law and Justice. In this year PiS won the presidential and then the parliamentary elections and formed a government consisted of Law and Justice and two minor parties – Poland Together and United Poland (all three were called the United Right). The Polish government’s policy in 2015–2020 resembled the policy pursued in previous years by Hungary (and some Balkan states) (Szymański, Wódka, Ufel and Dziubińska 2020). People connected with incumbents captured different state political and economic institutions as well as the courts (the Constitutional Tribunal, the Supreme Court, the National Judiciary Council) and the public media (Szymański 2017, 198–199).

The second set of structural factors concerns the role of external issues, i.e. the EU institutions and mechanisms. Some institutional aspects can be pointed out with reference to the EU pre-accession process and accession negotiations. Paradoxically, the EU pre-accession process in Poland also contributed to a stronger government. This process included the EU’s “fast-track legislative procedures”, meaning a limited involvement of the parliament in adoption of the high volume of legislation, the change of the role of parliament from legislating to one of mediating and supervising, and the EU preference for the candidate country to have a “core executive” capable of leading the cabinet and parliament so that economic policies consistent with EU rules can be pursued (Mansfeldova 2011, 143). Besides, there was a group of problems connected with the EU “governmentality” during the EU pre-accession process of Poland. The key mechanism of conditionality was selective – with different priority given to the democratic criteria at different stages of the pre-accession process. It meant in the Polish case that the democratic conditionality was important before the beginning of the

accession talks but not necessary at later stages of the EU pre-accession process, as it is within the current EU enlargement (Grabbe 2006).

The second group of factors that later contributed to the problems in the Polish democratisation concerns the limited EU impact on the democratisation process after the EU accession of Poland and all other Central and East European countries. Sometimes it was just the lack of formal competences (political ones seem to be not sufficient) to influence the domestic politics (Tomini 2015, 60). The Article 7 of the Treaty on the EU providing sanctions was always too radical in its application. Because of this the EU institutions focused more on the alternative measures which were often not very effective. For instance, so called infringement procedures (concerning the lack of compliance with the EU law) sometimes enforced the compliance, e.g. in Hungary after 2011 but their use was limited to the issues clearly included in the EU law and only partially concerning democracy (e.g. independence of the Central Bank, data protection or retirement age of judges in the Hungarian case) (Tomini 2015, 59–60). The Article 7 of the Treaty on the EU seems to be applied more effectively first in recent years when the democratic backsliding has been already developed in Poland.

Functional Issues

Structural factors are not sufficient to explain the Polish problems in the democratisation process. Focusing on the institutional issues does not explain e.g. why the Polish politicians began to take the undemocratic steps and why they are still supported by a part of the society. The complementary explanation give the functional factors, concerning first of all the deficits of the democratic political culture of both the Polish elites and society.

In the political transition period the attention was paid to the institutional aspects. The same approach had the EU which focused on procedures, benchmarks, etc. However, the necessity to explain these institutional changes to the Polish society and to develop its knowledge of democracy (its liberal model) and significance of its rules and institutions as well as positive attitudes towards democracy were not discerned by the Polish state's and EU's institutions. There was a lack of an important socialisation and learning process – both with reference to the conducted reforms and democratic rules. They should have been provided by the state and educational institutions (in the latter case, e.g. within the civic education which was not a part of school curricula).

As a result, there are problems with understanding of democracy by the Polish elites and society as well as with achieving the goal of treating democracy as the only game in town.

When it comes to the Polish elites, the problem of understanding democracy concerns first of all the incumbents. It was noticeable already in the first decade of the 21st century when Law and Justice governed for the first time (2005–2007) (Szymański 2015). PiS politicians present the majoritarian and minimalist understanding of democracy. They pay attention to the democratic institution of elections but they are not so eager to recognise the democratic mechanisms and citizens' rights between elections. It is reflected among others by criticising the opposition and people for taking part in protests (against the government policy) (*Kaczyński o protestach* 2020). It reminds us of the approach to democracy of leaders of countries with hybrid or authoritarian regimes who acknowledge the value of elections – mainly as a tool to confirm the legitimacy of their ruling but do not respect other democratic institutions (Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009; Morgenbesser 2014).

According to Law and Justice and its majoritarian understanding of democracy a strong support acquired in the election by the majority of the electorate makes the authorities' activities on behalf of the electorate legitimate. In their opinion the incumbents having such a legitimacy can also impose some solutions (laws, policies, etc.) knowing best what the masses need. They go even beyond this – they feel authorised to promote particular values, worldview or lifestyle. The question is what legitimizes this mandate. According to the incumbents in Poland they represent the will and interests of the “community.” Here appears a clear reference by incumbents to the identity politics (with a use of mixture of conservatism, nationalism and populism) as well as the communitarian approach to democracy, which, interestingly, resembles the approach of many Asian countries. PiS apart from dividing the society to “we” and “they” (classical populist approach) and polarising it (Havlik 2016), refers and appeals often to the macro-community, i.e. Polish Catholics who are in a big majority in Poland. They are an electoral majority that supports the governing party. This gives incumbents a strong democratic legitimacy to act on behalf of “the people”. The communitarian approach to democracy is promoted in this context. It is based on putting more emphasis on the rights of communities – be it family (micro-community) or the aforementioned nation and religious community (macro-community) than on the freedoms of individual citizens (Szymański 2015, 34–37).

It is noticeable that the majoritarian and communitarian approach to democracy have generated problems with keeping the liberal model of democracy, indicated in the aforementioned EIU democracy index (such categories as Electoral process and pluralism or Civil liberties). The Polish government does not represent the will and interest of the whole nation, but the majority of electorate. The

majoritarian understanding of democracy leads to the gradual marginalisation of all “others” or “them” – i.e. all minority groups within elites and society who represent interests or share opinions and worldviews which differ from that of majority. It is here first of all about the opposition as well as various minorities.

The opposition in the parliament in Poland has been marginalized (although in the Senate the oppositional parties and independent politicians have had since 2019 the small majority). The Sejm – the lower house of parliament is often sidelined, or it works as a rubber stamp institution. There are usually no real discussions on drafts of new regulations in parliamentary bodies and insufficient consultations in the Polish parliament. PiS deputies choose for this the legislative track within which its lawmakers propose the draft laws instead of the government members because there is then no formal obligation of consultations. Many laws are amended quickly – often during late-night sessions. The exception is the Senate since 2019, which consults the draft laws with experts, discusses them carefully and introduce amendments. However, at the end of the day the Polish lower house – Sejm, in which incumbents have the majority, adopts usually the previous version of a law, without the Senate amendments. The opposition, not having a substantial impact on the final stage of the legislative process (usually its amendments are rejected by the governing majority), attempts extraordinary measures such as blocking the work of the parliament, taking part in or organizing street protests, or building anti-government coalitions, but their role is limited in terms of changing the distribution of power – at least at the national level (Szymański 2019).

The PiS majoritarian understanding of democracy leads also to the situation that different types of minorities are often marginalized or discriminated. There are many examples of the negative attitude of Law and Justice politicians towards the “gender” movement and LGBT community (sometimes associated with pedophiles) and limitation of their rights as citizens (not to mention the right to marriage) as e.g. the freedom of assembly, health care, etc. (Szymczyk 2019). The cultural and social activities which are not in accordance with “the official” worldview, are not funded or promoted – in comparison to the undertakings of organizations connected with the Catholic Church (Adamski 2019).

The lack of explaining in the transition period the reforms as well as idea of democracy (its liberal model) and its significance contributed (together with the social consequences of transformation) to the situation that the Polish society understands democracy differently. One group supports the liberal model of democracy with the role of rights of individuals, pluralism and democratic institutions (institutional and axiological interpretation based on achievement of moral and political goals). However, there are also people who are disappointed

with the liberal system being a result of the transformation processes (also in the economic dimension). For these groups, who in most cases do not understand well the main idea and significance of liberal model of democracy, important is belonging to a particular community which gives a sense of existential and epistemological security. They feel then that they are not alone and they do not feel insecure due to sharing common worldview. These groups do not reject democracy but perceive it differently. They see it as the system which guarantees either security and good quality of life (social interpretation based on achievement of economic and social goals) or particular values – mainly conservative and national (ideological interpretation based on the achievement of patriotic goals). These two approaches correspond to PiS social and economic policy and the aforementioned communitarian approach to democracy. This is the reason for voting for PiS by many people in Poland and for their support for its undertakings which can be called undemocratic from the point of view of liberal model of democracy (Reykowski 2020, 155–182).

The attitude and behaviour of the Polish society with reference to democracy show that there are some deficits of the democratic political culture. It is already seen while looking at the EIU Democracy Index in the Table 1. The categories “Political culture” and “Political participation” are relatively low, e.g. in comparison to “Electoral process and pluralism” which reflects a more formal-procedural aspect of democracy.

These scores are confirmed in surveys reflecting the Polish attitudes and behaviour towards democracy. They show that in general terms the society in Poland supports democracy. For instance, according to the European Values Survey 2017–2020 the democratic governance is important for 89.74 percent of the people and democracy is the best system for 89.94 percent of respondents.

However, the same survey shows that democracy is not the only game in town and some part of the society gives priority to other political systems – expert (not government) ruling – 67.58 percent (however, we can assume that it is still about democracy in this regard); military regime – 21.41 percent; strong leader, unconcerned with parliament and elections – 17.30 percent (EVS 2020). The Global Attitudes Survey of the Pew Research Centre indicates in turn that not all democratic mechanisms and rules are equally highly evaluated by Poles. The survey covering the year 2019 shows that although 72 percent of people perceive as important fair judiciary, 69 percent – gender equality and 64 percent – free media, only 49 percent of respondents recognize the significance of free opposition parties (which to some extent can be a result of spreading its bad image by the incumbents, particularly in public media) and 56 percent – free religion (Wike and Schumacher 2020, 10). Moreover, when Poles are asked about value

of democracy in relationship with other issues, democracy is not always the top choice. According to one of previous surveys by the Pew Research Centre higher percentage of respondents give priority to “strong economy” (55 percent) than to “good democracy” (36 percent) (*Two Decades* 2009, 24–25).

When it comes to the democratic behaviour of Poles, connected e.g. with the political participation, a very low percentage of people in Poland are members of political parties and civil society organizations. According to the European Values Survey 2017–2020 only 1.26 percent of the Polish citizens are members of political parties. Solely 3.49 percent of Poles belong to professional organizations, 4.62 percent – sport or recreation organizations, 4.80 percent – humanitarian and charitable organizations, 0.50 percent – consumer organizations and 1.56 percent – self-help groups/mutual aid groups (EVS 2020).

5. Conclusion

This chapter proves that the answer to the question about the (old and new) factors behind the state of democratisation in Poland in the 21st century, particularly in recent years when we observe the symptoms of democratic backsliding, is not simple. The same can be said about the clear indicating of a stage of democratisation responsible in the first place for the current state of democracy in this Central European country. We have to take into consideration different set of factors – both structural (institutional) – on the domestic and international level and functional – in the Polish case first of all the democratic political culture. We have to track their emergence and development (or lack of development) at different stages of the Polish democratisation.

In some cases, as the institutional analysis of the Polish political system shows, the results of transition from undemocratic to democratic regime had been promising but then, already within the democratic consolidation, the chain of different institutional changes – concerning e.g. the political parties and party system or position of the executive power and incumbents, led to rising problems in the democratisation, with the dysfunctional role played also by some EU mechanisms (or their deficit). The investigation of the functional aspects proves in turn that roots of some current democratisation problems can be found already in the political transition. The neglect concerning the development of the democratic political culture of the Polish elites and society – a crucial factor behind the current deterioration of the liberal model of democracy, dates back to this period. The attention was paid both by the Polish government and EU institutions to procedural and institutional aspects of democratisation but not to explaining the democratic reforms and their significance to Poles.

The case of Poland is not the *sui generis* case in this regard. The democratic backsliding observable in other Central and East European countries, such as Hungary, Romania or Serbia, has generally similar categories of causes. That is why it is necessary to conduct more and more comparative analyses to understand better what went wrong in the countries which were already on the right path to consolidate their democratic regimes.

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Part II: Taiwan

Li-Jiuan CHEN-RABICH

Historical and identity perspective on democratisation process in Taiwan

Abstract:

Before Taiwan was returned to Chinese sovereignty in August 1945, Taiwan was a colony of Japan under the Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895. After losing control of Mainland China in the Chinese Civil War, the ROC (Republic of China) government under Kuomintang (KMT) retreated from China to Taiwan. The festering resentment of local Taiwanese erupted on 28. February 1947, so-called “228 massacre” that was an important historical event for the democratic development in Taiwan. This chapter works on the historical and identity perspective on democratisation process in Taiwan. Important historical events affecting Taiwan’s democratic transformation in chronological order since “228 massacre” will be discussed. Subsequently, Chiang Kai-Shek on the one side declared martial law; on the other side, the KMT carried out a series of reforms, such as land reform, economic development, educational reform, democratic reform and social change. The KMT ruled Taiwan as a single-party state for 40 years until democratic reforms in the 1980s. Finally, it draws a conclusion to clarify the most important elements historical and identity perspectives that influence Taiwan’s democratisation process.

Keywords: 228 incident, martial law, land reform, educational reform, democratic reform, democratic transformation

1. Introduction

From the perspective of historical development, this chapter discusses the important factors affecting Taiwan’s democratisation and how to create a democratic political system in Taiwan. First of all, taking the “228 incident” as the beginning of this chapter, “228 incident” has become an important event in Taiwan’s democratisation. The Kuomintang (KMT) government imposed Martial Law due to the conflict between the people of Taiwan and the army from Mainland China. The “228 incident” was not only a tragedy of an era, but also caused long-term provincial complex and conflicts on the island. It additionally gave the people of Taiwan a deeper sense of identity. Taiwan was under a one-party dictatorship until the lifting of Martial Law on July 15, 1987. The lifting of Martial Law was a watershed in Taiwan’s democratisation and made Taiwan as one of countries in the third wave of democratic transition (Huntington 1991). Democratisation in Taiwan refers to the pursuit of democratisation and consolidation of

democracy as the goal of social movements and political reforms, especially the democratisation measures implemented in 1980s (李福鐘 2020, 31). The KMT government carried out a series of reforms, such as land reform, economic development, educational reform, democratisation process and social change and so on. Finally, the various reform results before the lifting of Martial Law are summarized into conclusions with a view to reviewing the historical development of Taiwan's democratisation and how to form and value identity with Taiwanese.

2. The influence of “228 Incident”

After the end of World War II, ROC led by KMT took control of Taiwan. After World War II, Chiang Kai Shek immediately went on the offensive against the Communists. After the Chinese Civil War in Mainland China, the KMT government retreated to Taiwan. Taiwan was regarded as a province under ROC's legal system. At the beginning, Taiwan Chief Executive's Office (台灣省行政長官公署) and Taiwan Garrison Command (台灣警備司令部) were established instead of Taiwan provincial Government to execute local autonomy. In other words, the KMT government imitated Taiwan Governor's Mansion (台灣總督府) under the Japan's colonial regime to rule Taiwan in a dictatorship (Goddard 1966). The festering resentment of the local Taiwanese erupted on February 28th, 1947, a day for decades whispered about in Taiwan (28th February, the date the massacre began).

In the “228 incident”, Taiwanese gentry once asked for local autonomy and let people vote to elect members of Assembly and administrative officials, but the KMT government did not accept it. After the “228 incident”, the Taiwan Chief Executive's Office was reorganized into the Taiwan Provincial Government, but officials of the Provincial Government were still appointed by the Central Government, and members of Provincial Assembly were also appointed by the Central Government. For 40 years, Taiwan did not re-elect the Legislative Yuan (Parliament) and the National Assembly. These congressmen became life-long representatives of public opinion. Therefore, the “Ten-Thousand-Year Congress” (萬年國會) formed a solid ruling group with never resigning Chiang Kai Shek. Chiang Kai Shek's regime was like a “time capsule” (李福鐘 2020, 31).

In order to consolidate the political power, the KMT began to reform from July 1950 on. The party's organizational system and control power were comprehensively deepened and widened into the civilians, military, schools and government. The KMT fully implemented the principle of the party leading the government and the party leading the army. Since then, the KMT became

a supreme institution that overrode the constitutional system. The branches of KMT were spread across various government departments (李福鐘 2020, 33).

After the “228 incident” was calmed down, the people of Taiwan generally lived in the shadow of violent massacres. Many of them hated the KMT regime. As a result, thoughtful intellectuals fled to Japan, Europe and the United States. They quietly engaged in the movement against the KMT, which also formed the so-called Taiwan independence movement. Due to the overseas spies’ search of the KMT, their activities were turned underground. On the whole, independent movement overseas played an important role in the democratisation of Taiwan.

3. 1949–1987 Taiwan under Martial Law

After losing control of Mainland China in the Chinese Civil War in 1949, the Republic of China (ROC) government under KMT withdrew to Taiwan. The counterattack on the mainland (反攻大陸) became an important goal of the KMT government in the early days (Chao and Myers 1998, 14). The Martial Law (戒嚴法) enacted on May 20th, 1949. After 1950, the hope of the counterattack on the mainland gradually diminished. On the one hand, the KMT worked hard to localize, and on the other hand, it cultivated a group of a middle class to avoid the phenomenon of greed and inequality in society (Chao and Myers 1998, 16).

The Korean War broke out in 1950. The United States participated in the Korean War and sent the Seventh Fleet to patrol the Taiwan Strait and prevented the Chinese Communist Party from attacking Taiwan. At that time, the economic and military assistance provided by the United States to Taiwan not only stabilized the security of the Taiwan Strait, but also played an important role in the development of democracy on the island of Taiwan (Chao and Myers 1998, 13).

The KMT ruled Taiwan as a single-party state for 40 years, until democratic reforms in the 1980s. Chiang Ching Kuo, the eldest son of Chiang Kai Shek, took over as Chief Executive in May 1972. He began to orchestrate the development of Taiwan in moves that were to result in the modern economic miracle. He promoted large-scale infrastructure construction and actively employed technocrats to implement pragmatic economic policies. At the same time, Taiwanese were allowed to serve as high-level officials to appease the Taiwanese who accounted for more than 80 % of the population (李福鐘 2020, 33).

The counterattack on the mainland (反攻大陸) became a dream bubble. To continue rule in Taiwan, the KMT must carry out political reforms. Localization was imperative to take root in Taiwan. Chiang Ching Kuo adopted economic construction as the main policy axis. It is worth mentioning that Chiang

Ching Kuo adopted “Taiwanese to govern Taiwan” and began to cultivate Taiwanese elites. He deeply realized the importance of stepping up localization and appointing Taiwanese. Lee Teng Hui was a young talent who has been carefully selected and cultivated as his successor (陳世昌2015).

Under Martial Law, Taiwanese business was allowed to flourish and farmlands were redistributed to farmers. There were many communists, socialists and activists for Taiwan Independence arrested and purged during the period of Martial Law. In order to consolidate the base of anti-Communist and counter-attack on mainland, the KMT implemented authoritarian rule in Taiwan. Lots of innocent people were also spread. Taiwan experienced a so-called “White Terror” (白色恐怖) (陳世昌2015). During the period of “White Terror”, the people of Taiwan lived in dread. This was a great tragedy following the “228 incident”. Many innocent people were sacrificed (藍博洲 1993).

Illegal assembly, association, parade petition and strike were prohibited. There was no press freedom. Publishing newspapers and magazines was under a pre-censorship system. Taiwan was ruled authoritarian by the KMT under the Martial Law. The rise of the extra-party movements in 1970s has gradually become a political force that challenged one-party dictatorship. The democratisation of Taiwan after the 1990s was a gradual transition from a highly centralized party-state rule to a democratic system (李福鐘 2020, 32).

President Chiang Ching Kuo ordered on lifting of Martial Law in Taiwan on July 15, 1987. After nearly 40 years of strongman rule by Chiang Kai Shek and his son, when Chiang Ching Kuo passed away in 1988, the democratisation of Taiwan finally revealed the dawn. With the support of the reformists of the KMT, Lee Teng Hui succeeded in the posts of president and chairman of the KMT. This situation was absolutely conducive to the follow-up development and reform of Taiwan’s democratisation. Lee Teng Hui used political power and party power to promote constitutional amendments again and again. In particular, the constitutional amendment in 1994 stipulated that the presidential election should be replaced by universal suffrage instead of indirect elections by representatives of the National Assembly. This change in the rules of the game enabled Taiwan’s political reform to break through the original institutional framework and critical points, and moved quickly and steadily towards democratisation (李福鐘 2020, 34).

The presidential election in March 1996 was the first direct presidential election in Taiwan’s history. The five constitutional amendments from 1991 to 1999 completely changed the rules of the game in Taiwan’s politics. Not only did it end the “Ten-Thousand-Year Congress”, the Legislative Yuan was completely elected by the people, and more important, the president was also directly elected by the

people (李福鐘 2020, 35). During the presidency, Lee Teng Hui brought Taiwan from authoritarian rule to true democratic politics and successfully completed a successful peaceful revolution (陳世昌2015).

4. 1949–1954 Land Reform

In 1948, Taiwan suddenly became more important to the KMT. Chiang Kai Shek came to Taiwan. With the victory of Mao's Red Army in Mainland China, 2 million mainland Chinese, mainly soldiers and their families, poured across the Straits and into Taiwan. In order to win the support of farmers, land reform was inevitable. The land redistribution was a central strategy to relieve land scarcity problem, improve poverty and increase agricultural production (Duan 2015).

The final goal of Taiwan's land reform was to make all farmers the owners of their own fields. There was a land-rental system under a three-tier tenancy system since the Japanese colony. The three-tier tenancy system consisted of great landlords, tenant landlords, who paid a fix rent, and subtenants, who paid in kind to the tenant landlords (Jolly 2008). Over 50 % of the island's population was farmers, of whom 70 % were tenants.

The land reform introduced by the Chen Cheng, then chairman of the Taiwan Provincial Government, was a comprehensive package with various steps in the implementation, namely (1) leasing government-owned land to tenants; (2) 37.5 % shares on privately-owned farmland; (3) the sale of public land to farmers; and (4) the land-to-the-tiller program with assisting tenants to acquire their land.

The sale of public land to farmers and the land-to-the-tiller program led to transferring land ownership from landlords to tenant farmers. Landowners were compensated over a period of 10 years, receiving 70 % of the purchase price in land bonds to be redeemed in kind, in rice or sweet potatoes, with interest at 4 % per annum. The remaining 30 % was paid with stocks in government-owned industries. The aim was to encourage private operation of industry and to promote the policy of industrialization.

Taiwan had a successful land reform that was a reform of farmland ownership. The policy was "cultivate industry with agriculture, and then agriculture with industrial development" in order to increase agricultural production, promote economic stability and improve the international imbalance of payments. Agricultural output increased. Government corporations were created to absorb the excess military personnel. These companies focused on big projects and industries, like construction (RSEA), Steel (China Steel), shipbuilding (China

Shipbuilding), power (Tai-Power), brewing (Tobacco and Wine Monopoly), sugar (Tai-Sugar), and tourism and travel (China Airline) (陳世昌2015).

An important result of the land reform was equal income distribution in Taiwan (Fei, Ranis and Kuo 1979). To sum up, the land reform redistributed landownership and had significant positive influence on agricultural productivity and real capital accumulation. The land reform not only increased rice productivity, but also indirectly financed national industrialization. In other words, the land reform successfully transited Taiwan from an agrarian economy to an industrial one. As a result, social status of farmers was enhanced and their standards of living were generally improved, with more of their children attending school. A new middle class was gradually formed and became the backbone of Taiwan's society. The rise of the middle class was conducive to the stability and development of Taiwan's economy. The middle class also became civil society forces (關秉寅/王永慈2003, A8). People were increasingly concerned about democracy and rule of law, the protection of fundamental rights, freedom of speech, personal freedom, freedom of assembly, equality before the law and social justice.

5. After Late 1980s Democratic Reform

Taiwan's rapid economic development in the 1970s, meanwhile Taiwan diplomatically faced a series of shocks such as the withdrawal of the United Nations, the break-up of Taiwan and the United States (李福鐘 2020, 33). The political system under martial law and the parliamentary representatives who had not been re-elected for a long time have been questioned and challenged by all circles. Extra-party movements flourished and political events followed one after another: Zhongli Incident (中壢事件) in 1977, Kaohsiung Incident/Formosa Incident (高雄美麗島事件) in 1979, Lin Zhai Blood Case (林家血案) in 1980, Chen Wencheng's Murder (陳文成案) in 1981, Jiangnan Case (江南案) in 1984. As a result, the call for democratic reform was constantly.

The suppression of Kaohsiung Incident/Formosa Incident fueled a new wave of opposition movements and even spawned the formation of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). The DPP was officially established in 1986. The government announced relieving martial law in 1987, and then allowed the establishment of new parties and publishing new presses, lifted the ban on visiting relatives in Mainland China and carried out a parliamentary reform. The KMT ruled Taiwan as a single-party state for 40 years, until democratic reforms in the 1980s. The democratic reforms since the 1980s, especially with constitutional amendments, led to the first-ever direct presidential election in 1996. As

a result, it has become a free, open and democratic society in Taiwan. Lee Teng Hui directly referred to the KMT government as a “foreign power” (外來政權) and emphasized the subjectivity of Taiwan. This argument generally played a role in promoting the national identity in Taiwanese society. In other words, the two-state theory (兩國論) took shape and contributed to the democratisation of Taiwan (李福鐘 2020, 33). To sum up, in addition to the democratisation of politics and the constitutional system, the democratisation of Taiwan included the pursuit of national identity.

After 30 years of constitutional reforms and the return to the rule of law, as well as the openness of speech and media public opinion, Taiwan’s democratisation has systematically and practically reached a level of diversification and maturity. Taiwan’s democracy continues to advance smoothly and has gone through many rotations of political parties. The results of elections show that the people of Taiwan rationally determine their future and the future of Taiwan. The people of Taiwan have become accustomed to the presidency of leaders of different political parties. As long as the policy fails or the ethics is poor, the people will use their votes to ask for the rotation of political parties as soon as the term of office expires.

6. Educational Reform

The KMT government vigorously developed education enabling the Taiwanese to be fully educated for universal education, education equality, and higher education. The educational development is the foundation of Taiwan’s economic prosperity and political progress (陳世昌2015). In the late 1950s, the government enacted a series of education reforms, including the restoration of private school with measures taken to ensure their political loyalty. During the first 20 years of the KMT government, mandatory schooling consisted of six years of primary school education that was also under the former Japanese rule. In 1968, the compulsory education was extended to nine years. The colonial education has been reformed to create a new national identity (Wong 2020).

From 1994 to 1996 educational reform included multiple enrolment program, university autonomy and professor governance. As a result, there are significant changes in the ways of progression and campus culture. The number of colleges and universities has expanded dramatically. There are 160 universities and colleges in Taiwan. The “12 years education policy” was proposed in 1983, but was delayed for financial reasons. The current national basic education in Taiwan is 12 years education. The implementation of this compulsory education replaced the old 9 years education. Less quantity but quality is the future direction of

development for higher education in Taiwan. The result of educational reform has contributed to enough high – qualified labour force for the industry in Taiwan.

Language is a very important communication tool. The Japanese promoted the Japanese learning in the primary school since the beginning of the colonial rule. Japanese became a common daily language during the Japanese colonial regime. When the KMT government took over Taiwan, the Mainland Chinese and Taiwanese had language barrier that was unfavorable to rule. The story repeated that the KMT promoted Chinese as official language by educational system since April 1946. The policy of promoting Chinese aimed to accelerate the achievement of Taiwan's sinicization. A general order was enacted in July 1951 to teach in Chinese all levels of schools and strictly prohibit speaking of dialects including Taiwanese, Hakka and various aboriginal languages (陳世昌2015).

Hence, promoting Chinese and prohibiting dialects were simultaneously carried out. Dialects were banned from primary school. Pupils were punished for speaking in dialects. The KMT government ordered in 1964 all levels of institutions and schools to speak Chinese during office hours, and the use of dialects by radio and television stations should not exceed a certain limit. But the dialects of all provinces and regions from Mainland China had never been forbidden. On the other hand, Japan's ruling Taiwan had never banned Taiwanese to speak or use dialects. The policy of banning dialects was equivalent to a policy of severe discrimination against the people of Taiwan and an attempt to eliminate Taiwan's culture under authoritarian rule (陳世昌2015).

English is regarded as a global language and as one of the instruments to success in economic and modernization and internalization. Learning English is useful to enhance career and social status in Taiwan (Lin, Shie, Holmes, 2018). Although Taiwan was under the Martial Law, higher education still offered foreign language courses, especially under the influence of the United States. English has become the most important foreign language. Japanese has the follow-up effect of the Japanese colonization. Many older Taiwanese have learnt Japanese in the elementary school. As a result, Japanese has been also an important foreign language. During the period of the Martial Law, there was a strict censorship, but people still could listen to English radio programs, such as International Community Radio Taipei (ICRT)¹, Voice of America etc., and buy English newspapers

1 ICRT is Taiwan's only English-language radio station. Prior to 1979, the station served the US military personnel in Taiwan as the Armed Forces Network Taiwan (AFNT). When the United States broke diplomatic relation with the Republic of China, Taiwan

and magazines, such as *Times*, *Economist* etc. Many intellectuals have been able to obtain information on foreign news and democratic development through foreign language newspapers and mass media. This phenomenon also has a considerable influence on Taiwan's democratic development. Particularly, intellectuals could learn the democratic political system and new knowledge of foreign countries, and further carry out democratic reforms in Taiwan.

Although the universal education policy of the KMT government improved the education standards in Taiwan, on the other hand, the policy of banning dialects was a practice that discriminated against Taiwan's culture and hurt people's emotions. This absurd policy caused long-standing social conflicts related to Taiwan independence, social injustice, and national identity. Of course, this formed an important force in the democratisation of Taiwan. On the other hand, with the improvement of people's living standards and the popularization of education, people could afford their children to study abroad, especially in the United States. This would play an important role in the democratisation of Taiwan.

7. Conclusion

The lifting of Martial Law in 1987 was a watershed in Taiwan's democratisation. After the Korean War in 1950, the economic aid from the United States played an important role in Taiwan's democratic development. With the dashed hope of counterattacking on the mainland, the KMT government turned to localization and began to reform and build Taiwan into a modern industrial country.

The land reform successfully improved the living standards of farmers and increased their social status, with more of their children attending school. The success of supporting private enterprises increased the employment rate. The rise of the middle class was conducive to the economic stability and development in Taiwan. People gradually claimed for the participation in politics and democratic reforms. Lee Teng Hui wisely used political power and party power to amend constitution, and thoroughly reformed the original party-government system. On the whole, Lee Teng Hui's contribution to Taiwan's democratisation and his role at a turning point in Taiwan's history are beyond doubt.

in 1979, the American business community, with the help of the ROC government, recognized the station into ICRT. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/international_Community_Radio_Taipei, last visited 2021/11/24.

The general increase in people's knowledge and education, the rise of the middle class by the economic development, the economic take-off in the 1970s, the political reforms after the 1990s, such as full re-election of the National Assembly, direct election of mayors of municipalities directly under the Central Government, direct election of president, the first party rotation and the DPP's first ruling in 2000, and the influence of the American culture have played an important role in the democratisation of Taiwan.

Learning foreign languages, especially English, also contributed to the democratic development in Taiwan. English as an international language has become vital to success in Taiwan's democratic reforms. During the period of Martial Law, many college graduates chose to continue their studies abroad, particularly to the United States. Indirectly the American democracy has played an important exemplary role in Taiwan's democratisation process.

