Democratization in Taiwan and South Korea
– A Comparison through the Lenses of Modernization Theory and Dahl’s Democracy Theory

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Word count: 23904
Abstract

This is a master thesis centering around democratization in Taiwan and South Korea. The aim has been to reach a greater understanding of how Taiwan and South Korea could democratize and their respective democratization process. Related to the research gap, two theories were applied in the analysis. The theories are also reflected in the two research questions. The theories are modernization theory and Dahl’s democracy theory concerning the concept of polyarchy.

The thesis is comparative in its nature, and it is a two-case study. For the treatment of material, qualitative content analysis has been used. Following the literature review, a concise historical background to the two countries was written to provide context for the readers and as a background to the analysis which covered the period after World War Two.

In the analysis, the two theories were applied to Taiwan and South Korea. First, the four variables of economic growth from modernization theory and then the seven institutions of polyarchy from Dahl’s democracy theory. The analysis showed steady progress in both countries during the application of modernization theory. The seven institutions of polyarchy have been reached in both states, and the time for that is spelled out in the analysis. The conclusion found that modernization theory is facilitating understanding of the democratization in the countries and that Dahl’s democracy theory provided a framework for the timeline of democratization. It also showed that other perspectives such as culture, external influence, strategic culture, geopolitics, and in the Taiwanese case, ethnicity, are providing a greater knowledge of this subject.

Keywords: Democratization, Taiwan, South Korea, modernization theory, polyarchy
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Per Jansson, for his advice and constructive criticism throughout this thesis writing process. I would also like to thank my parents and my girlfriend for their support and encouragement!
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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

This master thesis centers around the concept of democratization, the interesting process when an autocracy attempts to develop into a democracy. More concretely, it will analyze democratizations in two countries with similarities in ideological profile, both during the authoritarian era and now as democracies. The ideological similarities were nationalism, culturally Confucian values (Kassomeh 2021, 1) and anti-communism. Other similarities include for instance experiences of being a Japanese colony, fast economic development during the authoritarian era, and a democratization process that took place at about the same time (Jacobs 2007, 227). The two countries which will be analyzed in this thesis are Taiwan and South Korea. These countries will be the cases in this comparative two-case study. I see a pattern where several nationalist and anti-communist autocracies have been able to democratize and become consolidated democracies. Such countries are for instance not only Taiwan and South Korea, but also Germany, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Japan, and Chile etc.

As mentioned above, there are similarities between Taiwan and South Korea, but there are also differences. Differences and similarities in the political systems of the two countries in the pre-transition to democracy, the differences and similarities in the democratization processes, and the differences and similarities in their contemporary democracies will be elaborated. After that has been examined, it will be possible to see if the character of the two democracies today has been impacted by the pre-transition status and their respective democratization process. The rationale for this comparison between Taiwan’s and South Korea’s democratization processes will be developed in the methods chapter.

1.2 Research gap

There are plenty of articles in the academic discussion dealing with democracy and democratization and what kind of forms it has taken in various countries. The concepts of democracy and democratization are after all central in political science. Based on my literature search on the Linköping University library online search, Google Scholar, and Scopus, there are studies about the two individual countries, Taiwan, and South Korea, and their political
development, but two specific democratization theories have not been applied to these cases together before.

The particular dimension that is missing in the scholarly literature about Taiwan’s and South Korea’s democratization are certain theoretical applications. In this thesis, Seymour Martin Lipset’s (1959) modernization theory and Robert Dahl’s (1989) democracy theory centering around the concept of polyarchy will be applied to the two cases. These theory applications will facilitate distinguishing this thesis from other studies about Taiwan’s and South Korea’s democratization. Although Larry Diamond (2015, 43) has touched upon modernization theory in relation to Taiwan and Jan Kliem (2019) has discussed the theory briefly in connection to Taiwan and South Korea, there are few published studies with this theoretical approach. From my literature searches on the three previously mentioned databases, I am yet to find any research concerning Taiwan’s and South Korea’s democratization where both modernization theory and Dahls’ democracy theory are applied. These two theory applications can thus fill the research gap. This thesis thereof concerns a problem within science, in this field of International Relations.

1.3 Aim, purpose, and research questions

The aim of this master thesis is to reach an increased understanding of how Taiwan and South Korea could democratize and their respective democratization processes. That will be done through a descriptive approach that focuses on the domestic factors for their democratization. Economic and institutional issues throughout the pre-democratic era, then during the democratization and onwards during the democratic consolidation phase will be highlighted. But since there are also external factors for the democratization of these two countries, there will be a reflection of them in the literature review and in the discussion chapter. There, it will be a reflection of the strategic culture of the two states.

The purpose of this thesis is to contribute to a new form of analysis of Taiwan’s and South Korea’s democratization through the application of the two theories modernization theory, and Dahl’s democracy theory. Since these two theories have not been applied together before in these two cases, this study could possibly lead to new findings. In order to achieve this, careful reading of articles about Taiwan’s and South Korea’s democratization will facilitate understanding of the
reasons behind it and the process. Then, a comparison of the two countries will be possible to carry out, and conclusions can be drawn based on the comparison.

As has been briefly mentioned before, Lipset’s modernization theory and Dahl’s democracy theory will be applied to the two cases of Taiwan and South Korea. That is important for a solid theoretical basis for the thesis, but also as a limitation for the analysis chapter. The reason for the choice of these two theories, their content, how they will be applied to the two cases, and in what ways they mean a delimitation for the analysis will be explained and presented in the theory chapter of the thesis. Considering the aim, purpose, and the identified research gap, the following research questions are relevant to ask:

1. How can the domestic factors for Taiwan’s and South Korea’s democratization be understood from modernization theory?

2. How can the domestic factors for Taiwan’s and South Korea’s democratization be understood from Dahl’s democracy theory?

1.4 Limitations

A comparison with neighboring countries with another ideological profile, communism, but originally with a similar cultural background could be made as well. However, China’s and North Korea’s continued autocratic rule and lack of democratization stands in sharp contrast to the political development in Taiwan and South Korea. The development in Taiwan and South Korea has been more remarkable, and it is therefore more relevant to investigate it. Despite political and economic reforms, the one-party state remains intact in both China and North Korea. Focusing solely on the political changes that have taken place in Taiwan and South Korea is also a necessary limitation which means that a more in-depth analysis can be done. This limitation is also needed given the time limit of the master thesis.

When it comes to case selection for a case study, one crucial criterion is to choose a relevant and important case, it might for example stem from a political decision with massive consequences. This criterion depends on the theoretical basis (Teorell & Svensson 2007, 151). Given the profound consequences that democratization has had on the people of Taiwan and South Korea, these two cases are important. They also connect much better to the two democratization theories
that will be applied compared to China and North Korea. Therefore, choosing Taiwan and South Korea as the cases is motivated.

Another limitation concerns how far back in history this study will go in terms of tracing the underlying conditions and the process of South Korea’s and Taiwan’s democratization. The fact that during one period, Taiwan and South Korea were Japanese colonies was mentioned briefly earlier. A close examination of that era and if it impacted the democratization processes of the two countries is out of scope for this thesis. Given the limited time, a shorter period is required. The colonial era will be concisely described as a background to when and how the two countries became de facto independent. But the analysis of the two cases will focus on the post World War Two era, from 1945 into this year, 2023. Naturally, the specific period when the democratization started will then be given more space in the analysis section. Therefore, plenty of space in the thesis will be designated to the late 1980s when the democratization processes started in both Taiwan and South Korea (Hermanns 2009, 206). The following decades will also be treated, the development of democracy and democratic consolidation.
2. Methods-Comparative case study and qualitative content analysis

As has been mentioned earlier, the main method of this thesis is comparative two-case study. The countries at the center of attention, Taiwan and South Korea, function as the cases. Qualitative content analysis will be the method used to analyze data on the two countries, primarily various forms of documents. In this chapter, I will first start by describing the first method, comparative case study, and how it will be used in this study. After that, I will do the same with qualitative content analysis.

2.1 Comparative case study

Case studies concern the specific nature and complexity of the case. The analysis is both intensive and detailed. In this method, the researcher aims to provide an in-depth examination of the case to discover its specific characteristics (Bryman 2016, 60-61). Regarding complexity and context, case studies facilitate understanding the impact of complexity and context for the outcome (Della Porta & Keating 2008, 4).

There are various kinds of case studies, one such form is the interpretive case study (disciplined-configurative). Here, theories are used to explain the cases which might lead to an evaluation of the theories or an improvement of the theories (Vennesson 2008, 227). This form of case study is reasonable in this thesis since the two theories, modernization theory and Dahl’s democracy theory are critical for the analysis of the two cases. The application of these two theories aims at advancing the analysis. This thesis will mainly include parts from the descriptive case study (ibid, 227) in the sense that descriptive aspects of the democratization processes and critical events will be important to identify and include.

