

Electoral Ordinance and Party Systems from an Institutionalist Perspective: Japan and Poland, 1989-2001

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‘The solutions to the democratic compromise consist of institutions’ (Przeworski, 1986: 60).

1. Institution and System

The choice of electoral ordinance, especially along the majoritarian and proportional dimension, is ‘among the important – and, arguably, *the* most important – of all institutional choices that have to be made in democracies’ (Lijphart, 1992: 208). Another important choice may be the one between presidentialism and parliamentarism. Once choices have been made, they tend to be durable. Institutions create their own vested interests which will be extremely difficult to break through. Therefore, it is rather a rare case for students of politics to observe whether the changes of the electoral ordinance have had impact on the political system of a given country and what kind of impact. It is an incident once in decades. Fortunately, however, the present generation of political scientists has had plenty of opportunities to witness fundamental changes of the electoral ordinance in the wake of the so-called third wave of democratization.¹

What purpose do elections serve? Traditionally, there are two interpretations: representation (and participation) or competition. The problem of representation and participation was rather easy to overcome in a small, city-based political community on which the

1 See Huntington (1991). Schmitter (1993) insists on the term the ‘fourth wave’. McFaul calls the political change in the former Soviet and East European countries the ‘fourth wave of democratization *and* dictatorship’, to be separated from Huntington’s ‘third wave’ (see McFaul, 2002).

classical democracy was based. It posed a formidable challenge for the modern democracy which was based on a large nation-state. Elections were a device to solve this problem. If elections are solely a means of representation and participation, the purpose is achieved when as many people as possible participate in the elections and the popular will gets represented as exactly as possibly in the composition of political power. From this point of view, the task of the electoral ordinance is rather simple.

From the point of view of procedural democracy, however, this is not enough. Even under state socialism one tried to pretend as if the popular will were represented in political power through 'elections' in which all the electorate were called upon or even forced to participate. What is more important in elections is not whether the people participate or the popular will is represented, but whether certain procedures are observed. In this regard the electoral ordinance is of utmost gravity. It has at least three functions to perform: to guarantee free and fair competition among political forces, to produce a stable and effective government, and to hold the rulers accountable to the electorate.

Free and fair political competition is the most important feature of democracy. The electoral ordinance is to guarantee it. Schumpeter's generally accepted definition of democracy is: 'The democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote' (Schumpeter, 1976: 269). Emphasis is on competitive struggle among individuals rather than on elections themselves. Even if there are popular elections, there is no democracy but for competitive struggle among individuals.

If elections permanently fail to produce a stable and effective government, popular dissatisfaction grows and eventually brings democracy to fall. Therefore, the electoral ordinance must be so designed that a stable and effective government may emerge out of elections. On the other hand, government stability should not be a fetish. As Linz warns, time constraints are inherent in democratic government. The Grundgesetz of Germany cares too much for government stability (Linz, 1998).

Elections offer an opportunity for rulers to be held accountable to the electorate. The government gets confirmed in power, or government turnover comes about as a result of elections. If elections do not allow a political party or a coalition of political parties in power to be replaced by another in opposition, and if government turnover usually takes place not as a result of elections but for some other reason, something is wrong with the functioning of democracy.

Under democracy it is usually political parties that play a major part in all these processes. It is political parties that compete, it is political parties that form a government, and it is political parties that are held accountable in elections. Political parties are a bridge between society and state. Democracy cannot endure without a well functioning system of political parties. In most cases political parties are set up to carry on an election campaign. Therefore, the electoral ordinance plays a substantial part in shaping the system of political parties. On the other hand, it itself is a product of the system of political parties. It must pass the parliament, that is, go through deliberation and agreement among major political parties. Also, it works in no other way than through the system of political parties.

The present writer follows the procedural interpretation of democracy and asks the question how well the electoral ordinance in Poland and Japan has performed the above-mentioned three functions. This chapter is a part of a larger research project: 'Democracy and Market Economics in Central and Eastern Europe: Are New Institutions Being Consolidated?' Within the framework of this broad problem setting, the present writer would like to single out for analysis the design of the electoral ordinance and its impact on the political party system in Poland and Japan.

Some words might be in order on the relationship between institution, system, and environment. Under the condition that the free play of forces is possible, some kind of structure will sooner or later appear that defines relations among the forces in play. This structure may be called a 'system', of which the system of political parties is a typical example. Institution is a set of rules agreed upon by players. The electoral ordinance is a good example of this.

There are mutual interactions between system and institution. One should by no means presuppose that one influences another in a unilateral way. The environment is factors external to, and constraining, both system and institution. As examples, one may give legacies of the past, social structures, economic conditions, political culture, international factors, and so forth. Social and cultural cleavages are considered, alongside with the electoral ordinance, the most important factor shaping the political party system (Kawato et al., 2001: 91-99, 114-123; Matoba, 2003: 244-248). Environmental factors influence both system and institution directly, but also indirectly, that means, influence one of them through the other. This chapter focuses on the design of the electoral ordinance in its relation to the political party system, but by no means ignores other factors. How well or how badly an electoral ordinance performs depends not only on its design. It depends also on many environmental factors. These factors influence also the party system directly and in a crucial way.

The author argues that in both Japan and Poland a new party system has emerged in three stages: nebular, transitory, and formative. At the nebular stage, the old rules of the game by the name of the electoral ordinance became invalid, but it took some time for new rules to get agreed upon and consolidate. Players, the political elite as well as the electorate, were quite at a loss, not knowing to what rules they should adjust. A chaotic situation followed. In the transitory stage, new rules gradually took shape and were formally accepted by the main players, but in actual practice players did not behave according to the new rules, but continued to behave according to the old ones. The basic axis of political confrontation remained as before. In the formative stage, players managed to adjust to new rules and started to play according to them. The old axis of confrontation tended to fade away. Instead, a new axis gradually loomed up. A rough contour of the new party system became discernible.

This scheme is not intended to be a generalizable theory, but a description of what has happened. The formative stage is not a final stage. There may be one or two more stages of development. At the time of this writing one cannot definitively say what direc-

tion the political party system takes and when it will achieve its final shape.

2. Why Poland and Japan?

Poland is a part of Western Christian civilization, while Japan firmly belongs to the Buddhist-Confucian traditions, although it is said that Japan represents an independent civilization (Huntington, 1996). As regards democratization, Poland is a third wave country, while Japan is a second wave one. Poland's democracy has a history of only 14 years, while Japan's dates back to 1945. The preceding regime in Poland was 'mature post-totalitarian' or 'almost authoritarian', using the words of Linz and Stepan (1996), while Japan's past was a 'bureaucratic-military type of authoritarianism' (Linz, 1975). Why compare these two completely different countries? Is there any sense in comparing them except for obvious personal reasons coming from the author's area specialization and nationality?

The past divides the two countries wide apart, but the future may bring them closer, provided that both of them have aspired to be democracies for some time. In sharp contrast to authoritarianism, democracy is a political system for which the number of models is quite limited. For all practical purposes, there is only one available model. Thus, any two political systems that aspire to be democracies or are already democracies are bound to look like one another. That is, they become more or less comparable. Of course, one should be cautious of falling into traps of teleology. But it is a well-known fact that democracy had achieved strong legitimacy in the postwar world, particularly in Poland and Japan.

There is one more factor that makes political systems come closer: international pressures, if the other conditions are equal. If political systems have long been exposed to the same kind of international influences, it may be easier to compare them than otherwise. Therefore, the countries that were found on the same side of the Cold War divide are easier to compare than across the divide and are often compared in actual fact.

Cannot, however, cases be compared across the divide? Poland and Japan are political systems that have developed while strongly exposed to external pressures during the Cold War, only in an opposite way. During the Cold War years some countries gravitated toward the West, while others were drawn into the Eastern orbit. We may assume that this symmetrical exposure to external pressures confronting one another worldwide may bring about a similar but reversed political configuration inside the countries. Western-oriented political forces in a Western country would resist a possible takeover by Eastern-oriented forces in their country by all available means, as it was believed to be a question of life or death for them. The same is true of Eastern-oriented forces in an Eastern country, only in a reversed way. As a result of this 'mirror effect', a similar but reversed political configuration took shape in a number of countries across the Cold War divide. Of course, the situation differed from country to country. Two factors may be of crucial importance in this respect: intensity of ideological confrontation within the country and geographical proximity to the other side of the divide. From this perspective it is understandable that there was a large difference in political configuration between the UK and Italy in the West, and between Poland and East Germany in the East.