The KMT government was an external regime from mainland China into Taiwan. Although the KMT government implemented high-handed rule and a single-party dictatorship in the early days, after the hope of counterattacking on the mainland was shattered, the KMT government faced the political reality and strived to reform Taiwan. It finally lifted the Martial Law and made Taiwan move towards democratisation and successfully completed the democratic transformation. Taiwan has changed its governing political parties several times. With the pace of democratisation in Taiwan, the identity of Taiwanese is gradually increasing. The merits and demerits of the KMT regime for the democratisation in Taiwan are divided.

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Mateus LEE

Social and economic preconditions of democratisation process in Taiwan

Abstract:

Taiwan is one of the dynamic and mature democratic countries in the world and its democratisation process is becoming one of the interesting issues in political science. To identify the social and economic preconditions of democratisation process in Taiwan, this chapter conducts an empirical analysis to study the validity of Lipset hypothesis in case of Taiwan. The author collects Taiwan's annual data on democracy, education, national income, trade and the international democracy level from 1976 to 2018. Under the control of stochastic trends and deterministic trends, the empirical evidences find that the enrollment rates of primary and secondary education levels have causal effects on Taiwan's democratisation. The average years of schooling and tertiary education enrollment rates have no effect on Taiwan's democracy. The income level is also found not to be a determinant of Taiwan's democratisation. Finally, the degree of openness and waves of international democratisation are not the influential factors of Taiwan's democracy. The quantitative results of this chapter does not fully support the Lipset hypothesis in case of Taiwan.

Keywords: *democratisation, economic development, education, enrollment rates.*

1. Introduction

It is well known that Taiwan is one of the most remarkable democratized countries in the world (Barro 1999). According to the Democracy Index published by the Economist Intelligence Business Unit in 2021, Taiwan was ranked as 8th among 165 countries which was the highest in Asia. Since Taiwan was a centralized autocratic state before lifting its martial law in 1987 and it is now a fully democratic nation, the issue on the determinants of democratic transition in Taiwan deserves our attention. Prior literatures found a causal effect of economic development on democracy (Barro 1999; Glaeser et al. 2007; Castello-Climent 2008; Boix 2011; Murtin and Wacziarg 2014; Rod et al. 2020). However, Taiwan was rarely studied in prior literatures. Barro (1999) investigated the effects of economic development on democracy for over 100 countries including Taiwan from 1972 to 1995. Since Taiwan held its first presidential election in 1996 and experienced its first peaceful party alternation in 2000, the empirical results in Barro (1999) may not provide further findings on Taiwan's democratisation.

Moreover, the qualitative study in Chu (2011) concluded that Taiwan's democratisation was triggered by the neoliberalism. Nevertheless, Chu (2011) lacks a further quantitative analysis to identify the impacts of neoliberalism on Taiwan's democratisation. To close the gap, this chapter collects Taiwan's democracy and economic development data to study the influences of economic development on Taiwan's democratisation.

Taiwan's democratisation transition

Taiwan was governed by ancient China before it was ceded to Japan because of China losing in the First Sino-Japanese War in 1895. When the World War Two ended in 1945, the island of Taiwan was returned to the Republic of China (hereafter ROC) which was governed by Kuomintang (hereafter KMT) in 1945. Following the end of the Chinese Civil War in 1949, the mainland China area and the island of Taiwan came under the control of two separate governments. The mainland China is ruled by the Chinese Communist Party of the People's Republic of China, and Taiwan is governed by the KMT of Republic of China. During 1949 to 1988, Taiwan was dictated by Chiang family, Chiang Kai-shek and Chiang Ching-kuo.¹ Under the era of dictatorship, the establishment of martial law and the nearly KMT-controlled parliament restricted Taiwan's civil liberties and democracy. For instance, the opposition media and parties were all banned because of the censorship, the opponents of KMT were no longer forbidden to hold meetings or publish papers.

As Taiwan economy was developed dramatically and rapidly from the 1970s which makes Taiwan to be well-known as the "Four Asian Dragons" with Singapore, South Korea and Hong Kong, many Taiwan-born activists advocated to relax the restrictions on freedom of speech and formation of political parties. The one-party KMT-government suppressed those opposition activities and movements such as the Zhongli incident in 1977 and the Kaohsiung incident in 1979. However, the strictly suppression of political oppositions from the KMT-controlled government was changed in 1980s. In 1984, the president Chiang Ching-kuo hand-picked the Taiwan-born Lee Teng-hui as vice-president to eventually succeed him. In 1985, the president Chiang Ching-kuo publicly announced that both the Chiang family and the military junta are no longer to rule the island. In 1986, Chiang Ching-kuo initiated political reform, including

1 Chiang Kai-shek was the first dictator ruling Taiwan island until his death in 1975. Then, the island was ruled by his son, Chiang Ching-kuo, before his death in 1988.

a free press, lifting bans on new political parties and street protests. Afterwards, Taiwan's first opposition party, the Democratic Progressive Party (hereafter DPP) was eventually established. In 1987, Taiwan lifted almost four decades of martial law, removed the press ban and party ban, and allowed the Taiwanese traveling to China.

In 1990, the Wild Lily student movement was demonstrated seeking direct presidential election and the election for National Assembly. The Wild Lily student movement successfully forced all the lifetime legislators of National Assembly to retire for the island's first general election to parliament in 1991. After that, Taiwan welcomed its first direct presidential election in 1996 and Lee Teng-hui (the representative of KMT) won the re-election to be the first elected president. In 2000, Chen Shui-bian (the representative of DPP) won the island's second direct presidential election and realized Taiwan's first party alternation peacefully. In 2008, Ma Ying-jeou (the candidate of KMT) won the president election bringing the Taiwan's second peaceful parties turning. In 2016, Tsai Ing-wen (candidate of DPP) won the island's president election which is the island's third parties turning. The continuous quiet and peaceful party alternation is now becoming Taiwan's new normal which makes Taiwan to be one of the most energetic and mature democratic countries in the world.

Economic development and democratisation

Lipset (1959) was the first work to study how economic development affects the democracy. A Lipset modernization hypothesis was then proposed for the positive effect of education and income on a nation's democratic development. The Lipset hypothesis was supported empirically by literatures, for instance, Barro (1999), Glaeser et al. (2007), Castello-Climent (2008), Boix (2011), Murtin and Wacziarg (2014), and Rod et al. (2020).

To study the influences of economic development on democracy, Barro (1999) constructed two indexes (electoral rights and civil liberties) measuring the democracy levels of 101 sampled countries (including Taiwan) between 1972 and 1995. Under the control of countries' individual variables and application of seemingly unrelated regression (SUR) model, the empirical results evidenced that years of primary schooling and GDP per capita were positively affected both the electoral rights and civil liberties. Nevertheless, the years of upper schooling was found to be insignificant. The empirical findings in Barro (1999) supported that more prosperous places are more likely to be democratic. Moreover, Barro (1999) also found that the other economic development indicators (health and income inequality) have no significantly statistical effects on democracy. In

particular, this literature pointed that Taiwan was one of the classical examples how the economic development affects its democracy. The pioneer empirical work of Barro (1999) indicated the education and income are the critical elements of democratisation.

For the effects of education on democracy, Glaeser et al. (2007) used the PolityIV scores to measure democracy levels of 68 sampled countries to study the causality between education and democracy. Their empirical findings found that there was a positive impact of education on democracy but no correlation of democracy on education. They considered that education helped people to accumulate their human capital, then promoted their capabilities in civic participations which increased the political competition, and finally deterred the occurrence of dictatorships. Therefore, Glaeser et al. (2007) considered that education is a critical factor of democracy development. Castello-Climent (2008) also found the impacts of education on democracy in a sample of 104 countries and two main contributions are worthy to be mention. Firstly, that study employed a system Generalized Method of Moments (system GMM) estimation to control the problem of persistency of explanatory variables on the panel estimations. Secondly, that study introduced two measures of education levels to further study the educational effects on democracy. One of the measures was the average years of schooling which was used to investigate the effects of overall educational attainments on democratisation. The second measure was the cumulative third quintile of education to capture the influences of educational distribution on democracy. The quantitative analysis results found that the average schooling years was weakly correlated with democracy but the distribution of education was significantly affected democracy. Therefore, the distribution of education has been proved to be relatively more important in a nation's democracy development. Murtin and Wacziarg (2014) used the GMM estimation to study the Lipset modernization hypothesis of 70 countries (excluding Taiwan) from 1870 to 2000. As they considered that the diverse development in education over time may generate different influences on democracy, they introduced the years of education at three different levels (primary, secondary and tertiary) to investigate the impacts of different educational levels on democratisation. Under the control of country fixed-effects and stationarity conditions, their panel data's empirical findings clearly showed that a various causal effect of education on democracy. They concluded that the primary schooling was the main driver of democracy relative to the secondary and tertiary education. As indicated by Castello-Climent (2008) and Murtin and Wacziarg (2014), different education levels have diverse effects on democracy, it is important to identify the effects of various education levels on democracy as well.

For the income effect, Boix (2011) employed the PolityIV index of 158 countries to test the effect of income on democratisation. In that study, a time trend is included into the regression to avoid a spurious regression due to the doubt of time-series variables' deterministic trends. With the control of country fixed effects and deterministic trend, the empirical results found that the income level positively affected democracy level. Since most of the variables in that study (for example, democracy level and income per capita) are time-series variables, the stochastic trend is not being tested and controlled. Murtin and Wacziarg (2014) also investigated the effects of a nation's income level on its democracy level but they found a weak income effect on democracy. Although they employed a differencing GMM estimation to control the stochastic trends of the time-related variables, the deterministic trends of the time-series variables were not controlled.

Besides the education and income effects, Boix (2011) and Rod et al. (2020) investigated how the international order influences democratisation. They empirically evidenced that a more democratic international atmosphere leads to a higher level of a nation's democracy. In addition, the international democratic atmosphere strengthened the positive impacts of income on a nation's level of democracy (Boix 2011).

However, Acemoglu et al. (2005) employed a Generalized Method of Moments (GMM) estimation to show that education and income had no effects on democracy when country's fixed effects have been controlled. They emphasized that most of the economic development factors are time-series variables and the exclusion of time effects may lead to a spurious regression.

Since Taiwan is one of the remarkable democratic countries, Taiwan was only studied in Barro (1999) and most of the prior literatures paid little attention to Taiwan. Therefore, this chapter collects Taiwan's data on democracy, education, national income, degree of openness, and the international democratisation data to study the Lipset modernization hypothesis in case of Taiwan, along with the control of the time-effects. Taking into account the stochastic and deterministic trends of the time-series variables, this chapter finds that a various causal effect of education on democracy. On the other hand, income, openness and international democratisation are found to have had no effects on Taiwan's democracy.

2. Data and methodology

This section provides a description of model specification, the variables, the data and the data sources used in this study. Econometric methods used in this empirical study is also introduced in this section.

Model and data

Murtin and Wacziarg (2014) constructed a panel econometric model to investigate the modernization hypothesis using a sample of 70 countries from 1870 to 2000. This chapter develops the model proposed in Murtin and Wacziarg (2014) to study the effect of economic development on Taiwan democracy. Equation (1) illustrates the model of Taiwan's democracy:

$$\begin{aligned} democ_t = & \alpha_0 + \beta_1 democ_{t-k} + \beta_2 schooling_{t-k} + \beta_3 primary_{t-k} \\ & + \beta_4 secondary_{t-k} + \beta_5 tertiary_{t-k} + \beta_6 lincome_{t-k} \\ & + \beta_7 openness_{t-k} + \beta_8 world_{t-k} + t + u_t \end{aligned} \quad (1)$$

where $democ_t$ is the Taiwan's democracy index in year t , $democ_{t-k}$ is the k -period lagged of Taiwan's democracy index capturing the possible persistence of democratisation (Acemoglu et al. 2005; Glaeser et al. 2007; Castello-Climent 2008; Boix 2011; Murtin and Wacziarg 2014), u_t is an identically and independently normal distributed error term. Since the modernization hypothesis is the primary interest in this study, a set of economic development variables are included in the quantitative analysis. Then, a set of explanatory variables regarding the economic development are stated as follows.

First, the author employs two measurements to proxy Taiwan's education level. The variable $schooling_{t-k}$ is the k -period lagged average years of schooling which is popularly used in prior literatures (Acemoglu et al. 2005; Glaeser et al. 2007; Castello-Climent 2008; Murtin and Wacziarg 2014). As Castello-Climent (2008) and Murtin and Wacziarg (2014) emphasized the diverse effects of educational distribution on democratisation, Murtin and Wacziarg (2014) further considered that the average years of schooling may not be a perfect proxy of education because the average schooling years only measures a nation's overall education level but not its schooling distribution. Acemoglu et al. (2005) used only the average schooling years to measure education level provided no information on the casual effects from the schooling distribution to democracy. Motivated by Chan (2014) using the enrollment rates to measure the equality of educational opportunity, this study employed the enrollment rates of various education levels (the variables $primary_{t-k}$, $secondary_{t-k}$, and $tertiary_{t-k}$) in Taiwan to be the second measurement of education level.

Second, the variable $lincome_{t-k}$ is the k -period lagged Taiwan's income level which is quantified by taking the logarithm of Taiwan's real income per capita from 1976 to 2018.

Finally, this study constructs two variables to capture the effects of global surroundings on Taiwan's democracy. As Chu (2011) considered that neoliberalism was one of the main determinants of Taiwan's democratisation, this chapter introduces a k -period lagged variable $openness_{t-k}$, the proportion of Taiwan's trade volumes to its gross domestic product (GDP) which is used to study the effect of neoliberalism on Taiwan's democracy. As Boix (2011) found that the positive impact of international order on democracy transition quantitatively, this chapter introduces the variable $worlddd_{t-k}$ which is the world's average democracy level by taking average democracy level of all the countries in the world excluding Taiwan to identify the effect of international democratisation on Taiwan's democracy.

Data sources

Motivated by prior studies (Jagers and Marshall 2003; Glaeser et al. 2007; Murtin and Wacziarg 2014; Rod et al. 2020; Lin and Hsiao 2021), this study employed the Polity2 code from the Polity IV database to be the measure of democracy. Polity2 is a combined polity score ranges between -10 and 10, with positive (negative) values representing democracy (autocracy) and higher (lower) values representing higher (lower) levels of political freedom. Before 1976, Taiwan was governed by Chiang Kai-shek who was a political strongman. Since long-tenured leaders hindered the development of democracy (Rod et al. 2020), a democratic transition was unlikely to be occurred in Taiwan under Chiang's strongman politics. This study mainly focuses on Taiwan's democracy transition after the death of Chiang Kai-shek in 1975. Therefore, both Taiwan's and the world's annual democracy data between 1976 and 2018 were collected from PolityIV database.

The average schooling years and enrollment rates of various education levels were obtained from the Ministry of Education, ROC. As pointed by Murtin and Wacziarg (2014), primary education was found to be the main driver of democracy relative to secondary and higher education. This chapter gathered the enrollment rates of three education levels (primary, secondary and higher education) between 1976 and 2018 to investigate the effects of different education levels on Taiwan's democratisation.

For the Taiwan's national income data, this chapter collected the Taiwan's annual real GDP per capita within 1976–2018 from the Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics, ROC. In addition, the trade data for the effects of neoliberalism is also collected from the Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics, ROC.

Econometric method

Granger and Newbold (1974) proved that a spurious regression and small-sample downward bias may lead to an inconsistent estimation using a non-stationarity time-series data. Nelson and Plosser (1982) further found that most of the economic time-series variables are non-stationary due to their stochastic trends, a unit-root test is suggested to identify the stationarity of a time-series data. When a non-stationarity time-series data has been identified, taking first-order difference or second-order difference can transform a non-stationary data to a difference stationary data.

Different from the positive effects of education on democracy found in prior literatures (Barro 1999; Glaser et al. 2007; Castello-Climent 2008; Murin and Wacziarg 2014), the empirical findings in Acemoglu et al. (2005) revealed no causal effect of education on democracy when time effects were included. Acemoglu et al. (2005) indicated a spurious estimation may be obtained if ignoring time-effects. For a set of time-series data, non-stationarity is the fundamental cause of a spurious regression. Therefore, identification of stationarity of the time-series data in this study is necessary.

The non-stationarity of a time series data includes the deterministic trend and stochastic trend. To avoid a spurious regression, this chapter employed two methods to control the non-stationarity. For the deterministic trend, a time trend variable t is introduced in Equation (1) proposed by Acemoglu et al. (2005). For the stochastic trend, this chapter employed the Augmented Dicky-Fuller test (ADF test) to identify the existence of unit root of all the explained and explanatory variables in Equation (1). When a unit root is being identified, differencing is then employed to the variable containing unit root.

In addition, k -lagged effects of independent variables on current democracy level is introduced in Equation (1). To identify the optimal lagged period, this chapter used a Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) test to obtain the optimal k value. Finally, this chapter employed an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression to estimate the effects of education on democracy under the control of other economic development factors.

In summary, to avoid a spurious regression, this chapter introduced a time trend variable into the regression equation to control the deterministic trend. Moreover, this chapter conducted a ADF test to identify the stationarity of the data.

3. Results

The model specification tests and estimation results are reported in this section. As indicated by Acemoglu et al. (2005), a spurious estimation on the causal effect of education on democracy may obtain if the time-related variables have been omitted. Since the data of this chapter is a time-series data, a specification test before the regression is required to avoid a spurious regression. Therefore, the specification tests results are presented firstly. Then, a revised regression equation is obtained based on the specification tests results. Finally, the estimation results of the revised regression model are reported.

Specification tests

To identify the stochastic trends, this study conducted a Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) unit root test to analyze the stochastic trends of all the variables in Equation (1). Table 2 summarized the ADF unit root test results of the dependent and independent variables in Equation (1). In Table 1, the ADF test shows that only the logarithm of per capita real GDP (the variable *lincome*) is significant at levels and the remaining variables are insignificant at levels. This shows that all the variables except *lincome* contain unit roots. Therefore, this study further conducted ADF unit tests to the first and second differences of all variables. At the first difference, except the enrollment rates of tertiary education (the variable *tertiary*), the rest of variables are statistically significant at 1 % level but the variable *worlddd* is weakly significant at 5 % level. At the second difference, the variables including *tertiary* and *worlddd* turn to be statistically significant at 1 % level. Except the logarithm per capita real GDP (the variable *lincome*), the ADF unit root tests results show that the dependent variable and the independent variables experienced stochastic trends at levels but not at first or second difference. Under the existences of stochastic trends, this chapter employed a differencing stationary regression method to revise the Equation (1) by introducing the level variable *lincome*, the first differences of the variables *democ*, *schooling*, *primary*, *secondary*, *openness*, and the second differences of the variables *tertiary* and *worlddd*.

For the level of lags selected for all the independent variables, the Akaike's Information Criterion (AIC) is applied to identify the optimal levels of lags. The AIC results show that a 6-lagged period is fitted. Therefore, all the independent variables with 6-lagged period are introduced in the estimation.

Finally, this study also introduced a time variable t to capture the deterministic trends. In conclusion, under the control of stochastic trends, deterministic trends and lagged effect, a revised OLS regression is employed to estimate the

effects of economic development on Taiwan's democracy level which is represented as the following Equation (2).

$$\begin{aligned}\Delta democ_t = & \alpha_0 + \beta_1 \Delta democ_{t-6} + \beta_2 \Delta schooling_{t-6} + \beta_3 \Delta primary_{t-6} \\ & + \beta_4 \Delta secondary_{t-6} + \beta_5 \Delta tertiary_{t-6} + \beta_6 \Delta lincome_{t-6} \\ & + \beta_7 \Delta openness_{t-6} + \beta_8 \Delta worlddd_{t-6} + t + u_t\end{aligned}\quad (2)$$

where Δx_t and $\Delta_2 x_t$ is the first difference and second difference of variable x respectively. Then, an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression is employed to estimate the effects of Taiwan's economic development factors on its democracy level.

Table 1. Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) unit root tests.

Variables	Statistics		
	Levels	First difference	Second difference
Democ	-1.160	-6.848***	
Schooling	-1.788	-5.570***	
Primary	-2.073	-7.479***	
Secondary	-0.727	-7.905***	
Tertiary	-2.041	-1.751	-8.861***
Lincome	7.450***		
Openness	-2.083	-8.241***	
Worlddd	-0.073	-3.407*	-7.767***

Notes: * indicates significance at the 10 % level; ** indicates significance at the 5 % level; *** indicates significance at the 1 % level.

Effects of economic development on Taiwan's democratisation

Figure 1 shows Taiwan's democracy level from 1976 to 2018. In Figure 1, Taiwan was extremely high autocracy at the beginning of the sample period and it has been transformed to completely democracy ultimately. Interestingly, there was a significant increase in Taiwan's democracy level within 1987 to 1995, its democracy index was risen dramatically from -1 in 1987 to 7 in 1995.

Figures 2 and 3 depict the overall average schooling years and the enrollment rates of different education levels (primary, secondary and tertiary education) from 1976 to 2018 respectively. As shown in Figures 2 and 3, the average schooling years and the enrollment rates of various education levels have been risen steadily over time. In particular, the enrollment of primary education is constant at a high level across the sample period. It is because an integrated primary education system was well-established in Japanese colonial period before 1945 plus the 6-year compulsory education policy after Taiwan returning to the Republic of China in 1945. The well-established public-funded primary education system provides sufficient primary educational resources which leads to a high primary enrollment rates. In 1968, the effective of 9-year compulsory education policy increased the secondary education enrollment rates. In 1994, the increasing investment in higher education sectors makes the tertiary education enrollment rates has been increased significantly from the 1990s.

Figure 4 demonstrates Taiwan's real GDP per capita from 1976 to 2018. The income per capita has been increased significantly from \$43,992 to \$779,260 with a remarkable compound annual growth rate of 7.08 %. Finally, the Taiwan's openness degree which is measured as the proportion of trade to its GDP and the world's average democracy levels from 1976 to 2018 are depicted in Figures 5 and 6 respectively. Particularly, the dramatic increase in average world's democracy level before 1997 shows the third wave of democratisation and the collapse of Soviet Union. Overall, Figures 1–6 clearly show that deterministic trends may exist among the dependent and independent variables in Equation (2). Therefore, it is necessary to include a time trend variable t in the estimation to avoid a spurious regression (Acemoglu et al. 2005).

Table 2 summarizes the descriptive statistics of dependent and independent variables in Equation (2). Prior to the regression, the variance inflated factors (VIFs) for the collinearity diagnostics for each of the explanatory variables are obtained. As stated by Kutner et al. (2004), collinearity among independent variables is not existed when VIF is smaller than 10. Given that the estimated VIFs were found to be between 1.09 and 4.51, with an average of 2.21, the VIF estimations in the present study clearly indicate that there is no collinearity problem. The OLS estimation results of Equation (2) are presented in Table 3.

Model 1 of Table 3 presented the estimation results of Equation (2) using only the average years of schooling to proxy education. The estimation shows that the average years of schooling and the income per capita are insignificantly. This result is different from the Lipset's modernization hypothesis literatures (Glaser et al. 2007; Castello-Climent 2008; Boix 2011; Murtin and Wacziarg 2014) since

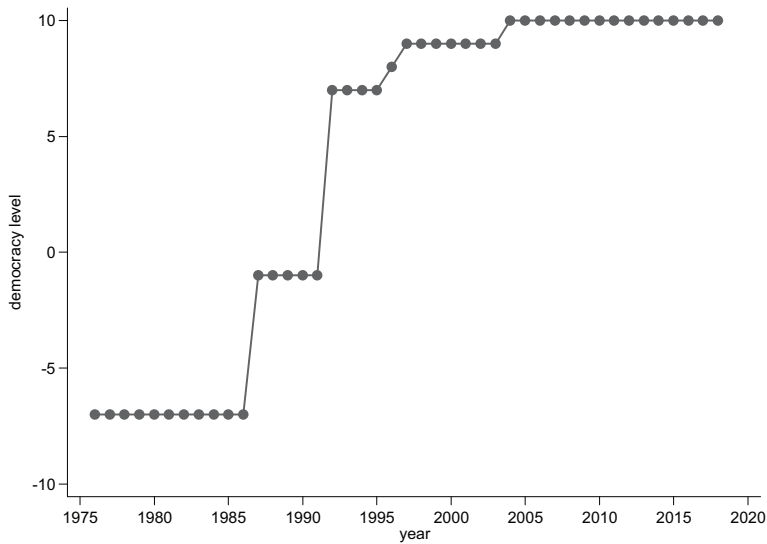


Figure 1. Taiwan's democracy level, 1976–2018.

Note: The democracy level is measured by the polity2 index obtained from PolityIV database, ranging from -10 to 10 in which -10 represents completely autocracy and 10 represents completely democracy.

there is no evidence supporting the modernization hypothesis when time effect and stationarity are controlled (Acemoglu et al. 2005).

Model 2 of Table 3 presented the estimation results using only the enrollment rates of various education levels to measure the education effect. Under the control of time-effects, the results show that the enrollment rates of primary and secondary education are significant positively affected Taiwan's democracy. In addition, the variable *world* turns to be weakly significant showing that the world's democratisation is positively correlated to Taiwan's democracy which is line with Boix (2011) and Rod et al. (2020). However, the tertiary educational enrollment rates and per capita real GDP are insignificant.

Model 3 of Table 3 is the full model of the estimation including the two measurements of education (average years of schooling and enrollment rates of various education levels). Similar to the estimation of Model 2, the primary and secondary education enrollment rates have positive causal effects on Taiwan's democracy but the tertiary education enrollment rate has no significant effects

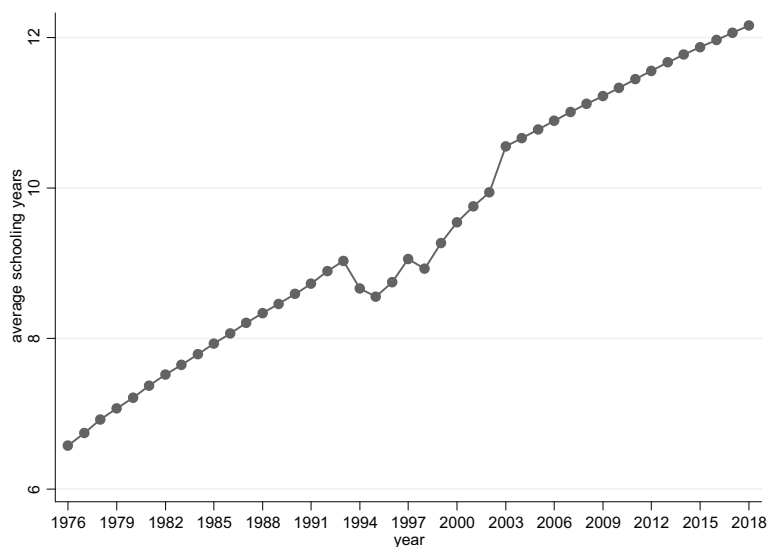


Figure 2. Taiwan's overall average years of schooling, 1976–2018.

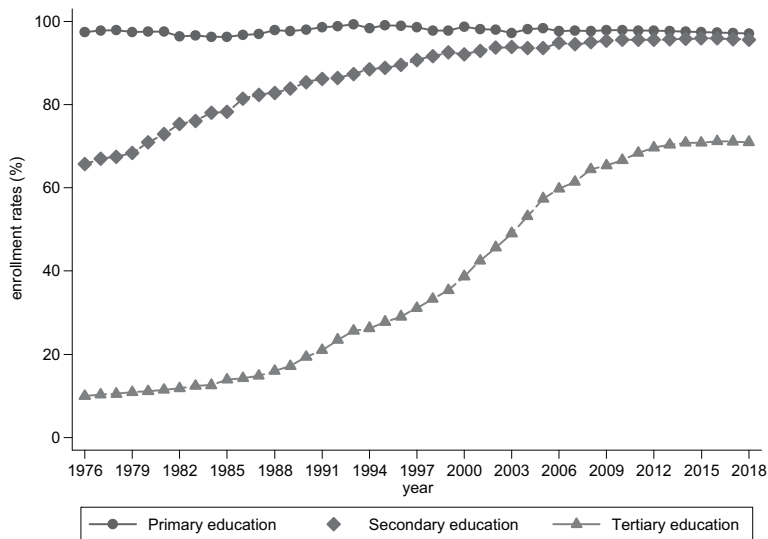


Figure 3. Enrollment rates of various education levels in Taiwan, 1976–2018.

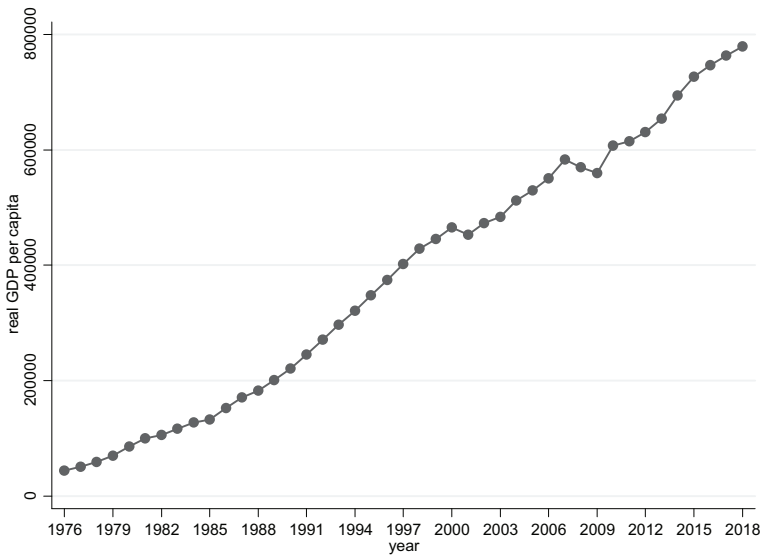


Figure 4. Income per capita in Taiwan, 1976–2018.

on Taiwan's democracy. Nevertheless, the per capita income, degree of openness and the world's democratic level have no effect on Taiwan's democratisation.

In summary, the estimated results of this study only supports the education effects on democracy but not the income effect, part of the Lipset's hypothesis is supported. Moreover, the diverse impacts of various education levels on democracy was found in this study reveals that the education distribution effects on democracy in Castello-Climent (2008) and Murtin and Wacziarg (2014) is supported. Besides, this study finds no causal effect of the world's democratisation on Taiwan's democracy which do not support the international democratic atmosphere effect proposed in Boix (2011) and Rod et al. (2020). Finally, the insignificant effect of the degree of openness shows that Taiwan's democracy may not related with neoliberalism hypothesis proposed in Chu (2011).

4. Conclusions

According to Lipset modernization hypothesis, economic development is the main driver of democratisation which is proved in prior literatures. Since Taiwan is one of the fully democratic countries in the world, most of prior literatures paid little attention to the determinants of Taiwan's democratisation. This

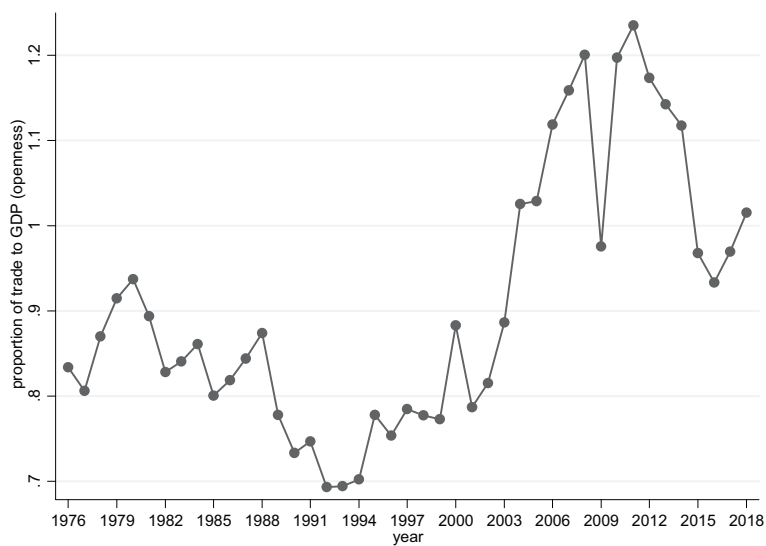


Figure 5. Taiwan's openness level in 1976–2018, measured as the volume of trade to its GDP.