This case study will have a chronological structure, meaning the history and development of the cases will be presented from the beginning, then on to the middle, and finally to our times in 2023. In this structure, it is crucial not to focus too much on the beginning of history (Yin 2007, 180). Moreover, in terms of structure, this case study is a two-case comparative case study which was briefly mentioned earlier. The comparative case-study design is relevant here since the logic of comparison implicates that a concept, in this case democratization, can be better understood when two relevant cases are compared (Bryman 2016, 64-65).
In case studies, there are many variables of the cases being studied to provide a thicker description (Della Porta 2008, 208). Multiple variables for the cases of Taiwan and South Korea will be found in the two theories which will be presented in the next chapter. It is important to include multiple sources to make empirical claims about the cases. It is also beneficial for the case study to use earlier development of theoretical hypotheses when gathering and analyzing the data (Yin 2007, 31). Many sources will be used in the thesis. The two theories will be of significant help when collecting and analyzing data.

There are several advantages with a multiple case study rather than a single case study. One is that the results and claims from a multiple case study are considered more robust and convincing (ibid, 68). Another benefit is that it is easier to establish the conditions for when a theory will hold compared to a single case study (Bryman 2016, 67).

In terms of generalizability following a two-case study, the two cases will differ to at least some extent, if similar conclusions are reached despite the differences, then the generalizability of the findings will be substantially greater than the results from a single case study (Yin 2007, 76). However, the limited opportunities to generalize the findings from case studies is a common criticism of this method. Proponents of case studies argue that it is not the point to generalize the results to other cases (Bryman 2016, 64). That is also the view in this thesis, the eventual results following the analysis are not supposed to be generalized to other countries who have gone through a democratization such as the ones mentioned in the background subchapter. The results are not meant to be applied to autocracies who could possibly democratize. After all, the importance of this study is to analyze Taiwan’s and South Korea’s democratization processes.

### 2.2 Qualitative content analysis

Qualitative content analysis is a common method for document analysis. It consists of a search for hidden themes in the texts. Bearing in mind the context where the documents are generated is significant because it facilitates understanding of why the text is formulated the way it is (Bryman 2016, 563-564). Considering the context where the document is created is also emphasized as important by Esaiasson et al. (2017, 211). They also highlight that qualitative content analysis aims at identifying the relevant content of a text. That identification is done through careful reading of the various parts of the text and the text in its entirety.
In addition to figuring out the hidden themes in the text, qualitative content analysis is also a tool to identify the text's messages, both the manifested and latent messages. The manifested message is the one explicitly spelled out in the text. The latent message on the other hand is not explicitly stated, rather it is the message that appears between the lines, for example what is not expressed in the text, the kind of associations the author wants to create by choosing particular words, and in what way metaphors and symbols are being used (Badersten & Gustavsson 2015, 115). Once again, the importance of careful reading of the text is highlighted.

In this qualitative content analysis, meaning and processes creating meaning are relevant. It is based on the view that actors interact towards other actors, objects or phenomena in the surroundings based on the meaning that these have for the actor (Esaïasson et al. 2017, 211). Meaning and ideas are related to research questions beginning with “how.” These questions seek to find out how the ideas developed over time and the context (ibid, 212). Just like comparative case studies, qualitative content analysis is relevant for this thesis in terms of the character of the research questions. Meaning and ideas relating to the democratization processes in Taiwan and South Korea are essential for the analysis of the two cases. The idea behind democracy and the meaning attached to it by both the authoritarian, then democratic governments and the people of the two countries is essential for answering the research questions.

Documents can take many forms, for instance memorandums, protocols, reports, administrative documents, and newspaper articles. The usage of documents has several strengths, for example stability, it is possible to review a document several times. Documents are also discreet in the sense that they were not created because of this case study, and precise since they contain exact names, dates, and references. Finally, documents cover a lot, including time, environments, and events. There are, however, weaknesses as well, and one such weakness is that specific documents can be difficult to find (Yin 2007, 112-113). In order to address that challenge, I will carefully search for articles covering the issues I will deal with on multiple databases. Throughout this thesis, various forms of documents will be used.
3. Theories—Modernization theory and Dahl’s democracy theory

In this third chapter, the theories of the thesis will be presented. As written earlier, modernization theory and Dahl’s democracy theory will be the two theories applied to the two cases. First, modernization theory will be presented, and an explanation will follow how and why it will be applied to Taiwan’s and South Korea’s democratization. In the second subchapter, a presentation of Dahl’s democracy theory will follow and the reasoning behind the selection of this theory for the thesis, how it is relevant and what it can contribute with to reach the aim of achieving an increased understanding of Taiwan’s and South Korea’s democratization will be elaborated. Finally, there will be a section comparing the two theories, how they relate to each other and how they differ.

3.1 Modernization theory

Modernization theory was developed by Lipset (1959) in his article “Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy”, published in The American Political Science Review. This article is the fundamental paper for modernization theory (Berman 2009). To be able to discuss the conditions for democratization, Lipset, (1959, 70-71) argues that a definition of the concept of democracy is needed. Democracy is here defined as “A political system which supplies regular constitutional opportunities for changing the governing officials. It is a social mechanism for the resolution of the problem of societal decision making among conflicting interest groups which permits the largest possible part of the population to influence these decisions through their ability to choose among alternative contenders for political office.” Participation of the citizens and political pluralism are phenomena emphasized in this definition.

Lipset (1959, 71) asserts that economic development and legitimacy function as “structural characteristics” for sustaining a democratic political system. In terms of economic development, the four key variables are industrialization, wealth, urbanization, and education. The indices of wealth are per capita income, number of persons per motor vehicle, number of persons per physician, and the number of telephones, newspapers, and radios per thousand persons (ibid, 75). For industrialization, the indicators are percentage of males in agriculture and per capita energy
concerned. Concerning education, the relevant components are the percentage of literate people, primary education enrollment per 1,000 persons, post-primary enrollment per 1,000 persons, and higher education enrollment per 1,000 persons (ibid, 76). Finally, the indices of urbanization are the percentage of the population in places of 20,000 and over, the percentage in communities of 100,000 and over, and the percentage of people residing in standard metropolitan areas (ibid, 78). These four variables have been studied separately in Lipset’s (1959, 80) study but since they are closely related, they form one factor together, and that is economic development.

Lipset (1959, 75) finds, in his own words that “the more well-to-do a nation, the greater the chances that it will sustain democracy”. However, it is no guarantee that increased wealth, an increase in the size of the middle class, improved education and other improvements in related sectors lead to a spread of democracy or to stabilized democracy (ibid, 103). Arat, (1988, 22) in his analysis of Lipset’s (1959) article, reached the conclusion that socioeconomic development is a necessary condition for democratization or upholding a democratic political system, but it is not a sufficient condition for the creation or maintenance of this system. Other factors play a role too.

The importance of education for the establishment of democracy was particularly stressed by Lipset (1959, 79) who claimed that it enables students to realize the value of tolerance, reduces the risk of them supporting extremist doctrines, and it improves the ability to make rational electoral choices. Although it is not possible to say that a prominent level of education is a sufficient condition for democracy, available data indicates that it is nearly a necessary condition in the modern world.

Wucherpfenning and Deutsch (2009, 7) highlight the relevance of Lipset’s (1959) modernization theory. They find that the thesis that socioeconomic development generally leads to a stable democracy still applies in our era. They also claim that scholars are less divided than ever before regarding the macro effects of modernization on democracy.

In this thesis, I will apply modernization theory with the aim of reaching increased understanding of Taiwan’s and South Korea’s initial prospects for democracy and their democratization processes. The four components of economic development: wealth, urbanization, education, and industrialization will be applied. This application should highlight the importance of these four variables and how they developed in the two countries from the 1940s until democratization.
started and onwards during democratic consolidation. By comparing the development in the four areas from the 40s to our times, a pattern will hopefully emerge. The indices of the four key variables were listed earlier in this chapter and will be applied to the two cases as much as possible. The availability of data is not explored at this stage of the thesis, it might be that all indices are not possible to find information about. Therefore, modifications of the indices might have to be made. There are however several indices where I am sure that data will be available, for example per capita income, literacy rate, radios per 1,000 persons, newspaper copies per 1,000 persons etc. The comparison between the two countries will show if there are great similarities in the two democratization processes and the reasons for it.