Poland was a deviant case in the East, while Japan was its counterpart in the West.² If these two deviant cases were freed from Cold War constraints and allowed to pursue their course toward full democratization, what would happen? This would have been a good thought experiment in the Cold War period. The comparison deserves an intellectual challenge still now when the counterfactual has turned into a hard reality.

The Polish story is rather well known. In Poland under Socialism, at least since 1956, there existed not a totalitarian one-party system, but a hegemonial one-party system which had

2 Italy may be another candidate for Poland's counterpart in the West. The political configuration of Italy both during and after the Cold War reveals a strong similarity to that of Japan. One Japanese political scientist makes an interesting comparison, talking about 'democratization of democracy' in Italy and Japan (Ushiro, 1996).

something in common with the predominant one-party system in Japan, though one should not overlook an obvious difference: competitive or not (Sartori, 1976). The Round Table Talks in 1989 finally ushered in truly competitive politics in Poland. There followed a period of political instability: as many as 29 political parties were represented in the parliament with at least ten parties being effective. One coalition of political forces replaced another at short intervals. This gradually gave way to periods of relative stability: The number of political parties represented in the parliament decreased to five or six, and more or less one coalition of political parties bore government responsibility for every full legislative period.

Japan is indeed a second wave country, but its democracy has a lot of peculiarities. One of them is a predominant one-party system or a one-and-a-half party system. It is called the '55 system' in Japan, as it consolidated in 1955. Since then one party, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), had uninterruptedly dominated Japan's political scene. For all practical purposes there was no government turnover in Japan in the proper sense of the word. Only at the beginning of the 1990s did this system disintegrate, coinciding with the third wave of democratization. This coincidence is not fortuitous, as it coincided with the end of the Cold War. Not only the party system, but also the Japanese bureaucracy's legendary grip on the economy is gone. Since that time the Japanese economy has incessantly been in depression. Apparently Japan's postwar political and economic system had reached the limit of growth at the beginning of the 1990s. When the Cold War came to an end, Japan's postwar system finally lived out its life.

Little known abroad is that Japan's politics underwent a period of unprecedented chaos in the 1990s. The LDP, the main pillar of the predominant one-party system, split. The Socialist Party of Japan (SPJ), the LDP's lesser partner in the system, was condemned to a political periphery. The LDP's notorious factions (*habatsu* in Japanese, which means not parliamentary 'factions', but just 'cliques') lost their grip upon followers, though they continued to exist. Instead, numerous political parties mushroomed. Some of the newly founded split further, some joined others, and

some disappeared. Only a few survived. At the beginning of the new millennium a new party system seemed to loom up, though still in vague outlines.

In both countries the great change was preceded by the introduction of a new electoral ordinance. Doubtless the reform of the electoral ordinance was to a considerable extent instrumental in reshaping the party system. The effect was not instantaneous. A learning process was necessary for both the political elite and the electorate. During that process quite a few confusions were inevitable. Many politicians did not get elected simply because they were on the wrong list. A lot of votes cast were found dead. It seems to take at least two elections for politicians as well as voters to adjust to the new ordinance.

There are at least two differences that make simple comparison between the two countries difficult. One is that Japan experienced only one reform, while Poland went through four reforms between 1989 and 2001. When reforms are frequent as in Poland, politicians as well as voters are busy in catching up. They may constantly commit mistakes. Sometimes it is difficult to judge whether the change is an effect of the new ordinance or an effect of mistakes on the part of politicians or voters.

The other is the difference between Japan's parliamentarism and Poland's presidentialism or semi-presidentialism. Though Poland tends to become a parliamentary republic in spite of the presidential institution, the fact remains that Poles have twice as much choice as Japanese. The two choices Poles have are of a different nature: in presidential elections the electorate chooses between persons rather than between political parties, while in parliamentary elections the opposite is true. As a result, presidentialism tends to decrease the number of effective parties (Linz, 1993; Stepan and Skach, 1993). In actual fact, however, a 'presidential premier' increasingly characterizes politics in Japan, with political parties losing the ground, while in Poland political parties retain much say in politics. This is one of the paradoxes.

3. Poland's Reforms and the Nebular Stage

In Poland the transformation was more fundamental than in Japan. In Poland you had to transform the non-competitive party system (hegemonial one-party system) into a competitive one, while in Japan you had only to make the existing competitive party system (predominant one-party system) more competitive. In Poland additionally you had to choose from among many variations of the competitive system. Hence, the confusion was bound to be greater. By 2001 there had been as many as four major reforms of the electoral ordinance. Each time the electoral reform was undertaken, there was some confusion. 1989-1993 may be characterized as nebular, 1993-2001 as transitory, and 2001- as formative.

The Round Table Talks in 1989 adopted an electoral ordinance which was a strange mixture of people's democracy and liberal democracy. Communists insisted on the right to govern, and the opposition on the right to protest. The compromise was: 65 per cent of the 460 seats of the Sejm, the Lower House of the Parliament, was reserved for the Communists (PZPR) and their allies (ZSL, SD, and pro-Communist Catholics), and only the rest was open for free competition. Communists could not only monopolize the seats reserved for them, but also take part in competition for the rest of the seats. Surprisingly, Communists proposed a majoritarian formula with runoff, violating the long proportionalist tradition of Leftist parties. Their calculation was that they could easily win by launching popular TV stars, journalists, movie actors, and so forth as their candidates (Kaminski, 2002).

The newly founded Senate (Upper House), was in its entirety open for free competition, which meant a great concession on the part of the Communists. The same majoritarian principle was applied here, too. Since two to three seats were allocated to every district unlike the Sejm, it may be better categorized as a 'limited vote' than a pure majoritarian system: voters can mark so many candidates as the available seats, and those who have won more than half the votes cast get elected. If such candidates are not available, runoff elections are held. The Senate is granted less seats (only 100) and less competencies than the Sejm. The Communists

did not have to win an absolute majority in the Senate to keep power. They would be content if they could obtain at least one of the seats in each district.

The newly created President was to be elected by a simple majority at the joint meeting of the Sejm and the Senate. Even if Communists and their allies would lose all the free seats in the Sejm and the Senate, they would still keep an absolute majority in the Sejm and can push through their presidential candidate.

The results of the first halfway free elections on June 4, 1989, were astonishing: Communists lost literally all the free seats with the exception of one Senate seat (Table 1). It was one of the founding elections that produced ‘stunning’ results in the third wave democratization (Huntington, 1991: 174-178). What was wrong with the Communist calculations? Huntington supposes that authoritarian reformers tend to develop unfounded optimism and become over confident, only to be surprised by a crushing defeat in the founding elections. Were Polish Communists also prisoners of such illusions?

Kaminski seems not to agree (Kaminski, 2002). He points out that one of the reasons for their miscalculation is a swift shift of the public opinion. On the basis of opinion polls held several months before elections, the Communists believed that they could play on an equal footing with the Solidarity. The change of public opinion took place thereafter, in the last months or even weeks preceding the elections. Another reason is their erroneous *ex ante* belief that the majoritarian formula would be more advantageous for them than the proportional one. Kaminski convincingly demonstrates that *ex post* the opposite is true. The same story would repeat itself in subsequent electoral reforms: those political parties that initiated a reform expecting to maximize the number of their seats ended up in losing elections. Democratic actors were not free from the same kind of illusions, either.

It seems to have been an implicit assumption of the Round Table Talks that Poland would have a two-party system. The Talks themselves were a negotiation between the two sides: coalition government and Solidarity opposition. The electoral ordinance they adopted, however, contributed little to the formation or ref-

ormation of any party system, not to mention a two-party system. The idea that some kind of system would emerge out of the free play of forces was still remote for the participants in the Talks. Anyway, the ordinance was not a long-term project but an improvised compromise valid only for the 1989 elections.

Table 1. Sejm and Senate, June 1989

Turnout:		First Ballot				Runoff	
		62.1				25.3	
Sejm	Total	National List*		District List*		District List*	
	Seats	Seats	Votes	Seats	Votes	Seats	Votes
	(460)	(35)		(425)			
Party Quota*	(299)	(35)		(264)			
	65.0	0.4	?	1.1	?	63.5	?
National List* PZPR ZSL SD Catholics	[7.6]						
	[34.1]						
	[14.6]						
	[5.2]						
	[3.5]						
Non-Party Quota*	(161)						
	35.0						
Gov. Coalition	[0.0]	-		0.0	17.0*	0.0	?
SCC	[35.0]	-		34.8	64.0*	0.2	?
Independents	[0.0]	-		0.0	9.0*	0.0	?
Refuse all	[-]			?	10.0*	0.0	?
Senate	Total Seats (100)	First Ballot			Runoff		
		Seats	Votes		Seats	Votes	
Gov. Coalition	0.0	0.0	?		0.0	?	
SCC	99.0	92.0	?		7.0	?	
Independents	1.0	0.0	?		1.0	?	
Refuse all	-	-	?		-	?	