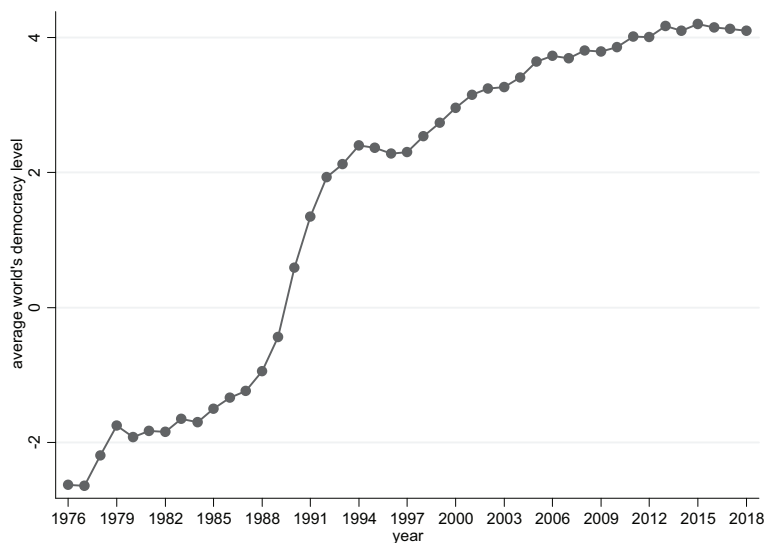


Figure 6. World's average democracy level, 1976–2018.

chapter collects Taiwan's annual data on democracy, education, national income, trade, and international democratisation level from 1976 to 2018 to study the Lipset modernization hypothesis in case of Taiwan.

With the control of stochastic trends and deterministic trends, the quantitative analysis of this study find that the Taiwan's enrollment rates of primary and secondary education levels have positive impacts on its democracy. However, both the tertiary education enrollment and the average years of schooling have no effect on Taiwan's democracy. This shows a various education effect on Taiwan's democratisation which is also found in Castello-Climent (2008) and Murtin and Wacziarg (2014). For the income effect, this study finds no causal effect of income to Taiwan's democracy supporting the finding in Acemoglu et al. (2005). The empirical results of this study supports only the education effect on democracy proposed by the Lipset hypothesis.

Besides the education and income factor, this study also finds that the degree of openness and international democratic atmosphere have no causal effects on Taiwan's democratisation showing that neoliberalism and waves of global democratisation are not the driver of Taiwan's democracy.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics.

Variables	Definition	Mean	S.D.	Min.	Max.
Dependent Variable					
$democ_{it}$	<i>Taiwan's annual democracy level which is obtained from the index polity2 at PolityIV database at year t.</i>	3.884	7.274	-7	10
Independent Variables					
$schooling_t$	<i>Annual average schooling years of Taiwan at year t.</i>	9.434	1.709	6.578	12.157
$primary_t$	<i>Taiwan's annual percentage of enrollment rates of primary education at year t.</i>	97.795	0.716	96.290	99.310
$secondary_t$	<i>Taiwan's annual percentage of enrollment rates of secondary education at year t.</i>	86.984	9.493	65.730	95.959

Variables	Definition	Mean	S.D.	Min.	Max.
$tertiary_t$	Taiwan's annual percentage of enrollment rates of higher education at year t .	37.614	23.402	9.970	71.241
$lincome_t$	Logarithm of per capita real GDP in Taiwan at year t .	12.584	0.828	10.692	13.566
$openness_t$	Proportion of total volumes of trade to gross domestic product (GDP) in Taiwan at year t .	0.906	0.153	0.694	1.235
$worldd_t$	World's average democracy level at year t which is obtained by taking the average of polity2 indexes of all the countries around the world except Taiwan.	1.592	2.455	-2.641	4.199

Table 3. Estimation of economic development on Taiwan's democracy level.

Variables	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		
	Coeff.	S.E.	Coeff.	S.E.	Coeff.	S.E.	S.E.
Lagged democracy level ($\Delta democ$)	-0.119	0.077	0.033		0.085	0.029	0.090
Average years of schooling ($\Delta schooling$)	0.056	0.760				0.674	1.461
Primary education enrollment rates ($\Delta primary$)			1.224	*	0.606	1.221	* 0.606
Secondary education enrollment rates ($\Delta secondary$)			1.817	**	0.757	1.811	** 0.763
Tertiary education enrollment rates ($\Delta tertiary$)			-0.124		0.176	-0.173	0.197
Income per capita ($\Delta lincome$)	0.989	0.717	0.394		0.908	0.551	1.059
Taiwan openness ($\Delta openness$)	-1.160	1.702	0.623		1.883	0.632	1.921

Variables	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		
	Coeff.	S.E.	Coeff.	S.E.	Coeff.	S.E.	S.E.
<i>World democracy level</i> ($\Delta_2 worldd$)	0.733	0.860	2.359		1.453	2.408	1.495
<i>Time trend (t)</i>	-0.104	0.065	0.035		0.061	0.027	0.067
Constant	-9.961	7.115	-6.751		9.886	-8.505	11.588
No. of Obs.	37		36		36		
<i>R-squared</i>	0.091		0.5169		0.5197		

Notes: * indicates significance at the 10 % level; ** indicates significance at the 5 % level; *** indicates significance at the 1 % level.

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San-Yi YANG

The ruling elites and opposition in the process of democratisation in Taiwan

Abstract:

This chapter is scheduled to divide into four parts: firstly, the author will present all ruling elites related to the democratisation from 1990s to the present in Taiwan. Secondly, major political parties will be illustrated, i.e. Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang), Democratic Progressive Party. Thirdly, the author will scrutinize the strategic interaction between the ruling party and the Opposition through case studies; that is, the lift of martial law, amendment to the constitution, and Taiwan's first directly president election. A comprehensive observation regarding on interaction between elites and the Opposition will be presented in conclusion.

Keywords: democratisation, Taiwan's presidents, Taiwan's first direct presidential election, Taiwan's ruling elites

1. Presidents related to the democratisation from 1990s to the present in Taiwan

Taiwan is an island with an area of 35,808 square kilometers and 23.45 million in habitants and is almost the most densely populated countries in the world. Major ethnic groups living there are Han Chinese (Hoklo, Hakka and mainlanders), Aborigines and others. Taiwan is also endowed with steep mountains that includes Yushan Mountain Range, which reaches an elevation of 3,952 m above sea level making it the highest peak in Northeast Asia. Taiwan is also located at tropical zones and enjoys an average temperature around 29°C in summer and around 16°C in winter. The average annual rainfall is about 2,500 mm per year and most of which come in the form of typhoons causing serious damages for the island.

Modern history of Taiwan can date back the end of World War II when Japan ended its imperial rule in colonial Taiwan with the signing of Japanese Instrument of Surrender.¹ After the end of World War II, the Taiwan Provincial Government was established by the Republic of China central government.

1 The Japanese Instrument of Surrender signaled the defeat of Japan and was the written agreement that formalized the surrender of the Empire of Japan. It marked the end of World War II in Asia.

Chiang Kai-shek (1950–1978)

Chiang Kai-shek resume his duties as president of the Republic of China (ROC) on 1 March 1950 and started his presidency since then. In order to take back mainland China, Taiwan was under martial law (1949–1987) and Chiang was reelected by the National Assembly to be the President of ROC on 20 May 1954, and again in 1960, 1966, and 1972. Chiang Kai-shek had conducted some limited democratic reforms, such as local self-government, seats of rural and urban township representative bodies (directly elected by the electorate), and supplementary elections for additional members of the parliament.

Preparations to retake the mainland China was Chiang's major goals for several presidencies and he continued to claim sovereignty over all China during the era of Cold War. Even in 1971 People's Republic of China was admitted into the UN and replaced ROC's membership of United Nations, Chiang still insisted "two enemies cannot live under the same sky." Features of Chinese civil war between two regimes (Chiang-led Kuomintang and Mao Zedong-led Communist party) was the declaration of martial law in Taiwan over 38-year-long period (1949–1987) and saw the longest imposition at that time.

Chiang Ching-kuo (1978–1988)

When civil war was breakout in China and the Communists finally gained control of whole mainland China in 1949, Chiang Ching-kuo and his father soon moved to Taiwan for the preparation to retake mainland China. As son of Chiang Kai-shek, Chiang Ching-kuo was cultivated as successor of his father: he became minister of national defense in 1965 and president of the Executive Yuan (prime minister) in 1972. Six years later, Chiang Ching-kuo was elected as president of Republic of China (preceded by Yen Chia-kan, as president being sworn in on 6 April 1975 and served out the remainder of Chiang Kai-shek's term until 20 May 1978).

The year of 1978 was not only the beginning of Chiang Ching-kuo's presidency but the cutting of diplomatic ties between Republic of China and United States, and also the year Washington's declaration of termination of Mutual Defense Treaty with Taiwan. Despite US President Jimmy Carter soon signed into law the Taiwan Relations Act as supplementary measures for US-Taiwan relations, Taiwan was extremely vulnerable at that time.

In the last years of Chiang Ching-kuo's presidency saw political reforms in Taiwan's political environments: almost 40 years martial law officially ended on 15 July 1987, Taiwan began its transition from authoritarian to democratisation. A gradual loosening of political controls in the sphere of political parties,

news media, freedom of speech and press, etc. were no longer taboo in daily life. What is more strikingly is the relations between Taiwan and mainland China (cross-strait relations). Chiang also allowed family visits to the mainland which designated the end of “Three-Noes Policy” (no contact, no negotiation and no compromise with the Chinese Communist Party).

The “three links”, on the contrary, is another major debates across the Taiwan Strait between Taiwan and mainland China. The so-called three links is the communications (links in mail, transportation and trading) between two sides. It started with the provisional implementation of the “mini-three-links” from 1 January 2001 when both side provisionally implemented direct shipping between the offshore islands of Kinmen and Matsu and Mainland China (Mainland Affairs Council 2000). Despite trade volume of the mini-three-links between Kinmen and Matsu and mainland China was small in the beginning, the links to a closer economic, social and cultural development is truly a symbolic and economic interflow across the Taiwan Straits in its political importance. Three links actually served as an impetus in improving the relationship through meaningful exchanges. 8 years later, on 15 December 2008, full restoration of the three Links officially commenced with inaugural direct shipping, direct flights, and direct mail (China Post 2008).

A historical retrospect in Taiwan’s political development after the end of Cold War, Chiang Ching-kuo is praised as the driving force behind Taiwan’s modernization. Some dissidents accused Chiang’s repression during his rule and caused about more than 4000 people killed for political purposes. Chiang actually relaxed his grip on power and honor the commitments he had made regarding freedom of speech and democratic elections. It is still not clear Chiang believed in western democracy, but Chiang started to use democracy to attack mainland China in the last years of his rule. Taiwan enjoyed rapid economic growth in 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, a “democratic Taiwan” is helpful to consolidate Chiang’s historical legacy (Yang 2014).

Lee Teng-hui (1988–2000)

Lee served as President of ROC from 1988–2000. Before that, Chiang Ching-kuo nominated Lee as governor of Taiwan on 26 November 1981 and then as vice president in 1984. When Chiang died on 13 January 1988, Lee took over the reins as president. Key features of Lee’s presidency were the last to be indirectly elected and the first to be directly elected. In Chinese history, leaders of the country were never elected directly. The 1992 additional articles of constitution

specifies direct election of the president who meets any of the following conditions, is an elector:

- a. He/she has been living in the free regions of the ROC for not less than 6 consecutive months.
- b. He/she has once lived in the free regions of the ROC for not less than 6 consecutive months, and is now living in a foreign country holding the passport of the ROC, and has within the specified time limit handled the registration of elector with the government agency of household registration at the location of the original domicile when he/she migrated to the foreign country (Laws & Regulations Database of the Republic of China 2020).

In 1996, Lee acquired 54 % of votes (nearly 11 million Taiwanese who cast ballots vote for Lee) and won a landslide victory for the first directly elected presidency. Lee's victory shows strong mandate from the people when missiles tests conducted by People's Republic of China (PRC) in the waters surrounding Taiwan. During PRC's missiles tests and military exercise, an opportunity for the strengthening Taiwan-US relations is emerging, including more arms sales to Taiwan and high level political dialogues (Cole 2017).

One of key features of Lee's democratisation is his constitutional reform when he convenes the National Development Conference (NDC), in which 192 points of consensus are reached, including party politics, economic development, and cross-strait relations. Before that, Lee has terminated the period of National Mobilization for Suppression of Communist Rebellion, conducted re-election of national legislature, institutionalization of local self-government, direct mayoral elections of Taiwan's two special municipalities of Taipei and Kaohsiung, direct presidential election, and downsizing of Taiwan Province.

Lee's democratic reform was accompanied by the vague concept of unification. Lee strategically gave the nod to "unification with mainland China" so that he could not be slammed for refusing it. Under the disguise of Unification Lee also released "the Guidelines for National Unification". With the help of the Guidelines, Lee began advocating using the Taiwanese language, learning about Taiwan, constructing the identity of Taiwan in schools and in public. Lee's policy to delink Taiwan from China did spark tensions across the Strait and drag US into Taiwan-China conflicts. However, Lee was also credited with ending autocratic rule in favor of free elections, pluralism and democracy.

Chen Shui-bian (2000–2008)

As the first non-Kuomintang president, Chen Shui-bian served as the president of ROC from 2000–2008 and the first president from the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP).

The second direct election of president was held in 2000, Chen won the election as a result of a split of factions within the Kuomintang between Lien Chan and James Soong. Despite DPP won the presidential election, Kuomintang was still the legislative majority.

During Chen's presidency, he firstly focused on aboriginal and ethnic issues: the establishment of the Council for Hakka Affairs and Hakka TV (Hakka literally means "guest families" and is also one of major ethnic people in Taiwan), and Taiwan Indigenous TV (Council of Indigenous Peoples 2021). Not only televisions, Chen formulates draft of Indigenous Peoples Autonomy Act to push forward autonomy among indigenous peoples, and gender and labor equality, such as Gender Equality in Employment Act, Employment Insurance Act, Protective Act for Mass Redundancy of Employees, and National Pension Act.

In addition to democratic reform, Chen's Cross-strait policy is quite different from Kuomintang: firstly, he declares the "Four No's Plus One" policy on his inaugural ceremony, 20 May 2000. Center for this idea is Chen will not declare independence, change the national title, push for the inclusion of the so-called "state-to-state" description in the Constitution, and promote a referendum to change the status quo on condition that the PRC does not use military force against Taiwan.

Cross-strait policy has undergone a substantial adjustment when he proposes the "One Country on Each Side" in 2002. Center for this formulate is Taiwanese sovereignty. As a counterattack, mainland China passed the Anti-Secession Law in 2005 as the sincerest attempt at resolving the Taiwan issue. Chen in 2007 once again come up with an advanced policy "Four Wants and One Without" policy, they are: Taiwan wants independence, Taiwan wants the rectification of its name, Taiwan wants a new constitution, Taiwan wants development, and Taiwan politics is without the question of left or right but only the question of unification or independence (Liberty Times 2007).

Chen's victory in 2000 and 2004 signals the advent of democratic consolidation. The term "democratic consolidation" was used to describe the emergence of new democratic regime. It also designates the process by which a new democracy matures in a way that it becomes unlikely to revert to authoritarianism, and is regarded as the only available system of government within a country (Linz and Stepan 1996). The rotation of ruling party in Taiwan from Kuomintang to DPP

signals this consolidation and confirms the effects of third wave of global democratisation on Taiwan. It is of course no small achievement because the transition of power is without violence. Chen has also conducted political reforms and advanced civil liberties during his two terms. Despite of reforms of political development and civil liberties are so obvious, this consolidation is at the cost of deteriorating of cross-strait relations (Copper 2009).

Ma Ying-jeou (2008–2016)

As a Hong Kong-born Taiwanese, Ma Ying-jeou served the president of ROC (Taiwan) from 2008 to 2016. Ma won the presidency by 58.45 % of the popular vote in the presidential election of 2008, and was re-elected in 2012 with 51.6 % of the vote (The New York Times, 2012). Ma's victory shows that Taiwan has undergone twice party rotation in which the government peacefully hands over control to a newly-elected leadership two times. During Ma's first presidency, he focuses on domestic affairs, i.e., reduces the number of cabinet-level ministers from 37-29; merges local self-government, intensifies volunteer military system, and 12-year public education, etc.

Issue of all-volunteer military is crucial in Taiwan because most democratic countries have implemented all-volunteer armed forces, few face the external threats that Taiwan does. In this regard, the administration of Ma come up with a plan in 2012 to an all-volunteer force over the several years and this policy is support by major political elites. To achieve the aforementioned objectives, the Ministry of National defense increased pay and benefits to attract younger generation and starts to open more facilities to the public (Shorenstein 2019).

Apart from all-volunteer military, Ma's conciliatory policies toward China promoted the advent of stability of Cross-Strait relations through a delicate definition of "one China". This conciliatory policies was derived from the process of DPP's nativization, which was designed as a necessity not only for strengthening social cohesion in a democratizing society, but also as a way to bolster national security as Taiwan became increasingly economically dependent on the PRC due to the liberalization of cross-Strait economic and social transactions that they oversaw (Hughes 2014). In terms of small and medium countries strategies, Taiwan has adopted hedging policy toward China under Ma's administration through engagement, accommodation and soft balancing. This hedging strategy is accompanied by the deeper cooperation of strategic cooperation with Japan (i.e. fisheries agreement) (Leng and Chang Liao 2016).

Moreover, despite the peaceful development of Cross-Strait relations has taken place under Ma's administration, China has not compromised its sovereignty

with regard to Taiwan. China still insists PRC as the only legitimate government of China and seeks Taiwan's eventual "unification" with the mainland. By virtue of intensive bilateral exchanges in the sphere of political, economic and societal aspects, Taiwanese multiple self-identity has grown due to this contact. The shift of identity is also clearly shown by the concept of "New Taiwanese". The emergence of New Taiwanese in 2008 presidential campaign has witnessed this idea from the civic side of to the ethnic side. Ma tries to combine ethnic and social-cultural aspects into a new one and tries to consolidate a new Taiwan-China identity politics (Kaeding 2009).

The climax of bilateral contact is the meeting of Ma Ying-jeou and Xi Jinping in Singapore on 7 November 2015. The meeting was the first between leaders of the two sides (one is leaders of Kuomintang and president of ROC; the other is leaders of Chinese Communist Party and president of People's Republic of China) since the end of the Chinese Civil War in 1950; it is also the first since the meeting between Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Zedong in Chongqing during the Double Tenth Agreement in August 1945. Ma-Xi meeting tries to echo and consolidate 1992 Consensus, a term referring to the meeting in 1992 between the mainland China and Taiwan "one China, different interpretations".

Tsai Ing-wen (2016-incumbent)

As the first female president in Taiwan, Tsai wins the presidential election in 2016 and 2020. Not only in Taiwan, Tsai is also one of the first female head of state in Asia. Tsai became involved in government activities since 1990s when she served as a trade policy advisor and later being appointed as negotiator as Taiwan's admission to World Trade Organization. Being chair of the Mainland Affairs Council in 2000, Tsai was responsible bilateral relations.

An epoch-making event between the US and Taiwan is Tsai placed a telephone call to U.S. President-elect Donald Trump in December 2016, and it seems that the call has changed US-China-Taiwan trilateral relations. During the call, the two leaders focused mostly on security issues in Asia-Pacific. Following the call, Trump publicized the talk on Twitter immediately and expressed gratitude to "the President of Taiwan". Taiwan released a statement about call soon after Trump's transition team confirmed the event. Although Tsai and Trump later said that their call did not indicate a policy shift, the call is deemed as breaking the deadlock since the US established diplomatic relations with China and broke off diplomatic relations with Taiwan in 1979, and the call is also regarded as a tremendous change for several decades of diplomatic protocol between the US and Taiwan (BBC News 2016).

In addition to the female president in Asia, Taiwan also holds the lead of same-sex marriage. The bill of same-sex marriage was passed on 17 May 2019. The bill is not merely a battle of nerves in Legislative Yuan (Parliament in Taiwan) but also an event of active participation in public life. In November 2018, the Taiwanese electorate passed referendums to prevent recognition of same-sex marriages in the Civil Code and to restrict the teaching of LGBT issues in sex education. The government responded by confirming that it will not amend the existing marriage laws in the Civil Code, but rather prepare a separate law for same-sex couples (Everington 2018). The progress of LGBT's rights (Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) in Asia are relatively limited in comparison to other areas of the world and Taiwan has provided a wider range of LGBT rights (Jeffreys and Wang 2017).

Tsai's victory in presidential election in 2016 marks a lopsided victory and this victory designates a major turning point in Taiwan's democratisation. 2016 election reached a milestone of democratic consolidation: the third peaceful transition of power and DPP was offered a majority in the legislative Yuan-in DPP's history for the first time being. Tsai's victory and successful democratisation stemmed from many factors, one is policies toward China, with special regard to Hong Kong. The Hong Kong national security law (the Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, HKSAR) was passed on 30 June 2020 established the crimes of secession, subversion and many other crimes with foreign organizations (The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region 2020). Due to the suppression by Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam's government to the media, the universities, the opposition and the NGOs during the past years, Hong Kong's freedom status was downgraded from free to partly free status (Freedom House, 2021). In contrast to Hong Kong's rolling back democracy, Taiwan's democratic consolidation seems to be on the rise (Fell 2019).

Table 1. List of Presidents of Republic of China (Taiwan)

List of Presidents of Republic of China (Taiwan)	Major policies or democratic reforms
Chiang Kai-shek (1950–1978)	The ROC central government relocates to Taiwan. Local representative bodies directly elected (in rural, urban township and Taiwan province). Supplementary elections for additional members of the Legislative Yuan and National Assembly. People's Republic of China (PRC) as “the only legitimate representative of China to the United Nations,” ROC was removed in 1971.
Chiang Ching-kuo (1978–1988)	Announce that Taiwan will never negotiate with the Chinese Communists or have contact with the Soviet Union in 1978. The cutting of diplomatic ties between Republic of China and United States, and also the year Washington's declaration of termination of Mutual Defense Treaty with Taiwan. The advent of Taiwan Relations Act as supplementary measures for US-Taiwan relations. Allowed family visits to the mainland which designated the end of “Three-Noes Policy”. The lifting of martial law in 1987.

List of Presidents of Republic of China (Taiwan)	Major policies or democratic reforms
Lee Teng-hui (1988–2000)	First direct election of the president and acquired 54 % of votes in 1996. The strengthening of Taiwan-US relations, including more arms sales to Taiwan and high-level political dialogues during PRC's missiles tests and military exercise against Taiwan. Terminated the period of National Mobilization for Suppression of Communist Rebellion. Conducted re-election of national legislature, institutionalization of local self-government, direct mayoral elections of Taiwan's two special municipalities of Taipei and Kaohsiung, and downsizing of Taiwan Province.
Chen Shui-bian (2000–2008)	The first president from the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). Proposed the "One Country on Each Side" in 2002. Focused on aboriginal and ethnic issues and the creation of Council for Hakka Affairs, Hakka TV and Taiwan Indigenous TV.
Ma Ying-jeou (2008–2016)	Democratic consolidation: Ma's victory shows that Taiwan has undergone twice party rotation in which the government peacefully hands over control to a newly-elected leadership two times. Reduced the number of cabinet-level ministers; merges local self-government, intensifies volunteer military system and 12-year public education. The meeting of Ma Ying-jeou and Xi Jinping in Singapore on 7 November 2015.

List of Presidents of Republic of China (Taiwan)	Major policies or democratic reforms
Tsai Ing-wen (2016-incumbent)	The first female president in Taiwan. Tsai placed a telephone call to U.S. President-elect Donald Trump in December 2016. The bill of same-sex marriage was passed on 17 May 2019. DPP was offered a majority in the legislative Yuan (the first in DPP's history) in 2016.

2. Opposition Organizations during Martial Law in Taiwan

Martial law in Taiwan referred to the period between 20 May 1949 to 14 July 1987, which was effective in Taiwan and Penghu for 38 years. During that time, not only political parties were very limited, freedom of speech, assembly, association and publication were also under control of ruling party KMT. Despite Taiwan has its own presidential, parliamentary and local elections during Martial Law period, these elections were far from democratic elections. Presidential election in Taiwan was held in indirect election before 1996 by National Assembly, which main duty was to elect the President and Vice President for terms of six years. Another duty of National Assembly was to recall or impeach the President and Vice President if they failed to fulfill their duties although this power has never been used for its history. The National Assembly was designed to act as the legislative body of Republic of China when KMT and CCP were fighting for the control of mainland China in 1940s.

The first National Assembly was elected in November 1947 but KMT lost mainland China in Civil War and retreated to Taiwan in 1948; from the time being the election of National Assembly for the next term was put into moratorium until at least half of all counties were again able to elect representatives via their County Assemblies. While martial law control at central government and maintaining the national government structure brought over from the mainland, gradual steps were taken to implement local self-rule at the local levels (Taiwan provincial assemblymen were directly elected for the first time in 1954). Despite local government witnessed a rapid self-rule development, the majority of seats (including National Assembly, Legislative Yuan and Control Yuan) continued to be held by delegates who had been elected in 1947.

Table 2. Membership of elected Central Government Organs

	National Assembly	Legislative Yuan	Control Yuan
Number of Members under constitution	3136	882	257
Number who came to Taiwan	1576	470	104

Source: Yongsun Chou and Andrew J. Nathan, "Democratizing Transition in Taiwan," *Asian Survey*, vo. 27, no. 3(1987), p. 279.

Taiwan's democracy has transformed into a new era when martial law was eventually lifted in 1987, a first step toward democratic rule. Former president Lee Teng-hui apologized for the "white terror" during martial law period and created a compensation fund for victims and their families (each family received around \$195,000).

After the end of martial law, Taiwan determined to advance democracy and human rights. After several rounds of negotiations between political parties, the Legislative Yuan proposed a series of amendments that included dissolution of the National Assembly on August 2004. On 7 June 2005, the 300 delegates voted (by a majority of 249 to 48) the constitutional amendments into effect, and so dissolved the National Assembly until the "unification of the country" as stated in the preamble. During Martial Law period, apart from the KMT the only legal parties were the Democratic Socialist Party and the Youth Party. Democratic Progressive Party was founded in September 1986 when KMT was the only dominant party. Later we will discuss the strategic interaction between ruling party and the opposition in 1980s and 1990s.

3. Strategic interaction between ruling party and the opposition in 1980s and 1990s

Martial law in Taiwan is as long as from 20 May 1949 to 14 July 1987 and lasted over 38 years period. Martial law in Taiwan was partly due to the outbreak of Chinese civil war and then chairman of Taiwan Provincial government Chen Cheng enacted an order covering Taiwan and Penghu Island. A nationwide martial law was enacted on 7 July 1949 covering whole China. The design of martial law was by ruling party Kuomintang to fight against Mao Zedong's China in a

way of “Temporary Provisions Effective During the Period of National Mobilization for Suppression of the Communist Rebellion”. The Temporary Provision was extended indefinitely in 1954 and the National Assembly resolved to abolish it on 22 April 1991. The lifting of Martial law on 15 July 1987 and the abolition of the Temporary Provision in 1 May 1991 designated that Taiwan is part of the advent of third wave of democratisation at the end of Cold War (Huntington 1993).

According to some observers, democratisation is a natural output of one country’s rapid economic development, but it is not the case of Taiwan. Before the 1990s, it is forbidden to talk about 228 Incident (an anti-government uprising in Taiwan and violently suppressed by then governor Chen Yi on 28 February 1947) in public (Edmondson 2002). The end of martial law in Taiwan was an important moment in the realization of democracy in the late 20th century and also a chance to reflect how Taiwanese look into itself again for the past decades.

Kuomintang, Taiwan’s main opposition political party until recently, sees itself as one of major driving forces pushing Taiwan’s democratisation. The official Twitter account of Kuomintang tweeted in 2021 (KMT tweet).



中國國民黨KMT
@kuomintang

...

34 years ago today, President Chiang Ching-kuo #蔣經國 lifted martial law on #Taiwan. We remain immensely proud of this decision, as it made possible the #RepublicOfChina's substantial subsequent democratization. Truly a historic day! #Democracy #Freedom #Libertad

KMT argues that as a major political party for more than 100 years and ruling party after 1945 in Taiwan, KMT is not only the backstage driving force for developing the economy but also the chief designer of democratic reforms. In an interview with Mrs. Graham, publisher of Washington, Chiang Ching-kuo declared:

“After formulating a new National Security Law, we will lift martial law and allow the formation of new political parties.”

What Chiang said is how Taiwan can survive and sustain in harsh competition with China; he believed that promoting the economy and advancing democracy

were Taiwan's most effective weapons to counter Beijing (Chou 2018). During the martial law era, media was kept on a tight leash to transmit the official ideology decided by the KMT. Soon after the end of Martial law the *baojin* (system of control over the press) was repealed and there has been a free press in Taiwan. The abolition of government controls over the media has opened up the daily newspaper market to competition; it has made it possible for all shades of opinion to be freely expressed.

For Kuomintang, Chiang is not only the architect of Taiwan's democratisation but also the promoter of peaceful cross-strait relation. He allowed family visits to the mainland China; this is seen as the end of "Three-Noes Policy" - means no contact, no negotiations and no compromise with the Chinese Communist Government. Chiang's policy is based on rational choices: There are more than two million people who followed Kuomintang to Taiwan. These people had eagerly awaited the decision to lift the ban and some of them even had paid secret visits to mainland China. They can't be stopped.

On the other side of story, Taiwan's democratisation may not have undergone a dramatic change without the opposition movement in the 1980s. Democratic Progressive Party, or DPP, was founded in 1986 in opposition to the Kuomintang's one-party rule during martial law. Before the establishment of DPP, no one was allowed to create an opposition political organization of any kind and those who tried were imprisoned (the China Democratic Party in 1960, the Formosa Magazine leaders in 1979). This is to say Chiang's reform was kind of liberalization (instead of democratisation), allowing the increase in freedom of speech and the press or maneuvering a small space for the opposition party in elections (Jacobs, 1981). For example, there are two minor opposition parties, the Young China Party and the China Democratic Socialist Party.

After the end of martial law and the pass away of Chiang Ching-kuo, several newly-formed political parties emerged. First, Taiwan has promulgated the Civic Organizations Law and eased the rules for the formation of new political parties in January 1989. Second, Taiwan also revised the Election and Recall Law to lift restrictions on campaign activities. This leads to the formation of the Labor Party, the Chinese Freedom Party, the China Reunification Party, the Farmers Party, etc. DPP is one of the best performed political party among them in the December 1989 national election.

The campaign for the National Assembly election on 21 December 1991 see the wax and wane. Despite the KMT captured 71.17 % of the popular votes, the DPP also won 23.94 % of popular votes. It was evidence at that time that both the KMT and the DPP wanted a two-party system. This is very obvious that in 1980s

and the early of 1990s saw a growing partisanship; this is derived from a more frequent electoral competition (Copper, 1993).

Another strategic interaction between KMT and DPP is the amendment to the constitution. Taiwan has started its democratic process but the constitution has not been amended for several decades. Hence constitutional reform was one of the priorities of KMT and DPP's political agenda. In 1992 the extraordinary session of the Second National Assembly with a total of 403 delegates is in charge of constitutional reforms. Despite its numerical inferiority in the National Assembly (DPP's 75 delegates against the KMT's 318), DPP resorted to the tactics of filibustering, name-calling, rallies and demonstrations to air their frustrations and in the end though differing over the question of Taiwan independence, DPP jointly supported a separation of power among the three branches of government and the direct election of the President (Leng & Lin 1993). Similar strategic interactions between KMT and DPP can also be seen in the case of Taiwan's first direct presidential election and other major political issues at that time.