3.2 Dahl’s democracy theory

Dahl has been described as “probably the most important democratic theorist of the second half of the twentieth century” by Christiano (2015, 88). His theory is therefore a heavy one among democracy theories. Among the books Dahl has written over the years where he has elaborated on the concept of democracy and theories of democracy, two of his books will be used in this thesis. The two books are Polyarchy-Participation and Observation from 1971 and Democracy and Its Critics, published in 1989.

Dahl (1971, 1-2) defines democracy as “a political system one of the characteristics of which is the quality of being completely or almost completely responsive to all its citizens”. The priorities of the citizens are therefore crucial for the government according to this definition. The citizens are viewed as “political equals.” For a government to continue being responsive to its citizens over a lengthy period, citizens must have three rights. First, they must be able to express their interests. Second, the citizens must be given the chance to show their preferences to other citizens and the government individually and collectively. Third, the desires of the citizens must be treated equally by the government no matter the source of the desire or its content.

Dahl (1971, 7-8) argues that democracy contains more than public contestation and participation from the citizens, and he finds that no countries are completely democratized. The systems that are closest to democracy are called polyarchies and they are known as relatively democratized regimes where popularization and liberalization have taken place and therefore, they are inclusive and open to public contestation. The concept polyarchy literally means “rule by the many” (Brown, McLean & McMillan 2018, 440).
When making regimes more competitive, and closing in on polyarchy, there have been three main ways of achieving this in independent nation-states in history. The first way is a gradual transformation of the old regime, the old regime enables a new regime to take its place in a generally peaceful manner. Demands for changes are met and a polyarchy or near-polyarchy is established. The second process is revolutionary, the old regime gets overthrown, and the new regime is founded by the leaders of the revolution. These leaders then create a polyarchy or near-polyarchy. Finally, there is the way of military conquest. In this scenario the old regime has suffered a military loss and the occupants install a polyarchy or near-polyarchy (Dahl 1971, 40-41).

Dahl (1971, 65) argues that the socioeconomic dimension is important for the establishing of a polyarchy. With a higher socioeconomic level in a state, the likelihood that the regime is a polyarchy or near-polyarchy is higher. And this leads to the fact that if a regime is a polyarchy, it is more likely to be found in a country with a fairly high level of socioeconomic progress, rather than in a state with a low level of development.

According to Dahl, (1989, 233) a polyarchy consists of seven institutions:

1. Control over governmental decisions about policy is constitutionally vested in elected officials.
2. Elected officials are chosen and peacefully removed in relatively frequent, fair and free elections in which coercion is quite limited.
3. Practically all adults have the right to vote in these elections.
4. Most adults also have the right to run for the public offices for which candidates run in these elections.
5. Citizens have an effectively enforced right to freedom of expression, particularly political expression, including criticism of the officials, the conduct of the government, the prevailing political, economic, and social system, and the dominant ideology.
6. They also have access to alternative sources of information that are not monopolized by the government or any other single group.
7. Finally, they have an effectively enforced right to form and join autonomous associations, including political associations, such as political parties and interest groups, that attempt to influence the government by competing in elections and by other peaceful means.
Political participation among the citizens is once again stressed as a characteristic of polyarchy. This theoretical framework will together with modernization’s theory’s four key variables of economic development be applied to the cases of Taiwan and South Korea. Whereas modernization theory will focus on the initial prospects for democratization in the two countries, Dahl’s polyarchy theory will be used to analyze the democratization processes. Through the application of these seven criteria for polyarchy, it will be possible to see when Taiwan and South Korea reached the various stages of polyarchy. For example, the third institution, where most adults have the right to vote will then be compared between the two cases. It will then be possible to figure out when these countries became polyarchies.

Some countries with a specific set of characteristics are more likely to develop polyarchy. Modernity is one such aspect and it relates to for instance education level, consumption, urbanization, and a decline in agricultural productivity. The country's dynamic nature is another part which includes improved living standards and economic development. Pluralism is the third dimension, and it refers to the high number of autonomous groups and organizations, particularly in the economy. Combined, these kinds of countries are called “modern dynamic pluralist countries” (MDP). There are two main reasons for why an MDP country increases the chances of a polyarchy. First, it spreads power and control from a single center towards associations, individuals, organizations, and other groups. Second, it shapes values and principles that are advantageous to democratic ideas. These two factors also strengthen each other (Dahl 1989, 251-252).

3.3 The relation between modernization theory and Dahl’s democracy theory

Both Lipset (1959, 70-71) and Dahl (1971, 1-2) stress participation among the citizens in the political process as key components of their definitions of democracy. The two scholars also find that the socioeconomic circumstances in a country are critical for the establishment of democracy. However, there is no guarantee for democracy in a prosperous state, but it does increase the probability of such a system. The four main variables of economic development according to Lipset, (1959, 71) wealth, education, urbanization, and industrialization function in sustaining democracy. Dahl’s (1971, 65) emphasis of the socioeconomic status of a county connects to Lipset’s wealth variable. Dahl’s (1989, 251-252) highlighting of urbanization also mirrors a variable from Lipset’s modernization theory.
Dahl’s finding that the most promising path to polyarchy occurs when political competition takes place prior to expanded political participation is supported by the founder of modernization theory (Diamond, Linz & Lipset 1989, 4). Social and economic conditions for this political participation are for Dahl, for instance, improved literacy and the spread of mass communications (Dix 1994, 101). These are found among Lipset’s (1959, 75-76) indices for education and wealth. In sum, there are connections between these two democracy theories. But they are also different in that modernization theory highlights the preconditions for democracy, whereas Dahl’s democracy theory provides a framework for assessing a country’s democratization. Therefore, they complement each other and should prove fruitful in the coming analysis of Taiwan’s and South Korea’s democratization.

The indices from modernization theory, especially industrialization, urbanization, and education (ibid, 71) can alter a country’s political culture. Dahl (1989, 251-252) highlights the importance of urbanization which also facilitates understanding of how a political culture can change. This happened in South Korea, during the era of industrialization and urbanization, education about democracy and its principles was introduced in schools and presented in the media. This contributed to a more democratic political culture (Kim 1998, 116).
4. Literature review

This chapter of the thesis will review some relevant articles and books about Taiwan’s and South Korea’s democratization. That will be followed by a summary of the literature review and why these articles are relevant for this thesis.

4.1 Literature review

As was written in the research gap section, there are studies about the democratization processes in Taiwan and South Korea. One such article is “More Than Anti-Communism: The Cold War and the Meanings of Democracy in Taiwan” by Erik Mobrand (2020, 631) who identifies several similarities between Taiwan and South Korea during the Cold War. Those similarities include close ties with the United States, (US) characteristics of the rulers, discrimination of trade unions, and hostile treatment of critics. One difference however was the existence of local elections. In Taiwan, the ruling party, Kuomintang, (KMT) allowed local elections to be held. These elections had started earlier, in the 1930s during the Japanese colonial era. Even though there were only local council offices up for election, and that candidates had to campaign either with the KMT or as independents, these elections proved important for the native Taiwanese people who could achieve prestigious local posts. The spirit surrounding the elections was joyful and the elections were viewed as important. In South Korea, there was not a festive spirit around local elections and from 1960 until democratization they were not held (ibid, 624-625). Local elections returned to South Korea in 1994 (Jacobs 2007, 236).

The study by Mobrand (2020) centers around democratization and elections on first the local level and later in the process, national level. His paper therefore connects to Dahl’s democracy theory but the economic growth during this period which is highlighted by modernization theory is not present in Mobrand’s (2020) study. That marks a difference compared to this thesis.

The local elections in Taiwan proved important for the future democratization of the country since these elections created a new group in the political elite who strove for a more tolerant electoral landscape. The electoral politics of Taiwan today reflect those values of pluralism and inclusiveness (Mobrand 2020, 630). Citizens over the age of 21 could since 1950 vote in local elections held every third year as described by Linda Chao and Ramon H. Myers (1994, 215).
their article “The First Chinese Democracy: Political Development of the Republic of China on Taiwan, 1986-1994”. Junhee Lee (2002, 833-834) in the article “Primary Causes of Asian Democratization: Dispelling Conventional Myths” also stresses the importance of local elections for Taiwan’s future democratization. The Tangwai opposition movement first appeared as a political force in the local elections in 1977. At that time, they argued for an end to martial law and Taiwanese independence. They did so until martial law ended in 1987. This movement consisted of liberal intellectuals in the 1960s but expanded to the middle class in the 70s and 80s.

Robert A. Scalapino (1993, 75) in the article “Democratizing Dragons: South Korea and Taiwan” compares the two countries’ democratization processes. One finding is that not only socioeconomic development led to political openness, but also the role of the leaders and their qualities proved crucial. The timing of the critical transformation of the political system was central. In terms of leadership in the Taiwanese case, President Chiang Ching-kuo undertook several reforms which broadened the political system prior to his death in 1988. Among those actions were his appointment of reformers to key posts in the administration and the selection of Lee Teng-hui, a native Taiwanese, as his vice-president and successor (ibid, 78).