* 'Party Quota': Quota reserved for government coalition parties (Communists and their allies).

* 'Non-Party Quota': Quota for free competition.

* 'National List': List of special candidates (high-ranking officials) for confirmation by over 50 per cent of the votes cast. Those seats that were not confirmed in the first vote were included into the district list of the party quota in the runoff.

* 'District List': List of general candidates for election with runoff.

* The vote distribution was not published. Only an estimated vote distribution in the first vote for the Sejm non-party quota was published in *Zycie Warszawy*, June 13, 1989, which is quoted above for information.

Of all the mistakes that Communists made, the most disastrous was doubtless to divide the parliamentary seats into two parts: non-competitive and competitive. Those Communist parliamentarians who obtained seats through non-competitive elections were discredited in the public eye. Although they constituted a majority, they were as if paralyzed. Soon satellite parties defected and formed the first non-Communist coalition government with Solidarity. It is rather amazing that this crippled ‘contract parliament’, as it was disdainfully called then, could serve two full years and manage to enact so many reform bills of far-reaching consequence.

One of the acts the ‘contract parliament’ approved is the law on the election of the President which is binding up to today.³ The President should be elected by popular elections. If no candidate obtains more than 50 per cent of the votes cast, a second ballot should take place on the two candidates that won the most votes in the first ballot. In November-December 1990 the first presidential elections took place (Table 2). From the beginning the election campaign unfolded not on a party basis, but on a personal basis. At first it looked as if Walesa and Mazowiecki, both from the Solidarity camp, would make a duel. But unexpectedly Stanislaw Tyminski, a man from nowhere, became the dark horse that Walesa had to beat in the runoff.

Table 2. Presidential election, November 1990

		First Ballot	Runoff
Turnout:		60.6	53.4
Lech Walesa	Solidarity	39.96	74.3
Stan Tyminski	Independent	23.10	25.7
Tadeusz Mazowiecki	Solidarity	18.08	
Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz	SLD	9.21	
Roman Bartoszcze	PSL	7.15	
Leszek Moczulski	KPN	2.50	

3 Ustawa z 27 września 1990 r. o wyborze Prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej - tekst jednolity. See <http://www.bezuprzedzen.pl/wybory/ordynacja.html> (August 23, 2003).

The first President who won in free elections was a great challenge for the ‘contract parliament’. Walesa was interested in the new Sejm electoral ordinance and constantly tried to interfere with the deliberation, which developed into a major political crisis. Parties finally went to the vote only to pass some sort of law against Walesa’s veto, not weighing out the pluses and minuses of the new ordinance for themselves and for the political system as a whole.

In contrast to the Round Table ordinance, a proportional formula was adopted: 37 regional districts with 391 seats (average: 10.6) and one nationwide district with 69 seats are set up. Votes are translated into seats according to the quasi-Hare-Niemeyer method for regional districts and to the modified Sainte-Lague method for the nationwide district. There is a five per cent threshold for the nationwide district, but no threshold for regions (Kaminski, 2002). The new ordinance also laid down special conditions for minorities, which the present paper ignores, as they do not seem to influence the party system much in Poland’s case. The same applies to subsequent ordinances.

Of the three translation procedures, it is known that d’Hondt is favourable for larger parties, Sainte-Lague for smaller parties, and Hare-Niemeyer is in-between. Against this background, the second ordinance, a combination of Hare-Niemeyer with no threshold for regions and Sainte-Lague with a five per cent threshold for the nationwide district, was favourable for smaller parties. Legislators were rather idealistic: they tried to reduce manipulation as far as possible and to have the vote distribution among the electorate represented in the Sejm as exactly as possible.

The Senate ordinance did not attract much attention from President Walesa. Many parliamentarians wanted to introduce a majoritarian-proportional law, but supporters of the old majoritarian version won by a hair in the final vote. Only runoff elections were abolished (Kaminski, 2002). The Round Table formula has not basically changed up to today.

The 1991 elections produced an extremely fragmented parliament with 29 parties represented (Table 3). It was even more fragmented than an ‘atomized party system’, the most extreme type

of fragmented party system in Sartori's famous classification (Sartori, 1976). Under these conditions it was hardly possible to organize a stable and effective government. The two years before the next parliamentary elections witnessed four cabinets coming into being and falling.

Table 3. Sejm and Senate, October 1991

Turnout: 43.2	Sejm		Senate	
	Seats	Votes	Seats	Votes
	(460)		(100)	
UD	13.48	12.31	21.0	?
SLD	13.04	11.98	4.0	?
WAK	10.65	8.73	9.0	?
PSL SP	10.43	8.67	7.0	?
KPN	10.00	7.50	4.0	?
POC	9.57	8.71	9.0	?
KLD	8.04	7.48	6.0	?
PL	6.09	5.46	5.0	?
NSZZ S	5.87	5.05	11.0	?
PPPP	3.48	3.27		?
MN	1.52	1.17	1.0	?
ChD	1.09	2.36	1.0	?
PZZ	0.87	0.23		?
PChD	0.87	1.11	3.0	?
SP	0.87	2.05		?
UPR	0.65	2.25		?
PX	0.65	0.47		?
RAS	0.43	0.35		?
SD	0.22	1.41		?
RDS	0.22	0.46		?
UWP	0.22	?		?
JL	0.22	?		?
WiP	0.22	?		?
S80	0.22	?		?
LPW P	0.22	?		?
Prawoslawni	0.22	?		?
KSzP	0.22	?		?
ZP	0.22	?		?
SKpTZ	0.22	?		?
Others	0.00	?		?
Indep./Regions	-	-	19.0	?

Is the electoral ordinance to blame for this? Gebethner (1996) disputes it. The ordinance had enough safeguards against excessive fragmentation. Not the electoral ordinance but Polish society itself is to blame for the fragmented party system. Indeed, the Senate was elected according to the majoritarian formula, but revealed almost the same extent of fragmentation as the Sejm which was elected according to the proportional formula. Polish society seemed to be politically as much fragmented in 1991 as right after the First World War. In 1925 as many as 31 parties were represented in the parliament.

Nevertheless, the electoral ordinance cannot wholly be exempted from responsibility. If the society is fragmented, the ordinance should take enough countermeasures against it. Having understood this, Polish legislators immediately proceeded to revise the ordinance.

4. Japan's Reform and Nebular Stage

Since the late 1950s there was much talk of 'reform' in socialist countries, but nothing came out of it. We often forget that there has been as much talk of 'reform' in Japan, too. The first Japanese premier that spoke of 'reform' was the late Ohira in 1979. From that time on uninterruptedly up to today the public debate on 'reform' has been continuing. Premier Koizumi is one of the politicians that speak most emphatically of 'reform'. Many kinds of 'reform' have been suggested: administrative reform, financial reform, political reform, economic reform, pension reform, postal reform, and so on, and so forth. Has anything come out of it? Yes, but precious little. One of the results is electoral reform.

What was meant by 'political reform' in the 1980s? It was primarily to change the political system so that corruption might disappear from high politics. Politics costs much money in Japan. This was thought to be the main cause of corruption. Why does politics cost money in Japan? It is because the election campaign is organized not by parties, but by individual politicians. The electoral ordinance necessitates it, it was argued.

In Japan a special kind of electoral ordinance was practiced since the end of the 1920s. It was called a ‘middle size electoral district system’.⁴ Under the majoritarian system each district is assigned only one seat. Under the ‘middle size electoral district system’ each district is allocated 3-5 seats. Voters have only one vote to cast, and those 3-5 candidates who have obtained the most votes get elected. At a glance it looks like a variant of a majoritarian system, but it is rather a variant of proportional one.⁵ The difference is whether the vote is transferable. Under the proportional system it is transferable to the party list, but under the ‘middle size electoral district system’ it is not. Therefore, some political scientists prefer to call it ‘single non-transferable vote (SNTV) system’. It is a kind of ‘limited vote’ system. Every electoral system is unique, but this system is very unique. It is said that a similar system is, or used to be, practiced only in Taiwan and Ireland.