4. Conclusion

Democracy has established strong roots in Taiwan. This is because people show overwhelming support for democracy in Taiwan despite people are not always satisfied with the performance of competition among different ideological political parties. No major party in Taiwan embraces authoritarian regime or opposes democracy. To sum up, democracy is the basis and consensus of all Taiwanese in this island. This is the result of many years of struggling. Since the lifting of martial law, democracy was already a starting point and not a destination for Taiwan any more.

In line with Taiwan's interest, it is worth to advocate for a freer and more democratic international environment, which is regarded as the basis of international peace and would mitigate the risk of violence being employed as an instrument of international politics (Russett 1993). According to democratic peace theorists, a democratic international order would be instrumental to realizing an international order based on the principles of resolving international differences peacefully, mirroring the Kantian idea "eternal peace" among democratic nations. In this regard, a democratic Taiwan would become much more attractive for mainland China in particular the co-existence of two entities.

For the EU, an FTA with Taiwan would show Brussels's determination on democracy promotion around the world and deliver a message of supporting closer ties of Taiwan-China economic integration. EU can also benefit from Taiwan's high-value hub and ICT in East Asian supply chains. The EU-Taiwan Political

Relations and Cooperation report signals the importance of this bilateral economic relations. The report, focusing on enhancing European Union-Taiwan relations (580 votes in favor, 26 against, 66 abstentions), calling on the EU to begin the talk for a Bilateral Investment Agreement (BIA) with Taiwan, suggesting changing the name of the EU representative office in Taipei, highlights the milestone of EU-Taiwan relations. EU sees Taiwan as a key partner in the Indo-Pacific one that needs to be paid more attention to maintaining a norms-based international order.

Taiwan demonstrates that a democratic way of life can be achieved in a Chinese-speaking society; Taiwan also get high marks as one of the freest countries in the world.² In this regard, Taiwan serves as a model for the political evolution of the Indo-Pacific region. EU, US and other countries may express their determination in supporting this island's flourishing democracy.

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Ming-sho HO

Student movement and democratisation in Taiwan

Abstract:

Students have played an important role in Taiwan's pursuit of political freedom over the entire postwar era, and yet their activism has waxed and waned in cyclic patterns. Student movement is defined here as protest participation by university students with the objective of promoting social change. This chapter examines four mobilising cycles. First, following the February 28 Incident of 1947, an anti-regime wave of student activism emerged which continued in spite of repression, and culminated in the April 6 Incident of 1949. Some student activists were late to join the communist-related clandestine insurgency and were later purged during the heyday of White Terror rule. The second wave was initiated with the Diaoyutai dispute in 1971 and evolved into an intellectual awakening focusing on the pressing needs for social and political reforms. In tandem with the growth of political opposition in the 1980s, university campuses witnessed growing student mobilisation for democracy, which culminated in the 1990 Wild Lily Student Movement. Finally, while the second and third waves were primarily preoccupied with domestic reforms, the fourth cycle emerged as resistance against the encroaching 'China factor'. This cycle was kick-started with the 2008 Wild Strawberry Student Movement and reached its climax with the 2014 Sunflower Movement.

Keywords: Wild Lily Student Movement, Wild Strawberry Movement, Sunflower Movement, student movement, student mobilisation for democracy

1. Introduction

Taiwan's postwar era is a study in contrasts; the first half witnessed the formation of an anticommunist dictatorship that ruthlessly repressed political dissidents for 38 years under martial-law rule, whereas the latter half saw the flourishing of democracy, with three peaceful transfers of power via election so far and making steady strides on the fronts of gender equality, environmental protection, and other human rights issues. Yet, straddling these two periods was the student activism that constantly strove for political freedom. To be sure, Taiwan did not have continuous generations of student movement, but rather experienced short periods of intensive mobilisation followed by prolonged stretches of quietude. Despite its discontinuities and episodic emergence, student political action has made its impacts on the island's political trajectory.

This chapter will review these four waves of student movements to understand their role in Taiwan's march toward democracy: (1) clandestine insurgency (1947–1949), (2) the Diaoyutai Island Movement and its aftermath (the early 1970s), (3) the pro-democracy movement (mid-1980s–1990s), and finally (4) from the Wild Strawberry Movement (2008) to the Sunflower Movement (2014). This chapter will first present these four episodes and then compare their outcomes.

Globally, university students have long been the vanguard for political radicalism for a number of reasons. Education brought about critical thinking and modern ideas that encouraged students to question the authorities. Being at the early stages of their life course, students were more receptive to idealistic causes and less unencumbered by family duties. While more discretionary time allowed them to take part in protest activism, their pre-existing school connections and identity facilitated their collective action. While Taiwanese students shared these characteristics, there also exhibited several particular traits that contributed to willingness to participate in these actions.

First, Taiwan inherited Confucian values which imbued intellectual learning with moral authority. Education per se was venerated and became an integral aspect of social hierarchy. In the imperial era, Chinese intellectuals played the role of the nation's moral conscience, characterised by their selfless commitment to public service. Students, particularly those attending elite universities, were more or less seen as the modern inheritors of the classical tradition of Chinese literati. As such, a student protest carried more political weight than say worker or farmer protests. From the 1919 May Fourth Movement to the 1989 Tiananmen Movement, a fairly established cultural script of student patriotism has emerged, in which student protesters assumed the role of being the nation's spokesperson and addressed authorities to demand reforms (Israel 1966; Wasserstrom 1991). The below analysis will show that such a cultural legacy was visible in Taiwan, although its salience has gradually declined.

Secondly, the control capabilities of Taiwan's postwar authoritarian rule were exceptionally strong. Inheriting from the Japanese a state machinery built for the purpose of wartime extraction, the Kuomintang regime further imposed a party-state structure in order to fasten its grip on Taiwan (Cheng 1989; Dickson 1993). From the early 1950s onward, there were party members, cells, and committees in every school. Learning the lesson of defeat and fleeing from the mainland, the Kuomintang installed a penetrating network of student informants, counterintelligence officers, and military instructors on campuses for the purpose of political monitoring, not to mention imposed a thoroughly indoctrinated curriculum via education authorities. With such preventive measures, universities became a

dangerous site for student activists, partly explaining why the first two waves of student movement failed.

Finally, university students are a product of education modernisation, particular when tertiary education emerged in order to meet the need for professional specialists. When Taiwan was under Japanese rule (1895–1945), colonisation brought about progress on many fronts, including education. While colonisers needed skilled local natives to assist their rule, they incidentally sowed the seeds for intellectual rebellion. In particular, two special schools established in the early years of Japanese rule later turned out to be hotbeds for dissent. Students and alumni of the National Language School founded in 1896 (the predecessor of National Taipei University of Education and University of Taipei) and the Medical School in 1899 (now National Taiwan University College of Medicine) played an important role in the 1920s anti-colonial movement. Taiwanese doctors trained in the latter channel, in particular, assumed intellectual leadership because of their professional status (Lo 2002). On the other hand, although Taihoku Imperial University (now National Taiwan University, NTU) was established in 1928, its admission systematically favoured Japanese at the expense of Taiwanese, which dampened dissent at this school before 1945. Meanwhile, offspring from better-off families went to Tokyo for higher education opportunities. In the imperial metropolis, these Taiwanese students gained new perspectives from their exposure to a more cosmopolitan milieu and thus initiated their overseas campaigning (Chou 1989). However, by the mid-1930s, resistance campaigns mounted by students and youth had been effectively stamped out by the colonial government, leaving only a vague trace. With the drastic regime change following the Japanese surrender, the waves of postwar student movement practically started from scratch with only scant memories of what had happened in the past.

In addition, this chapter chooses not to examine the movement mounted by Taiwan's overseas students – a persistent source of youthful activism. In the postwar era, students in Japan and the United States pioneered a Taiwan independence movement, which has served as an overseas ally to pro-democracy struggles on the island. Once exposed to unfiltered information, many overseas students became vocal critics of the Kuomintang regime (Cheng 2017; Lynch 2003); yet they were barred from returning to Taiwan until the 1990s, which hindered them from playing a more important role in the earlier period.

2. The Clandestine Insurgency in the Late 1940s

During the 28 February Incident in 1947, an island-wide uprising against the Kuomintang's predation and misrule, student played a limited role. In some cities, like Taichung and Kaohsiung, high school and college students joined armed militias to maintain local peace briefly. However, the Kuomintang's ruthless suppression of the demand for autonomy and democracy further alienated Taiwanese, creating an opportunity for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), then at a renewed civil war with the Kuomintang, to develop its organisational foothold on the island.

Under Japanese colonialism, a shorted-lived Taiwanese Communist Party (1928–1931) emerged under the sponsorship of its Japanese counterpart; and after its demise, a small contingent fled to China and joined the CCP (Tertitsky 2010). The Japanese had effectively eradicated the home-grown communist movement and contained its ideological appeal among islanders. Therefore, unlike in other provinces, the CCP was largely unable to penetrate the Kuomintang's cordon line and reach Taiwan in the initial postwar years. After the 28 February Incident (an island-wide uprising to demand democracy and autonomy) and subsequent crackdown, Taiwanese resentment, particularly among the educated stratum, became an unexpected resource for CCP operatives to tap. In 1947, the CCP's Taiwan Province Work Committee established a Student Work Committee particularly focusing on NTU and National Taiwan Normal University (NTNU). At that time, the CCP did not envision a head-on military confrontation with its Nationalist rivals on the island. Its directive was primarily geared toward preparation for a communist takeover; as such, students, together with industrial workers and indigenous peoples in the mountains, were the main target population for recruiting clandestine party members (Lin 2009).

The CCP adopted a strategy of underground organising, with its participants instructed to conceal their identities and receive only one superior's command. With its structure hidden from the public, communist activists made use of front organisations in order to attract mass followers. In higher education, student self-governing bodies were the perfect tool to access more students, and in the years 1947–1949, several leading positions in NTU and NTNU were held by communist members. They also circulated leftwing literature to attract more followers. As a former political prisoner who attended NTNU recalled,

'Grievances accumulated quickly after the 28 February Incident so that communists easily recruited new members. Many students with a sense of justice were easily absorbed and joined the CCP. They approached people by letting you read Mao Zedong's writing on new democracy. After you finished reading, they

came back for your thoughts. If you liked it, they would recruit you. Nine out ten of those who read these works agreed to join the party.' (Lan 2000).

As CCP gained a foothold among Taiwan's students, some protests over school regulations took place. Student activism also spread over to political issues; and in tandem with what was happening in mainland cities (Chen 2001), Taiwan's students rallied to oppose civil war and to end hunger. In March 1949, two NTU and NTNU students were forcibly stopped, beaten, and arrested by policemen for violating bicycle traffic rules. Hundreds of students from both schools immediately besieged the police station and successfully secured the release of the two arrestees. In the following two weeks, students held large-scale anti-government rallies, which incidentally alerted the government to the presence of communists in the schools. On 6 April, the Taiwan Garrison Command launched a raid on NTU and NTNU dormitories to arrest student leaders. The so-called 6 April Incident was a major turning point for the first-wave student movement. The authorities came to be aware of the existence of communist cells in Taiwan's higher education and the subsequent roundup of student activists, communist or not, deprived the island of a young generation of student leaders, who were either executed or sentenced to long prison terms. The 6 April Incident of 1949 was largely seen as a prelude to the White Terror period, in which the Kuomintang attempted to annihilate its opponents on this island. There were few student activists who escaped the manhunt. For instance, Zhou Shenyuan, the former NTNU student union chair, turned to underground insurgency in a rural area until he was killed in a police action presumably in 1952.

In hindsight, the failure of post-28 February-Incident student activism bequeathed a profound legacy. The decimation of Taiwan's best and brightest young intellectuals was such a traumatic lesson that taking an interest in politics or even expressing concern over public affairs was so risky that one had better avoid it. Since CCP activists recruited new student members through reading groups, such innocent activities instantly became taboo on campus, thus frustrating spontaneous organising among students. Kuomintang took stock of this, and proceeded to implement tight controls over campuses. As such, under the watchful eye of the authorities, students became inward-looking and self-regarding.

It is difficult to ascertain the degree of CCP penetration in Taiwan's student movement in the late 1940s. Among those students who were arrested, some were genuine communists, while others were merely sympathisers, and yet from the Kuomintang regime's perspective, they were equally subversive. Perhaps, the most famous person involved in this period of student activism was former President Lee Teng-hui (1988–2000), who befriended many communists and

was said to have even applied for party membership during his NTU student years (1946–1949). Moreover, even for those who voluntarily joined the CCP in their youth, one cannot see that as evidence of an ideological belief in revolutionary socialism. For disgruntled Taiwanese students, the CCP represented many things, including an alternative to the discriminatory, corrupt, and incompetent Kuomintang. The CCP's Taiwan Province Work Committee then upheld a program of 'democracy and autonomy',¹ which echoed the demands of the 28 February Incident leaders. In fact, the CCP's Taiwan-based operatives later set up a front organisation, League for Taiwan's Democracy and Autonomy, to access more islanders. Many student participants who were absorbed thought they had merely joined a front league, rather than the CCP per se. In short, even though the CCP successfully attracted a certain number of student dissidents in Taiwan in the late 1940s and the Kuomintang persecuted these activists for their communist allegiance and involvement, one should not see this wave of student movement as entirely a communist underground operation. There were genuine grievances among Taiwanese students, and the CCP happened to fill in the vacuum when Taiwan's more established political leaders were killed or silenced in the aftermath of the 28 February Incident.

3. The Diaoyutai Island Movement and its Aftermath in the Early 1970s

After the Kuomintang eradicated campus insurgents, there were short-lived campaigns to challenge the prevalent culture of apathy and acquiescence among students, which was best characterised by the then fashionable slogan 'Come to NTU and Go to the US (*lai lai lai laitaida qu qu qu qumeiguo*)'. In 1953 and 1963, two drives of self-awakening spontaneously emerged criticising careerism and materialism. After a brief period of public attention, both campaigns vapourised and were quickly forgotten for the lack of concrete and realizable goals (Wu 2003). As a consequence, Taiwan does not have a memory of the 1960s, when campus radicalism was surging across the Americas, Europe, and Japan. Under the Kuomintang's water-tight control, the global wave of New Left protests found no rejoinder in Taiwan.

1 Historical Research Commission of Taiwan Province, *Taiwan diqu jieyan shiqi wulin niandai zhengzhi an shiliao huibian* (The Compilation of Historical Material of Political Cases in the Period of Martial Law in Taiwan) (Nantou, Historical Research Commission of Taiwan Province, 1998), II, 56.

The next stirring of student activism came from unexpected sources. In response to the United States' decision to declare the Diaoyutai Islands (or the Senkaku Islands in Japanese) as part of Japan's Okinawa, Taiwan's students launched a series of patriotic protests in 1971, and this nationalistic fervour quickly spread to Hong Kong and overseas students in America. Evoking slogans from the 1919 May Fourth Movement, students contended that the islands in question were sacred land of Chinese people and vehemently condemned the US-Japan transaction as an act of imperialistic aggression. Students launched signature-collecting campaigns, wrote articles, and mounted protest rallies at the American Embassy. The government took care to channel the student activism into manageable venues, fearing that its fervour might turn inward and stimulate anti-government sentiments. After the conclusion of a US-Japan agreement in 1972, the Diaoyutai activism among Taiwan's students quickly subsided, although its reverberations continued abroad (Hsiao 2017).

Diaoyutai student activists were firm believers in Chinese nationalism, the ideology promoted by the Kuomintang which embarrassingly needed the military support of the US. It was during the Diaoyutai dispute that then President Chiang Kai-shek's representatives were expelled from the United Nations and the seat was transferred to the People's Republic of China – a blow to the regime's claim of representing the sole legitimate government of China. As such, student patriotism became a double-edged sword for the regime incumbents. It could be channelled into pro-government loyalty and also a potential source of political subversion. Student activists certainly knew the growing gap between outdated ideological claims and geopolitical reality. Moreover, their spontaneous patriotic activities were constantly hindered by campus security agents. In tandem with their patriotic rallies, NTU students also campaigned for freedom of speech, and thus challenged the regime's security control over the campus. In addition, these student activists also joined the editorial team of a newly reorganised magazine *The Intellectual* (*Daxue*), which was the leading voice for political and social reforms in the early 1970s (Hong 1993).

The collaboration between student activists and dissidents apparently alarmed the government, and a series of disciplinary reprisals against student participants and firings of pro-student teachers, culminating in the NTU Philosophy Department Incident (1973–1974), put an end to the political wing of this period of student movement. Some of the activists later joined the political opposition movement in the late 1970s (Hong and Chen 2015). On the other hand, the Diaoyutai patriotism also saw a non-political outgrowth. University students came to be aware of existing social problems, such as poverty in rural areas. A social service campaign emerged, as many students volunteered to go to distant

villages to help farmers, fishermen, and the indigenous people (Huang 1976). The idealistic enthusiasm lasted and later gave rise to many service and charity student associations in universities, which still exist to this day.

In hindsight, the brief flourishing of student activism in the early 1970s was both a product of external shocks and domestic political opportunities. As Chiang Ching-kuo gradually took the reins from his terminally ill father Chiang Kai-shek, he had to implement a series of reforms to shore up the shaky regime, including limited election of legislators, abolition of the agrarian tax, and appointment of native Taiwanese to top positions. Student activism was tolerated for a moment until Chiang Ching-kuo could consolidate his authority. Yet, in spite of the short-lived existence and the apparent failure, the outburst of Diaoyutai patriotism and related political and social discussion became a wake-up call for a generation of young intellectuals and students, who began a soul-searching journey of rethinking their relation with Taiwan. Gone were the years where apathy and materialism was touted as virtues for students. According to A-chin Hsiau, 'a return-to-reality' mentality gradually took root. In other words, in place of an illusory pursuit of Chinese nationalism, idealistic youth were encouraged to concentrate their attention on the existing realities in Taiwan and devote their efforts to improving its social and political conditions (Hsiau 2021). As such, a process of identity indigenisation emerged as a Taiwan-centred outlook became dominant in the eventful decade of the 1970s.

4. The Pro-democracy Movement (mid-1980s-1990s)

After the emergence of political opposition and social protests in the late 1970s, the Kuomintang regime had to tolerate more activities by dissident students. Starting in the early 1980s, many universities witnessed the rise of dissident student clubs. One of the arenas where dissident students engaged with school authorities was in regards to existing regulations, such as those concerning censorship of student papers and the indirect election of leaders of student self-governing bodies. In 1983, a pro-reform student defeated the Kuomintang-supported candidate and took control of the NTU student union for the first time since party-state control was implemented in the early 1950s. Moreover, student activists began to be concerned with contemporary social protests. In response to an environmental movement that resisted an investment project by the US chemical giant DuPont, NTU students launched a summer investigation project in Lukang Township of Changhua County in 1986, the epicentre of the dispute. Afterwards, they published their survey results in a book as a gesture of solidarity with the local anti-pollution movement (Teng 1993).

Following the lifting of martial law in 1987, student movements became more proactive and grew in scale by making use of the more liberal atmosphere. In the same year, students from 11 schools formed a coalition to promote reforms regarding the University Act, marking the first instance of open cross-school networking among student activists. They demanded academic freedom and autonomy from political authorities as well as full citizenship of students (Hsueh 1996). At the same time, many student activists took part in emerging social movements in the late 1980s, including farmer, labour, and environmental movements.

The climax of student activism during this period took place during the Wild Lily Movement in March 1990. As the ruling Kuomintang was mired in a deep rift regarding the reelection of President Lee Teng-hui, and many citizens grew disenchanted with the nasty infighting among ruling elites, students took the lead to stage a protest at Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall on 16 March, which evolved into a week-long sit-in with the participation of up to six thousand people. Students raised political demands to expedite the on-going democratisation. After securing his next presidential term, Lee Teng-hui received student delegates at the presidential office and announced his reform pledges on 21 March. The next day students voted to evacuate the square, thus peacefully ending their protest that had grabbed national attention (Wright 2001).

During the Wild Lily Movement, Taiwan's students reenacted the classic script of a Chinese student movement by addressing the power holders as a nonpartisan moral conscience. They enjoyed wide popular support, and also worked to protect the 'purity' of their participants, for instance by cordoning off an area where only participants with student IDs were allowed to enter. Hunger strikes, the signature act of classic intellectuals' remonstrance, were also adopted by some students. Although they raised nearly the same claims as the opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), the students tried to maintain a visible distance from DPP politicians and supporters. Coming on the heels of the Tiananmen Movement less than a year earlier, Taiwan's students certainly took inspiration from Beijing students, and at the same time, they were worried about the likelihood of a Tiananmen-style solution occurring in Taipei (Ho 2020).

After the Wild Lily Movement, students also took part in a protest against the nomination of Hau Pei-tsun, a military strongman, as premier in May 1990 and the Taiwan Independence Association Incident in May 1991, in which a graduate student at National Tsing Hua University was snatched from his dormitory for allegedly committing the crime of sedition. Afterwards, student involvement in national politics declined; while student activists devoted to gender, labour,

environmental, and other issues remained, they no longer took the nation-wide spotlight.

In retrospect, the Wild Lily Movement emerged at the critical movement of Taiwan's political transition, with old restrictions being removed, but with incumbents remaining reluctant to establish new democratic rules. The student participants obtained the moral high ground that was denied to the opposition politicians, and powerfully articulated demands for further political reforms, and thus hastening the process of democratisation. After the legislature was fully reelected in 1992 and the first direct presidential election took place in 1996, there remained fewer and fewer political issues for students to be concerned with. In this context, post-Wild Lily student activism turned inward and became less likely to be motivated by larger political concerns. Many dissident student clubs that appeared during the heyday of the protest wave in the late 1980s gradually dissipated. By the time the DPP first won the presidential election in 2000, marking the end of Taiwan's political transition, a reporter observed a prevalent disenchantment with the 'excessive partisanship and political chaos' on campus that dampened students' idealist pursuits (Ho 2001). In short, as Taiwan's democracy became consolidated, students faded from the national arena.

In addition to accelerating Taiwan's political transition, the Wild Lily Movement bequeathed other legacies. With a more liberalised and tolerant school culture, campuses of the 1990s became fertile ground for new advocacy campaigns. For instance, Taiwan's lesbians and gays began their organisations first as student clubs in universities (Damm 2011). Ex-student activists chose to work as organisers in labour unions, NGOs, and other advocacy groups so that Taiwan's civil-society organisations received an injection of fresh blood. While there were ex-Wild Lily participants who decided to embrace a political career, there were those who pursued further studies and upon receiving doctoral degrees, embarked on academic careers. As Taiwan's higher education expanded significantly in the late 1990s, many former student activists successfully landed in positions at leading universities. For some research topics, such as social movement studies, these Wild-Lily-generation academics played an important role in deepening development (Ho 2018). Perhaps the greatest achievement of the student movement in this period was that it was generally perceived as successful and thereby left behind a positive image. Unlike the two previous waves that ended in repression and frustration, and thus fostering an abiding culture of fear and apathy, the Wild Lily Movement received a positive evaluation in history, even though a democratised Taiwan had less need for student intervention, at least for a while.

5. From the Wild Strawberry Movement to the Sunflower Movement

In 2008, Taiwan's student movement was resuscitated due to the excessive policing when the newly installed Kuomintang government under President Ma Ying-jeou received a Chinese envoy in November. Ending eight years of the DPP in power, Ma pledged to build rapprochement in cross-strait relations and the historic visit of PRC officials amounted to be the first step in his agenda. As the public was shocked by the aggressive style with which policemen treated protesters, students launched a sit-in protest in front of the Executive Yuan on 6 November. After being dispersed by police, they reassembled at Liberty Square (formerly the square of Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall), and at the same time students in Hsinchu, Taichung, Chiayi, Tainan, and Kaohsiung also responded with local sit-ins. Students demanded a government apology, the resignation of responsible officials, and the revision of the Assembly and Parade Act which required prior police permission for protest gatherings. After a lengthy discussion, student protesters decided to adopt the name 'Wild Strawberry' because young people in Taiwan had been denigrated by seniors as the 'strawberry tribe' (*caomeizu*) which were thought to be pampered, fragile, and soft. With that appellation, student participants attempted to playfully twist the existing negative stereotype. Moreover, the prefix 'wild' indicated that these students self-consciously chose to claim the heritage of the Wild Lily Movement from 18 years earlier.

The Wild Strawberry Movement lasted around two months but was not able to obtain positive responses from the authorities. Yet, in spite of the seeming failure, it actually marked the beginning of a new mobilisation cycle of student activism in Taiwan after a prolonged silence. Many student activists returned to their schools to reinvigorate the then defunct clubs or to establish new ones, laying the organisational foundation for future actions. In hindsight, many core leaders in the 2014 Sunflower Movement, such as Lin Fei-fan and Chen Wei-ting, cut their teeth during this episode. There was another interesting parallel between the Wild Lily Movement and the Wild Strawberry Movement. While the former aimed to expedite Taiwan's democratisation, which had appeared to have been jeopardised by the Kuomintang's infighting, the latter was motivated by the threat that a Kuomintang political comeback would trigger a backslide into authoritarianism. Adopting from a catchy film line, Wild Strawberry activists claimed to oppose 'the brand new experience of traditional martial-law rule' (*jieyan chuantong quanxin ganshou*).

Similar to the previous student movement wave starting in the mid-1980s, the Wild Strawberry Movement and its after-effects happened to coincide with the beginning of a new protest cycle in which the labour movement, anti-nuclear movement, farmer movement, and other advocacy campaigns gained new life. Paradoxically, the eight years of the Ma Ying-jeou government turned out to be a golden era for social movements (Fell 2017). There are several reasons for this unexpected development. First, the conservative agenda of the Kuomintang government galvanised social movement organisations to defend their hitherto policy gains. Policy reversals and the closing of participatory channels encouraged advocacy groups to resort to protest tactics (Ho 2014). Secondly, the advent of digital media propelled a worldwide current of protests from the 2011 Arab Spring onward, and Taiwan was not immune to this global trend. In fact, the Wild Strawberry Movement was spawned from a midnight post on an electronic bulletin board, rather from pre-existing organisations or well-known leaders (Hsiao 2017). Lastly, similar to elsewhere in the world, the worsening of economic inequalities disproportionately victimised the younger generation, as they came to face a dismal future as an overeducated precariat. Young people's grievances emerged as the driving force for a number of social movements including the student protests, and further crystallised into a generational identity. In the Taiwan context, those who were born in the 1980s were often identified as 'Seventh Graders' (following the Republic of China calendar wherein these years are counted as the 1970s), and this age cohort, aged from 18 to 27 when the Wild Strawberry Movement took place, turned out to be the most important constituents of subsequent protest movements.

The Wild Strawberry Movement framed itself as a human rights protest as well as a defence of democracy, without mentioning the PRC's growing influence over Taiwan. Yet, in the years to come, Wild Strawberry student activists began to be engaged with the so-called 'China Factor' and its manifestations in Taiwan. In 2010, some ex-Wild Strawberry activists collaborated to resume the outdoors Tiananmen commemorative gatherings that had been discontinued for some time. In 2012, Wild Strawberry veterans joined the anti-media monopoly movement to oppose a merger bid from an avowedly pro-Beijing tycoon to expand his media empire. Originally, the dispute was a relatively minor concern among academics, but with the student involvement, it became a national issue and it was largely due to the innovative tactics on the part of student activists that the government turned down the merger application (Wong and Wright 2018). Moreover, it was during the anti-media monopoly movement that student activists called attention to the fact that China had exerted pernicious influence on Taiwan's democracy. In so doing, student activists challenged the then

prevalent narrative that deeper engagement with China was ultimately economically beneficial to Taiwan and could reduce the military tension. In a sense, student protesters acted like a Cassandra by calling attention to the imminent risk to Taiwan's democracy. Herein lies one of the greatest contrasts between the Wild Lily Movement and the Wild Strawberry Movement. For the former participants, China was still a distant concern which would in no way stand in the path of Taiwan's democracy, and yet for the latter, China was already present in everyday life – an 'anaconda in the chandelier' (Wu, Tsai and Cheng 2017) that one could not simply ignore.

In 2014, Taiwan's student movement reached an unprecedented zenith with the eruption of the Sunflower Movement. In response to an attempt by Kuomintang lawmakers to railroad through a free-trade agreement bill with China, student protesters stormed the legislature on 18 March and their action unexpectedly resulted in a 24-day occupy action that precipitated a national political crisis. Spontaneous reactions from citizens and students arose, and as the area neighbouring the national legislature filled with supporters, the authorities found it difficult to resort to police eviction. The ruling Kuomintang was incapacitated by a growing split between hardliner Ma Ying-jeou and moderates like Legislative Yuan Speaker Wang Jin-pyng. As President Ma's support rate took a nose dive, the students' protest thus enjoyed solid popular support. Toward the final days, as the movement momentum was rapidly losing steam, student leadership made use of a favourable statement by Wang Jin-pyng to decide for a withdrawal. On the eve of their evacuation, they declared a movement victory and vowed to continue their struggles beyond the legislature occupation. In the end, the free-trade agreement in question was not ratified by the legislature, and further economic liberalisation with China was stalled.

Looking back, the Sunflower Movement was a harbinger of many things to come. The bold initiative by Taiwanese students became an inspiring lesson for students in Hong Kong, thus paving the way for the Umbrella Movement six months later (Ho 2019). Globally, the democratic West used to believe in a liberal doctrine whereby economic engagement with China would ultimately be beneficial for both parties involved and eventually facilitate the democratic transformation of China. This wishful thinking was called into question during the trade war in 2018, and now has been largely abandoned as the world has come to know more about the realities of Chinese-style state capitalism. As such, the Taiwanese students' dramatic occupation of the legislature can be considered the starting point of a global revaluation of the PRC's role in the world.

Domestically, the Sunflower Movement left behind a potent legacy. In terms of scale, it easily surpassed the Wild Lily Movement, which at its height attracted

no more than ten thousand students, whereas the Sunflower Movement held a rally which purportedly gathered half a million participants. The anti-nuclear movement (Ho 2018) and same-sex marriage movements (Ho 2019) directly benefited from the tremendous outpouring of youthful idealism and secured milestone victories. In 2015, Taiwanese high school students mounted a protest movement to oppose a curriculum revision that would have reinstalled a China-centred historical perspective. In the so-called 'Sunflower Movement for high school students', protesters occupied the front yard of the Ministry of Education for a week, and finally obtained an official agreement to suspend the imminent implementation (Chou 2017).

The Sunflower Movement also exerted a mighty impact on electoral politics. The Kuomintang party took a beating for its inability to solve the political crisis, with Ma Ying-jeou's commitment to build a closer cross-strait relationship in tatters. The ruling party suffered a major defeat in the 2014 local election and later in the 2016 presidential and legislative elections. During the occupation of the legislature, DPP politicians mobilised to support the student actions and carefully not intervene in their decision making. The DPP ended up as the biggest political winner by capturing the presidential race and obtaining a first-time legislative majority in 2016. Furthermore, a groundswell of youth enthusiasm for politics surged, as many Sunflower participants joined elections or formed new political parties (the so-called Third Force). Both in 2016 and 2020, Sunflower Movement activists who had occupied the legislature were elected into the legislature by popular vote (Ho and Huang 2017; Nachman 2015). Among the new political start-ups, the New Power Party was undoubtedly the most successful one, obtaining 5 and 3 seats respectively in the 2016 and 2020 elections.