Scalapino’s (1993) article mainly concerns early elections in the two countries even though there is some room for the socioeconomic dimension in his analysis of their democratizations. With the application of modernization theory, this thesis will have a stronger emphasis on the economic and social conditions leading to democratization in the two states. Another crucial difference is the time of writing, this thesis is written 30 years after Scalapino’s paper, and in the last 30 years, many formative events in especially Taiwan’s but also South Korea’s democratization processes have taken place.

Several scholars argue that Taiwan’s democratization was facilitated by external influence. Daniel Lynch, (2002, 573-574) in the article “Taiwan's Democratization and the Rise of Taiwanese Nationalism as Socialization to Global Culture” argues that an important reason for Taiwan’s successful democratization was the influences from the democratic US that Taiwanese students experienced when studying there. During their studies in the US and in other democracies, the Taiwanese people witnessed how political systems could be more effective and tolerant, but they also learned about phenomena such as nationhood and decolonization. These concepts were then applied to the Taiwanese case, leading them to new interpretations about
their country’s status, identity, and it justified their activism. This activism was manifested in university protests that occurred at National Taiwan University (NTU) between 1986-1987. The demonstrators were against the campus rules and requested liberalization. These protests spread to other universities which led to a university-student alliance (Lee 2002, 832).

The American influence can also be found in political pressure from the US towards Taiwan which was identified by Bruce Jacobs (2012, 16) in his book “Democratizing Taiwan” as one of the ten factors impacting Taiwan’s democratization. The US Congress paid more attention to the human rights situation in Taiwan following the enactment of the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) on the tenth of April 1979. More pressure was exerted from both parties in Congress especially after the Kaohsiung Incident on the tenth of December 1979. During that day, many Taiwanese protestors were arrested. The introduction of the TRA followed the American recognition of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) as the only legitimate government of China on the first of January 1979. This also meant the end of American recognition of the Republic of China (ROC) in Taiwan (Office of the Historian, no date).

Yangsun Chou and Andrew J. Nathan (1987, 298) find in their paper, “Democratizing Transition in Taiwan” that American pressure and public opinion impacted Taiwan’s democratization due to Taiwan’s reliance on the US in the economic and military spheres. Dafydd Fell (2012, 26) in the book “Government and Politics in Taiwan” also finds American pressure critical for Taiwan’s democratization. This pressure to liberalize politically became especially pronounced in the middle of the 80s.

There was also such American pressure in the South Korean case. The US was and still is South Korea’s greatest supporter and they repeatedly pressed the then President Park Chung Hee, who took power in 1961, to reestablish democracy. Some pushes were taken in that direction but following the American withdrawal from Vietnam, Park Chung Hee found democratic development too risky for South Korea (Scalapino 1993, 74). Uk Heo and Jung-Yeop Woo (2007, 151) in the book chapter “South Korea’s Response: Democracy, Identity, and Strategy” claim that the legitimacy of the Park Chung Hee government was based on economic growth, and Park justified his authoritarian rule by pointing at the continued economic development and the constant threat from North Korea. Park further argued that South Korea was not ready for a Western-style democracy due to his country’s political culture (Mobrand 2020, 622).
Given this background of Park Chung Hee’s thinking, he declared a state of emergency after the 1971 election due to the fear that the opposition would get more seats. He then terminated the National Assembly and suspended the constitution which was discussed by Frida Andersson & Valeriya Mechkova (2016, 5) in their paper “Country Brief-South Korea”.

In the article “Democratization of the Taiwanese and Korean Political Regimes: A Comparative Study,” Masahiro Wakabayashi (1997, 437-438) compares the democratization processes in Taiwan and South Korea. One finding is that Taiwan’s democratization process was slower and more hesitant than South Korea’s. The democratic transition was also decided from the top, the government, unlike in South Korea where formal negotiations between the government and opposition parties were held. An even greater difference between the two countries can be found in the external environment where South Korea had and still has a more favorable position. This can be seen in their political support from the international community, from legal recognition as a state, membership in the United Nations, (UN) and as being hosts of the 1988 Olympic Games, held in Seoul. For Taiwan however, despite their successful democratization, they were unable to achieve increased legal recognition from other states. It even went in the opposite direction for Taiwan with fewer diplomatic allies, including the loss of the former close ally South Korea’s recognition in 1992 (Fell 2012, 158).

The article by Wakabayashi (1997) is a relevant source for this thesis in the sense of its focus on the electoral development in Taiwan and South Korea. It thus resembles Dahls’s theory more than modernization theory even though all variables of Dahl’s theory are not applied in Wakabayashi’s (1997) paper. Just like with Scalapino’s (1993) paper, the time of writing is substantially different from this thesis. It means that a more complete analysis of democratization in Taiwan and South Korea can be made in this thesis. For example, three years after the Wakabayashi (1997) study, the Taiwanese election in 2000 led to the first change of power, and that process was peaceful too. In 2000, Chen Shui-bian representing the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) won the presidential election which was analyzed by T. Y. Wang (2005, 5) in the article “National Identity and Democratization in Taiwan: An Introduction”.

Kevin Gray (2008, 111) has in the article “Challenges to the Theory and Practice of Polyarchy: the rise of the political left in Korea” partly analyzed the American role towards South Korea, both during the authoritarian era and during the democratization. In May 1980, a military coup
by Major-General Chun Doo-Hwan extended martial law. On the 18th of May, special troops disposed to stop the student protests killed numbers of protesters. The residents in Kwangju responded by taking up arms and taking over the city. The response from the government came a few days later involving tens of thousands of troops who managed to retake the city but, in the process, they killed thousands of civilians. According to the author, such a massive troop deployment could not have been carried out without American approval. Therefore, the US was accused of tolerating the massacre and supporting the authoritarian government. Because of this, the US was viewed as the greatest hinder to democracy in South Korea at the time.

During the next massive protest movement, the American approach had changed. Protests broke out in June 1987 and included students from the minjung movement, but also intellectuals, the middle class, and religious activists (ibid, 111). Other groups were small business owners, white collar workers, and common people with protests taking place in the city centers of large cities (Lee 2002, 833). Chun Doo-Hwan was forced to alter the constitution and establish free presidential elections. The Americans now argued against the use of military means against the protesters and favored a transition to democracy. One reason for this was the American belief that the authoritarian government threatened political stability in the country, and that democratization could hinder the American fear of revolutionary transformations by popular movements (Gray 2008, 111-112).

Ginsburg (2008, 102) in the article “Lessons from Democratic Transitions: Case Studies from Asia” emphasizes the different American position to the protests in 1987. US Undersecretary Gaston Sigur delivered a clear message to the South Korean authorities, namely that the US would not accept another Kwangju massacre. This message combined with the upcoming Olympic Games in the South Korean capital Seoul in 1988 changed the government’s response to the demonstrators. American engagement with South Korean governments during the authoritarian era gave the US credibility to further their interests at critical moments.

In sum, the American approach towards democratization in Taiwan and South Korea differed, but following the June 1987 protests in South Korea, the US position was explicitly in favor of democratization in both countries. The Americans strived for an inclusive and democratic political culture in the two states.

4.2 Summary and relevance of the literature review
This literature review highlights various aspects of Taiwan’s and South Korea’s democratization. One dimension is for example external influence, especially the US impact, but also the UN. Other areas are for instance, the Cold War, geopolitics, local elections in the two countries, the role of leaders, culture, and some events during democratization not covered in the analysis.

The literature review is important since it contains topics not covered later in the thesis, particularly relevant is the American impact on the democratization processes which was emphasized by several authors. Furthermore, this literature review provides an extended background to the topic, and it complements Dahl’s democracy theory in the analysis. In that theory, national elections are explored, but in this literature review, local elections and their significance are mentioned.
5. Concise historical background of Taiwan and South Korea

In order to understand how Taiwan and South Korea could transition from authoritarian regimes to democratic ones, a brief historical background is needed. This period will start from the Japanese colonial era in both countries. This background is also important to provide context for the readers.

5.1 Concise historical background of Taiwan

The first Sino-Japanese War started on the 25th of July 1894, and it was fought between China’s Qing dynasty and Japan which was in the Meiji era. The war outbreak was a result of the issue of control over Korea, which was contested by both countries. Japanese victories in the first six months of the war on both sea and land forced China to accept a peace treaty, the Treaty of Shimonoseki, which was signed on the 17th of April 1895. The treaty forced China to recognize Korea’s independence, open several Chinese territories for Japanese trade, and pay a war indemnity sum of 200,000,000 Kuping taels of silver. It also led to that China had to cede Taiwan, the Pescadores group of islands, and Liaotung Peninsula to Japan in eternity with full Japanese sovereignty (Dong & Guo 2018, 17). The sum China had to pay Japan was the equivalent of around 25 percent of Japan’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at the time (ibid, 15).