When there are 3-5 seats (Japanese average: 3.9) in one district, it is quite natural that major political parties should try to place a corresponding number of candidates for that district. They compete not only against candidates of other parties, but also against each other. The larger their party is, the more so. If several candidates of one and the same party compete against each other, their relations to the electorate tend to be not ideational or policy-based, but personalistic. Politicians who compete against each other in the same district belong indeed to the same party, but feel rather independent of it. They form factions within the mother party. That there always existed four to five factions in the LDP roughly corresponds to the average number of seats in electoral districts. Members of a faction support their boss in the election to the party chair. In return, the boss helps members, particularly when they are still novices, to carry on the election campaign that

4 For a brief history of Japan’s electoral systems, see Kobayashi (1994: 118-122) and Yamada (1998: 207-219).

5 The ‘middle size electoral district system’ is even more proportional than the proportional system with the d’Hondt formula, supposing that the district size is the same. See Kobayashi (1989: 312-316) and Kawato et al. (2001: 132-136).

costs so much money and to get initiated into the world of high politics.

It is the Cold War that made it possible for the LDP to stay in power permanently. The intra-party struggle among factions tended to increase the votes cast for the LDP as a whole. Factions, however impressive their size might have become, did not dare to get out of the mother party and to establish a new party in fear that they would lose power to the SPJ or the CPJ (Communist Party of Japan). Government turnover among parties did not take place or could not take place under the conditions of the Cold War. It took place only among the LDP's various factions.⁶

Precisely this structure engenders corruptions, it was argued. At the core of corruptions lies the electoral ordinance. The 'middle size electoral district' system or SNTV system should give way to either a simple majoritarian system or a proportional system. It would make politics more inexpensive and true government turnover possible by depriving factions of their *raison d'être*. That such a reform was felt necessary and possible indicates that the Cold War finally came to an end in domestic Japanese politics.

There was a long story of pros and cons on the reform. The LDP was against a proportional system, while the SPJ and other opposition parties were against a majoritarian one. Already in 1983 a reform of the electoral ordinance of the House of Councillors (Upper House) was undertaken. Of the 252 seats, 100 were elected according to the proportional system with a binding party list of candidates and the d'Hondt formula, and the rest according to the traditional SNTV system. The two districts are parallel, and voters vote twice: once for the nationwide proportional district and once for the SNTV district. The reform did not have much impact, as it was not radical enough and the House of Councillors does not have so much power as the House of Representatives (Lower House).

6 I have elaborated on this point elsewhere (Ito, 2003).

Table 4. House of Representatives, July 1993

Turnout: 67.26	Seats (511)	Votes
LDP	43.64	36.6
SPJ	13.70	15.4
PNL	10.76	10.1
Komeito	9.98	8.1
NPJ	6.85	8.0
DSPJ	2.94	3.5
CPJ	2.94	7.7
Sakigake	2.54	2.6
SDA	0.78	0.7
Others	-	0.2
Independents	5.87	6.9

In the early 1990s the LDP tried hard to reform the electoral ordinance for the House of Representatives, but two LDP premiers failed to get the reform bill through the parliament. Then an opportunity presented itself, when the LDP suffered a defeat in the 1993 elections to the House of Representatives (Table 4). It was for the first time since 1955 that the LDP lost an absolute majority in the Lower House. But no party won an absolute majority to replace the LDP. The SPJ, the LDP's traditional rival, lost even more than the LDP. Instead, new parties appeared: the Party of New Life (PNL), the New Party of Japan (NPJ), and Sakigake (Forerunners). They were all splinter groups from the LDP.

Anyway, the political party system changed. The old pre-dominant one-party system is gone. Morihiro Hosokawa, the NPJ's leader, formed a coalition government with some other opposition parties including the SPJ. Hosokawa regarded it his sole task as premier to get through the reform bill already prepared by his the LDP predecessors. Finally in January 1994 the reform bill that fundamentally changed the electoral ordinance of the House of Representatives passed the parliament and went into effect in March of the same year. Thus, properly speaking, in Japan the change of the electoral ordinance did not precede the change of the

political party system. Rather the opposite is true. The collapse of the '55 system' was an immediate consequence of the Cold War's end for domestic Japanese politics.

The new ordinance was rather a complicated one, because it was a product of compromises.⁷ Voters vote twice: once for a majoritarian (First Past the Post - FPP) district and once for a proportional district. Majoritarian districts are all one-seated. Those candidates who receive a plurality (at least one sixth of the effective votes) get elected. There are 300 majoritarian districts. The rest (200 seats until 2000, 180 seats thereafter) is allocated for 11 proportional districts (average: 16.4). Here voters vote not for individual candidates, but for lists of candidates submitted by parties. Those candidates get elected whose party has received enough votes and who is placed high enough on the party list. The d'Hondt formula is applied, but no thresholds are introduced.

One and the same candidate can run for both districts if he or she wants to. When the candidate gets elected in the majoritarian district, his or her name is automatically eliminated from the list in the proportional district. When the candidate loses the election in the majoritarian district, he/she may get elected in the proportional district if the margin to the elected in the majoritarian district is narrow enough and he/she is placed high enough on the list. Those who get elected this way are called 'resurrected'.⁸

The new ordinance favours larger parties, but gives smaller parties a chance to survive. The FPP formula in the majoritarian district and the d'Hondt formula in the proportional district are favourable for larger parties. But smaller parties can survive thanks to the large district size and the non-existence of thresholds in the proportional district.

The development of the post-55 party system may be traced in three stages: first from 1993 to 1996, second from 1996 to 2001, and third from 2001 until today. In contrast to Poland, Japan's electoral ordinance of the House of Representatives, adopted at the very outset of the first stage, has not been changed. For the first

7 For an outline of the new system, see Kobayashi (1994: 122-138).

8 For a brief description and problems of the new electoral ordinance, see Kobayashi (1994: 122-155).

three years, however, no elections took place under the new ordinance. Japan's nebular stage falls precisely on this period.

With the Cold War approaching an end, symptoms of the change made themselves felt long before the electoral reform. For instance, the boom of new party foundings dates back to as early as 1976 when the New Liberal Club with Yohei Kono at the top was founded. In the 1989 elections the SPJ with Takako Doi, a woman, as leader experienced a sudden rise of popularity. From 1993 a rush of party foundings followed. Most of them were splinter groups from the LDP. As stated above, the new ordinance was indeed prepared by the LDP, but the credit of its adoption goes to those new forces. One might say that the new ordinance was a product of an emerging new party system, but not the other way round.

At this stage, however, one cannot speak of a new party system yet. One new party after another came into being. Most parties were nothing but clubs of parliamentarians and were short-lived. Parliamentarians frequently changed their party affiliation. It must be one of the rare cases in the history of parliaments that politicians moved from one party to another with such ease during the same legislative term. New parties were by no means new, because they were filled with old people. Politicians behaved as if they were pure power seekers freed from all conventional constraints like morals, ideologies, programmes, party discipline, esprit de corps, class identity, and so forth. All political combinations including those considered unconceivable until then became possible. Deserters from the LDP formed coalition governments with the SPJ, the LDP's former arch-enemy. They were replaced by a SPJ-LDP coalition government with a SPJ man, a former trade union functionary, as premier. Komeito, a Buddhist pacifist party, dissolved itself and joined a new party founded by the LDP's former general-secretary. SPJ parliamentarians deserted en masse the mother party and founded a new party together with former LDP parliamentarians, and so on.

The situation was really nebulous. Some political scientists regard this a beginning of a new epoch and even a precursor of future developments in other democracies (Lavor and Kato, 2001). The present writer does not agree and argues that such a situation

inevitably arises whenever and wherever a long-lived party system collapses to be replaced by another.

The 1995 elections to the House of Councillors gave a glimpse into what was going on in the party system (Table 5). The LDP won again, but only nominally. In actual fact it lost in both SNTV and proportional districts to Shinshinto (Party of New Progress), a completely new party. The SPJ, the LDP's rival in the '55 system', also lost ground to be ranked only third. Komeito and the DSPJ (Democratic Socialist Party of Japan), small but necessary components of the '55 system' since the 1960s, disappeared. Instead, new groupings such as Sakigake (Forerunners) or ADR (Alliance for Democratic Reform) made an appearance. It is clear that the old system is gone, but no new system was visible yet in spite of the statement of a leading Japanese election specialist to the contrary.⁹

Table 5. House of Councillors, July 1995

Turnout: 44.52	Total	SNTV District		Proportional District	
	Seats	Seats	Votes	Seats	Votes
	(126)	(76)		(50)	
LDP	36.5	40.8	25.4	30.0	27.3
Shinshinto	31.7	28.9	26.5	36.0	30.8
SPJ	12.7	9.2	11.9	18.0	16.9
CPJ	6.3	3.9	10.4	10.0	9.5
Sakigake	2.4	1.3	2.6	4.0	3.6
ADR	1.6	2.6	4.5	-	-
SHC	0.8	-	-	2.0	3.2
CPP	0.8	1.3	1.4	0	0.9
Others	0.0	0.0	2.8	0	7.9
Independents	7.1	11.8	14.7	-	-

9 Ikuko Kabashima, 'Nidai seitousei no makuake no yokan' (A Foreboding of the Two-Party System), *Yomiuri Shimbun*, July 25, 1995. See also Kabashima (1998: 254-278). Though larger parties are favoured by the present electoral ordinance, it seems that the opinion of Japanese specialists is still divided on the future development of Japan's party system (see Miyake 2001: 117-140).