6. Comparison and Analysis

The evolution of Taiwan in the seven decades of the postwar era was anything but smooth and linear. In the beginning, a war-torn colony anxiously awaiting the resumption of the reign of its erstwhile fatherland experienced traumatic repression and the subsequent establishment of a coercive autocratic regime in the name of anti-communist operation. This military bastion was transformed from the inside out due to the influences of economic development, urbanisation, and the growth of the middle class, which nourished a home-grown opposition movement. As Taiwan finally ended its world-record-long period of martial rule, 38 years from 1950 to 1987, the yearnings for change could no longer be curbed. The pro-democracy movement and other social movements thrived in the liberalised environment and proceeded to reconfigure Taiwan into an island nation

that has become a regional beacon for human rights and political liberties. Yet, the rise of a revisionist and expansionist China threatened to undermine these achievements because of its territorial ambition, and Taiwan's hard-won democracy and freedom to choose one's own lifestyle remained hanging delicately in the balance. While the worldwide, yet belated, recognition of the PRC's global threat certainly helped shine a spotlight on Taiwan's democracy on the international stage, the rising rifts within Western democracies, emerging from the rise of rightwing populism, anti-immigrant xenophobia, and sharp power operations by autocratic regimes, cast darker doubts on the island's future.

The Changing Political Situations

Traversing this dramatically changing terrain, Taiwan's postwar student movements, the collective actions among the best and brightest young intellectuals, have assumed different contours and resulted in different outcomes. The first wave of student activism in 1947–1949 took place in the aftermath of the 28 February Incident as alienated students became ready recipients of messages of political radicalism. The Kuomintang regime then was autocratic, predatory, and discriminatory, yet without consolidated authoritarian control. This explained why a seeming mild incident of police violence led to an island-wide uprising in 1947 as well as how Chinese Communists were able to establish underground cells in Taiwan's higher education so quickly, like a prairie fire as Mao Zedong characterised revolutionary movement. As native leaders were decimated after the 28 February Incident, communists filled the void and gained the allegiance of campus dissidents.

The failure of these clandestine activities led to fatal consequences. As the regime learnt the political risk of restless campuses, a full-brunt security regime was meticulously implemented in universities so as to minimise the existence of blind spots. In addition, a whole generation of Taiwanese youth grew up under a constant reminder from their parents that political involvement was risky so it was better to be selfish, cynical, and careerist rather than follow the inner voice of conscience. The second wave of student activism in the early 1970s took place in such harsh terrain, and even though it was initiated as a patriotic pro-regime campaign to defend against a threatened loss of territory, it ended up being harassed into silence and quickly dissolved, at least within Taiwan. The regime certainly loved to see the spontaneous outpourings of youthful patriotism, but only under the condition that these expressions and demands toed the line of the incumbents' expectations, and once participants incidentally stepped over

the boundary into a pro-democracy campaign, ruthless repression descended upon them.

When the third wave emerged in the mid-1980s, Taiwan already had a strong political opposition and had seen the rise of civil society. Although martial law was still in place, the Kuomintang regime had to tolerate political criticism and social protests. Student activism in this period represented one constituent stream of the broadly defined pro-democracy movement. On the one hand, students mobilised to dismantle the coercive apparatuses of campus control, opening up another zone of engagement in the struggle against authoritarianism; on the other hand, they also joined the campaign demanding more political reforms. The Wild Lily Movement of 1990 represented a climax of student influence. Their week-long sit-in protest precipitated a political crisis that forced government incumbents to promise a timetable for reforms. With this breakthrough achievement, students again faded from public involvement. However, this time it was not due to their failure, but rather their success. As a democratised Taiwan ended one-party dominance and improved the protection of academic freedom and student rights, there remained little authoritarian coercion for them to fight against. True, socially conscious students remained active in their engagement in a plethora of social movements, but they rarely spoke in the name of students, and their identity was not a salient issue in the protests in which they took part.

After a long absence, the 2008 Wild Strawberry Movement ushered in the fourth wave of student activism. The return to power of Kuomintang conservatives, as well as their cross-straight policy which threatened to enable China to play a more prominent role in Taiwan, was the main triggering cause. The concern over the pernicious influences from Beijing was the leitmotif of student opposition to media monopoly in 2012 and resistance against a free-trade bill with China in 2014. This theme also marked the fundamental difference between these two waves of student movement. While Wild Lily participants were campaigning to expedite Taiwan's democratisation, Sunflower activists were motivated by an existential threat that their taken-for-granted democratic way of life was at risk. Such angst partly explained why students would launch a daring occupy protest of the national legislature as well as the fact they enjoyed solid support from citizens. Just like their predecessors 24 years previously, Taiwan's student activists were again in the national spotlight and their decisions during that eventful episode had far-reaching consequences for the years to come. Although student protesters in 2014 no longer had a nightmarish fear of martial-law rule, the student leaders managed to engineer a timely and peaceful retreat to avoid a potential police eviction. While several Wild Lily veterans chose to embark on a political career, they typically waited several years before joining

elections. Sunflower participants, on the other hand, formed political parties or joined the election a few months after the conclusion of the movement. The difference has to do with the massive youthful enthusiasm for politics propelled by an optimistic belief that things could be changed in the post-Sunflower years. Therefore, even though the Sunflower Movement ended quickly, it bequeathed a living legacy still perceivable at the time of this writing (2022).

Ideology and Identity in Flux

In terms of guiding ideology, democracy appeared to be a common thread connecting these four waves. Even in the underground insurgency of the late 1940s which was organisationally connected with the CCP, the pursuit for Taiwan's democracy and autonomy, rather than a class revolution, was still the proposed number one goal. The second wave in the early 1970s started as a patriotic campaign, but it also generated a pro-democracy stream that strived for reforms both within and without the campus. Both the Wild Lily Movement and the Sunflower Movement styled themselves as pro-democracy actions, which took place when elected and nonelected representatives were perceived as misusing their power. In this sense, with the exception of the first wave, Taiwan's student activists were ardent believers in political liberalism who valued freedom of speech, electoral rights, procedural justice, transparency, and so on. By contrast, leftwing radicalism, particularly the 1960s New Left ideologies (Maoism, neo-Marxism, revolutionary Third-Worldism, and so on), did not take root in Taiwan because the Kuomintang regime was able to prevent their spread to the island. By the time Taiwan's students became politically active again in the late 1980s, the economic and political collapse of state socialism in Eastern Europe had made these leftwing alternatives less appealing, although varieties of neo-Marxist works were circulating among student intellectuals in the 1980s and the 1990s. True, Taiwanese students sometimes adopted acts of nonviolent resistance; but they were never ideological or tactical radicals.

The change in national identity is another interesting aspect. If the Diaoyutai Island campaign marked the high tide of Chinese nationalism among student activists, the Sunflower Movement represented a powerful eruption of Taiwanese nationalism (Chen and Yen 2016; Ho, Huang and Lin 2020; Ho and Lin 2019). In the span of four decades, the national identity of student activists has made a drastic U-turn. The second and fourth waves make an interesting pair for comparison, because nationalistic aspirations (defending a territorial piece of the fatherland and resisting economic incorporation into another political unit) were the prime driving forces behind student activisms. In a sense, the identity

change among students largely reflected the secular trend of cultural and political indigenisation, as a Taiwan-centred perspective gradually replaced the China-centred one and became dominant (Jacobs 2005). Nevertheless, student activists were not merely passive followers, but rather they proactively took part in the identity indigenisation. As said above, post-Diaoyutai student activists began a soul-searching intellectual journey and finally decided to focus on the contemporary Taiwan rather than an illusory mainland China.

To be sure, the 'return-to-reality' mentality of the late 1970s, to use A-Chin Hsiao's phrase, does not imply a nationalist commitment to self-determination, which was first mentioned by political opposition in the early 1980s, or the claim of an independent nationhood, as the advocacy of Taiwan independence was only decriminalised in 1992. After the lifting of martial law in 1987, a lively debate emerged about Taiwan's future. As pro-independence voices surfaced and sought to challenge the political taboo, a smaller pro-unification camp also came into being and its activists sought to articulate a different vision than the Kuomintang government's then policy to 'unite China with the Three Principles of the People'. In the third wave of student activism, there were intensive discussions about the independence-unification question. Yet, when the Wild Lily Movement took place, student leaders decided to shelve this issue in order to minimise their internal differences and focus on the demands of political reforms.

Finally, during the Sunflower Movement, it would be very difficult to find a pro-unification student participant at the scene, as Taiwan identity had become a prevailing characteristic among the country's youth. While Wild Lily student leaders made an effort to disentangle themselves from the then divisive independence-unification dispute, Sunflower leaders made no secret of their pro-independence leaning. An episode suffices here to characterise such a change. The date 7 April 1989 was when pro-independence activist Cheng Nan-jung set himself on fire in order to resist police arrest. On its anniversary 25 years later, Sunflower Movement leaders took turns at the podium to reiterate Cheng's famous opening statement in a speech: 'I am Cheng Nan-jung and I support Taiwan independence'. Clearly, student leaders in 2014 no longer saw Taiwan independence as a distracting and divisive issue, but rather a positive asset for them to arouse more popular support.

Lastly, the first three waves more or less followed the classic playbook of Chinese student patriotism as students emerged as the nation's moral spokesperson to address the wrongdoings of authorities. There was an elitist assumption in this traditional script of remonstrance because students were seen as the modern inheritor of the Confucian literati whose voices were laden with moral power. However, such student-and-nonstudent distinctions appeared on the wane for

a number of reasons. In the 1971 Diaoyutai protests, the 1990 Wild Lily Movement, and the 2008 Wild Strawberry Movement, there were student-only rallies and zones, which rejected the participation of other citizens. The jealously guarded purity of student membership was not merely a defensive measure to prevent infiltration by agent provocateurs sent by the regime, but also a demonstration of the students' lofty detachment and nonpartisanship. Yet, such border policing was gone in the 2012 anti-media monopoly movement and the 2014 Sunflower Movement. With the participation of non-student citizens, it naturally raised the question of whether they were student movements or not.

The blurring of this distinction in fact reflected the profound restructuring of Taiwan's higher education in recent decades. Up to the mid-1990, Taiwanese university students were seldom seriously concerned about their career prospects and they were more or less assured of a white-collar professional future waiting for them upon leaving the school. Yet, with the rapid expansion of higher education in the late 1990s and the difficulties of transitioning to a post-industrial economy, Taiwan's college graduates found the market value of their diplomas shrinking rapidly. Their economic woes were better known in this century and this became a dominant motivation behind participation in many newer protests after 2008. One reason the Sunflower Movement was able to strike a chord with so many students had to do with the free-trade agreement with China in question as it was largely perceived as likely to worsen the economic prospects of younger Taiwanese for the benefit of big corporates.

Moreover, Taiwan's higher education no longer functioned as a marker of elite status as more and more youngsters were allowed to enter college. As university education was no longer the privilege of the selected elite, but had become more or less universally accessible to the masses, it appeared highly presumptuous, if not anachronistic, for student activists to reenact the classic script. At the same time, the rise of digital media encouraged a particular style of self-expression among young internet users that was largely foreign to senior citizens. Educational difference was no longer so salient, and it was replaced by the difference in age cohorts. As such, youth became a more broadly based label than students when it came to encouraging protest participation. During the Wild Lily Movement, student participants gathered in their respective school areas, indicating their university identity still mattered. However, during the Sunflower Movement, such school distinction no longer held, and students and non-students simply blended in throughout the occupation area. Moreover, Sunflower leaders also sought to appeal to young internet users by deliberately imitating their idiomatic and creative ways of expression, which was rather unthinkable for the Wild Lily Movement participants.

7. Conclusion

Worldwide student movements have proceeded in an intermittent pattern, with brief flourishing of intensive protests bookended by longer periods of acquiescence. The same observation applies to Taiwan, too. The four interludes of student activism examined above only comprise the relatively short period of Taiwan's postwar history. As such, each generation of student activists have to start practically from scratch, which explains these historical discontinuities. However, when the waves of student protest erupt, they have the potential to bring about far-reaching consequences in their wake. This chapter pays particular attention to students' role in the democratisation of Taiwan. From the Wild Lily Movement to the Sunflower Movement, there exists a clear dialectical relationship: a democratised Taiwan enabled students to organise, advocate, and protest more easily, and their political participation helped to deepen and consolidate the existing democratic institutions.

There are structural reasons why the outbursts of student activism tend to be short-lived. The student status is transient, usually limited to the regular four years of college life. These people are experiencing a delicate and transformative period of their life course. Largely unmarried, childless, and unemployed, they have more time to devote to protest activism; however, any change in marital and economic status is likely to distract them from further movement participation. Moreover, students' public involvement is intimately entwined with their own search for their own identity. For them, participation in a protest is less an instrumental action, but rather more an expressive one that is constitutive of their own selves. As expected then, student movements tend to be more fluid and volatile than other social movements.

Finally, beyond the immediate changes in politics, what are the longer and less directly observable results of student movements? Just like the 1960s in the West, the legacy of student radicalism took years to ferment. In Taiwan, ex-Wild Lily veterans are now in their 50s, and many of them have become leaders in different professional fields, including politics, academia, and so on. There have been some progressive changes as these former student activists gradually gained influence in their careers. For instance, there are scenes of the 1980s student protests in popular films such as *GF*BF* (*nupengyou nanpengyou*) in 2012, *Your Name Engraved Herein* (*kezai nixindi de mingzi*) in 2020, as well as the TV drama *The Magician on the Skywalk* (*tianqiaoshang de moshushi*) in 2021. The award-winning documentary film *Our Youth in Taiwan* (*women de qingchun zai taiwan*) in 2019 tells the story of two Sunflower Movement participants. The appearance of student movements in these mainstream and popular cultural

products is largely due to the fact their producers and creators were themselves student activists in the past. It also indicates that Taiwan's student movements have become an integral part of the island's collective memory, and are largely remembered and presented in a positive light. As the Sunflower Movement cohort are more numerous and younger (in their early 30s in age), it remains a fascinating question how they will proceed to make history beyond what their Wild Lily predecessors have done.

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Kuan-Hsiung WANG

Geopolitical Challenges to the Democratisation Development in Taiwan

Abstract:

This chapter discusses the issues influencing the development of democratisation in Taiwan through the perspective of geopolitics. The author holds the view that the demonstration of Taiwan's democratisation is the result from the stimulations of both external and internal environment changes. The former one is from the competition of great powers in hegemonic system, and the latter one is from the domestic demands in view of maintaining its survival.

Democracy started to take its root in Taiwan after the Second World War, especially during the Cold War era. Due to its crucial geopolitical location, Taiwan has been one of the important partners in the democratic camp, or the so-called "free world", and the choosing to be a democratic state has been the main efforts for Taiwan in promoting its international relations. Taiwan's participation in international organizations, such as the United Nations, will also be examined as cases study in this Chapter.

Keywords: Democratisation, geopolitical democratisation factors, Taiwan's geopolitics, Taiwan's participation in international organizations

1. Introduction

When discussing Taiwan's geopolitics, its location and importance in the First Island Chain in the Western Pacific are often mentioned. The "unsinkable aircraft carrier" is the best notion of Taiwan's geopolitical importance, and it was also the meeting point of the confrontation between two extreme ideologies, ie., democracy and communism, during the Cold War era. It is also easy to know that there is a democratic entity in Taiwan, that is the Republic of China (ROC, or cited as Taiwan), but the process of democratisation for the ROC is not an easy one. There were two separate perspectives to view democratisation in Taiwan, one is from the external stimulation of the competition between great powers, and the other is from internal demands for democratisation and the needs to maintain its survival.

2. Location of Taiwan: A Geopolitical View

The Republic of China (Wang 2017)¹ was established in 1911 and is comprised of four divided groups of islands: Taiwan island, Penghu islands, Kinmen (also known as Quemoy) islands, and Matsu islands.²

Taiwan, the main and largest island, is a leaf-shaped island with a coastline over 1,566 km in length and situated on the margin of the Chinese continental shelf. Taiwan stretches about 386 km from north to south and 137 km across its widest points from east to west. The land area is about 36,000 km², about two thirds of which is covered with forested mountains and only one third made up of plains and small hills.

Penghu, also known by its Portuguese name “Pescadores” (meaning “fishermen”), is an archipelago of 64 small islands located in the Taiwan Strait off the west coast of Taiwan. The total area of these islands is 126.86 km². However, only twenty of them are inhabited. According to the Penghu County government, there are 54,766 fishermen in Penghu, which is about 55 % of the population. Makung, the capital city, is 76 nm from Kaohsiung and 95 nm from Keelung.

Kinmen (Quemoy) includes twelve islets, covering an area of 150.45 km² off the south-eastern coast of Chinese mainland. It controls the mouth of Amoy Bay. Kinmen is 82 nm west of the Penghu islands and 18 nm east of Amoy. It is 198 nm from Keelung in northern Taiwan and 155 nm from Kaohsiung in southern Taiwan. The shortest distance from Kinmen to Chinese mainland is only 1.25 nm.

The Matsu islets are made up of nineteen islets. The total area of the island group is 28.8 km². This group of islands lies at the mouth of the Min River,

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- 1 In December 1949, due to its defeat in the civil war with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) between 1945 and 1949, the government of the Republic of China (ROC) retreated to Taiwan while the CCP established the People's Republic of China (PRC) in Beijing. Since then, two Chinese regimes have existed, both of which claim to be the sole legal representative of the whole Chinese people and to be entitled to the territory of the whole of China. In 1949, ROC forces led by Chiang Kai-shek fled to the island of Taiwan and established its administration there while still claiming to be the legitimate government of all of China including the Chinese mainland. At the same time, the Chinese Communist forces led by Mao Zedong, in control of mainland China, established the PRC in 1949, which also claimed to be the legitimate government of China, including the island of Taiwan. It is a fact that both sides of the Taiwan Strait claim to be the representative of China.
 - 2 The following account on Taiwan and other islands is based on Sung, *Republic of China 1988: A Reference Book* (1989) pp. 162–194.

Chinese mainland. The main island, Matsu, is 114 nm northwest of Keelung, and is the same distance north of Kinmen. Kaoteng, one of the islets, is only 5.5 nm from Chinese mainland.

In order to prevent the expansion of communism after the end of the Second World War, such as the PRC joined the Korean War after 15 October 1950 and assisted Democratic Republic of Vietnam (also known as North Vietnam)³ with military and political-economic supports. The US was worried about the “Domino Effect” which would harm to the balance of power in the West Pacific region.⁴ The US government accepted George Kennan, an US diplomat in the Soviet Union, who suggested that the US and the Soviet Union would become rivals. In order to defeat the Soviet Union, a policy of “containment” had to be adopted (Gaddis 2011; Klieman 2015). “Containment Policy” is a foreign policy based on geopolitical strategic considerations. In practice, the most apparent example of this policy is the implementation of the “First Island Chain”.⁵ Obviously, the importance of Taiwan’s geopolitics is highlighted (Yoshihara 2012; Thompson 2020).

A case to demonstrate Taiwan’s geopolitical importance is the *Mutual Defence Treaty between the USA and the ROC*, which was signed on 3 December 1954.⁶ This was the practice of geopolitical strategic concept. According to the *Mutual Defence Treaty*, two articles expressed the concern of Taiwan’s security facing the hostility and possible assault from mainland China,

3 Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) was a socialist state in Southeast Asia. In accordance with agreements concluded in Geneva between April and July 1954 (collectively called the Geneva Accords) which were signed by French and Viet Minh representatives and provided for a cease-fire and temporary division of the country into two military zones at latitude 17°N (popularly called the 17th parallel). North Vietnam occupied the northern part of Vietnam and existed from 1945 to 1976. See Britannica, “The two Vietnams (1954–65)”, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Vietnam/The-two-Vietnams-1954-65>.

4 “Domino Effect” means that if one country fell under communist influence or control, its neighboring countries would soon follow.

5 The “First Island Chain” refers to the chain of major islands out from the East Asian continental mainland coast. It mainly consists of a group of islands including, from north to south, the Kuril Islands, the Japanese Archipelago, the Ryukyu Islands, Taiwan Island, the northern Philippines, and Borneo.

6 For full text of *Mutual Defence Treaty between the USA and the ROC*, American Institute in Taiwan (AIT), “China Mutual Defense (1954)”, <https://web.archive-2017.aith.org.tw/en/sino-us-mutual-defense-treaty-1954.html>.

Article 5

Each Party recognizes that an armed attack in the West Pacific Area directed against the territories of either of the Parties would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes.

Article 7

The Government of the Republic of China grants, and the Government of the United States of America accepts, the right to dispose such United States land, air and sea forces in and about Taiwan and the Pescadores as may be required for their defense, as determined by mutual agreement.

However, even under this treaty for security guarantees, the 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis still occurred. It was a military conflict between the PRC and the ROC over the Kinmen Islands. It was a continuation of civil war between Chinese National Party led by Chiang Kai-shek and Chinese Communist Party led by Mao Zedong (Halperin 1966). From 23 August to 5 October 1958, more than 470,000 shells were fired at Kinmen and part of Matsu islets, which covers an area of 150 km², meaning that each square kilometer was littered with 3,160 shells on average.⁷ Through such drastic military offensive, there were two possible purposes for the PRC attempting to bombarding Kinmen and Matsu Islands: firstly, to “liberate” Taiwan from the ROC government; and secondly, to test how deep the US determination of military defence in Taiwan under the *Mutual Defence Treaty*. In particular for the first point, in case that the PRC succeeded in liberating Taiwan, communism would be able to break through the defence front of the First Island Chain. In other words, US grand strategy in the Western Pacific, Containment Policy, would not be sustained. From the aforementioned situation, it is again demonstrating the importance of Taiwan in terms of its geopolitical location.

3. Elements Influencing Taiwan's Geopolitical Consideration

General Douglas MacArthur used to refer Taiwan as an “unsinkable aircraft carrier” and “checkmate counteroffensive operations by United States Forces based on Okinawa and the Philippines”.⁸ Obviously, General MacArthur's wording was

7 “President Ma delivers address to members of Kinmen Defense Command and attends activities commemorating 55th anniversary of 823 Artillery War”, Office of the President, ROC, 23 August 2013, <https://english.president.gov.tw/NEWS/4231>.

8 Office of the Historian, “Memorandum on Formosa, by General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, Commander in Chief, Far East, and Supreme Commander, Allied Powers, Japan”, Tokyo, 14 June 1950, Annex of Memorandum of Conversation, by the

from the geographical importance of Taiwan, and he was advocating the offensive nature of the strategy, which had been deployed to contain communism during the Cold War.

Therefore, “Taiwan geo-strategy” is also recognized by international relations scholars. Taiwan geo-strategy mainly describes Taiwan’s strategic considerations on the country’s foreign policy based on its geographic type, location and actual strength, i.e., military capacity in terms of hard power and international trade capability in terms soft power. Under such circumstances, Taiwan’s geo-strategy is based on a maritime island, geographically located on the edge of the Pacific Ocean, in the middle of the First Island Chain in the Western Pacific, and strategically located in the region with the smallest land area but extremely high population density in East Asia.⁹ Economically, Taiwan relies on international navigation, air traffic, as well as trade for survive.¹⁰ Politically and militarily, Taiwan is influenced by both mainland China and the United States.

In terms of military, Taiwan and the United States share geopolitical interests, that is the defence of First Island Chain. Therefore, it was the general practices that the US provides Taiwan with self-defense weapons, including continue arms sales to Taiwan, in order to help defend the security and stability of the Western Pacific. With regard to the bilateral relations between Taiwan and the US, the US has legal obligation to support Taiwan in case of PRC initiates attacks on it in accordance with the Mutual Defence Treaty between the USA and the ROC in 1954.

Ambassador at Large (Jessup), 25 June 1950, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950, Korea, Volume VII, 795.00/6–2550, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1950v07/d86>.

- 9 The current population of Taiwan is 23,895,294 as of 30 April 2022, based on Worldometer elaboration of the latest United Nations data. The population density in Taiwan is 673 per km². Worldometer, Taiwan Population, <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/taiwan-population/>.
- 10 In 2020, Taiwan’s GDP grew by 2.98 %. The unemployment rate was 3.85 % and the labor participation rate was 59.15 %. As of December 2020, Taiwan was the world’s fifth-largest holder of foreign exchange reserves and was ranked thirteenth in gold reserves, with holdings of \$483 billion and 423.6 metric tons respectively. In terms of trade performance, China is Taiwan’s largest trading partner, accounting for 26.3 % of total trade and 22.2 % of Taiwan’s imports in 2020. The US is Taiwan’s second largest trading partner, accounting for 13.2 % of total trade and 11.5 % of Taiwan imports. In terms of total trade, other major Taiwan trading partners include Japan (10.9 %), the European Union (8.2 %), and Hong Kong (7.9 %). International Trade Administration, USA, “Taiwan – Country Commercial Guide”, 13 September 2021, <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/taiwan-market-overview>.

Although this Mutual Defence Treaty was terminated on 1 January 1980 when one year after the US established diplomatic relations with the PRC.¹¹ Nonetheless, the US arms sales to Taiwan has been maintained and governed in large part by the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979.¹² Under that Act, the US “will make available to Taiwan such defense articles and defense services in such quantity as may be necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability.” While officially recognizing China and having formal diplomatic relations with Beijing, every presidential administration has since maintained unofficial relations with Taiwan and notified Congress of arms sales to it.¹³ Probably one of the effect factors of developments in such kind of bilateral relations between Taiwan and the US is that Taiwan has always believed that it implements a democratic political system that has common values with the United States, although the US really gave offense to Taiwan in 1979.

Under Taiwan’s geopolitics consideration, even though Taiwan and its related island groups are the geographical basis for its survival and security, it should not be ignored that Taiwan is an island in nature, and this island is not as rich in natural resources as imagined or expected. For important strategic resources such as petrol, LNG, or steel, Taiwan has to rely on foreign trade to maintain its daily normal operation. According to Energy Information Administration (EIA), in 2015, Taiwan consumed almost 1.1 million b/d of petroleum and other liquids and Taiwan imported almost 86 % of its crude oil from countries in the Persian Gulf and smaller portions from Angola and other countries. Also in the

11 Although there is no termination provision, Article 10 of the Mutual Defence Treaty stipulated that either party can terminate the treaty one year after notifying the other party. Accordingly, the Treaty came to an end on 1 January 1980, one year after the US government recognized the PRC and established diplomatic relations with it on 1 January 1979. American Institute in Taiwan (AIT), “Joint Communiqué of the United States of America and the People’s Republic of China (Normalization Communiqué)”, 1 January 1979, <https://www.ait.org.tw/our-relationship/policy-history/key-u-s-foreign-policy-documents-region/u-s-prc-joint-communiqué-1979/>.

12 The Taiwan Relations Act is an act of the US Congress. Since the recognition of the PRC, the Act has defined the officially substantial but non-diplomatic relations between the people of the United States and the people of Taiwan. Moreover, the Act had became the framework of the bilateral relations between Taiwan and the US. For full text of Taiwan Relations Act 1979, see American Institute in Taiwan (AIT), “Taiwan Relations Act”, 1 January 1979, <https://www.ait.org.tw/our-relationship/policy-history/key-u-s-foreign-policy-documents-region/taiwan-relations-act/>.

13 “U.S. Arms Sales to Taiwan”, *Forum on the Arms Trade*, <https://www.forumarmstrade.org/ustaiwan.html>.

same year, Taiwan imported more than 700 billion cubic feet of LNG in 2015, making it the world's fifth-largest LNG importer.¹⁴ In particular, Taiwan's energy consumption is almost entirely dependent on imports from other countries through navigation, which means maintaining the security of sea lanes of communication has been a critical element for survival. In other words, in discussing Taiwan's geopolitics, not only the survival and defence of islands is important, but also the protection of sea lands of communication should not be overlooked (Ji 2000; Yang 2018; Pawiński 2014).

Security of sea lanes of communication can be treated as the lifeline for an island state. Even though Taiwan could secure its geopolitical stability as a base and be able to control its surrounding waters, it still would not be able to survive if Taiwan cannot freely make use of the sea lanes through the South China Sea, the Bashi Strait, the North Pacific or the East China Sea for maritime trade with other states. This also implies that the supply of energy or international interaction would be disconnected. In the end, there will be one outcome that it will not be able to maintain its territorial integrity and to lose the war/conflict with PRC. In other words, Taiwan's geopolitics is inevitably involved with the security of sea lanes of communication (Auslin 2016).

As far as the maritime security issues are concerned, Taiwan is at the centre of the First Island Chain in the Western Pacific. The geographical location of Taiwan is to connect the Ryukyu Islands to the northeast, the Philippine Islands to the southeast, the East Asian mainland to the west, and Guam, the closest overseas territory of the US to Taiwan, 2,500 km south of the east. The western Pacific island chain starts from the U.S. Aleutian Islands in the north, continues with the Kamchatka Peninsula, goes to the Kuril Islands in the southwest, passes through the Ryukyu Islands, reaches Taiwan Island, which is in the central, and then goes south to the Philippine Islands and Borneo to the Indonesian archipelago. The southern end of this island chain separates the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean. The Malay Peninsula and the Indonesian archipelago from Singapore to Cape York are the Pacific Ocean in the north and the Indian Ocean in the south. Besides, Taiwan is also the northern choke point of the South China Sea, controlling the sea lane of communication between India Ocean and the Pacific Ocean.

Therefore, Taiwan is capable of exerting its geopolitical significance because of its special geographical location. For the same reason, Taiwan also has the

14 US Energy Information Administration (EIA), "Taiwan Analysis", December 2016, <https://www.eia.gov/international/analysis/country/TWN>.

characteristics of being a choke point where the sea lanes of communication in the west Pacific Ocean, as well as an intercept point between powers from the Pacific Ocean and the East Asian continent. These two characteristics have repeatedly appeared on the stage of world politics in history. The Netherlands, Spain, Japan, and even the United Kingdom and Germany intended to acquire the Taiwan island because of the characteristics of Taiwan possesses the capability of controlling the sea areas as well as the communication lines. From the history, the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895) between the Qing dynasty of China and the Empire of Japan,¹⁵ the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945) between the Republic of China and the Empire of Japan,¹⁶ Taiwan had been one of the main issues because of its geo-political importance.

Moreover, from a contemporary strategic perspective, in case that the power from East Asian continent wants to break through the obstruction from the island chain, then it is necessary to control Taiwan and use it as a forward base. Then, it is possible to prevent the attack from Pacific powers and to penetrate the waters where is far from the sea lane. On the contrary, in case that the Pacific powers control the island chain, it would be easy for them to display the ability on the command of sea. Moreover, the Pacific powers would be able to contain or block the expansion of the East Asian power from mainland. This would create military threats, thereby affecting the balance of power in the region and avoiding a single and mighty East Asian power appeared. Therefore, even if Taiwan cannot draw enough domestic resources to establish strong naval fleets to exercise its strength to control the sea lanes of communication in the region, it is still able to strengthen its position from the perspective of geopolitics, which is the capability to control traffic choke points.

15 The Treaty of Shimonoseki of 1895 was signed between China and Japan on 17 April 1895 to end the war. According to Article 2 of the Treaty, China recognized the total independence of Korea and ceded the Liaodong Peninsula, Taiwan and Penghu Islands to Japan in perpetuity. For full text of the Treaty of Shimonoseki, USC US-China Institute, <https://china.usc.edu/treaty-shimonoseki-1895>.

16 The Treaty of Peace between the ROC and Japan signed in Taipei on 28 April 1952, and took effect on August 5 the same year, to end the Second World War between the ROC and Japan. According Article 2 of the Peace Treaty, "Japan has renounced all right, title and claim to Taiwan (Formosa) and Penghu (the Pescadores) as well as the Spratly Islands and the Paracel Islands". For full text of the Peace Treaty, USC US-China Institute, <https://china.usc.edu/treaty-peace-between-republic-china-and-japan-treaty-taipei-1952>.