At the same time of the ceding of Taiwan to Japan in 1895, Taiwan was in a modernization phase of its economy. Initially, the people of Taiwan refused to agree to becoming part of Japan, and therefore they proclaimed their own republic. As a result of that, Japan deployed massive troops to the island and took control over it from that year and the coming 50 years until 1945 (Hägerdal 2015, 220). During this process, it is estimated that nearly 8,000 Taiwanese were killed by the Japanese in 1895. Another 12,000 Taiwanese are believed to have been killed in the years 1898-1902 while a Japanese source claim it was as high as 32,000, which was the equivalent of more than one percent of the Taiwanese population at the time (Jacobs 2007, 211). The ceding of Taiwan to Japan was by most Chinese nationalists at the time not perceived as a loss (Friedman 2009, 59). With the ceding, Taiwan became Japan’s first colony (Fell 2012, 11).

Japan’s rule had a substantial impact on Taiwan’s economy, it led to modern civilization on the island. In the beginning of the 20th century, critical parts of infrastructure emerged in Taiwan such as post offices, railways, navigation facilities, harbors, telecommunications, motorways,
and surveys of the land, forest, and population. Moreover, measurement and monetary systems were unified. Taiwan developed a precise governmental system, police system, agricultural unions, household registry, laws and legal organizations, financial and business systems, public roads and railway systems, electricity and cable systems, large-scale irrigation systems, and primary school education all over the island. The Taiwanese learned about modern Western civilization, elementary technology, and novel approaches due to the education. Punctuality, hygiene, and law obedience improved. These improvements and transformations in Taiwan did not occur in China (Lee 2014, 37-38). Hygiene improved thanks to reforms in public health and sanitation. Because of that, the control of diseases such as smallpox, cholera, and bubonic plague improved by 1905. A public hospital was also built in Taipei together with a medical college. Along with those creations, charity hospitals and treatment centers were also founded around the island (Lamley 1999, 210).

There were also developments in other industries such as hydroelectric, chemicals, and metallurgy (principally aluminum). Due to all these developments, Taiwan had a good structure for future industrialization after 1945 (Cumings 2021, 5). Travel facilities on the ocean between Taiwan and Japan were also developed along with industries such as petroleum refining, shipbuilding, and near the end of the Second World War, paper and textile industries were developed with the aim of making Taiwan self-sufficient in those areas (Shih 1968, 115).

The agricultural sector improved in the way that new seeds were being developed for crops like pineapple, rice, and sugar cane. The developments also contributed to improved public health and the eradication of some diseases (Jacobs 1990, 84). The Japanese strove for increasing the food production in Taiwan which would help Japanese workers in Japan to focus on industrial work rather than agricultural. This meant that Japan could reduce its spending on food imports and instead spend more on strategic imports (Ho 1968, 313). Because of all these developments, Taiwan was more economically sophisticated, and the Taiwanese people enjoyed a higher living standard than the Chinese people in all the provinces on the Chinese mainland (Fell 2012, 11).

During Japanese rule, the Taiwanese people had their first experiences of democracy. After lengthy campaigning by the Taiwanese, the Japanese authorities allowed elections to the “advisory councils” on the prefectural, county, and township levels. Only men over 25 years of age who were sufficiently wealthy and tolerated by the Japanese police could vote. Their vote led
to the election of less than half of the councilors, the rest were chosen by the Japanese administration. The first election was held in 1935, followed by new ones in 1937 and 1939. In the 1939 election, 286,700 Taiwanese could vote, and they elected 3,104 representatives (Jacobs 2012, 9). The electoral system was the same as in Japan and it was known as Single, Non-transferable Voting in Multi-member Districts (SVMM). It is still used in Taiwan today (Fell 2012, 12).

Following Japan’s loss in World War Two in 1945, Taiwan was transferred to one of the winning countries, China. The island became part of the ROC led by the KMT. They attempted to integrate Taiwan into the Chinese nation-state (Wu 2014, 32). The day of Taiwan’s switch from Japanese to Chinese rule happened on the 25th of October during a ceremony in Taipei (Phillips 1999, 276). That Taiwan would be transferred to China after the end of the Second World War was decided in the Cairo Conference in 1943, the Taiwanese people did not get the chance to express their preferences (Bush & Haas 2019, 3).

This transfer caused problems as General Chen Yi became governor of Taiwan. Living conditions worsened, corruption increased drastically as well as inflation and unemployment, combined with food shortages. The Taiwanese disapproval of the new government thus increased (Chiou & Hong 2021, 429). Other problems included a decrease in production, the establishment of economic monopolies, worsened social security, and increased plundering and theft (Lee 2014, 40-41). Housing shortages increased too. Another problem was the decline in public health and sanitation which led to a cholera outbreak in southern Taiwan in 1946, increased frequency of leprosy and malaria, and the return of the bubonic plague for the first time since 1919 (Phillips 1999, 284).

A critical event in Taiwanese history began on the evening of the 27th of February 1947. Government monopoly agents made an unsuccessful attempt to confiscate illegally sold cigarettes. A bystander was shot which led to riots and rebellion. After a couple of days, Taiwanese had taken over most towns and cities, and there were several instances where Mainland Chinese people were killed or hurt. KMT troops from the mainland arrived in March and reconquered the territory, killing around 10,000 people in the process (Fell 2012, 13). Other sources estimate the death toll being up to 30,000 people (Chiou & Hong 2021, 428). Among those targeted by the KMT army were intellectuals, lawyers, students, and doctors (Sung 2014,
48). This event, which is known as the 2-28 Incident, led to the birth of Taiwanese nationalism. A Taiwanese independence movement was formed and operated in exile from Japan and the US (Fell 2012, 15).

After Japan’s defeat in the Second World War, the Chinese Civil War, which had started in the 1920s but had been paused during the war against Japan, resumed (Culver 2020). By October 1949, the KMT had lost to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) who proclaimed the People’s Republic of China in Beijing. Those left in the KMT army and government fled to Taiwan. From 1948-1950, between one to two million people emigrated to Taiwan. This had a concrete demographic impact on Taiwan as its population in 1945 was six million people. The ethnic structure was thus altered, Chinese immigrants, who became known as Mainlanders now made up between 20-25 percent of the populace in 1950 (Fell 2012, 15).

The outbreak of the Korean War on the 25th of June 1950 did not only directly impact North Korea and South Korea, but it also saved the KMT government in Taiwan since the US deployed its seventh fleet in the Taiwan Strait to prevent a Chinese invasion. Security provided by the Americans was later formalized in the 1954 US-ROC Mutual Defense Treaty. This was tested in 1954 and 1958 during the Strait Crises when China attacked the islands of Kinmen and Matsu, held by the ROC but located close to the Chinese Mainland. The division between the PRC and ROC led to both viewing themselves as the sole legitimate government of all of China, they had thus their own interpretations of the “One China policy” (ibid, 16).

5.2 Concise historical background of South Korea

As written in the previous section, the First Sino-Japanese War centered around Korea’s status. Korea’s location in between China and Japan was relevant for the Japanese who planned further territorial conquests in Manchuria and China. Korea had earlier been a tribute state to the Chinese Qing dynasty (Dong & Guo 2018, 17). Influence over Korea following the war shifted between Russia and Japan. In 1906, after the end of the Russo-Japanese War, and the Japanese victory, Korea became a Japanese protectorate (King 1975, 1). Korea then became a Japanese colony in 1910 and it remained as such until 1945 (Andersson & Mechkova 2016, 2). Japan’s rhetoric towards Korea shifted, earlier the Japanese argued that their policy was the protection of Korean independence. Now, after the annexation, they instead claimed that their rule over the Korean peninsula was “natural and inevitable” (Caprio 2011, 6). Korea had prior to the Japanese
colonization been governed by the declining Yi dynasty of Chosun, this dynasty had ruled the country from 1392 until 1910 (Graham 2003, 11). A reason for the dynasty’s longevity was the anti-militaristic beliefs which stemmed from Confucianism. The Korean military policy was impacted by that and there were no military coups (Im 2010, 104-105).

The time of colonialization was remarkably late; Korea was one of the last countries to be colonized. In 1910 anti-colonialism beliefs had started to spread in some countries (Cumings 2021, 1). This was the first time in Korean history that the whole country was ruled by a foreign country (Lew 2000, 23). South Korea was thus a Japanese colony 15 years less than Taiwan, but the end of the colonial era occurred during the same year.