Anyway, the House of Councillors is not so weighty as the House of Representatives. In addition, not all members are replaced by elections at one time, but only half the members. It takes more time for the House to have an impact on the party system, as elections take place every three years. Already 12 years have passed since the new ordinance for the House of Councillors was adopted. Clearly it is not primarily due to the changed electoral ordinance of the House of Councillors, that the party system started to change.

5. The Transitory Stage in Poland and Japan

Polish legislators were deadly serious about correcting the shortcomings of the second electoral ordinance. In May 1993 a new, third electoral ordinance passed the parliament. It decidedly favoured larger parties. Of course, the act was vehemently opposed by smaller parties, but accepted by a comfortable majority in the Sejm which covered all political spectra: rightist, centrist and leftist.

First, entry was made difficult for newer and smaller parties by strict eligibility requirements. Second, new thresholds were created or raised: five per cent for single party or committee and eight per cent for coalitions of parties in regional districts, and seven per cent for all in the nationwide district (percentage of thresholds in nationwide scale). Third, a unified apportionment formula for both districts was introduced which is by far the most favourable for larger parties: quasi-d'Hondt. Finally, the average district size considerably decreased: 52 regional districts for 391 seats (average: 7.5), which is also favourable for larger parties (Kaminski, 2002).

Right after the law passed, the parliament was unexpectedly dissolved, and new elections took place. Parties and the electorate were not granted enough time to adjust to the new conditions. In the elections dead votes reached as much as 35 per cent. But the effect was dramatic: the number of parties represented in the parliament decreased from 29 to six. This seemed to augur well for government stability.

Post-Communist parties won almost two thirds of the seats, and post-Solidarity parties were decimated (Table 6). The SLD

(Alliance of the Democratic Left), an heir to the PZPR, won 37.2 per cent of the seats with only 24.2 per cent of the votes cast, and the PSL (Polish Peasant Party), an heir to the ZSL, one of the PZPR's satellite parties, won 28.7 per cent of the seats with 15.4 per cent of the votes cast. In contrast, the UD (Democratic Union), one of the post-Solidarity parties and the former government party, obtained 16.1 per cent of the seats with 10.6 per cent of the votes cast, and BBWR (Non-Party Bloc for Support of Reform), Walesa's political arm, only 3.5 per cent of the seats with 5.4 per cent of the votes cast. KKW 'Ojczyzna' (Catholic Electoral Committee 'Fatherland'), another post-Solidarity grouping, got no seat at all with 6.4 per cent of the votes cast. Similarly, NSZZ 'Solidarnosc' (Solidarity Trade Union) obtained no seat with 4.9 per cent of the votes cast.

Table 6. Sejm and Senate, September 1993

Turnout: 52.1	Sejm		Senate	
	Seats	Votes	Seats	Votes
	(469)		(100)	
SLD	37.2	20.41	37.0	?
PSL	28.7	15.40	36.0	?
UD	16.1	10.59	4.0	?
UP	8.9	7.28	2.0	?
KKW O	0.0	6.37	0.0	?
KPN	4.8	5.77	0.0	?
BBWR	3.5	5.41	2.0	?
NSZZ S	0.0	4.90	9.0	?
PC	0.0	4.42	1.0	?
KLD	0.0	3.99	1.0	?
UPR	0.0	3.18	0.0	?
PSL PL	0.0	2.37	1.0	?
Samoobrona	0.0	2.78	0.0	?
PX	0.0	2.74	0.0	?
KdR	0.0	2.70	0.0	?
MN	0.9	1.69	1.0	?
Independents	-	-	5.0	?

The SLD and PSL, the two post-Communist parties that formed a coalition government, could secure an almost two-third majority in the Sejm. Under the old ordinance they would have fallen short of a Sejm majority, and the government would have been organized by a coalition of post-Solidarity groupings. As far as post-Solidarity groupings are concerned, again those who initiated the reform became losers under the reformed ordinance.

A party system seemed to gradually take shape. It was a system consisting of three orientations: leftist with the SLD, rightist with Fatherland and Solidarity, and centrist with the PSL and UD. There were, however, still many groupings which could not establish their identity with any of the orientations. Would they be forced to identify themselves in order to survive under the new ordinance?

The 1995 presidential elections were a test for the emerging party system (Table 7). Challenger Kwasniewski of the SLD spoke for the left, incumbent Walesa for the right, and Jacek Kuron of the UW (Freedom Union, successor to the UD), the third man in the first ballot, for the centre. In the runoff Kwasniewski defeated Walesa by the margin of 3.4 per cent. This scheme of confrontation seemed to sketch a contour of the looming party system.

Table 7. Presidential election, November 1995

		First Ballot	Runoff
Turnout:		64.7	68.2
Aleksandr Kwasniewski	SLD	35.11	51.72
Lech Walesa	Indep./Solidarity	33.11	48.28
Jacek Kuron	UW	9.22	
Jan Olszewski	RdR/PC	6.86	
Waldemar Pawlak	PSL	4.31	
Tadeusz Zielinski	Indep./UP/PPEiR	3.53	
Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz	Indep./ZChN	2.76	
Janusz Korwin-Mikke	UPR	2.40	
Andrzej Lepper	Samoobrona	1.32	
Jan Pietrzak	Independent	1.12	
Tadeusz Kozluk	Independent	0.15	
Kazimierz Piotrowicz	Independent	0.07	
Leszek Bubel	Independent	0.04	

The 1997 parliamentary elections enhanced this impression even further (Table 8). This time all the rightist groupings coalesced in AWS (Solidarity Electoral Action). In the Sejm elections the AWS won 43.7 per cent of the seats with 33.8 per cent of the votes cast, while the SLD won 35.7 per cent of the seats with 27.1 per cent of the votes cast. The UW won 13 per cent of the seats with 13.4 per cent of the votes cast and the PSL 5.9 per cent of the seats with 7.3 per cent of the votes cast. The number of parties represented in the Sejm decreased to five, but at the same time the percentage of dead votes decreased to 12.8 per cent. This means that politicians as well as voters have learned a lot. The Senate elections revealed a similar distribution of votes and seats. The AWS made a coalition with the UW to form a government.

Table 8. Sejm and Senate, September 1997

Turnout: 47.9	Sejm		Senate	
	Seats	Votes	Seats	Votes
	(460)		(100)	
AWS	43.7	33.83	51.0	?
SLD	35.7	27.13	28.0	?
UW	13.0	13.37	8.0	?
PSL	5.9	7.31	3.0	?
ROP	1.3	5.56	5.0	?
UP	0.0	4.70	0.0	?
KPEiR	0.0	2.18	0.0	?
UPrawicyR	0.0	2.03	0.0	?
KPEiR RP	0.0	1.63	0.0	?
BdP	0.0	1.36	0.0	?
PWN-PSN	0.0	0.07	0.0	?
Samoobrona	0.0	0.08	0.0	?
MN	0.4	0.43	0.0	?
Independents	-	-	5.0	?

The pattern of political confrontation: SLD-PSL versus AWS-UW, is a pattern envisaged already at the Round Table Talks

in 1989: Communists versus Solidarity people. It is a quasi-two-party system pattern. Does it reflect the reality of transformed Poland? Surely it reflects the psychology of the political elite as well as the electorate, but not policies, social cleavages, values, cultures, etc. In other words, actors were still prisoners of the past. They are still fighting the past battles according to the new rules.