However, even if Taiwan devotes all its national resources to the defence sector, it is still difficult to guarantee that it can defeat attacks from People's Liberation Army (PLA). This is an issue encountered by island states, especially when they want to build up their defence forces. From historical experiences, the challenges for island states are mainly on how to hinder attacks from crossing the sea and this needs to develop a powerful naval power. Obviously, this consumes enormous economic resources. However, in practices, manipulating the balance of power might be the key factor to prevent attacking from continental states.

From the internal, or domestic, perspectives of Taiwan, Taiwan government possesses the basis of the justifiability and legitimacy of public opinion, it can use domestic resources to formulate a plan to handle its geopolitical location and importance. In other words, the Republic of China government has to take possession of justifiability and legitimacy first, then it could be able to exert Taiwan's geopolitical capabilities. This was a major policy during the Cold War. To cope with the confrontation with the CCP, it is necessary for Taiwan to join the democratic coalition and obtain enough defence assistance (Kagan 2015). Therefore, the demonstration of domestic institutions and public opinion with democracy as the system and freedom as the goal is the first step in responding to the threat of the CCP (Marshall 2021). That is to say, in order to eliminate external threats to internal interests, there must be a stable and ample democratic system. This expresses the importance of the development of democratisation and the deepening of democratic thoughts in Taiwan.

Therefore, from a geopolitical point of view, Taiwan is not only geographically located as a hub, it is also conducive to controlling regional traffic in peacetime. In times of war, aircrafts taking off from Taiwan can extend their control 800–1,000 km to the north, east and south of Taiwan, forming a defence zone in the Western Pacific Ocean that is 2,000 km long from north to south and 900 km wide from east to west. Therefore, in case that any major power in any region can control or influence Taiwan, they can effectively manipulate the sea and air traffics in the region, which will greatly benefit that state's interests. On the contrary, if mainland China can control Taiwan, it will not only become the only country to control the Taiwan Strait geographically, but also use Taiwan as an acute pivot for intervention in Pacific affairs, which will greatly increase the attack radius of mainland Chinese fighter jets. In the end, the control of important air routes from Northeast Asian countries, such as Japan and South Korea, to Southeast Asian countries, such as the Philippines, Indonesia, or even Singapore, will fall into the hands of the CCP.

Looking back at history, Taiwan's geopolitics were defined by the outside world, including foreign governments or international relations scholars. The

arguments include that Taiwan can be used as an anti-communist base, Taiwan is a transshipment point in the ocean, or Taiwan is a pivot for various forces. However, taking Taiwan as the only base for survival and security of the people on the island, and taking this as the basis, as well as thinking about the geographical characteristics of island countries with the consideration of the geo-strategic approach, it is important for Taiwan to deliberate a geopolitical strategy with subjective consideration. The most fundamental significance is that Taiwan has to adhere to democratic system that can reflect public opinion and expand foreign relations with members of international community. If without such democratic system, it is impossible for Taiwan to construct a geo-strategy that could defend the survival fortress, let alone whether it can develop into a regional-level international relations actor.

4. A Serious Setback: Withdraw from the UN

As introduced, the ROC was founded in 1912 and has been the government of China since then. At that time, Taiwan was under Japanese colonial rule as a result of the 1895 Treaty of Shimonoseki, by which the Qing Dynasty ceded Taiwan to Japan. The ROC government began exercising jurisdiction over Taiwan in 1945 after Japan surrendered and ended the Second World War through signing the *Treaty of Peace with Japan* (also known as *San Francisco Peace Treaty*) with Allied Powers.¹⁷

Four months after the San Francisco Peace Conference ended, the United Nations officially commenced, on 24 October 1945, when it came into existence after its *Charter* had been ratified by the Republic of China, France, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America and by a majority of other signatories.¹⁸

Even during the Second World War, there had been a civil war between the ROC government, led by Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang, KMT), and

17 Government Portal of the Republic of China (Taiwan), "History", https://www.taiwan.gov.tw/content_3.php. For full text of *Treaty of Peace with Japan*, <https://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/unts/volume%20136/volume-136-i-1832-english.pdf>.

18 United Nations, "History of the United Nations", <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/history-of-the-un>. Also, in accordance with Article 3 of the *UN Charter*, "The original Members of the United Nations shall be the states which, having participated in the United Nations Conference on International Organization at San Francisco, or having previously signed the *Declaration by United Nations* of 1 January 1942, sign the present *Charter* and ratify it in accordance with Article 110".

the troops led by Chinese Communist Party (CCP) (Fu 1990). In 1949, the CCP controlled nearly all of the Chinese mainland and proclaimed the People's Republic of China (PRC) established in Beijing. The ROC government was forced to retreat to Taiwan, which Japan had renounced all rights, titles and claims in accordance with the *Treaty of Peace with Japan*. After 1950 up to now, the PRC was in control of mainland China, while the ROC maintained control over Taiwan island, Penghu archipelagos, Kinmen islets and Matsu islets.

In terms of the international recognition issue, the PRC claimed to be the successor government of the ROC, while the Kuomintang in Taiwan championed the continued existence of the Republic of China. Both claimed to be the only legitimate Chinese government, and each refused to maintain diplomatic relations with countries that have recognized the other.¹⁹ This civil war extends to diplomatic recognition by the international community, especially who, ROC or PRC, can represent China in the UN became a critical issue between democratic states and communist states.

The One China policy advocated by both governments rejected the possible solution of dual representation,²⁰ but during the Cold War and the Korean War, the United States and its allies opposed the replacement of the Republic of China with the People's Republic of China at the United Nations, while at the same time the Soviet Union and its allies argued that the People's Republic of China was the legitimate representative of China. However, Britain, France and many democratic allies converted their recognition of China to that of the PRC. Albania moved annual votes to replace the ROC with the PRC, but these were all rejected because such motions are deemed as an "important question" and required a two-thirds vote under United Nations General Assembly Resolution 1668.²¹

19 For recognition in international law, a classic academic work, Hans Kelsen, "Recognition in International Law: Theoretical Observations", *American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 35, No. 4 (October, 1941), pp. 605–617; also, Malcolm Evans, *International Law*, 4th edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 236–241.

20 "Dual representation" is a compromise proposal raised by the US which means both ROC and PRC represent China in the United Nations. See, Philip Hsiaopong, "Dual Representation: Reviewing the Republic of China's Last Battle in the UN," *Issues & Studies*, Vol. 47, No. 2 (June 2011), pp. 87–118.

21 United Nations General Assembly Resolution 1668 (XVI) was an act of the UN General Assembly that deemed the issue of Chinese representation at the UN an "important question" under the UN Charter. Under such circumstances, any proposal to change of recognition either to the PRC from the ROC and designated as such as the representation of all of China at the UN would hence require a two-thirds majority of all voting members. UN General Assembly, "Representation of China in the United Nations", A/

Some scholars argue that the issue of China's representation is of international concern because a small China (Taiwan) occupies such an important position. China's legitimacy is an issue between Taipei and Beijing, and if neither country is given a permanent seat on the Security Council, or if the importance of this seat is diluted, then it is less important to the rest of the world (Hsiaopong 2016). However, from the perspective of the international community, it is a question of UN representation. If from the perspective of the Republic of China, it is not only a battle to defend the UN seat, but also a struggle between the two forces of democracy and communism.

The voting took place on 25 October 1971. In the first vote held, the General Assembly rejected the US backed proposal that the matter would require a supermajority vote, i.e., the "important question motion". The General Assembly then voted on a separate US proposal that the words "and to expel forthwith the representatives of Chiang Kai-shek from the place which they unlawfully occupied at the United Nations and in all the organizations related to it" be removed from the draft resolution. If that motion were accepted, it would have allowed the PRC to join the UN as "China's representative", while allowing the ROC to remain a regular UN member. However, that motion was rejected (UN 1971). At this point, the chief representative of the ROC, Ambassador Liu Chieh, stated "in view of the frenzy and irrational manner that has been exhibited in this hall, the delegation of the Republic of China has now decided not to take part in any further proceedings of this General Assembly". He said the "ideals upon which the UN was founded" had been "betrayed". The ROC representatives decided to withdraw from the UN.

The Assembly then adopted draft Albanian proposed Resolution 2758, which reads:

The General Assembly,

Recalling the principles of the Charter of the United Nations,

Considering that the restoration of the lawful rights of the People's Republic of China is essential both for the protection of the Charter of the United Nations and for the cause that the United Nations must serve under the Charter,

Recognizing that the representatives of the Government of the People's Republic of China are the only lawful representatives of China to the United Nations and that the People's Republic of China is one of the five permanent members of the Security Council,

Decides to restore all its rights to the People's Republic of China and to recognize the representatives of its Government as the only legitimate representatives of China to the United Nations, and to expel forthwith the representatives of Chiang Kai-shek from the place which they unlawfully occupy at the United Nations and in all the organizations related to it.

Although the ROC was reluctant to withdraw from the UN, the situation was such that it had no choice but to do so. It is also worth noting that, from the ROC's view, it was an "important question" for the exclusion of members, but some countries considered it to be a motion for the membership of the United Nations only, as in the case of the view from the United Kingdom and the USSR. They took a view arguing that only one Chinese state was a member, and so the question was merely one of which Chinese delegation's credentials to accept and that any other Chinese state would have to apply for membership in accordance with the Charter. Obviously, this was a setback for Taiwan, not only because it had to withdraw from the UN, which is a serious defeat on its diplomatic war field, but also a betray from the democratic camp.

5. Conclusion

Taiwan is located in East Asia is also the center of the First Island Chain and commands the busy traffic of Taiwan Strait and Bashi Channel where is the choke point for international trade and maritime strategic activities. Taiwan played an important role in the First Island Refinery during the Cold War because of its excellent geographical location, which gave it a strategic position that had to be taken seriously. This is why it was called the "unsinkable aircraft carrier" or the "beacon of democracy in East Asia". However, these praises were all from other governments and academic scholars. It is crucial for Taiwan to deliberate its own political system.

Although the international situation in East Asia after the Second World War is generally moving towards a democratic political system, there are still China, North Korea in Northeast Asia and Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Burma in Southeast Asia that are under communist regimes. In case that Taiwan could be able to form a democratic community together with Japan and South Korea in East Asia and the Philippines, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia in Southeast Asia, it would increase the stability in the region, promote economic prosperity, and enhance regional security. Therefore, Taiwan had to adhere to democratic institutions that are responsive to public opinion and broaden participation. Without such democratic institutions, there is no way to construct a

geo-strategy that Taiwan is able to defend its survival, let alone whether it could develop into a regional-level strategy.

In the case of the Republic of China (ROC), after the Second World War, apart from the civil war with the Chinese Communist Party, which made the choice of democratic politics inevitable, the ROC government moved to Taiwan and democratisation became a necessary option for consolidating its internal rule and administration.

The deepening of Taiwan's fragile democratic system has therefore become the basis for the construction of Taiwan's geostrategy. The process of democratisation that has been underway since the 1980s has had considerable success. In particular, the only source of legitimacy for gaining political power in Taiwan must come through its democratic process which is also in line with its constitution law. This means that the future of Taiwan must also be determined by all the people through its democratic system. However, there is counter-currents to the hollowing out of democracy that is also in the offing. The main problems include the powerlessness of citizens in the post-democratic era, the serious disorder within a democratic society that has lost its purpose, and the tension between democratism and anti-democratic communalism.

In other words, the guiding principle at the local level is to "deepen democracy", which could be achieved through the reform of democratic institutions and education systems, gradually influencing citizens to actively participate in political operations. Also, the use of deliberative democracy by the government and the public to jointly conceive a long-term national policy. Moreover, dissolving the political mobilization called for by various ethnic groups. However, it is also important to understand that the real structural problem is the conflict between social classes under its economic development, the long-standing inequality in the distribution of its social resources, and the result of the competition between politicians and the media. The above-mentioned structural problems should be responded, in order to deepen Taiwan's democratic system and to guarantee the freedom of its people from the threat of communism, so as to initiate and implement Taiwan's geo-strategy with its own significance.

In the process of Taiwan's democratisation, therefore, apart from geopolitical considerations of international relations, including diplomatic relations with the United States and neighbouring countries, which represented the link between Taiwan and the "democratic community". There is also an important diplomatic battleground, namely the battle with the PRC for Chinese representation at the UN, as the loss or win of this battleground represents Taiwan's position in the process of "democracy against communism" in the world. Although the ROC does not have significant diplomatic success in terms of its bilateral official relations

with most of the members of the international community, however, the democratisation process developed by the ROC in Taiwan is a successful precedent and an important manifestation of the evolution of democratic politics.

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Chin-Mo CHENG

Changes in political system of Taiwan during the democratisation process

Abstract:

Taiwan shares with Poland the similar democratic experiences and both are successful cases of the Third Wave of Democratisation. This chapter focus on the evolution of Taiwan's political system from the authoritarian KMT ruling, the dissolution of one-party system, the amendment of Constitution, the changing political party system, and the introduction of semi-presidential system, to the consolidation of democracy. The exploration would also be carried out on the domestic and external factors include Taiwan's political culture, economic development and geopolitical position that push and draw back Taiwan's democratic process. Through the study of the reform of Taiwan's political system, this chapter expects that the Taiwan's successful democratisation model could be better seen.

Keywords: *democratisation, one-party system in Taiwan, semi-presidential system in Taiwan, taiwanization*

1. Introduction

When Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang government came to Taiwan and declared martial law to implement one-party rule in 1949, to Chiang Kai-shek's son, Chiang Ching-kuo, who succeeded the presidency in 1975, lifted long-standing martial law in 1987, to 1986 when Taiwan's first opposition party, the Democratic Progressive Party, was formally established, to 1996, when the presidential election was democratized, Taiwan's political transformation process has undergone many major changes.

From 1949 to the 1970s, under the martial law system during the period of mobilization to suppress the rebellion, the government successively promoted local autonomous elections and by-elections for representatives of the central public. Negative phenomena such as money politics and election bribery occurred, but they still insisted on embarking on the road to democracy, laying the foundation for democratic transformation. After the lifting of martial law in 1987, a series of liberalization measures, such as the overall re-election of parliament, the direct presidential election, the implementation of local self-governance, free competition of party politics, etc., to expand citizens the political participation of the

people, initiating the process of democratic transformation, which was taken by Samuel P. Huntington as a “third wave democratisation” country.

Especially in 1996, the first direct presidential elections are seen as a milestone in democratic transition. Moreover, the first rotation of ruling parties took place in 2000, and two turnovers of ruling parties were completed in 2008, completed what Huntington called the “consolidation of democracy” process. The transition from an authoritarian system to a democratic politics, despite the turbulence, is a peaceful process, which can be called a major achievement of democratic politics.

The Decline of the Legitimacy of the KMT

According to the ‘Government Portal of the Republic of China (Taiwan)’ website, ‘The ROC Constitution, promulgated Jan. 1, 1947, did not begin to serve its intended purpose as the foundation for democratic governance and rule of law until after 1987, when martial law was lifted in Taiwan. Since then, it has undergone seven rounds of revision in 1991, 1992, 1994, 1997, 1999, 2000 and 2005 to make it more relevant to the country’s current condition.’ The reason why the Constitution of ROC couldn’t be carrying out was because the Chinese civil war and then the defeated Chinese Nationalist Party escaped from China to Taiwan. Chinese Communist regime formally inaugurated in the 1st of Oct., 1949.

The legitimacy of the Kuomintang in Taiwan in the early days was based on complete control over society and politics, and at the same time, an ideological system was attached to strengthen the Taiwanese’s identification with the Chinese who were in the foreground of the Kuomintang. However, such a ruling method made the Kuomintang government since the 1980s, it has faced two crises of legitimacy, which has prompted the transformation of the regime. One is the non-investment of domestic capital, and the other is the continuous emergence of social movements in civil society after 1983, which challenged the authority of the Kuomintang government. (Sun Shichun 2014, 61–62)

In the 1980s, the emergence of a large number of non-Party magazines attracted a large number of intellectuals to join the opposition movement. These intellectuals then formed a new force in the non-Party movement, advocating that ideas, discipline, and social mobilization should be used to attract non-Party masses. The program is different from the previous development model of opposition movements dominated by public office. There are even two different directions of development: “election-parliamentary line” and “protest-mass movement”, both of which oppress the government’s reforms, directly

or indirectly challenged the authority of the Kuomintang government. (Sun Shichun 2014, 62)

Chiang Ching-kuo's Opening-up Policy in His Later Years

After Chiang Kai-shek dead, Chiang Ching-kuo become the chairman of Kuomintang (KMT) and served as premier since 1972. He possess the power of parties, the government, and military after National Assembly elected him as the president of the Republic of China (Taiwan) at the 20th of May, 1978. Due to domestic and foreign circumstances changing, Chiang Ching-kuo as the premier started to launch the political reforms called "innovation and protection of Taiwan." In order to stimulate the democratisation and liberalization in Taiwan, he declared the abolition of Martial Law and decontrolled the published newspaper and organized parties.

The mantle of the democracy movement across Asia was passed onto Taiwan, and at 6:00 PM on the evening of July 14, with over 200 members of the Taiwanese and foreign press crowding into the meeting room at the Government Information Office (GIO), GIO Minister Shaw Yu-ming made the following announcement: "By presidential order, it is hereby announced that martial law will be lifted across the Taiwan region effective at midnight local time on 15 July 1987."

Taiwan was a poster child for the global "third wave" of democratisation that occurred in the 1980s and 1990s. Its transition from authoritarian rule to a representative, electoral system was gradual and peaceful. (Bush 2021)

Democratisation in Lee Teng-hui's Period

In January 1988, President Chiang Ching-kuo died, and Vice President Lee Teng-hui (1923–2020) succeeded to the presidency in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution. Lee Teng-hui was the first native of the province to become president. At the beginning, Lee Teng-hui did not have a solid power base, but he exerted excellent political skills, succeeded as the party chairman of the Kuomintang, was elected president at the National Assembly held in March 1990, and continued to implement the democratisation and Taiwanization policy line initiated by Chiang Ching-kuo.

During his administration, the way the president is selected has also undergone major changes. In the past presidential elections, indirect elections were used to maintain the empty shell form in which "all parts of China including Taiwan elect representatives to the National Congress, and the representatives to the National Congress elect the president." It was not until after 1996 that it

was changed to “to be elected by all the people of the free areas of the Republic of China”, that is, to be directly elected by the people of Taiwan. The election of the president with the highest power in Taiwan in a free and fair manner is not only the last important milestone in Taiwan’s democratisation, but the direct election of the president of the Republic of China by Taiwanese voters who has nothing to do with China can also be regarded as Taiwanization important starting point.

The political transformation of democratisation began at the end of the Chiang Ching-kuo era and ended in the Lee Teng-hui era. This change also brought about the phenomenon of Taiwanization, which is an inevitable result. Masayoshi Wakabayashi, who specializes in the study of Taiwan’s political system, begins with (1) the Taiwanization of the government leadership, (2) the Taiwanization of political power orthodoxy, (3) the Taiwanization of ideology, and (4) the Taiwanization of the state system. Four aspects to define Taiwanization. Of course, as long as the text of the Constitution of the Republic of China is not revised, it is impossible to achieve complete Taiwanization, but in reality, the Republic of China has indeed gradually transformed into a Taiwanized Republic of China. Wakabayashi called this phenomenon as “Taiwanization of the Republic of China” (NarotoHall 2021).

In terms of diplomacy, Lee Teng-hui tried his best to communicate with countries without formal diplomatic relations, relying on Taiwan’s democratisation and economic growth to enhance Taiwan’s presence in the international community. This approach worked to a certain extent. At home, Lee Teng-hui attempted to free competition among political parties through democratisation, and through elections, the Chinese Kuomintang was transformed into a Kuomintang integrated into Taiwanese society. But this attempt was only half successful. Lee Teng-hui succeeded in consolidating the concept of “Taiwan identity”, but there was still no way for the KMT to become a party that “holds Taiwanese identity”.

External Factors in the Transformation of Taiwan’s Political System

After Taiwan and the United States severed diplomatic relations, Chiang Ching-kuo was under increasing pressure from the executive and legislative branches of Washington to promote democratisation. How much pressure the United States, from the summer of 1982 Senator Edward. Kennedy’s private letter to Kang Ning-xiang can be seen in the letter, in which the brother of the former US president bluntly criticized the Kuomintang for “there has been too little progress” on human rights and democratisation issues. The CCP’s human rights violations are deeply disgusting. When similar situations occur in Taiwan, he can’t sit back

and watch, and asks Kang Ning-xiang to tell other people outside the party that he has worked hand in hand with the leaders of the Congress and the House of Representatives to prepare a proposal to ask the Kuomintang to lift martial law. In the face of pressure from the United States, Chiang Ching-kuo used channels to let Washington know about the four major policy directions in the future, including political democratisation, localization of government organizations, ensuring Taiwan's economic prosperity, and gradually opening up people-to-people exchanges across the strait. (CNA 2021/4/27)

Another subtle factor that is rarely mentioned in the process of Taiwan's democratisation is the invisible competitive pressure from the other side of mainland China; after the establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and China, the United States has a high degree of imagination and expectation for China's reform and opening up under Deng Xiaoping's rule. On the occasion of 1985, Deng Xiaoping enjoyed a great reputation at home and abroad. In September of that year, the Fourth Plenary Session of the Twelfth Central Committee of the Communist Party of China established that the policy of reform and opening up remained unchanged, reformists continued to hold power steadily, and the CCP veterans and the military interfered in the political situation. The possibility of development is also extremely small, a situation in sharp contrast to Taiwan, which is deeply mired in political scandals and has a conservative atmosphere on the other side of the strait. (CNA 2021/4/27)

2. Changes in Party System

According to American State Department's annual report of human rights practices which says that in Taiwan civil and political rights and the rule of law are well protected. These positive ratings do have a basis. Elections are free, fair, and highly competitive. In presidential races, turnout usually exceeds 70 %. There have been three presidential transfers of power, an indicator of democratic consolidation. The party system is institutionalized, with two large, distinctive parties – the Kuomintang (KMT) and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). Each is supported by small parties and groupings, producing two political camps. The KMT leads the Blue camp and the DPP the Green camp (named for the colors of their party flags). Civil society organizations have proliferated and pursue their objectives seriously. Polling organizations facilitate a permanent plebiscite on leaders and government policies (Bush 2021).

Although the development of political parties in Taiwan began during the Japanese occupation period, the real formation and development of political party politics took place after the Second World War. As mentioning above, at

present judging from the voting rate of the political parties in the eighth legislature election, it is based on the pan-blue camp of the Chinese Kuomintang and the Chinese Nationalist Party. A two-party system dominated by the two major political parties of the Pan-Green camp, the Democratic Progressive Party. In recent years, emerging third-power political parties such as Taiwan People's Party and New Power Party have emerged to challenge Taiwan's traditional blue-green political ecology.

Two-Party System

After the 1970s, the strategy adopted by the Kuomintang was to strengthen its internal legitimacy and seek social support to maintain its rule. Especially after 1972, the Kuomintang launched the policy of "Taiwanization" and "Indigenization", and formed alliances with Taiwan's economic and social elites, while some political elites who were not absorbed or who were absorbed and had no development opportunities gradually turned their attention to opposition. Especially since 1977, the rise of opposition movements dominated by the middle class challenged the authority of the Kuomintang and made the Kuomintang strengthen its relationship with local elites. Under the impact, they did not choose to absorb elites who opposed the movement into the system, but instead suppressed them (Tang 2006, 144).

After the government of the Republic of China moved to Taiwan in 1949, some people outside the party fought for democracy and freedom. Afterwards, the non-party momentum gradually developed and expanded. The Beautiful Island incident that broke out in 1979 can be said to be the climax of the non-party movement. In the 1980s, this non-party force gradually combined and unified, and finally on September 28, 1986, 132 non-party supporters who attended the meeting announced the formation of the Democratic Progressive Party at the Yuanshan Hotel (圓山飯店) in Taipei. After the formation of the party in 1986, the DPP participated in the first election of legislators and representatives of the National Assembly, and the total vote rate was more than 20 %. Since then, the DPP has also launched several street demonstrations, striving for the lifting of martial law by the authorities, direct elections for the people's representatives, and a series of public policy adjustments.

In 1987, President Chiang Ching-kuo announced the lifting of martial law, lifting the ban on newspapers and the party, and the DPP continued to participate in Taiwan politics and demanded direct presidential elections. The DPP passed the "Four Ifs" resolution, saying that the DPP will support Taiwan independence only when the four conditions of the Kuomintang's betrayal of the

interests of the Taiwan people and the Chinese Communist Party's unification of Taiwan become a reality. In the county mayor and legislature elections in 1989, the support rate of the DPP continued to rise. In 1991, the DPP officially adopted the Taiwan Independence Party Program at the Fifth National Congress of the Communist Party of China. Article 1 of the Party Program declared that the basic proposition of the DPP was "to establish a sovereign and independent Republic of Taiwan through the self-determination of the residents." The promotion of Taiwan independence to the main goal of the party marks that the DPP has officially become a party supporting Taiwan independence.

In 1994, in the mayoral election of Taipei City, the DPP launched a campaign between legislator Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁) and the New Party Zhao Shaokang (趙少康), and the Kuomintang Huang Dazhou (黃大洲), who was seeking re-election, and finally won the election against candidates of New Party and Kuomintang. In 1997, the DPP won 12 seats in the county mayor election, surpassing the Kuomintang for the first time, forming a situation of "local encirclement of the center".

In 1999, in response to the presidential election of the Republic of China in 2000, the basic policy of the DPP was changed, and the "Resolution on the Future of Taiwan" was passed. Voters agree. In the subsequent elections, former Taipei Mayor Chen Shui-bian, who lost the election, and Lu Xiulian (呂秀蓮), who was the county magistrate of Taoyuan County at the time, participated in the election of the president and vice president. The election process was not favored by the outside world, which led to a decline in support. In addition, Lien Chan and the Kuomintang nomination campaign divided the votes. In the end, Chen Shui-bian and James Soong won the election with a gap of 2.5 %, realizing the first party rotation in the history of the Republic of China and ending the Kuomintang's 55-year rule in Taiwan.

During Chen's administration, he vigorously promoted the Taiwan localization movement, which made the concept of "Taiwan as a sovereign and independent country" become the mainstream of Taiwan's public opinion. At the same time, many of its policies could not be implemented smoothly due to the situation of "going against Ono" in the Congress. Corruption scandals were frequently reported in the late period of power. In the 2008 presidential and legislative elections, the DPP lost to the Kuomintang, and the DPP once again became an opposition party. It was not until 2016 that he came to power again, and for the first time achieved "full power" in which he controlled both the executive and legislative branches.

More important was in 2000, the DPP won the general election, realizing the first political party rotation in Taiwan's history. The DPP came to power,

marking the official end of the Kuomintang's one-party authoritarian rule, and Taiwan's political party system has also undergone tremendous changes. In the two legislative elections in 2001 and 2004, the DPP defeated the KMT and became the largest party in the Congress. The strength and political influence of the DPP has greatly increased, and it has gradually achieved an equal position with the Kuomintang in Taiwan's political arena, and the confrontation between the two major parties has basically taken shape. The Legislative Yuan still uses the Multi-Member District single non-transferable vote system, and small and medium-sized political parties can still find vitality in the cracks between the two major parties. The People First Party, the Taiwan Union Party and the New Party all hold certain seats in the Legislative Yuan and maintain considerable political influence. However, due to ideological confrontation, these small and medium-sized political parties have chosen to form alliances with large parties with similar consciousness of unity and independence, forming the pan-blue and pan-green camps respectively. Therefore, during this period, Taiwan's political party system was based on the confrontation between the two major parties, the opposition between the two major political parties, blue and green. (Bing 2014, 27)

Reform of Electoral System

In 2005, the Kuomintang and the DPP joined forces to promote congressional reforms, halving the number of congressional seats and changing the plural constituency system to a single constituency system, under strong opposition from small parties. As expected, the disproportion of the Legislative Yuan has become more serious. In 2008, the Kuomintang won 72 % of the seats with 54 % of the total constituency votes, while the DPP won 38 % of the constituency votes but only got 24 % of the seats, not to mention other small parties have reduced their elected seats. Only one or two seats can be obtained from the compressed non-divisional legislator seats (currently, the non-divisional legislature seats are directly voted by voters to political parties, and the non-divisional seats are allocated according to the proportion of the national votes obtained by each party). To make matters worse, such an electoral system more structurally consolidated the position of the Kuomintang. According to projections, Pan-Blue (KMT and PFP) only need to get 45 % of the constituency votes. (Templeman 2014)

In the early days of "lifting the martial law", the Kuomintang was still able to maintain its dominant position as a single party, but the growth of opposition parties such as the Democratic Progressive Party quickly changed this situation. The electoral system played a role in inducing and accelerating the collapse of

the Kuomintang one-party hegemony. First, the election of the legislature is still dominated by the “Multi-Member District single non-transferable vote system”, and the size of the constituencies has been reduced, and the threshold for election has been further lowered, which has increased the possibility of the election of the weaker opposition parties. The factions split from the party provide a chance for survival and play a role in inducing the split of the big party to a certain extent. For example, the new parties that split from the Kuomintang can survive after splitting from the big party to form a new party, which can win a seat in elections such as legislators. Second, the adoption of the “single district simple majority system” in the election of local executive heads directly transformed the split of the Kuomintang into dividends for the opposition party and accelerated the collapse of the Kuomintang’s one-party hegemony. (Bing 2014, 27)

The 2005 “mission-oriented National Congress” halved the total number of seats in the Legislative Yuan from 225 to 113, and changed its electoral system to a “single constituency two-vote system”, that is, 73 “regional legislators” in the local 73 seats. The 34-seat non-divisional and overseas-elected legislators are elected in a proportional representation constituency with the whole of Taiwan as a constituency. Only parties that receive more than 5 % of the votes can participate in the allocation of seats in the proportional representation constituency. However, the 6-seat legislators of the mountain and land ethnic minorities are still generated by the “single-record inalienable system for plural constituencies”. The “two-vote system for a single constituency” is also a mixed electoral system that combines the majority system and the proportional representation system. Each voter must cast two votes, one for the candidate in the majority constituency and the other for the candidate in the proportional representation constituency.

Since the number of seats produced by majority constituencies in Taiwan’s Legislative Yuan is far more than that of proportional representation constituencies, in fact, the “single constituency two-vote system” adopted by the Taiwan Legislative Yuan is based on the “single constituency comparative majority system”. That is to say, after a certain party’s vote ratio reaches a certain ratio, its seat ratio will be much higher than its vote ratio; on the contrary, if a certain party’s vote ratio does not reach a certain ratio, then its seat ratio will be far lower than its voting rate. Under the influence of “mechanical factors”, voters will further develop psychological factors that are unwilling to let their votes become invalid votes, and then abandon small parties that have no hope of being elected and switch to large parties that are promising. The combination of these two factors makes the “single constituency comparative majority system” an electoral

system that is most favorable to large parties and not favorable to small parties. (Bing 2014, 28)

In the more than 60 years since the emergence of political elections, Taiwan's political party system has also gone through four stages: the Kuomintang's one-party autocracy, one-party dominance, the confrontation between the two major political parties, and the two-party system. Although the electoral system is not the only factor influencing the changes of Taiwan's political party system, it plays the most direct role. Changes in the detailed design of the electoral system, such as the way of counting votes and the division of constituencies, will have an impact on the living space of the ruling party and opposition forces, large and small parties in Taiwan's political arena. In particular, the reform of the election system for the Legislative Yuan, which was implemented in 2005, played an important role in basically establishing a two-party system in Taiwan. It can be foreseen that as long as there are no drastic social changes in Taiwan in the future, the electoral system will continue to play a role, and the two-party system in which the two major parties of the Kuomintang and the People are opposed will be maintained and consolidated in Taiwan.