Koreans viewed Japanese colonial rule as humiliating and illegitimate. This Korean resistance led Japan to initially adopt a military policy known as budan seiji. In 1919, the non-violent mass-movement March First Movement was formed. 33 intellectuals petitioned for Korean independence from Japan on the first of March which inspired nation-wide mass protests which lasted several months. Japanese national and military police were unable to stop the rebellion and had to call for the Japanese army and navy. More than half a million Koreans were in the demonstrations that month and in April at more than 600 various locations. During one occasion, Japanese police officers locked demonstrators inside a church and put fire on it which led it to burn down to the ground. Estimates of the total number of victims varies, according to Japanese statistics, there were 553 dead and more than 12,000 arrested. The numbers from Korean nationalist sources are substantially higher, 7,500 victims, and 45,000 held by the police (Cumings 2021, 2-3). In the protests, members from all echelons of Korean society participated (Setiawati 2005, 227).

Just as in Taiwan, Japanese colonial rule led to modernization and development of the economy. Korea’s economy grew drastically between 1910-1945, average annual growth was 5.4 percent, in agriculture, the production increased by 85 percent from 1915 to 1940 while industrial production was 80 percent higher in 1940 than 1915 (King 1975, 10). During this period various industries were developed in Korea (Mizoguchi 1979, 1). These industries include hydroelectric plants, and the expansion of railway networks and telecommunications (King 1975, 19). Other industries include steel, automobile production, and chemical facilities (Cumings 2021, 5). In addition to that, roads were created, sophisticated agricultural techniques were launched, and a
modern tax and financial system was formed (King 1975, 21). Despite these improvements, Korea lagged behind Taiwan in areas such as GDP per capita, education enrollment, mortality, and consumption levels (Booth & Deng 2017, 96).

Under Japanese rule, Korean people were treated as second class citizens. They were denied voting rights and could not participate in the political process even though the parliament, the Japanese Diet, had passed the universal manhood suffrage law in 1925. Higher positions in the colonial governments were unattainable for the Koreans, most positions above the level of clerk were held by the Japanese. Some Korean political activists ended up in prison due to no legal room for political participation. In prison, torture was common (Kim 1998, 102-103). Another reason for Korean hostility towards Japan and the Japanese was Korea’s Confucian heritage. Through that lens, the Japanese were viewed as savages (Setiawati 2005, 226-227).

Unlike the Taiwanese who could vote in local elections, Koreans were totally deprived of voting rights. This might be one factor that has led to differences in how Japan and the Japanese legacy is perceived in contemporary Korea and Taiwan. Another factor contributing to strained relations between Korea and Japan to these days is the prevalence of forced labor and sexual slavery which was carried out by the Japanese military (Ku 2018, 7). Furthermore, some Japanese consideration to the socio-political traditions in Taiwan also led to better relations between Taiwan and Japan in the post-colonial times. In South Korea, the Japanese rule was much more oppressing (Neary 1998, 18).

After Japan’s loss in the Second World War, Korea became independent. Korean Independence League, made up of nationalists and leftists, set up the Committee for the Preparation of Korean independence (CPKI), which became the interim government of Korea in August 1945 (Lew 2000, 23). The country was however divided, the northern part became an occupation zone administered by the Soviet Union and the southern part became ruled by the US (Keum & Campbell 2018, 34). The idea to divide the Korean peninsula the 38th parallel came from American policy makers in order to prevent a complete Soviet occupation of the peninsula. The Soviet military occupied the northern parts in August 1945 and the US took over the south in September. The Americans ruled that part of Korea for the coming three years (Lew 2000, 24).

The Americans were however not prepared for administering and militarily controlling the southern half of the Korean peninsula. Due to that, they maintained systems from the Japanese
colonial era including staff. What used to be the Japanese colonial headquarters became the American headquarters. Koreans who had collaborated with the Japanese were hired to the police force and military. This was a propaganda victory for the north who imprisoned or shot former collaborators. They could therefore claim that only the north represented Korean nationalism (Cha 2012, 36-37).

In December 1945, the Moscow Agreement was reached between the US and the Soviet Union. This agreement made clear how Korea would transition into a sovereign state. That Korea would become independent had been decided at the Cairo Conference in 1943. The disagreements concerning which group should run Korea persisted and therefore no agreement could be reached. An election was held in May 1948 in South Korea. This election was backed by the UN and Syngman Rhee was elected as the first president. He proclaimed the Republic of Korea (ROK) on the 15th of August 1948. Later that year, on the 12th of December, the ROK was recognized by the UN. The US recognized the new state on the first of January 1949 and withdrew their troops by June 1949 (ibid, 24-25). Although Rhee was elected president, the election for that position and the voting for the Constitutional Assembly were characterized by fraud, vote buying, election violence, and attempts by the government to frighten the opposition. These problems would remain in the coming elections for the upcoming decades (Andersson & Mechkova 2016, 5). The year of the elections, 1948, marked the beginning of the first republic (McNamara 1992, 702).

From mid-October 1945, the Soviet Union started supporting Kim Il-sung as the North Korean leader, and he became the ruler of the North Korean branch of the Korean Communist Party in December. In February 1946, he became the leader of North Korea. Two years later, on the 9th of September 1948, he declared the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK). The DPRK was recognized by its protector, the Soviet Union, and by the end of 1948 they also withdrew their troops. This division of the peninsula and the ideological differences led to an all-out war, the Korean War. It started with a surprise attack by North Korea on the 25th of June 1950. The American President Harry Truman committed American forces to push back the North Koreans to the northern half of the 38th parallel. The war lasted three years and by 1953, three million Koreans had died, both soldiers and civilians, one million Chinese soldiers battling along the North Koreans, and 54,000 American soldiers also died from the fighting. A 16 member UN
coalition fought alongside South Korea. After they crossed north of the 38th parallel, Chinese forces intervened and pushed them back. By spring 1951, a military stalemate was reached. Soviet initiates of talks of a cease-fire in the middle of 1951 were welcomed by the Americans. Those negotiations lasted two years. Against the wishes of the South Korean President Rhee, an armistice was signed on the 27th of July 1953. In October that year, the US signed a mutual defense treaty with South Korea as a form of compensation (Lew 2000, 27-28). This armistice remains today and so does the border at the 38th parallel. The maintenance of the armistice is crucial to reduce the risk for incidents and escalation on the Korean Peninsula (Smith 2023).
6. Taiwan’s and South Korea’s democratization from modernization theory

6.1 Taiwan’s and South Korea’s democratization from the index of wealth

6.1.1 Per capita income

Taiwan

Taiwan’s currency is the New Taiwan Dollar (NT$). In 1952, Taiwan’s per capita income based on the price level in 1964 was 4,115 NT$. That amount equals roughly 135 United States Dollar (USD). Taiwan’s economic development led to a steady increase in per capita income, the average growth rate for its per capita income was 4.3 percent between 1953 to 1966. This led to a per capita income of 7,539 NT$ in 1966, the equivalent of slightly over 247 USD. The factor that enabled growth in per capita income was because Taiwan’s growth rates in Gross National Product (GNP) and national income were higher than the population growth (Shih 1968, 125-127). The per capita income grew the following year, reaching 255 USD in 1967 (Wei 1976, 255).

The economic development in Taiwan did not end in 1967, in fact the average GNP growth rate reached almost 9 percent per year between 1953-1990 (Tien & Shiau 1992, 59). In the previous paragraph, data from 1952 to 1966 showed a continuous growth, and so does the statistics for the period between 1965 to 1981. During these years, the annual GNP growth rate was slightly higher than between 1953-1990, landing at 9.4 percent. Considering the population growth, this resulted in an annual GNP per capita growth of 6.9 percent (Scitovsky 1985, 216). To put Taiwan’s economic development in perspective, in 1952, the GNP per capita was one thirtieth of the US GNP per capita. In 1992, Taiwan’s GNP per capita equaled 50 percent of the American GNP per capita (Chu 1993, 1).

In the late 60s, in 1969, Taiwan’s per capita income was 324 USD. That figure was surpassed in 1970, then reaching 364 USD (Wei 1976, 255). In 1972, Taiwan’s per capita income stood at 395 USD (ibid, 254). By 1975, Taiwan’s per capita income had risen to 891 USD (Liu 1980, 12). Five years after that, in 1980, the GNP per capita in the country was 2,344 USD. In 1990, its GNP per capita had increased to 7,954 USD (Lu & Chiang 2011, 90). It continued to rise and
four years later, in 1994, the GNP per capita was 11,604 USD (Chiang 1997, 226). In 1996, Taiwan’s GNP per capita reached more than 13,000 USD (Wu & Tseng 2003, 76). During this year, Taiwan had its first direct presidential election (Rigger 2011, 2). The incumbent President, Lee Teng-hui was elected, and he thus became Taiwan’s first democratically elected president (Kassomeh 2021, 3).