In Japan finally in 1996 the first elections to the House of Representatives took place under the new ordinance. Already three years had passed since the new ordinance passed the House of Representatives, but the political elite as well as the electorate had not yet adjusted to the new ordinance. The share of dead votes in the total amounted to an astronomic 54.7 per cent, compared with 24.7 per cent in the 1993 elections. The larger the party, the less the share of dead votes becomes. It is 31.2 per cent for the LDP, but 98.7 per cent for the CPJ. ‘Resurrected candidates’, those candidates who lost in a majoritarian district but were salvaged in the proportional district, amounted to 84, that is, 42 per cent of the proportional seats.¹⁰

Table 9. House of Representatives, October 1996

Turnout: 59.65	Total	SNTV District		Proportional District	
	Seats	Seats	Votes	Seats	Votes
	(500)	(300)		(200)	
LDP	47.8	56.3	38.6	35.0	32.7
Shinshinto	31.2	32.0	28.0	30.0	28.0
DPJ	10.4	5.7	10.6	17.5	16.1
CPJ	5.2	0.7	12.6	13.1	12.0
SDPJ	3.0	1.3	2.2	5.5	6.4
Sakigake	0.4	0.7	1.3	0.0	1.1
ADR	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.0
Others	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	2.6
Independents	1.8	3.0	4.4	-	-

10 Hideo Iwasaki, ‘Sho senkyoku senkyo no “shihyo”’ (Dead Votes in Majoritarian Districts), Mainichi Shimbun, October 22, 1996. See <http://www.mainichi.co.jp/eye/sousenkyo/1996/result/04.html> (August 23, 2003).

At first glance, the new parliament is not much different from the old one (Table 9). But at a closer look several differences draw attention. First, the LDP won again, but fell short of an absolute majority. It would be forced to make a coalition with other parties. Second, the SPJ, long the second strongest party behind the LDP and the mother party of Premier Murayama who served 1994-96, was so weakened that it would no longer be able to recover its former status. Third, the position SPJ occupied was to be taken over by two new formations that competed against one another: Shinshinto and the DPJ (Democratic Party of Japan). For a while, Shinshinto had the edge over the DPJ, but soon, as a result of internal conflicts, it was eclipsed by the latter. Fourth, the composition of smaller parties changed. Komeito, the DSPJ, and the SDA (Social Democratic Alliance) disappeared: Komeito joined Shinshinto, while the DSPJ and the SDA joined the DPJ. On the other hand, two survivors of the nebular stage remained on the political periphery: Sakigake and the ADR. Finally, the CPJ unexpectedly survived. It was successful particularly in proportional districts. Given, however, the fact that the share of proportional seats in the total is small (37.5%), consequences of the reform would sooner or later make themselves felt also on the CPJ.

The basic axis of confrontation in Japanese politics used to be national security policy: pro-American or anti-American. This axis ceased to exist in 1995 when Premier Murayama of the SPJ declared that the Self-Defence Forces are constitutional. Since then the confrontation over national security policy lost its meaning. The second stage in Japan is transitory in the sense that the new electoral ordinance was already in action, while the LDP tried to get the new situation under control by resorting to a verified old method: balancing of power among factions.

The LDP was still a union of factions, and the party leader ruled as a man of his faction rather than the party as a whole. Under Premier Hashimoto (January 1996 to July 1998) the situation was still labile. The LDP ruled from October 1996, with the SDPJ (successor to the SPJ) and Sakigake cooperating outside the cabinet. Shinshinto gradually fell apart into its components: some returned to the LDP, some joined the DPJ, former members of

Komeito rediscovered their old identity and resurrected Komeito, and others followed leadership of Ichiro Ozawa to found a new party the Liberal Party, but some others founded another party the Conservative Party. The disintegration of Shinshinto helped the LDP to stay in power by swelling its ranks. In 1997, however, Hashimoto made a mistake to nominate as a minister one of the former convicts in the Lockheed affair to appease the faction to which he belonged, a step that had a very bad press. The 1998 elections to the House of Councillors brought Hashimoto down (Table 10). The LDP lost two elections to the Upper House in a row and finally forfeited an absolute majority also in the Upper House.

Table 10. House of Councillors, July 1998

Turnout: 58.84	Total	SNTV District		Proportional District	
	Seats	Seats	Votes	Seats	Votes
	(126)	(76)		(50)	
LDP	34.9	39.5	30.5	28.0	25.2
DPJ	21.4	19.7	16.2	24.0	21.7
CPJ	11.9	9.2	15.7	16.0	14.6
Komeito	7.1	2.6	3.3	14.0	13.8
LP	4.8	1.3	1.8	10.0	9.3
SDPJ	4.0	1.3	4.3	8.0	7.8
New SPJ	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.6
Sakigake	0.0	-	-	0.0	1.4
SHC	0.0	-	-	0.0	1.0
LA	0.0	-	-	0.0	0.9
Others	0.0	0.0	4.3	0.0	6.2
Independents	15.9	26.3	22.9	-	-

Premier Obuchi (July 1998 to April 2000) was even more successful in managing politics with old methods than his predecessor. He made a coalition with the LPJ and Komeito. It created a super-majority controlling 72.9 per cent of the seats in the Lower House. It looked even more formidable than the old predominant one-party system. But, after all, it was a coalition government. The LDP could not govern without coalition partners, as it lacked an absolute majority in the House of Councillors.

It drew public attention that, in 1998 when the vote on Hashimoto's successor took place, the CPJ supported Naoto Kan, the DPJ candidate for premiership. The CPJ, one of the pillars of the '55 system', had voted only for its own candidate throughout the postwar years. Finally this party, too, changed the basic line of conduct. Even the Communists started to overcome the legacy of the Cold War.

Obuchi's sudden death brought Yoshiro Mori to power. Premier Mori (April 2000 to April 2001) continued a policy of balancing LDP factions and making a coalition with Komeito and the Conservatives. Though the elections to the House of Representatives in June 2001 did not bring particularly unfavourable results for the LDP (Table 11), Premier Mori got a bad press for incompetence, indiscreet remarks, and corruption. LDP bosses who feared that they would lose the next elections under his premiership forced him to resign.

Table 11. House of Representatives, June 2000

Turnout: 62.49	Total	Majoritarian District		Proportional District	
	Seats	Seats	Votes	Seats	Votes
	(480)	(300)		(180)	
LDP	48.5	59.0	41.0	31.1	28.3
DPJ	26.5	26.7	27.6	26.1	25.2
Komeito	6.5	2.3	2.0	13.3	13.0
LPJ	4.6	1.3	3.4	10.0	11.0
CPJ	4.1	0.0	12.1	11.1	11.2
SDPJ	4.0	1.3	3.8	8.3	9.4
Conservatives	1.6	2.3	2.0	0.0	0.4
CI	1.0	1.7	1.1	0.0	0.3
LA	0.2	0.3	1.8	0.0	1.1
Others	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.2
Independents	3.1	5.0	4.9	0.0	0.0

6. The Formative Stage in Poland and Japan

There is no monolinear development in the real world. Under the new ordinance in Poland government stability was indeed more guaranteed, but problems of coalition government remained. In 1997 the PSL deserted the coalition with the SLD in the hope to make gains in the imminent elections, which did not materialize. In 2000 the UW deserted the coalition with the AWS because of policy differences. The AWS itself began to disintegrate into its original components. All the governments after 1993 tend to become a minority government towards the end of their term. They could serve their full term only thanks to the institution of the constructive vote of no-confidence.

In the parliament voices were raised to call for a new revision of the electoral ordinance. It was argued that as a result of the far-reaching reform of local administration, another revision of the electoral ordinance became necessary, as in most cases the electoral district coincided with the unit of local administration. There was one more reason for the call for revision which was even more pressing: it was criticized that larger parties were favoured too much. Clearly one had in mind the SLD. Though the SLD was defeated in the 1997 elections, it actually increased the share in the total vote from 20.41 per cent to 27.13 per cent (Tables 6 and 7). In the presidential election of October 2001 SLD candidate and incumbent Kwasniewski won an overwhelming victory already in the first ballot (Table 12). The victory of the SLD and its allies in the coming parliamentary elections was seen as almost assured. In contrast, the ruling AWS was in disarray. Now rightist and centrist parties strongly felt that the interests of smaller parties like them should be protected (Millard, 2003a: 69-71). Against the objection of the SLD with Leszek Miller on top, the revised electoral ordinance passed the parliament. President Kwasniewski of the SLD signed it, having added that it is better to accept the revision when the prospect of SLD victory in the next elections is certain.