Party Alternation

After decades of indirect presidential election in authoritarian era, in 1996, the president and vice president of the Republic of China were elected, and the Chinese Kuomintang candidate Lee Teng-hui (李登輝) was elected, completing the first direct election of the head of state. In 2000, the Democratic Progressive Party candidate Chen Shui-bian was elected president, completing the first party rotation. At the end of 2003, it became the first country in East Asia to enact legislation to protect citizens' right to vote. In 2008, the Kuomintang candidate Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) was elected president, completing the second party rotation. In 2016, DPP candidate Tsai Ing-wen was elected president, achieving the third party rotation and becoming the first female president of the Republic of China and the first female ruler of Taiwan.

More details on party alternation in Taiwan in 2000 were when Lee Teng-hui's term of office expired, the Kuomintang nominated Lien Chan (連戰) to run for the presidency, and Soong Chuyu (宋楚瑜), a powerful figure in the party, left the party to run for election. Under such a split situation, the results of the presidential elections of Taiwan, were held on March 18, 2000, Lien Chan won 23.1 % of the votes, Soong Chu won 36.84 % of the votes, and the Democratic Progressive Party candidate Chen Shui-bian won 39.3 % of the votes. The highest vote

was elected president, resulting in the first political party rotation in Taiwan's history. (Yishen 2009)

It is generally believed that the reason for the loss of power of the Kuomintang, in addition to the division within the party, is the long-term awareness of unity and independence and the factors of provincial ethnic groups. Since the Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui took the localization route in the 1990s, he was considered to be inclined to Taiwan independence. Although he nominated the same Taiwanese Lien Chan ran for the presidency, but most of the traditional supporters of the Kuomintang fell to Soong Chuyu, a foreign national, so Soong lost the election by just over 310,000 votes. "If you engage in independence, you will not end well." This caused a backlash from Taiwanese voters, and votes went to Chen Shui-bian. After Chen Shui-bian was elected, he became a "minority president." Facing the congressional majority of the pan-blue camp (the Kuomintang and the People First Party founded by James Soong), major bills, budgets, policies, etc. were difficult to pass, and the constitutional system was unclear. Elephant, known by political scientists as "premature party rotation syndrome". Nevertheless, with the cooperation of Lien Chan and James Soong in 2004, Chen Shui-bian was re-elected by a slight margin (50.11 % vs. 49.89 %).

The 2008 presidential election was a test of the DPP's eight-year rule. Due to the halving of parliamentary seats and the two-vote system for a single constituency passed through the revision of the 2005 constitution, on the one hand, the pan-green camp (the DPP and the Taiwan Solidarity Alliance) did not have a chance to do so. On the one hand, it is unfavorable for the DPP itself, which led to the re-election of the legislators in January 2008, and the KMT won an overwhelming majority (72 % of the seats), which in turn affected the presidential election. In addition, the high level of the Presidential Office reported fraud and improper handling of political and business relations, so that in the general election on March 22, 2008, the presidential candidate Ma Ying-jeou nominated by the Kuomintang won 58 % of the votes and was elected, which can be called "the second political party rotation." (Yishen 2009)

3. Government Reform

Party-State System

During the period of authoritarian rule, the Chinese Kuomintang regime, led by the party, controlled the army and monopolized political power. It also excluded other political and social forces for a long time through various special laws, emotional governance units and other mechanisms. Basic principles, and go a

step further to persecute people through various laws and systems. In a nutshell, it is to control the people by controlling the state apparatus and abuse the state apparatus to inflict undue violence on the people. Without the legitimacy of Taiwanese public opinion, the government of the Republic of China, lasted as long as 43 years. This was the so-called “ten thousand years of parliament”. Chiang Kai-shek’s presidency also became “tenure”, serving as president for five consecutive terms until his death in 1975, a dictatorship that ruled Taiwan for nearly 30 years. (Sih and Ruizi 2019)

Taiwan’s party-state system can be said from the defeat and retreat of the Kuomintang in China. Mr. Chiang Kai-shek, the top leader of the party at the time, took the retreat to Taiwan as an opportunity to reflect on how to stabilize his own ruling power, so he pointed one of the targets at the “party”. The “one-whip-style” party-state system of leading state organizations officially sounded the death knell for the separation of powers. Chiang Kai-shek himself said in “The President’s Instructions for the Reform of the Party” in 1950: We cannot allow all the concepts, behaviours and styles that led to the fall of the mainland to be used in Taiwan to disintegrate the last fortress of the Republic of China and make it re-enter the provinces of the mainland. The only way to follow is to get rid of the swirl of factional strife, eradicate the old habits of personal disputes, and make a new determination to reform the party. As Mr. Matsuda Yasushi analyzed in the book “The Establishment of Taiwan’s One-Party Dictatorship”: Such a declaration, like a *carte blanche*, requires that the transformation of the party’s personalities and the actual reform be entrusted to itself, and the later party and government organizations also. It is like a staff agency that provides Jiang’s decision-making advice, not a collegiate body for democratic decision-making. Chiang himself was ultimately an authoritarian leader who was above all else, not bound by any formal rules (Wang 2020).

Due to dissatisfaction with the party-state system and the “ten thousand years of parliament” Congress, on March 16, 1990, the masses led by Taiwanese students sat in the “Chiang Cheng Memorial Hall” and started the “Wild Lily Movement”, proposing to “dissolve the National Assembly” and “abolish the provisional provisions”, “Convening the country is the meeting”, and “political and economic reform timetable” and other four demands. In April, Chen Shui-bian and other 26 elected legislators filed a petition for constitutional interpretation on the term of the “first senior public opinion representative”. The “first senior central public opinion representatives” who were elected in China in 1948, including deputies to the first National Assembly, legislators, and supervisory committee members, must all resign by December 31, 1991 at the latest. On May 1, 1991, President Lee Teng-hui, who was still elected by the first

national representative, proclaimed the abolition of the “Temporary Provisions for Mobilization and Rebellion Period”. On December 21, 1991, the people of the “Free Areas of the Republic of China”, mainly Taiwan, directly elected representatives to the second session of the National Congress. On December 31, all the “first senior central public opinion representatives” elected in China in 1948, including representatives of the National Assembly, legislators, and supervisory committees, announced in accordance with the constitutional interpretation of the justices that they all resigned from office, and the “ten thousand years of parliament” finally came to an end. “Deputies to the Second National Assembly” elected by voters in the “Free Areas” held their first meeting on March 20, 1992. (Sih and Ruizi 2019)

Semi-Presidentialism

The government system Republic of China (Taiwan) was considered to have the characteristics of cabinet system. The “Temporary Provisions for the period of national mobilization in suppression of communist rebellion” formulated in 1948 stipulated: “During the period of mobilization and suppression of communist rebellion, in order to avoid urgent danger to the country and the people, or to cope with major financial and economic changes, the President may, through a resolution of the Executive Yuan (cabinet) meeting, make an emergent conduct. Sanctions are not subject to the procedures prescribed in Article 39 or 43 of the Constitution. For the emergency sanctions in the preceding paragraph, the Legislative Yuan may modify or revoke them in accordance with the procedures in Paragraph 2 of Article 57 of the Constitution. Suspension shall be proclaimed by the President, or by the Legislative Yuan (congress) at the request of the President.” (Chou 2007)

However, the emergency response power of the President is still limited and cannot be exercised without a resolution of the Executive Yuan. Although the provisional provisions attempt to expand the power of the President, the design of the President of the Executive Yuan as the top executive head in the Constitution has not changed. Furthermore, the “provisional provision for mobilization and suppression of communist rebellion” will certainly help the president to expand his power, but even without this provision, through the results of the operation of the party and government, the actual operation of the constitutional system will still be transformed into a presidential system centered on the president (Chou 2007).

4. Challenges to Taiwan's Political System

The Asian Barometer Survey has conducted several surveys of public attitudes that probe the degree of satisfaction about Taiwan's democracy in various ways. The following is the set of responses in the 2014 "wave," the last one to be done, in declining levels of positivity: 1. 88 % supported the idea that democracy is still the best form of government, whatever its problems. 2. 84 % thought that "democracy is suitable for our country." 3. 76 % believed that democracy is capable of solving problems in society. 4. 68 % thought that Taiwan was a democracy, though some thought it had "minor problems." 5. 63 % were satisfied with the way democracy worked in Taiwan. 6. 63 % believed that "democracy was always preferable." (Bush 2021)

But there is no denying that on a range of issues, the Taiwan political system's response to policy problems has been suboptimal. These include the government budget; maintaining economic competitiveness; ensuring good jobs for young people; energy security, preserving the environment, and food safety; the generosity of retiree pensions; marriage equality; transitional justice (how far to go in holding accountable the authoritarian KMT regime of the past); judicial reform; and, last but definitely not least, China. On each of these issues, the players – the political leadership, central and local government agencies, political parties, the business community, civil society, and the public – and how they interact varies, depending on the nature of the problem to be addressed. But the results are often policy swings, chronic contention, or even gridlock (Bush 2021).

Political Competition

In term of electoral system, Taiwan's constitution and electoral game rules currently limit the living space of small parties. Small parties can only win a very small number of seats in the 113 seats. Therefore, unless the electoral system changes, hundreds of small parties like the "Citizens' Group" can only be destined to disappear into the torrent of history like a small party in Taiwan's past. In the past, Taiwan also went through a different electoral system. Before the 2008 general election, Taiwan's legislature elections used a multiple constituency system (multiple legislators were elected in one constituency), and a small party could get a seat with 10 % of the vote, so when the new party was split by the Kuomintang in the mid-1990s when they came out, they won 12.8 % of the seats, and they quickly became important members of Taiwan's political party system in the first election. Likewise, PFP and the Taiwan Solidarity Alliance won 20.4 % and 5.7 % of the seats respectively when they first ran for election in 2001 (Templeman 2014).

At present Taiwan is still dominated by the Kuomintang-dominated pan-blue camp and the DPP-dominated pan-green camp as the two largest political forces. The two camps have very different views on Taiwan's sovereignty and cross-strait relations. After the rotation of political parties, political party battles often occur: Pan-Blue accuses Pan-Green of engaging in populism, and that announcing independence will plunge the Taiwan Strait into war; Pan-Green accuses Pan-Blue of changing his stance, from anti-Communist to pro-China. The struggle between the two parties has gradually formed the current electoral geography of Taiwan. It is worth noting that political party fighting is not only found in Taiwan, but also in other democratic countries, such as the Democratic Party in the United States, when it competes with the Republican Party or main political parties in Poland.

The Kuomintang advocates maintaining the status quo and even cross-strait reunification; and although the DPP's party platform advocates Taiwan independence and the establishment of a sovereign and independent Republic of Taiwan, the DPP passed the "Taiwan Future Resolution" in 1999, which stated that "Taiwan is recognized as a sovereign and independent country, the name of the country is the Republic of China." After that, it recognized the Republic of China and opposed the CCP's totalitarian rule, similar to China's independence. The *Power of the Times* proposes "progressive values", "openness and transparency", and "normalization of Taiwan's national status", which are similar to the political propositions of the pan-green camp dominated by the DPP in terms of foreign affairs and national defense.

Taiwan Jijin (台灣基進) is positioned to follow the left-wing Taiwan independence line, and proposes the concept of "political division of labor", emphasizing that the Democratic Progressive Party should be in charge of internal affairs reform, while Taiwan Jijin is regarded as "internal thieves ("Chinese termites" and Chinese Kuomintang), foreigners. Anti-strong enemy (resistance)" role. In the Legislative Yuan and local councils, the forces of the times adopted strong supervision of the blue and green armies, while Taiwan Jijin cooperated with the DPP and opposed the Kuomintang. The ultimate goal of the power of the times and Taiwan's radicalization is to replace the political position of the Kuomintang, so that the DPP, which has both Taiwan independence leftists and rightists, pushes to the right and becomes the two major political forces in Taiwan.

Despite all these favorable attributes, the island's public has decidedly mixed views about their democratic system. In the World Values Survey in 2012, 40 to 60 % of Taiwan expressed confidence in the central government, civil service, armed forces, and the courts, but rated the press at 28.4 %, the Legislative Yuan (LY, the parliament) at 27.6 %, and political parties at 22.4 %. (Bush 2021)

Further Deepening of Democracy

In the 8th legislature election in 2012, although both the Taiwan United Party and the People First Party passed the 5 % political party threshold, they won the minimum three seats in the Legislative Yuan to form a party group. However, the two major parties, the Kuomintang and the DPP, still control 92 % of the seats. In addition, in this election, James Soong participated in the general election, and he used the effect of hens to bring chickens to drive the momentum of the election of the legislators of the People's First Party. James Soong's main appeal is the third force, and he did not get 3 % of the votes in the general election. In addition to the two legislature elections successively, the non-party solidarity alliance and non-party candidates can only be in Kinmen, Matsu or minority constituencies. When the number of voters is small, the constituencies with huge clan power have won sporadic seats. It has been proved that due to the implementation of the "single district two-vote system", there is almost no room for third forces to survive in Taiwan, and an exclusive two-party system has been basically established in Taiwan. (Bing 2014, 29) How to prevent political power being monopolized by 2 biggest party and ensure that small parties still have a say in parliament are still big challenges to Taiwan's democratic build-up.

As far as Taiwan's central government system is concerned, the current system is characterized by "the president is the core of power" and "the legislature that has been weakened but still has a certain ability to contain it." The possible dangers are a minority government, the negative effect of division, and the president's considerable power (Huang Jintang 2004). But after 2016, DDP control both the presidential office and the parliament together with the declining of the main opponent KMT. The stability of Taiwan's politics and the strengthening of free competition relies too much on DPP's self-restrained.

The Gerrit van der Wees, the formal chief editor of "Taiwan Communiqué", said that "The biggest challenge to Taiwan's democracy is China. Because China has become very, very good at undermining Taiwan's democracy, by spreading disinformation, bribing Taiwan's officials, and inviting all Taiwanese local officials come to China at all costs, so they are very active in using soft power in a sense, but at the same time, they also use military aircraft for training around Taiwan, as well as intimidating Taiwan not to do anything or they will take action to threaten Taiwan, so China itself is the main threat." (Zhong 2020). He also believes that confrontation and conflict between China and Taiwan are inevitable, because when Taiwan is democratically elected, some people will express that moving towards China's reunification is the wrong direction, then the relationship between Taiwan and China will be even more tense.

5. Conclusion

As scholar Bush Richard describing, Taiwan was a poster child for the global “third wave” of democratisation that occurred in the 1980s and 1990s. Its transition from authoritarian rule to a representative, electoral system was gradual and peaceful. Stephen Yates said that he knew that before Lee Teng-hui, there were people who made contributions to Taiwan’s democracy, and others made fundamental contributions after him, but for him, Lee Teng-hui’s tenure was the most important part of Taiwan’s democratic process. From 1987 to 2000, political changes occurred in Taiwan, including the freezing of the Taiwan provincial government organization, the end of the National Assembly, and the opening of direct elections for various public offices. Lee Teng-hui could have been easily re-elected in the 2000 presidential election, but he chose not to continue the campaign. Demonstrate his commitment to building the foundations of Taiwan’s future democracy and having a competitive party politics. Although Former President Chiang lifted the ban on political parties and presses, yet it’s President Lee who laid down the foundation of democratisation of Taiwan.

The achievements of Taiwan’s democratic development can be talked about from the time of Chiang Ching-kuo. During his tenure, the DPP was established in 1986, martial law was lifted the following year, and the party ban was further opened in 1988, which enabled the development of party politics. During his tenure, Lee Teng-hui declared the end of the civil war. In 1991, he promoted the comprehensive re-election of the National Assembly. In 1992, the blacklisted persons were allowed to return to Taiwan. In the same year, Article 100 of the Criminal Law was abolished and the first direct presidential election was held in 1996. When Chen Shui-bian was in power, he promoted the referendum law into the constitution and legislation in 2003, and held the first national referendum in the same year and the second national referendum in 2007.

Under their reforms, Taiwan’s political system gradually diversified. Including the legalization of political parties, the abolition of the period of mobilization and suppression and the return to the constitution; the withdrawal of political parties from the military, making the military nationalization; the lifting of the ban on newspapers to allow all kinds of opinions to be expressed. In addition, by promoting the “referendum”, the referendum can be implemented and the people’s political power can be improved. In addition, it can make the United States and Western free countries understand the will of the Taiwanese people and gain their determination to support and defend Taiwan’s democratic system.

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Wei-feng TZENG

Challenges of the political transition of Taiwan

Abstract:

The nonviolent democratisation and democratic consolidation of Taiwan after 1990s has become a widely told story around the world. The party politics in Taiwan has been institutionalized and democratic values are internalized in the society. Despite its successful political transition, this relatively young democracy still faces domestic and external challenges. Domestically, there are challenges uniquely rooted in the history of cross-Straits antagonism, which has created the identity politics that polarized Taiwan's public opinion and incited populism from time to time. Externally, there are challenges facing all countries in the world when the rise of China has become a threatening force to democratic institutions when the red dragon began to sell its institutional superiority globally and to pursue its political and economic influences regionally. On the other hand, however, Taiwan has developed a resilient democracy that is capable of defending the external and internal threat. Having an intertwined relationship with China, Taiwan will undoubtedly continue to be haunted by the China factor in the future. Therefore, while Taiwan's democracy has been consolidated as it passed the two-turnover test, Taiwanese politics is still heavily and unpredictably challenged by the growing influence of the Communist China.

Keywords: Taiwan, China factor, identity politics, cross-Straits antagonism, democratic consolidation

1. Taiwan's Democratisation and Cross-strait Relations

The nonviolent democratisation and democratic consolidation of Republic of China or Taiwan (Taiwan hereafter) after 1990s has become a widely told story around the world. After the first direct election of the President in 1996, Taiwan has gone through a series of political events that promote its democratisation and passed what Huntington has called "two-turnover test" for democratic consolidation. In 2000, the opposition party Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) won the presidential election, officially ending the authoritarian rule of Kuomintang (KMT) since 1949. In 2008 after two terms of DPP presidency, the KMT won the presidential election and returned to power with a landslide victory (58 % votes vs. 41 % votes). As the DPP, the KMT enjoyed the fruit of victory only in two terms. In 2016, the DPP assumed the position again when KMT was struggling in the presidential election. As such, it is no doubt that after the first

direct election of President, Taiwan has become a full-blown democracy with active political participation of citizens. Moreover, the party politics in Taiwan has been institutionalized and democratic values are highly internalized in the society.

Taiwan's democracy was built and consolidated based upon its successful industrialization and economic development. The KMT government retreated from mainland to Taiwan after its defeat by the CCP in 1949, after which the KMT regime depends on US military and economic assistance to counter the threat from PRC. Thanks to American transfer of resources, Taiwan experienced a huge transformation from a society with the majority of people engaging in agricultural activities to a country with high-tech firms and a variety of highly developed industries. Today Taiwan's semiconductor industry has occupied the key position in the global supply chain in the information technology industries, with more than half provision of semiconductor chips were produced by a Taiwanese based firm TSMC. The fast-growing economy catalyzed the process of democratisation of Taiwan. In 1970s as economic development improved education in the society, many educated intellectuals began to criticize the KMT's monopoly of political power and began to pursue political rights. Such movement then turned into the enthusiasm of establishment of a party outside the KMT gave birth to the DPP. While the KMT attempted to crush down the political movement in the beginning, it finally opened the political system to the general public. Unlike other regimes struggling in the democratisation process, such as the Philippines or Indonesia in Southeast Asia, Taiwan's democratic transition took place smoothly and quite nonviolently.

Despite its relatively successful democratisation, Taiwan's political development has not escaped the influence from China. The democracy in Taiwan is a salient contrast to the one-party dominance of the Chinese political regime. The authoritarian presence of China strongly influenced Taiwan's politics. For bilateral relations, China never gives up the use of force to unify Taiwan into the mainland, which led to continuous military confrontations between the two parties. Internationally, China often engaged in conflicts with the US or Japan regarding the Taiwan issue. Internally, the influence of "China" has sparked off a hot debate about national identity that frequently emerged in elections between the two major parties in Taiwan (Habich-Sobieggalla and Fleischauer 2017). The influence of China has been growing as China quickly developed its economy and strengthened its military capability.

Interestingly, facing the growing threat from China with a stronger economy and more powerful military capacity, Taiwan's democracy seems to maintain its vigor in a way that the public show greater concern about China's influence

and more actively participate in political matters related to China. Indeed, the presence of China in Taiwanese politics has generated considerable challenges to Taiwan's democratic system: on the one hand, China has adopted a variety of measures to pose a grave threat on Taiwan's democracy; on the other hand, the presence of China intensifies the internal identity politics, worsening the problem of ethnic cleavage and conflict in Taiwan. However, during the democratisation process, Taiwan has also developed strength and resilience to these external and internal challenges, which makes Taiwan a typical case for a robust democracy that can defend its own democratic value against China's interference. The purpose of this essay is to provide a discussion about these challenges and opportunities that can characterize the current Taiwan's democracy and democratisation.

This article is organized as follows. In the next section, the China factor in Taiwan politics will be briefly introduced and relevant literatures will be reviewed. After the discussion of China factor, the third section will provide a discussion about the external and internal challenges to Taiwan's democracy. The fourth section will focus on two important features of the resilience of Taiwan's democracy. The fifth section concludes the observation of Taiwan's democracy and discusses the future trend.

2. China Factor in Taiwan Politics

China's role in global politics has been noticeable as it has grown into the second largest economy in the world. China factor, as students in political science has identified, also gradually formulates the domestic politics of the countries that have closer economic or diplomatic relations with China. Citizens in many countries, democratic or authoritarian; large or small, geographically close or distant, deem China as essential to their countries' political and economic development (Chu, Kang, and Huang 2014; Aldrich, Lu, and Kang 2014; Chu 2021).

Taiwan, geographically located in the front line against PRC, has been greatly influenced by the China factor in all dimensions. The most prominent cases were Taiwan electoral politics. Scholars have discussed how the China factor exerted a strong influence on voters' choice in Taiwan's election, national or local. Taiwanese voters, for instance, can be divided into two major camps- pro-China and anti-China. The KMT supporters are considered more positive to unification with China while the DPP supporters usually are mobilized by the ideology of Taiwan independence. This phenomenon has been found in the early stage of democratisation (Hsieh and Niou 1996). The debate of Taiwan's independence or unification with China has created a salient political issue of national identity

in Taiwan, which became the major political cleavage in Taiwan politics (Rigger 1999; Chang and Wang 2005). Also, scholars find that Taiwanese voters evaluate candidates' capability in dealing with the relationships with China (Ho et al. 2013) and one key to their voting decision is whether the candidate can effectively maintain stability of the cross-strait relations while at the same time improve the economic situation of Taiwan (Lacy and Niou 2012; Choi 2010). Perceptions of China's influence on Taiwan also exerted divergent effects across voters: those who hold different political ideologies and belong to different generations usually perceived China differently. For instance, analyzing elections from 2008 to 2014, Weng, Chen, and Wang (2020) find that playing China card did not effectively mobilize pro-China supporters from pan-blue camp but has a significant effect on pan-green voters, especially for those younger generation (Weng, Chen, and Wang 2020). The research identifies multiple influences of the China factor in Taiwan electoral politics. Regarding the China impact on Taiwan's democracy, the discussion heavily skewed towards negative influence of engaging with China. China's "sharp power" – the manipulative use of domestic institution to affect a democratic country's politics – has concerned students and analysts of international politics and most of the scholars deem Taiwan as the main frontline to defend China's powerful influence (Chang and Yang 2020; Templeman 2020; Walker 2018).

3. Challenges Facing Taiwan's Democracy

External Challenge to Taiwan's Democracy: China's Threat

There is no doubt that China can directly harm Taiwan's democracy through its military measures. China continuously claims Taiwan's sovereignty, propagandizes Taiwan is part of its territory and sets annexation of Taiwan as its national goal. Throughout all the generations of leadership, the CCP has constantly signaled its resolution of national unification. In Mao's era, the PRC pursued the aim of "liberation of Taiwan island" as its mission. In the post-Mao era, realizing the low likelihood of immediate military conquest, the leader Deng who assumed power after Mao redirected the national goal to "peaceful unification" as its national core interests. Since Deng, peaceful unification of Taiwan has become the guiding thoughts for the CCP's Taiwan Policy. Despite claiming the ultimate aim of peaceful settling of Taiwan issue, the PRC never gave up the use of military force to conquer the island, particularly when Taiwan democratized and gradually developed a sense of self-identity as Taiwanese against the identity of "Great China". Fearing the pursuit of independence of Taiwan, the PRC imposed

political pressure on Taiwan's politicians by threatening to send troops to unify this island if there is any attempt to be found in making an announcement for Taiwan's independence. To demonstrate its resolution, China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) not only has stationed hundreds and even thousands of missiles aimed at Taiwan but sent air fighters and warships to the waters near Taiwan on a daily basis. In 2021, for instance, there were more than 900 warplanes into Taiwan air defense zone to claim the sovereignty of Taiwan.

In addition to military threat towards Taiwan, China continues to project its overwhelming power using different measures in economic and societal realms. China and Taiwan began to engage in economic exchanges since 1987 when the KMT government at the time decided to lift the restriction of visiting China for those mainlanders who came to Taiwan with the KMT army in 1949 and still have family in the mainland China. After 1987, the cross-Straits economic exchange increased exponentially, leading to a vast volume of bilateral trade and huge investment flow between the two political competitors. In 1987, the cross-Straits trade accounted for 1.5 billion US dollars while the trade volume has skyrocketed to well above 270 billion dollars in 2021 (see Figure 1). Taiwan's investment in the PRC also increased every year since 1990 (see Figure 2). With such a rapid increase of bilateral economic exchanges, interactions between the two societies quickly multiplied. Tens of thousands of Taiwanese businessmen, firm managers, their family as well as visiting students from each society have frequently travelled back and forth between the mainland and Taiwan every year. As such, while the cross-Straits political impasse remains unsolved, the two economies and societies are increasingly integrated with each.

The closer economic and social ties, however, have made Taiwan more vulnerable to the influence from China. Taiwan's deepening economic dependence on China gave the Chinese regime a leverage in Taiwan's politics. After Taiwan's democratisation, almost in every election China has more or less involved in the activities that attempt to direct the electoral results to its own favor. Take presidential elections as example, in 1996, the PLA launched two missiles into the waters near Taiwan to warn the candidates in the presidential elections. In the 2000 presidential election, the Premier of the State Council Chu made an announcement to intimidate Taiwanese people not to vote for a party that supports Taiwan independence just three days before Taiwanese people went to the voting booth. After economic and social connections got closer, China changed the strategy from military intimidation to directly engaging in election activities. In the 2004 presidential election, which the incumbent party DPP and the opposition KMT were neck and neck in the competition, the Chinese government mobilized Taiwanese businessmen and their family members who live in China to return to

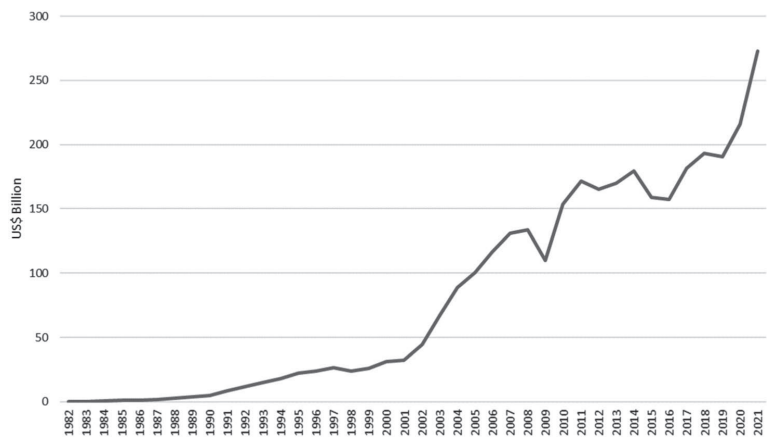


Figure 1. Cross-Strait trade volume.

Source: the author drew the figure from data released by Mainland Affairs Council, Taiwan

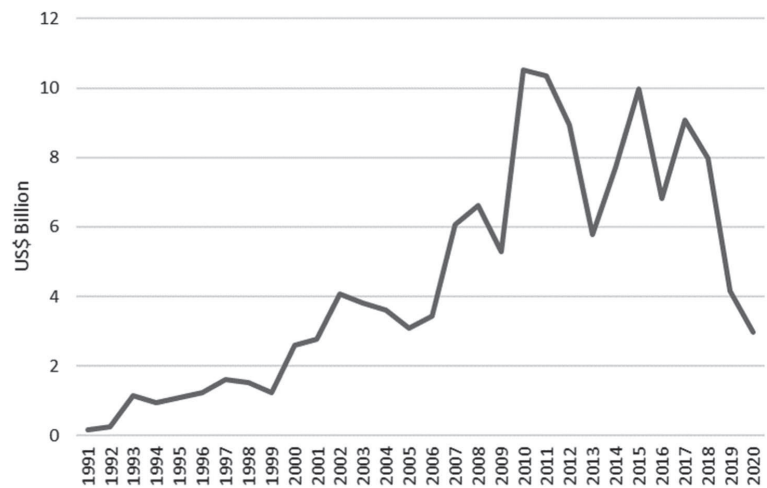


Figure 2. Investment flow from Taiwan to China.

Source: the author drew the figure from data released by Mainland Affairs Council, Taiwan

Taiwan for voting the KMT candidate. Despite China's unsuccessful attempt in manipulating the electoral result, the 2004 presidential election marked the changing feature of China factor in Taiwan's democracy. Since then, the skills China adopted in influencing Taiwan politics have evolved from the previous rough scaring tactics into more sophisticated techniques.

One leverage China has been using is Taiwan's economic dependence on the Chinese market. In international relations, economic sanction or economic statecraft plays an important role in a country exerting power on its targeted counterpart (Baldwin 2020; Blanchard and Ripsman 2008). As abovementioned, the cross-Strait economic interactions surged since 1990, and the interdependence becomes imbalanced as China grows into the second largest economy in the world. Under this circumstance, China can utilize Taiwan's dependence on China's market as a political tool. For instance, after 2004 when the KMT lost the presidential election, the CCP rejected any political contact with the pro-independence DDP government. Instead, the CCP introduced a great deal of policies that favored Taiwan's businesses and citizens through in a series of dialogues with the KMT to facilitate bilateral trade and to elicit the support of the Taiwan's general public. In 2018, the Chinese government officially announced a preference policy containing a set of 31 items to attract Taiwanese businesses and ordinary citizens to invest or live in China. In the following years, China continues to issue new policies that grant equal treatment to Taiwanese businessmen, students, farmers, or young generations who are seeking opportunities to start a business in the mainland.

In addition to the policy measures luring Taiwanese citizens to China, the Chinese government employed the economic dependence as a sanction tool to undermine its enemy's political base (in this case, the DPP) in Taiwan. One of the examples involves the agricultural industry. As the cross-Strait exchanges increased, the agricultural trade has been a huge deal for Taiwanese farmers. Every year witnessed a huge number of fruits, vegetables, fishery products shipping from Taiwan to China. In 2021, more 90 % of Taiwanese pineapple, wax apple, and sugar-apple were exported to China. With its market's considerable importance, China has frequently used this as a weapon to "force" Taiwanese farmers to put pressure on the government in dealing with the political disputes between the two governments. For instance, in 2021 when Taiwan developed a warm relations with the US, the Chinese government decided to suspend the import of Taiwanese pineapple, wax apple and sugar apple for they found *Plano-coccus minor*, a type of mealybug in several shipments from Taiwan. Given the trade dependence of these fruits, Taiwanese growers were heavily impacted by such decision, and turned to blame the situation of cross-Strait relations under

the DPP government. To resolve this problem, the DPP government condemned the political purpose of China's decision and brought the case to WTO as a trade dispute. This event clearly showed the leverage owned by the Chinese government to "punish" Taiwan under the current economic interactions and unbalanced interdependence. The cross-Strait economic relations also exhibited a case that China can utilize the trade dependence to influence Taiwan's politics and exert strong influence on Taiwan's democracy.