When the new millennium started in 2000, Taiwan’s GNP per capita was 14,216 USD. Six years after, in 2006, Taiwan’s GNP per capita was 16,471 USD (Lu & Chiang 2011, 86). Last year, in 2022, Taiwan’s per capita income was 33,565 USD (Wang & Su 2023). That marks a sharp increase compared to the 2006 figure.

South Korea

In 1953, when the Korean War had ended and South Korea was on its first republic, the GNP per capita was 67 USD (Lew 2000, 28). Only a small improvement could be seen eight years later, in 1961. That year, GNP per capita was 73 USD (Rodrik, Grossman & Norman 1995, 75). Only a minor improvement took place in the coming year, in 1962, the GNP per capita was 87 USD (Yeon, Baek & Park 1995, 7). From 1963 to the late 80s, South Korea’s economic development was massive, the GNP growth per year was more than 10 percent. This led to South Korea moving from a low-income economy to a middle-income industrialized country in the beginning of the 80s (Kim 1998, 107).

Since South Korea’s GNP grew faster than its population, the country’s GNP per capita increased too. It did so at a slightly slower rate than in Taiwan, more precisely, the annual GNP per capita growth was 6.7 percent between 1965 and 1981 (Scitovsky 1985, 216). The GNP per capita growth led to the GNP per capita rising to 1,500 USD in 1980. 10 years later, in 1990, the GNP per capita had increased to more than 6,500 USD (Kim 1998, 107). At that time, South Korea had had a direct election to the presidency, in 1987 (Wakabayashi 1997, 423). The 1990 figure was followed by an improved one in 1993, that year the GNP per capita was 7,466 USD (Yeon, Baek & Park 2015, 7). The GNP per capita in the country continued to increase, and it reached 7,500 USD in the next year, in 1994 (Lew 2000, 28). By this time in South Korean history, the second consecutive presidential election had been held. It happened on the 18th of December in 1992, and Kim Young-sam was elected president, he was the first civilian president in more than 30 years (Baker 2014, 70).
South Korea’s per capita income was 32,661 USD in 2022 which was lower than Taiwan’s for the first time since 2002. It went down 7.7 percent compared with 2021 (Wang & Su 2023). Despite this, the per capita income was still substantially higher than what it was in 1994.

To illustrate this development graphically, a table with Taiwan’s and South Korea’s per capita income in USD during five selected years will be presented:

**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1952 (TW)</th>
<th>1953 (SK)</th>
<th>1980</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>1994</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>2,344</td>
<td>7,954</td>
<td>11,604</td>
<td>33,565</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>6,500</td>
<td>7,500</td>
<td>32,661</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 6.1.2 Telephones per 1,000 persons

#### Taiwan

In 1941, Taiwan averaged five telephones per 1,000 persons (Lee 2014, 40). The number of telephones per 1,000 persons first shrunk to four in 1952 before it reached the same number of five as in 1941 again in 1956. It then increased to 12 in 1961 and 27 in 1970. The prevalence of telephones continued to rise, by 1983 the number was 259 per 1,000 persons, and eight years later, in 1991, the number was 449 (Freedman, Chang & Sun 1994, 318).

In late February 2000, mobile phone usage in Taiwan became more common than telephones with landlines. This marked a fast development of mobile phones since only seven percent of the Taiwanese people had mobile phones in 1997 (Han 2022). By the end of 2000, there were 802 mobile phones per 1,000 persons (Woo & Lin 2001, 15). In 2007, this number had increased past 1,000 mobile phones per 1,000 persons, the number being 1,063.13 (NationMaster 2023a).

#### South Korea

One dimension of South Korea’s industrialization was its development in mass communications. In 1980, the number of telephone users was almost 2.8 million people. This number was 20 times higher than the number of telephone users in 1962 (Kim 1998, 108). The number of telephone
consumers in 1962 was 140,000. In 1962, the South Korean population stood at 26.51 million people. In 1980, it had increased to 38.12 million people (WorldData, no date). That means that there were 5.28 telephone users per 1,000 persons in 1962 and 74.45 phone users per 1,000 persons in South Korea in 1980. The number of telephone users was thus lower than in Taiwan for both those two years. In 1993, a striking increase could be seen compared to the 1980 telephone frequency figure; in the early 90s, there were 378 telephones per 1,000 people (Yeon, Baek & Park 1995, 7).

For 2012, the number of fixed telephone lines per 1,000 persons in South Korea was 601.94 (NationMaster 2023b). For mobile phones, there were 886.94 users per 1,000 persons in 2007, a number lower than in Taiwan (NationMaster 2023a). In 2012, the number had increased to 1,103.6 mobile phones per 1,000 persons (Qamar 2014).

### 6.1.3 Newspaper copies per 1,000 persons

#### Taiwan

Regarding the consumption of newspapers and magazines in Taiwan, the number of copies per 1,000 persons was 52 in 1964. In 1970, it had increased to 78. That number was followed by 199 newspaper and magazine copies per 1,000 persons in 1983 (Freedman, Chang & Sun 1994, 318). Three years later, in 1986, there were 208 newspapers sold per 1,000 persons in Taiwan (Batto 2004, 4). In 1991, the number rose to 214 (Freedman, Chang & Sun 1994, 318). Until 1988, it was prohibited to start new newspapers (Fell 2012, 22). The lifting of the ban is one reason for the increase in newspaper consumption in 1991.

#### South Korea

In South Korea, newspaper subscriptions per 1,000 persons reached 52 in 1965. In 1979, the number had risen to 235 per 1,000 persons. This increase in newspaper consumption and the development of other forms of mass media contributed to new beliefs, modern values, and played a key role in the political socialization of South Koreans (Kim 1998, 108).

The number of newspaper copies per 1,000 persons in South Korea was thereby similar to Taiwan in 1965, but the 1979 figure was substantially higher in South Korea. That number was not reached in Taiwan in 1991.
6.1.4 Radios per 1,000 persons

**Taiwan**

In 1950, the number of radio licenses issued in Taiwan was two per 1,000 persons (UNESCO 1963, 52). That number was 14 in 1955 (ibid, 57). In 1959, it increased to 43 per 1,000 inhabitants (ibid, 52). Radio networks in Taiwan at the time were run by the KMT through its Broadcasting Corporation of China (Fell 2012, 22). Due to martial law restrictions, there was only one person who could broadcast amateur radio until 1985, after that more licenses were handed out (Han 2019).

**South Korea**

South Korea had four radio receivers per 1,000 persons in 1950 (UNESCO 1963, 52). Five years later, in 1955, the number stood at 9.5 (ibid, 57). That number rose to 16 per 1,000 persons in 1959 (ibid, 52). They were thus ahead of Taiwan in 1950, but behind in numbers both five years and nine years later.

Radio usage continued to increase in South Korea, in 1986, there was 1,000 radios per 1,000 persons. The number crossed 1,000 per person in 1991 and continued to rise until 2000 (Schweke&ndiek 2011, 76).

6.1.5 Thousands of persons per doctor

**Taiwan**

Given that the available data is presented in terms of number of physicians per 1,000 persons, that is how it will also be presented here. In 1960, Taiwan had 0.5 physicians per 1,000 persons. That number shrunk to 0.4 a decade later, in 1970. In 1980, it had risen to 0.7 physicians per 1,000 persons. Ten years later, in 1990, the new number was 1 physician per 1,000 persons. By 1994, it had increased to 1.1 (Chan 2010, 565). In 2001, the number had improved to 1.37 physicians per 1,000 persons (Cheng 2003, 62). By 2008, an increase to 1.8 physicians per 1,000 persons could be seen (Chan 2010, 565). That number remained the same the upcoming five years, no change was visible in 2013 (Lu & Chiang 2018, 8). However, by 2015 some progress had been made in this area, and now the number of physicians per 1,000 persons had reached 1.9 which marked a 36 percent increase compared to the 2001 figure (Cheng et al. 2018, 151). Last
year, in 2022, Taiwan reached its highest number to date, 2.17 physicians per 1,000 persons. Despite the development and that record number, the view is still that Taiwan suffers from a shortage of doctors (Peng & Lin 2022).