Table 12. Presidential election, October 2000

Turnout:		61.12
Aleksandr Kwasniewski	SLD	53.90
Andrzej Olechowski	Independent	17.30
Marian Krzaklewski	AWS	15.57
Jaroslaw Kalinowski	PSL	5.95
Andrzej Lepper	Samoobrona	3.05
Janusz Korwin-Mikke	UPR	1.43
Lech Walesa	Independent	1.01
Jan Lopuszanski	PP	0.79
Dariusz Grabowski	KdP	0.51
Piotr Ikonowicz	PPS	0.22
Tadeusz Wilecki	SND/ROP	0.16
Bogdan Pawlowski	Independent	0.10

The new, fourth electoral ordinance after transformation is characterized as follows. First, there are reduced, milder, and simpler eligibility requirements. Second, though general thresholds of five per cent for single party or committee and eight per cent for coalition are maintained, special thresholds of three per cent for single party or committee and five per cent for coalitions of parties are created for the case that no list of candidates or only one list of candidates in the given district satisfies the above conditions. Third, an apportionment formula favourable for smaller parties is introduced: modified Sainte-Lague. Finally, the nationwide district was abolished, and the size of the regional district was made larger (average: 11.2). Though the former is not favourable for smaller parties, the latter is (7).¹¹

The 2001 parliamentary elections produced again astonishing results (Table 13). Government parties AWSP (AWS of the Right)

11 „Ustawa z dnia 12 kwietnia 2001 r.: Ordynacja Wyborcza do Sejmu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej i do Senatu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej,” *Dziennik Ustaw*, Nr 46, poz. 499. Although the same document is reproduced in the home page of the State Election Committee, a mistake seems to have crept into the passage on the translation procedure: not Sainte-Lague, but d'Hondt as in the old ordinance. See <http://pkw.gov.pl/katalog/arttykul/18409.html> (August 23, 2003).

and UW disappeared. As expected, the opposition party SLD in coalition with the UP (Labour Union) won a landslide: 47.0 per cent of the seats with 41.0 per cent of the votes cast, but this fell short of an absolute majority. Another opposition party, the PSL, slightly advanced: 9.0 per cent of the seats with 9.0 per cent of the votes cast. Four new parties entered the parliament: PO (Civic Platform), PiS (Law and Justice), Samoobrona (Self-Defence), and LPR (League of Polish Families). PO was a party founded to inherit the vote that Andrzej M. Olechowski collected in the 2000 presidential elections. He unexpectedly got 17.3 per cent of the votes cast and ranked second behind Kwasniewski (Table 12). In its world outlook PO is close to UD and replaced it in the new parliament. PiS is one of the splinter parties of the AWS, led by former Justice Minister Lech Kaczynski.

Table 13. Sejm and Senate, September 2001

Turnout: 46.28	Sejm		Senate	
	Seats	Votes	Seats	Votes
	(460)		(100)	
SLD-UP	47.0	41.04	75.0	?
PO	14.1	12.68	0.0	?
Samoobrona	11.6	10.20	2.0	?
PiS	9.6	9.50	1.0	?
PSL	9.1	8.98	4.0	?
LPR	8.3	7.87	2.0	?
AWSP	0.0	5.60	0.0	?
UW	0.0	3.10	0.0	?
Alternatywa	0.0	0.42	0.0	?
MN	0.4	0.36	0.0	?
PPS	0.0	0.10	0.0	?
PUG	0.0	0.06	0.0	?
NM GS	0.0	0.06	0.0	?
PWN	0.0	0.02	0.0	?
Stoklosa	-	-	1.0	?
Senate Bloc	-	-	15.0	?

Completely new for Poland's parliamentary scene were two radical parties: Samoobrona and LPR. Samoobrona was originally a peasant union affiliated with the PSL. It transformed itself into a political movement with the charismatic demagogue Andrzej Lepper as leader and split from the mother party. The LPR is a Catholic nationalist party that split from the AWS. It has developed a vehement anti-EU campaign.

The effect of the new ordinance is evident. The number of the parties represented in the parliament again increased from five to six. Completely new and even anti-system parties made entry into the parliament. Surely the SLD-UP could have obtained an absolute majority under the old ordinance. Government instability is again as if promised (Millard, 2003a: 80-81). At first the SLD-UP formed a coalition government with PSL, with Samoobrona co-operating outside the cabinet. Soon Samoobrona went into opposition. As early as March 2003 the SLD-UP broke with the PSL on policy issues and chose to form a minority government.

In the 2001 elections in Poland the constraints of the past became weaker, at least as far as the electorate is concerned. Szczerbiak pointed out that the electorate in Poland today is very volatile: it is widely observed that those voters who had voted for the AWS in the last elections voted this time en masse for the SLD-UP. That means that the past axis of political confrontation is no longer binding on the electorate today (Szczerbiak 2002). However, the political elite may feel still constrained by the past. For instance, a coalition between the SLD and the PO is still out of the question, although there is not much difference in their policy orientations, domestic as well as international.

In Poland today the presidential office as well as the parliament are firmly in the hands of the LSD. The opposition is not united. It looks as if the old hegemonial one-party system were revived, but the system today is fully competitive. A party system is looming up in which one large party is surrounded by five smaller parties. Only one party, the SLD, seems to be capable of government responsibility. Of the five opposition parties, three are too small and incapable of coalitioning with each other. Two are even anti-system parties. For the time being, the SLD will remain in power.

There is a structural instability in the Polish party system: a large political party or a coalition of political parties which bears even government responsibility appears and disappears from one election to another. It seems, with some exceptions, that the organizational reach of Polish political parties is not solid socially and regionally. Given this fact, the future of the Polish party system depends to a considerable extent on the presidential office. The race for the presidential office is not necessarily party-based. It is quite possible that a candidate of a smaller party wins because of his personal attraction. That will then greatly influence the shape of the party system.

Japan's formative stage is closely connected with the rise of Junichiro Koizumi, the present Premier. When Mori resigned, the LDP was caught in a deep crisis. If the successor is nominated on the basis of secret negotiations among faction bosses as before, the same story will repeat itself, it was feared. In order to nominate the new party chairman, they decided to hold a 'preliminary election'. The prefectural party organization was allocated three votes each. Junichiro Koizumi had a landslide in this election and went to the main election. Electors, that is, LDP parliamentarians, had no other choice than to confirm the result of the preliminary election.

Koizumi has never been a faction boss, though he has formally belonged to the Mori faction. His label in the party, 'strange man' or 'lone wolf', suggests what a reputation he has received in the party. He has always emphasized the need for radical reform in all walks of life. He has made it also clear that he is determined to pursue a personnel policy according to his own judgments, not listening to 'advice' from faction bosses.

In actual practice, Koizumi nominated high-ranking officials without paying much attention to balancing factions. His cabinet included many women and specialists. He declared that he would serve until the end of his term with the same team, that means, there would be no regular reshuffle of the cabinet as before. This would deprive many politicians of their dream to be promoted to a minister. In the past politicians were nominated ministers on the advice to the Premier from their faction boss, and the regular reshuffle of the cabinet gave them the hope to become ministers soon.

Koizumi announced a wide range of reform policies. In the past there were many policy areas where no reform was possible, as it would violate vested interests of some politicians concerned. Those areas were called ‘sanctuaries’. Koizumi declared ‘structural reforms without sanctuaries’ to demonstrate his seriousness. Those who would resist reforms were labeled ‘resistance forces’. It looked as if the LDP had split into two parties: a Reformist Party and an Anti-Reformist Party. Sometimes there was an impression that Koizumi had more support in the opposition than in his own party.

Any premier is popular in the first several months, which is called a honeymoon effect. Then the popularity tends to decline. Koizumi, however, has managed to maintain a high level of support far beyond the honeymoon period, which can be confirmed by any opinion poll. The 2001 elections to the House of Councillors demonstrated it beyond any doubt (Table 14). The LDP recovered an absolute majority and left the DPJ, the second party, far behind. As only half of the members are elected every three years, the LDP does not yet command an absolute majority in the Upper House as a whole. With Komeito and Conservatives in coalition, however, the LDP has now a comfortable majority in both the Upper and Lower Houses.

Table 14. House of Councillors, July 2001

Turnout: 56.44	Total	SNTV District		Proportional District	
	Seats	Seats	Votes	Seats	Votes
	(121)	(73)		(48)	
LDP	52.9	60.3	41.0	41.7	38.6
DPJ	21.5	24.7	18.5	16.7	16.4
Komeito	10.7	6.8	6.4	16.7	15.0
LPJ	5.0	2.7	5.5	8.3	7.7
CPJ	4.1	1.4	9.9	8.3	7.9
SDPJ	2.5	0.0	3.5	6.3	6.6
Conservatives	0.8	-	-	2.1	2.3
LA	0.0	0.0	2.3	0.0	1.4
SHC	0.0	-	-	0.0	1.2
Others	0.0	0.0	2.5	0.0	2.8
Independents	2.5	4.2	10.4	-	-

The Koizumi phenomenon put ‘resistance forces’, which may compose as many as two thirds of the LDP parliamentarians, in a serious dilemma: if they rebel against him and topple him, their party will lose the next elections. If they follow him, however, they must accept policies they do not like. Koizumi’s term as party chairman comes to an end in September 2003. Following the party election, the dissolution of the House of Representatives and new elections are expected.