Other than the economic leverage, there have been a variety of techniques that China could use to have a say in Taiwan's democratic development, in particular after information technologies come into play in Taiwan's electoral politics. According to the official statement of the Taiwanese government, Beijing has continued to take an advantage of Taiwanese media freedom and freedom of speech and expression to undermine the legitimacy of the Taiwanese government – which was called by the DPP administration "the cognitive warfare." For instance, Taipei accused Beijing of using the press in Taiwan as their agent to infiltrate Taiwan's society and to spread "fake news" among the population to weaken the DPP's political base. The cases of information or cognitive warfare included identifying the DPP candidate's intent to claim independence after election or spreading information such as the DPP candidate Tsai has no Ph.D. degree in the presidential election or any votes for KMT candidate will be considered as invalid, implying the DPP will manipulate the electoral results. This fake information has been widely circulated along the social media among the population in Taiwan. When Taiwan was heavily hit by the COVID-19 in 2021, a great deal of news from China, many of which have been demonstrated fake, have targeting the DPP government's incompetence to contain the virus and their policy failure in dealing with public health emergency. Although it is quite difficult to trace the origin of these fake news, it is believed that China has played an important role in generating such information to influence Taiwan's elections.

The information warfare against Taiwan has certain negative impact on Taiwan's democracy. In 2019, a Taiwan based but pro-China TV station, Chung T'ien television (Cti TV) was under investigation for its spreading fake news through cable television. The channel was finally taken off air in 2020 (The Strait Times 2020). This is the first time that the democratically elected government decided to shut down a media press based on the worries of infiltration from Beijing. The government accused the Cti TV of its failure to deal with serious and frequent findings of bias and disinformation. The DPP and its supporters also blamed Cti TV as a mouthpiece of Beijing and always aired the pro-KMT reports. Pro-Beijing or not, the closedown of Cti TV has become a critical event for Taiwan's democracy and the caveat lies in the potential interference in the

media press from the government or political parties—which is an unwanted result for any mature democracies, but ironically seems to be a reasonable reaction to a strong, hostile neighbor who is trying to shape the public opinion against your government.

With decades' interactions, the close ties between the two societies also provide China with means to attract different Taiwanese social groups into its orbit, which was known as China's "united front" strategy. In recent years, especially after the DPP won the office in 2016, China particularly applies the "united front" strategy in a number of targets of social groups in Taiwan, including religious groups, grassroots opinion leaders, aboriginal groups as well as young generations. For instance, there are many cross-Strait religious activities and exchanges every year, with tens of thousands of believers (most of them belong to daoism) visiting China from Taiwan for the origins of the worship. In return, many Chinese shrine and temples held religious events to receive Taiwanese pilgrims. In addition, there are strong connections between the local grassroots organizations in China and in Taiwan. The Chinese government regularly provided financial resources to fund the tour group for receiving village chiefs from Taiwan, some of which even went to China to hold public office. For aborigines, China continued to welcome Taiwanese aboriginal groups to China and fund their visits as well as mark their identity as equally important as the minority groups in China, trying to enhance their warm feeling about China (Taipei Times 2021). The same strategy goes to young generations as well. The Chinese government offer start up loans with very low interest rate to Taiwanese young people who are seeking to build their businesses in China. This policy has attracted a segment of young generation in Taiwan. They located their businesses in big cities such as Shanghai, Shenzhen, Beijing, Xiamen etc. For the Chinese government, these targeted groups are the hope for further swaying Taiwanese public opinion towards China, while for the Taiwanese government (especially for the DPP administration), China's "united front" strategy has become an external threat to the democratic system.

Internal Challenge to Taiwan's Democracy: Polarized Identity Politics

China has posed a serious external threat to Taiwan's democratic system as discussed above. However, it should not be neglected that the presence of China also has played a role in Taiwan internal politics, especially when it comes to national identity. The identity politics has become highly salient and polarized; the party politics also frequently focused on the main issue of engaging or disconnecting

with China; the rising interest politics in Taiwan's democracy as well lies in the debate of whether trade with China benefits a segment of Taiwanese population but harms the other groups. These identity issues received considerable public attention and mobilized citizens to go to street to air their concerns and discontent. With the presence of China, Taiwan has a high voter turnout rate.

Taiwanese national identity raised with Taiwan's democratisation and the presence of China strengthens the identity politics. There are two mechanisms that explain China's influence. The first mechanism concerns China's incessant military threat towards Taiwan to deter potential attempts of separatists in pursuing independence. Taiwanese identity grew in the environment of political separation between Taiwan and China in 1949 (Lynch 2002; Wu 2004; Wang and Liu 2004). The number of people who identified themselves as Taiwanese, however, increased as Taiwan democratized in the late 1990s. Fear that the political liberalization may lead Taiwan to move towards independence, China always considered using military force to "unify" Taiwan as its last resort. Yet the actions of military threat backfired when Taiwanese people realized China's hostility. Hence, anti-China sentiment gradually grew among the society in this island. One of the pieces of evidence is the sharp rise of Taiwanese identity in 1996, when Taiwan was holding its first direct presidential election and China launched two missiles into the waters near the island. Also, people who identified themselves as Taiwanese has increased significantly in 2000, when Chen Shui-bian, the leader of DPP, came to power. Chen's presidency (2000–2008) highlighted the democratisation progress of Taiwan, but it also experienced the strongest military pressure placed by the Chinese government. In 2005, China passed "Anti-Secession Law" to legalize the use of force to unify Taiwan if Taiwan announces independence. However, also under the Chen administration, a large segment of population in Taiwan developed their Taiwanese identity. Indeed, scholars have argued that the cause of radical rising Taiwanese identity after Chen's being elected is the emotional counterforce against China's frequent threats. Schubert (2004) examines the principal parties' mainland policies approaches in Taiwan, either pro-dependence or pro-unification, and found most of them support the rising of Taiwanese identity. A linkage of the issue of unification or dependence to Taiwanese identity is obvious, he argued, and "[China's] threat of invasion in conjunction with electoral politics may push Taiwan further down the road of nation-building... (Schubert 2004, 553)." Wang and Liu (2004) hold the same perspective as well. Their survey data shows that Taiwanese who backed independence from China were more prone to have Taiwanese identity. In other words, once China's threat was elevating, Taiwanese identity and the supports for independence increased simultaneously.

As discussed above, when the KMT retreated to Taiwan in 1949, hundreds of thousand Chinese people, which was then called mainlander, fled with the KMT to this island. Being a shaky regime from the mainland, the KMT's discomfort about Taiwan's indigenous culture was severe. Therefore, in the time of authoritarian governance, the use of local dialects in daily life was inhibited by the government and the only language that can be used was official Chinese. The measures that repressed the local culture also aroused a series of political movements organized by dissidents against the KMT regime. These protesters use the 228 event as a symbol to fight against the KMT rule. The 228 event was a conflict between Taiwanese residents and the ruling government taking place in 1947. In the event, the KMT military violently suppressed the unrest, resulting in a massacre of numerous civilians. After the 228 event, the anti-KMT sentiment grew and widely spread throughout most of Taiwan's local residents (Hsieh 2005, 13–16). This sentiment did not vanish after the retreat of the KMT from mainland China to Taiwan. Quite the reverse; the KMT's adoption a more repressive rule, which has been called the White Terror, in order to retain its political survival broke the local residents' hope of the greatness of being Chinese. Even if the KMT employed a variety of measures to promote a "Great China identity," for making local residents accept the view that both Taiwan and the Chinese mainland were part of China and that China was their motherland (Wang and Liu 2004, 572), the separation between Mainlander and Taiwanese had been rooted in Taiwan's society by the middle of the twentieth century.

The second mechanism accounting for China factor in the rise of Taiwanese national identity lies in Taiwan's politics, particularly political competition among elites. Lee Teng-hui, as a native Taiwanese president, opened the political opportunities to the mass in order to fight against the mainlander political elites in KMT to retain his political survival (Lin 2017). By doing so, Lee himself supported the emerging Taiwanese nationalism and anti-China emotions, as proved in his exclamation of independence of Taiwan from China after he finished his presidency in 2000 (Dreyer 2003, 7). In addition, oversea elites facilitate the rise of Taiwanese identity. The hidden Taiwanese national identity was refurbished by many oversea journals and magazines (Lynch 2002, 571–573). Since the public atmosphere in Taiwan had changed and public communication was no longer monopolized by the state machine, Taiwanese identity began to distinguish itself. In addition, according to Lynch's interviews, oversea students who received more knowledge and ideologies about liberalism, democracy and nationalism further fueled emerging Taiwanese nationalism. These intellectuals then returned to Taiwan and become political activists in the democratisation and nationalization movement (Lynch 2002, 560–566).

The trend that military threat from China influenced Taiwanese identity choice can be illustrated by the poll data. Today, according to a national poll conducted by National Chengchi University in Taiwan, majority of people (63.3 %) in Taiwan identified themselves as Taiwanese. As shown in Figure 3, there was a sharp increase of people who chose Taiwanese identity after 1996 when China launched missiles into the waters near the island and the number of citizens who identified themselves as Taiwanese continued to grow. Interestingly, however, after 2008 as pro-China party KMT led by its president Ma Ying-Jeou returned to power and the cross-Straits relations entered to a period of *détente*, Taiwanese identity seems to continue to be strengthened in the island and the number peaked in 2014 under the Ma administration. This does not invalidate the argument that China's military threat has shaped Taiwan's identity politics in its democratisation process. Instead, the increase of Taiwanese identity can be attributed to the economic disputes over the close economic interactions between the two parties pushed by the Ma administration (discussed later).

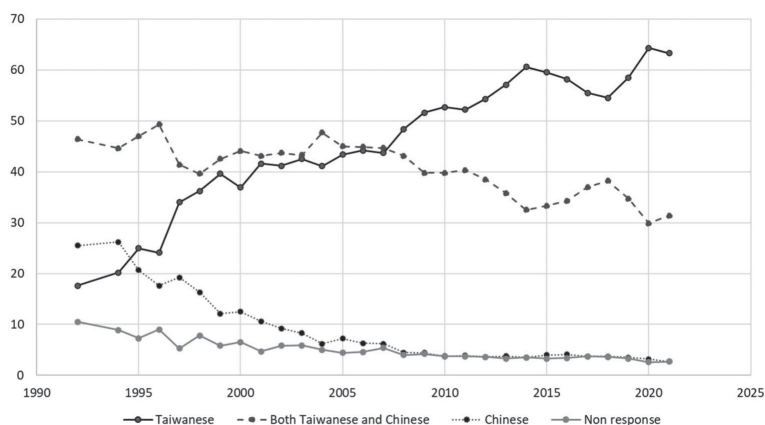


Figure 3. Changing national identity among Taiwanese population.

Source: the author drew the figure using data collected by Chengchi university, <https://esc.nccu.edu.tw/PageDoc/Detail?fid=7804&id=6960>

After 2016, the DDP, led by the chair Tsai Ing-wen, came to power again and the Chinese government stopped any political interactions with Taiwan and put even higher military pressure on the DDP government. In Tsai's term, while the proportion of population choosing Taiwanese identity decreased for two years, it grew right after 2018 and reached the apex in 2020. Obviously, identity politics

is a major and salient issue among Taiwan's society and deeply embedded in Taiwan's democracy. Among all the factors, the presence of China further stimulated the diverging of individual identity and intensify the ethnic cleavage among the population.

4. The Resilience of Taiwan's Democracy

While Taiwan met considerable external and internal challenges when dealing with China, the development of Taiwan politics has proved remarkably resilient to potential threat against its democratic system. Two features are particularly key to the resilience of Taiwan's democracy. One is the stabilized party system, and the other comes from Taiwan's vigorous civil society.

Stabilized Party System

Taiwan has been widely considered as one of the successfully democratized countries after its first presidential direct elections in 1996 and the party turnover in 2000. The stabilizing party system deserves certain credits for the success. Before the democratisation, Taiwan was a one-party authoritarian regime governed by the dominant party KMT. Structurally, the KMT was a Leninist party, whose organization was highly hierarchical and surrounded by several supportive organizations such as a cadre school and several foundations and research institutes. Losing the mainland to the CCP, the KMT leader Chiang Kai-shek adopted strict military control over the society. Under Martial Law, expression of political dissents was inhibited and repressed. In addition to the authoritarian rule, the KMT also gained legitimacy from its policies enhancing the economic growth in Taiwan (Wong 2008, Cheng 1990, Huntington 1993). The KMT adopted policies such as land reforms and encouragement of business development for improving the wealth in the society, which can on the one hand give the KMT financial resources in return and on the other hand can bolster the political supports for the party. As such, the KMT remains a dominant party for over 40 years.

As modernization theory has proposed, when its economy continued to grow, Taiwan's society became gradually liberalized, which finally triggered democratisation. Nevertheless, not until 1986 did the KMT allow political contestation in elections. The KMT remained a ruling party in Taiwan and controlled the key political offices. To differentiate itself from the totalitarian Communist China, the KMT allowed local elections in Taiwan and propagandize these elections as a "democratic and free China." The local elections, however, were not free and fair in reality, but just institutional façade that facilitated the KMT to distribute

patronage in exchange of political loyalty. There was no party competition as to Martial Law that outlawed establishment of political parties. All candidates in election at the time were appointed or nominated by the KMT. Although there were few independent candidates successfully winning offices in local legislatures and governments, they did not really act and behave in their own will. Rather, they were forcibly incorporated into the KMT network of governance. Before the real contestation among parties in 1986, the competition in elections only existed within the KMT as conflicting local factions competing for resources. Although constitutionally party and state are different, under the KMT rule, there was not much difference between the party and the state institutions (Fell 2005).

Since 1970, the KMT gradually felt pressure from society and encountered political oppositions. The new socio-economic structure and the exclusionary rule of the KMT led Taiwanese elites to oppose against the KMT. The emerging native Taiwanese elites requested political rights, sometimes rampaged through cities, and eventually facilitated the establishment of the DPP in 1986. One strategy the KMT employed to legitimize its ruling is to develop the economy (Dickson 1996, 160). On the one hand, the KMT continuously use state resources and stable political environment to facilitate economic growth in 1970s–1980s. On the other, the economic development assisted the ruling party to accumulate considerable financial resources and assets, which were used to buy off local political supports and maintain its patronage politics. As such, in the local level, the KMT was a powerful election machine with strong patron-client relationship with Taiwanese local elites. Elections thus have become a mechanism to distribute patronage for political loyalty (Wu 2001, 2003). The process through which the KMT corroborated with local factions to maintain electoral dominance and political control was thus evolve the KMT to be a catch-all party that is less likely to focus on its original ideology of “fighting Communist and taking mainland China back.”

In addition, the rise of Taiwanese identity made the mainlander-centric characterization the KMT’s Achilles’ heel in elections. The KMT was drawn as an alien regime by the opposition elites. These political opponents accused the KMT of governing without consent of Taiwanese people. In order to solve the identity crisis, the KMT initiated a Taiwanization policy for accommodating advocates of Taiwanese nationalism (Wong 2008). The KMT recruited an increasing number of Taiwanese into the party since 1970, and Taiwanese outnumbered mainlanders in party membership in 1975 as well as reached two-thirds by the mid-1980s (Huang 1996).

To survive democratisation, the KMT was forced to transform the party platform and accommodate public opinion. It has to occupy the important position in the policy spectrum. The issues involving China thus became a major debate

between the KMT and the DPP in elections. One of the most important issues in Taiwan's electoral politics is the engagement with China regarding Taiwanese independence or Chinese unification, or *tongdu* issues¹. Many DPP elites conceived of an independent country separated from China as a goal for Taiwan's future. The idea of Taiwan's independence, which deviated from the traditional "Great China" ideology that the KMT held under Chiang Kai-shek's rule, create a polarized political spectrum, in which one group believes future unification with while the other advocates ultimate independence from China. As such, after 2000 presidential election, the two major parties form the party politics with the KMT being depicted as a pro-unification party but the DPP being deemed as a pro-independence party.

The unification or independence debate have dominated most of the elections while neither of the two major parties was willing to show a clear stance to support unification or independence in the election. In the 2000 presidential election, the KMT candidate Lien Chan was advertising himself as a status quo keeper and blamed his rivals to be either rapid independence or rapid unification (Fell 2005, 108). The DPP candidate Chen Shui-Bian took a pro-independence position in the election but did not claim to move the status quo. Even though after its election, Chen chose to take a step back and announce there will not be any activity to change the status quo of cross-Straits relations in his term.

In the 2008 presidential election, the KMT has gradually owned a policy domain that can attract voters. Different from previous elections, in terms of the cross-Straits relations, the KMT's campaign concentrated on the failure of Chen's China policy. This policy position not only prevented it from being neutralized in the middle of the *tongdu* spectrum; it also let the KMT regain the issue ownership from the parties in the extreme. The party position shift allowed the KMT to occupy the right on the spectrum and eventually facilitated the KMT to return to power. While there are multiple factors that can account for the KMT's success to return to power after the 2008 presidential election, for instance, the KMT candidate Ma Ying-jeou's charismatic personal traits (Muyard 2008, Fell 2009) or the DPP president's scandal in corruption, one key factor was the KMT's clear issue position on the cross-strait relations – embracing China's market and normalizing the engagement with China. However, Ma also promised "a 'three no's' policy – no independence, no unification, and no use of force to resolve differences across the Strait" and focus his campaign on maintaining cross-Straits stability and economic rapprochement in China relations (Reuters 2012). In Ma's

1 In Chinese, *Tong* (統) means unification while *Du* (獨) refers to independence.

two terms, the cross-Strait economic and social exchanges rapidly grow and the ties between the two political bodies deepened.

The DPP's coming back to power in 2016 is then no surprise from the point of view concerning the China factor. The strengthening connections between China and Taiwan became a source of worry for the public in Taiwan. Taiwanese citizens developed high distrust on the KMT when it comes to the China policy and believed that the government should pay more attention to the security issue regarding the engagement with China. This type of distrust has been further catalyzed by the 2014's Sunflower movement. As such, in 2016 presidential elections, the DPP candidate Tsai Ing-wen won the election from the KMT's inability to deal with the China issue.

Clearly, after Taiwan's democratisation, voters in Taiwan have incentivized to participate in politics by the issues involving China. Following this trend, the major parties competed with each other on the China problem, including national identity and independence as well as engagement with China. Failure, in both economic and security sense, to effectively deal with the relation with China will be punished by the voters. China factor has been the key issue in Taiwan's party politics and such development is considered healthy to the party competition and democratic accountability. After electoral defeat and return to power of major parties, the party politics has been consolidated after 2008, with two major parties, the KMT and the DPP, in competition of the main offices. The KMT eventually adapt to democratic rule by its successful move of policy position. As Fell (2009) has pointed out, Taiwanese party politics thereafter became healthy and conducive to the democracy in Taiwan.

Vigorous Civil Society

The growing civil society is key to Taiwan's democratisation. As discussed above, after the economy flourished in Taiwan after 1970s, middle classes and social groups developed and pursued more political rights in opposition to the KMT's authoritarian rule. The groups from the middle class shaped the generation of democratisation (for example, the first non-KMT president, Chen Shui-Bian was a lawyer), many of which are still playing important role in today's political stage. In comparison to the generation of democratisation, younger population who grew up under the democracy has less enthusiasm on political affairs. The reasons behind the political indifference among young people are like the political development of western societies. The two major parties are pursuing to maximize their votes, which lead to a convergence of their policy platform in social issues. This makes policy debate less competitive and less attractive. In

addition, many people who lived in a life where the living standard has been improved and political rights granted are satisfied with the political status quo. Moreover, the youth believed the participation makes no difference in political affairs, which reduces their incentives to take part in political events. Therefore, the voter turnout rate decline over time in Taiwan. Take presidential elections as examples, the voter turnout was 82.69 % in 2000, after which the turnout rate decreased to 80 % in 2004 and 76 % in 2008. The rate went down to 74 % in 2012 and reached its lowest 66.27 % in 2016. In every election after the democratisation, the significant difference between age groups can be found- the older population have a higher turnout rate than the younger do.

The situation changes, however, after the potential threat from the Chinese government was highlighted in recent years. One distinct event is the 2014's sunflower movement, a protest occupation of the Legislature Yuan (Taiwan's Congress) initiated by the young people whose goal was to block the congress from passing a bill to further integrate the economic ties with China. The event reignited the public's concern about the potential danger to strengthen economic ties with China. In the beginning of the protest, a group of students stormed into the chamber and decided to stay there to stop any decision from being made in terms of the trade agreement with China. The occupation of legislature yuan lasted for more than twenty days, within which many young people and social groups joined the protest one after another. The opposition party DPP also provided support to the movement and its major political figures showed up in the protest event to express their backing position. This demonstration finally ended with the KMT's accommodation of the protesters' demand to promise to re-examine the trade agreement and to pass a bill to oversee the agreement.

Originated from Taiwanese society's deeper worries about China's gravitational economic influence, the Sunflower movement is key to Taiwan's democracy. The direct political consequence caused by the movement was the defeat of the KMT in local elections in 2014. However, the influence has gone beyond elections. The young generation care more about public affairs than the past, especially when the issues related with China. In 2015, a group of students stormed the education ministry to protest against the government's decision of changing the curriculum by adding more content about mainland China (BBC 2015). This movement also received supports from a number of social groups and the opposition party DPP who asked the KMT administration should not be put great China ideology in the high school textbook. In addition, many of the members who participated in the sunflower movement become important opinion leaders in the society. Some of them formed new parties and won seats in local or national legislature. After 2014, obviously the vigorous civil society has reshaped

Taiwan's political contour. The China factor- the main concern for Taiwan's society- undoubtedly played a key role in bringing about such change.

5. Democracy under Siege: The Future of Taiwan's Democracy

Over 70 years witnessed Taiwan's transition from a one-party authoritarian regime to a robust democracy. The democratisation is consolidated, and the democratic value has been rooted in Taiwanese society. In comparison to other Chinese societies, such as China, Singapore or Hong Kong, Taiwan can be marked as the most democratic society. Despite the success in democratisation, the China factor haunted Taiwan's democracy, generating issues that seem difficult, if not impossible, to resolve. The separation of mainland China and Taiwan in 1949 divided the two societies for decades. The Chinese government, ruled by the CCP, continues to claim the sovereignty of Taiwan, and used a variety of measures to impose pressure on the Taiwanese government in the tongdu issue as well as to attract the general public in Taiwan. All China has done is to force Taiwan to accept that the two parties belong to one country and to ultimately achieve its goal of unification. The presence of China clearly exerts strong influence on Taiwan's politics in a way that favors China's Taiwan policy and undermines the base of the parties that express opposition against China. The Chinese government's attempt to interfere political affairs in Taiwan has negative consequence to Taiwan's democracy. The presence of China created fear of the Taiwan's public over the military and political threat from China. The democratic system also became more vulnerable to political intervention. For instance, as discussed previously, the government's decision to shut down a media channel is an unwanted occasion for a democracy. On the other hand, Taiwan politics long suffered from the polarized identity politics, which has become an obstacle for development of social trust among different ethnic groups.

Looking the positive side, however, the presence of China fueled the political discussion in Taiwan's civil society. This article has discussed two features that Taiwan's democratic resilience – stabilized party politics and the development of civil society. Facing the threat from China, Taiwanese public opinion has been divided into two divergent perceptions. One camp believes engagement with China will do more harm than favor to Taiwan's democracy as the economic dependence on and social exchanges with China increase. Another camp holds the perspective that Taiwan can strengthen economic and social ties with China and utilizes such ties to enhance economic growth without losing its own autonomy. The debate on China's influence has become a salient issue in Taiwan's

politics and one of the determinants in local and national elections. The presence of China is therefore essential to Taiwan's politics.

In the foreseeable future, the presence of China will remain to be a determining factor in shaping Taiwan's political landscape. China's military threat against Taiwan's autonomy will continue, and the policy measures to lure Taiwan's public will be multiplied. The situation seems to be even harder when the current Chinese leader Xi Jinping vowed to unify Taiwan as a solution of the Taiwan dispute at the ceremony marking the centenary of the CCP in 2021. At the same time, Taiwan's civil society keeps growing its own resilience against any attempt to suppress the belief in democracy. The presence of China thus brings about challenges as well as opportunities for Taiwan's democratic development. The political impasse between China and Taiwan will not be resolved easily and quickly. However, there is no reason to believe such dilemma is a poison to Taiwan's democracy. Instead, it provides fuels to energize the civil society and continues to strengthen Taiwan's democratic resilience against any malign intent to sabotage the democratic system.

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Closing remarks

Why do states undergo a process of democratisation ensuring that at some given moment they move over from being authoritarian regimes to becoming democratic ones? And what is the role played in such processes by social movement, crises, the social environment and circumstances domestically and externally, as well as experiences from history? Just what can it be that makes autocrats initiate democratisation? And how does the process proceed in the end, and in line with what conditioning? The subject literature has sought to answer these questions, and we here too are seeking to engage in comparative analysis of the democratisation processes that were made manifest – in fact at rather similar times – in both Poland and Taiwan.

Samuel Huntington saw Poland's democratisation as exemplifying his "transplacement" – which is to say one achieved by way of negotiation between the ruling camp and the democratic Opposition. In some contrast, Taiwan has manifested "transformation", there defined as a democratisation pursued by a ruling camp that remains in power. Both polities thus had a key role for authorities to play and, while that role was certainly greater in Taiwan than in Poland, both places saw those in power recognise that a liberalisation of the system would do more for them than would any further attempt to hang on to the *status quo*. So why, then, was the role for the Opposition in Taiwan's process of democratisation a smaller one, in the view of Huntington?

This volume offers the fruits of analysis conducted as regards Opposition circles and economic factors, among a number of other things. It may be that the maintenance in power of the ruling camp, as liberalisation was ongoing in Taiwan, was associated with a more-limited role for the Opposition in the first years of democratisation – given the latter's scattered and diffuse nature, as well as the better condition of the former (with greater legitimisation offered by KMT-pursued reforms, an improving as opposed to greatly deteriorating economic situation, and clientelism displayed to those families incoming from China).

However, both the Taiwanese and Polish political systems provided conditions favouring the development of social values close to those of a democratic society, including prior experience with modernisation, a development of education, and ongoing social change (with both regions for example seeing a growth in literacy and other kinds of development even before the Second World War

broke out). For, if a process of democratisation is to commence, and if the democracy that takes shape subsequently is to persist, then there must be a subsoil able to sustain the development of Opposition leaders and movements, even if these are not actually the main catalysts behind regime-change.

Equally, Ryszard Szarfenberg emphasises how modernisation theory may not suffice to account for the democratisation process in the Polish case, given the lack of full consistency between the industrialisation taking place in Poland in the immediate post-War period and the modernisation process (with industrialisation taking place in the particular circumstances *not* having to mean modernisation in the sense of the theory). Szarfenberg indicates that it was the guaranteeing of the economic state of affairs by way of the two-Bloc system in place after the War that helped ensure that authoritarianism was maintained in Poland.

Thus, when modernisation is referred to, Poland's cultural transformation is seen to have been less advanced than was typical for Western countries, in terms of both secularisation and post-materialist orientation. Szarfenberg suggests that the democratisation of Poland is also related to a strengthening of democratic institutions, as well as accession to the Council of Europe and European Union with their pro-democratic values and in-place systems for the protection of human rights. Again in regard to modernisation theory and Poland, the former may not be a prerequisite for understanding steadily ongoing democratisation in the 1990s. As Szarfenberg concludes, focus on the "processes of socio-economic development and cultural evolution leaves some other crucial factors out of consideration". For: "economic factors combined with external political factors in the form of the weakening of control by the USSR and concessions by the ruling party in 1989, as well as the unification of the Opposition and its victory in partially-free elections, appear to be key as explanations for the transition to democracy in Poland".

Interestingly, then, while Taiwan might seem to offer a better illustration of the significance of modernisation theories, Mateus Lee points to it not fully supporting the Lipset hypothesis. Quantitative analysis finds that Taiwan's enrollment rates in primary and secondary education have correlated positively with progressing democracy, even as average numbers of years of schooling do not correlate, as neither do income level or the degree of openness, or even the presence of waves of democratisation in the wider world.

This is why democratisation in Poland and Taiwan have also to gain analysis through the prism of such other factors as the interaction between authoritarian ruling camps and democratic Oppositions.

It is just such interactions that have therefore been presented in this book, and are seen to have taken shape through a series of crises afflicting politics. A gradual loss of fear encouraged mobilisations of society in both Taiwan and Poland, even though Martial Law was actually introduced in *both*. And Opposition movements in society influence, not only the authorities, but also society, given that they serve in democratic socialisation.

Alongside change in a ruling camp – to the extent that there arises a wing feeling it is essential that at least a limited liberalisation of the regime should take place; there is also a perceptible evolution of Opposition elites who pass through a “learning process” and become more and more effective as a result.

So it was that, in the 1980s, Poland was able to develop an Opposition movement 9 million strong that was founded around the *Solidarity* trade union, even as Taiwan in the same period at least witnessed dynamic growth of organisations in society dealing with consumerism, the fight against pollution, nature conservation, the rights of women and indigenous peoples, human rights in general, and the rights of students. And as in Taiwan there was a fourfold increase in numbers of organisations operating in society, so there was a more-than-fourfold increase in numbers of protests actually taking place during the 1980s. So in Poland too, anti-government protests were a daily matter, which reached beyond just a single social class in that decade, ensuring the construction of a broader base for Opposition movements. It was for this reason that Poland may only have had a more-limited/less-tangible place for typical student movements. The role of youth seems to have been greater in the case of Taiwan. What is also highly important is of course the fact that both polities witnessed mostly-peaceful protests.

Again in both places equally, invocation of the past seems to have played a role in the processes of awareness-shaping within Opposition circles. In the case of Poland, it was the pre-War democratic country of long history that was turned to, while for Taiwan the key thing was the story of the development of a local identity, also where certain ethnic groups were concerned. While in some sense a Polish democratic identity developed by virtue of anti-Communism, the Taiwanese situation was more connected with the building of a feeling of distinctiveness *vis-à-vis* a China predicated on the CCP. Equally, a further factor catalysing Opposition identity-shaping against governing autocrats was any terror those in power were in a position to apply.

Also not without its significance was pressure imposed from abroad, with a view political change being achieved; as later followed up by active support extending beyond the level of states (such as the USA), and international organisations; so as to even encompass NGOs and whole societies – including those

based around diasporas derived from both Polish and Taiwanese societies. There were nevertheless certain distinct features when it came to the external pressure imposed. In the case of Taiwan, it was an ally that was being pressurised by the USA, given the inconvenient nature of support having to be extended to a partner generating violations of human rights not dissimilar from those engaged in by America's enemies. In contrast, where Poland was concerned, the cooperation was addressed directly to the Opposition, or to society as a whole, given that those in authority were on the side of the adversary. Furthermore, in the light of the deployment of enormous authoritarian power up to its very borders, the USSR (or Russia) served in the role of negative frame of reference for groupings of the democratic Opposition. Equally, in the case of Taiwan, the People's Republic of China was a negative point of reference for the KMT authorities, rather than the Opposition as such.

The processes of democratisation ongoing in the two systems faced many similar challenges, e.g. in regard to directions of electoral change, transformation of the party system and Constitutional amendment. But what now look intriguing are the further trajectories (to be) taken in the two polities. While Taiwan seems to be strengthening its democratic procedures and values, Poland has been moving down democracy rankings for several years now. As gaining partial presentation in this book's two last chapters, the challenges to the further development of democracy in Poland are *inter alia* linked with social and political polarisation. Indeed, what may characterise both Taiwan and Poland is a high degree of polarisation that does not necessarily bode well for the future – as other research is making quite clear.

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