In Japan the constraints of the past were not strong. If there were any at all, they quickly disappeared when the Cold War ended. But the inertia of the past was obstinate in Japan, too; the political elite were prisoners of factional dynamics. Factions had already been eclipsed due to the new electoral ordinance. But LDP leaders behaved as if factions had much to say in politics. It is only Koizumi that seriously tried to break through the wall of factions. Even under Koizumi’s premiership factions continued to exist. If the competitive mechanism properly functioned, either the so-called ‘resistance forces’ should secede from the LDP to set up their own party, or Koizumi should make a coalition with those opposition parties that support his policies. It seems this will not happen in the near future.

There are seven effective parties represented in the Japanese parliament at the time of this writing. As in Poland, it looks as if the old predominant one-party system was revived, with the only difference: that the LDP lacks an absolute majority and is constantly forced to form a coalition with minor parties. But a different mechanism seems to be working here from the old system. The grip of factions is loosening. A party can win only with an attractive leader, but not with grey eminences. A party leader who has led his party to a victory in elections can ignore factions. Factions may desert, but then they will be condemned to political impotence. That means, any party can win if it is able to supply an attractive leader. The Japanese electorate, too, has become volatile enough to shift from one election to another, and from one party to another (Fukuoka, 2001: 103-106; Miyake, 2001: 82-83).

7. Au lieu d'une Conclusion

Is the emerging party system the one envisaged by the legislators of the electoral ordinance? It is not always clear what the legislators intended. This applies particularly to Poland where the electoral ordinance was changed frequently and hastily. None of the legislators in both countries, however, thought that anything approximate to the old system would reemerge as a result of the new electoral ordinance. They were all decidedly against it. In this sense it was a failure. But this may be due to factors beyond the control of the electoral ordinance.

How well is the electoral ordinance performing? First, with regard to fair and free competition among political forces, it does well. Poland and Japan are almost even in this regard. One may argue that minor parties are permanently disadvantaged under the present ordinance. Take, for instance, the CPJ that collects 10-16 per cent of the votes cast in every election, but obtains only 4-11 per cent of the seats in the parliament. On the other hand, we see that smaller parties such as Komeito or the Conservatives have more to say in politics than under the old ordinance. It is one of the ironies that the ordinance *ex ante* intended to favour larger parties granted *ex post* smaller parties more chance to maneuver. The same applies to Poland. Take for instance, the PSL, UP, or UW.

Second, with regard to stable and effective government, Poland lags behind Japan. During the period of great transformation no electoral ordinance could help produce a stable government. Poland, as well as Japan, witnessed much instability in the 1990s. In Poland, however, more or less stable governments came to be established after 1993. This is due to the institution of a constructive vote of no-confidence rather than the electoral ordinance. The electoral ordinance was revised four times, and each time just two or three months prior to elections. One can hardly say that political parties had enough time to adjust and the party configuration that emerged out of the hastily held elections was credible enough to form a stable government. All the governments after 1993 repeatedly experienced serious crises and ended up as a minority government.

We must also separate stable government from effective government. A stable government depends on party politics, while an effective government depends much on bureaucracy. Generally speaking, the role of political parties in organizing a government is much greater in Poland than in Japan. Japan has seldom been blessed with a stable government, but there has always been an effective government thanks to a powerful bureaucracy. It is dangerous for democracy, however, to rely too much on bureaucracy. Japan's bureaucracy has been in disarray since the early 1990s, and effective government has tended to decline. In Poland it seems that not only stable government, but also effective government depends on political parties rather than bureaucracy. To make the government effective, political parties should be strengthened in Japan, while in Poland it is the bureaucracy. After all, effective government cannot be organized by political parties alone.

Third, as regards accountability, Poland's performance is superior to Japan's. To begin with, government turnover from one party to another as a result of elections is more frequent in Poland than in Japan. At the nebular stage in Japan there was rather frequent government turnover, but not as a result of elections. From 1996 there has been government turnover only within one and the same party. In Poland since 1993 there has been government turnover at regular intervals. This is a typical example of a democratic cycle. The present SLD government is no exception. An opinion poll recorded an all-time low in support for the government in April 2003. If the trend continues as it is, the SLD will not fail to be replaced by the opposition in the next election.

Also, presidentialism is more identifiable and gives more chance for the electorate to hold the government accountable than parliamentarism, as Mainwaring and Shugart (1997) testify. Although Poland does not have full presidentialism, this seems to hold. In 1990 when Premier Mazowiecki ran for the presidential office, the electorate voted for Walesa. In 1995 when the Solidarity President cohabited with the SLD-PSL government, the electorate voted for the SLD candidate Kwasniewski. In 2000 when the SLD President cohabited with the AWS Government, the electorate voted for the SLD President. Under Japanese parliamentarism it is

often difficult for the electorate to know who will be Premier if they vote for whom. When the LDP has a majority in the parliament, in most cases it is decided in secret deals among faction bosses who should be party chair, that is, Premier. Although the party leadership has become increasingly sensitive to elections, the electorate can influence the choice of Premier only indirectly.

Koizumi has brought some change here, too. He proposes that the party should first nominate its chair and then go to elections so that the electorate might identify the party with its leader and know for whom they vote for as Premier. It is said that he even considers the possibility to introduce a 'presidential premier', that is, a premier that is elected by popular elections. That was the old idea of Premier Nakasone. It remains to be seen whether it will materialize.

When the Cold War came to an end, Poland's party system as well as Japan's were finally liberated from external pressures and allowed to freely develop. How far have they then diverged from one another? Not so much, at least judging from external appearance. Institutional changes have played a colossal role in shaping the party system in both countries. Poland and Japan have created completely different institutional frameworks for party development. In spite of all this, however, the systems have not diverged radically, with one party dominance with minor parties being allowed to play a peripheral role. It seems that legacies of the past still throw a long shadow on the present state of affairs in both countries. It is still too early to predict in what shape the party system will end up in respective cases. There will be a fourth or even a fifth stage. The present paper is nothing but an interim report.

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Acronyms of Political Parties (only major groupings):

Poland:

Alternatywa	Social Movement Alternative
AWS	Solidarity Electoral Action
AWSP	Solidarity Electoral Action of the Right
BBWR	Non-Party Bloc for Support of Reform
ChD	Christian Democracy
KdR	Coalition for the Republic
KKW O	Catholic Electoral Committee 'Fatherland'
KPN	Confederation for Independent Poland
KLD	Liberal Democratic Congress
KPEiR	Pensioners' National Party
KPEiR RP	Pensioners' National Party of the Republic of Poland
LPR	Liga Polskich Rodzin
MN	German Minority
NSZZ S	Independent Self-Governing Trade Union 'Solidarity'
PC	Center Alliance
PChD	Christian Democratic Party
PO	Civic Platform
POC	Center Civic Alliance

ELECTORAL ORDINANCE AND PARTY SYSTEMS

PPPP	Polish Party of Beer Lovers
PPS	Polish Socialist Party
PSL	Polish Peasant Party
PX	Party 'X'
PZPR	Polish United Workers' Party
ROP	Movement for the Defence of Poland
Samoobrona	Self-Defence of the Polish Republic
SCC	'Solidarity' Civic Committee
SD	Democratic Party
UP	Labour Union
UPR	Union of Real Politics
UPrawicyR	Union of the Republican Right
UD	Democratic Union
UW	Freedom Union
WAK	Catholic Electoral Action
ZChN	National Christian Union
ZSL	United Peasant Party

Japan:

ADR	Alliance for Democratic Reforms
Conservatives	Conservative Party of Japan
CPJ	Communist Party of Japan
CPP	Civic Party for Peace
CI	Club of Independents
DPJ	Democratic Party of Japan
Komeito	Party of Clean Politics
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party of Japan
LPJ	Liberal Party of Japan
LA	Liberal Alliance
NPJ	New Party of Japan
PNL	Party of New Life
Sakigake	Forerunners
SPJ	Socialist Party of Japan
SDA	Social Democratic Alliance
SDPJ	Social Democratic Party of Japan (successor to SPJ)
SHC	Second House Club
Shinshinto	Party of New Progress