**South Korea**

The statistics about the rate of physicians in South Korea will also be presented as number of physicians per 1,000 persons. In 1963, South Korea had 0.33 physicians per 1,000 persons which was lower than in Taiwan at the time (TaiwanToday 1964). 17 years later, in 1981, the number had increased to 0.5 physicians per 1,000 persons. Improvements in this regard continued, and by 1989, there were 0.8 physicians per 1,000 persons (Kwon 2009, 65). Six years after the 0.8 figure, in 1995, South Korea’s number of physicians per 1,000 persons increased to 1.1 (The World Bank 2023). One year after the new millennium had begun, in 2001, the rate improved to 1.4 physicians per 1,000 persons. From that year until 2015, an increase of 64 percent could be seen which led to the number of physicians per 1,000 persons being 2.3. This number was higher than in Taiwan and the increase in pace during the 14 years between 2001 and 2015 was also substantially higher in South Korea (Cheng et al. 2018, 151). The figure from 2020 in South Korea showed continued improvement, three years ago, the number of physicians per 1,000 persons was 2.51 (The Global Economy.com 2023).

It can therefore be concluded that Taiwan historically had more physicians per 1,000 persons than South Korea, but that the latter reached the Taiwanese level in the mid-1990s, and then passed the island-state in the beginning of the 21st century.

**6.1.6 Persons per motor vehicle**

**Taiwan**

In this section, due to limited data availability, statistics on both cars, motorcycles and scooters, and motor vehicles in general per 1,000 persons will be presented. First, car numbers will be spelled out.

In Taiwan, the number of cars per 1,000 persons was 2.9 in 1965 (Young & Santoso 1988, 524). A modest increase was found in 1970, then, the number of cars per 1,000 persons was 3 (Dargay & Gately 1999, 104). In the mid-80s, in 1984, a sharp increase compared to the two previous
figures could be seen, now there were 64.6 cars per 1,000 persons in Taiwan (Young & Santoso 1988, 524). At the start of the following decade, in 1990, a continued rise in the number of cars could be seen, now, there was 108 cars per 1,000 persons (Belgiawan et al. 2014, 1231). 11 years later, in 2001, the number of cars per 1,000 persons was 205 (Hsu, Nguyen & Sadullah 2003, 182). This increase in the number of cars per 1,000 persons continued to rise in Taiwan, and by 2010 the number had reached 251 (Belgiawan et al. 2014, 1231).

Motorcycles and scooters are more common than cars in Taiwan. In 2001, there were more than double the number of motorcycles per 1,000 persons than cars. The number stood at 509 (Hsu, Nguyen & Sadullah 2003, 182). In 2015, that figure had further increased. By the mid 2010s, there was 1 motorcycle and scooter for 1.56 people which equals slightly more than 641 such vehicles per 1,000 persons (Scanlan 2015).

Taiwan had 0.3 motor vehicles per 1,000 persons in 1952 (Wei 1976, 254). By 1970, the number had increased and now there were 10 motor vehicles per 1,000 persons (Dargay & Gately 1999, 104). In 1974, that number had increased to 14 (Dargay, Gately & Sommer 2007, 147). Compared with the 1970 statistics, the 22 years leading up to 1992 saw Taiwan’s motor vehicle growth being four percent per year. That meant that in the beginning of the 90s, there were 120 motor vehicles per 1,000 persons (Dargay & Gately 1999, 104). The coming decade witnessed a further increase in the number of motor vehicles per 1,000 persons, now the number was 260 in 2002 (Dargay, Gately & Sommer 2007, 147). In February 2023, the highest number of motor vehicles per 1,000 persons to date was registered, during that month the figure was almost 354 (CEIC 2023).

South Korea

In 1960, South Korea had 19 motor vehicles per 1,000 persons (Dargay, Gately & Sommer 2007, 147). Two decades later, a slight increase was visible in South Korea, in 1980, there was 24.9 motor vehicles per 1,000 persons (Knoema no date). A continued increase could be seen in 1992, in that year the number of motor vehicles per 1,000 persons was 100. From 1970, the annual increase in motor vehicles per 1,000 persons was 16.4 percent until 1992 (Dargay & Gately 1999, 104). In 1994, the number of motor vehicles per 1,000 persons rose to 153.4 (Yeon, Baek & Park 1995, 7). In 2002, that figure had risen to 293 vehicles per 1,000 persons (Dargay, Gately & Sommer 2007, 147). 13 years after that, another improvement could be distinguished, during
2015, the number of motor vehicles per 1,000 persons was 426 (Helgi Library 2023). That marks an annual increase in number of motor vehicles at 64.56 percent (Knoema no date). Thus, there were slightly more motor vehicles per 1,000 persons in Taiwan in 1992, but by 2002, South Korea had passed Taiwan and that remains.

Dargay and Gately (1999, 119) projected that by 2015, South Korea would have 550 motor vehicles per 1,000 persons. That estimation proved too high, since South Korea reached 426 motor vehicles per 1,000 persons as written in the previous paragraph (Helgi Library 2023).

Concerning the number of cars per 1,000 persons, the number was 2 in 1970. The 21 years that followed saw a yearly increase rate of 18.1 percent which led to 60 cars per 1,000 persons in 1991 (Dargay & Gately 1999, 104). In 2005, the number had increased to 319 cars per 1,000 persons which meant place 40 in a study of 119 states (Jin 2007). South Korea was behind Taiwan in cars per 1,000 persons in both 1970, and the beginning of the 90s. But by the beginning of the 21st century, South Korea passed Taiwan.

6.2 Taiwan’s and South Korea’s democratization from the index of industrialization

6.2.1 Percentage of males in agriculture

Taiwan

Due to limited data availability on the percentage of males in Taiwan’s agriculture historically, this section will instead focus on general employment in agriculture no matter gender. It will also focus on agriculture’s share of the economy. Only minor attention will be paid to the share of males in Taiwan’s agricultural sector. The same approach will be applied to the analysis of South Korea.

In 1945, around 46% of the Taiwanese population worked in agriculture (Irrigation Agency, Council of Agriculture 2020). Seven years after that, in 1952, an increase in the population working in agriculture could be seen, that year 52.1 percent worked in agriculture. In 1971, the share of the Taiwanese labor force in the agricultural sector had shrunk to 35 percent (Wang 1999, 332). This development continued and in 1980, the number of the workforce in agriculture had decreased to 20 percent which was lower than the figures for manufacturing, industry, and services (Rubinstein 1999a, 372). In 1985, the percentage of the workforce in the agricultural
sector dropped to 17 percent (Liu & Armer 1993, 314). That figure dropped to 13 percent in the early 90s (Rubinstein 1999a, 368). 25 years later, in 2015, that number remained about the same, the amount of the population working in the agricultural sector was 13.2 percent (AgriTaiwan 2015).

Concerning males working in agriculture, the decline in numbers mirrored the general employment drop in that branch. In 1966, 43 percent of males worked in agriculture, but the number had lowered to 19 % in 1986. The number of males in agriculture was lower than the number of females in 1966 but higher 20 years later (Chou 1987).

Regarding agriculture’s share of the total GDP, the number was 33 percent in the 50s and 20 percent in the 70s (ibid). In 1980, the decline continued, that year the number had gone down to 8 percent (Moore 1984, 61). In the mid-80s, that figure had dropped to 6 percent (Liu & Armer 1993, 314). 28 years later the pattern remained the same, and by 2013, the share of agriculture in Taiwan’s GDP was 1.69 percent (MOFA Republic of China (Taiwan) 2016).

South Korea

In the year of 1955, 75.5 percent of South Koreans worked in agriculture (Kim 2019). Five years later, in 1960, that number had fallen to 68.3 percent (Chaudhuri 1996, 18). In 1963, the number further dropped, that year it reached 63.1 percent (Yeon, Baek & Park 1995, 7). Seven years after that, in 1970, the trend continued with 45.7 percent of the South Koreans employed in agriculture. By 1980, it was 28.4 percent (Kim 2019). In the late 80s, people employed in agriculture were fewer than those working in manufacturing; by then, the figure went down to 20.7 percent (Chaudhuri 1996, 18). Near the mid-90s, in 1994, 15 percent of the South Koreans worked in the agricultural sector (Yeon, Baek & Park 1995, 7).

At the start of the new millennium, in 2000, 8.8 percent of the South Koreans were working in the agricultural sector. A decade later, the number had further decreased, in 2010, it reached 6.2 percent. In 2018, the number was as low as 4.5 percent (Kim 2019).

After the Second World War, South Korea had more people employed in agriculture than Taiwan. This pattern continued with South Korea constantly showing a greater number of the labor force involved in agriculture than in Taiwan in the years 1970, 1980, and in the late 80s
and early 90s. From 2010 and onwards however, South Koreans were less likely to be working in agriculture than Taiwanese people.

Data on males as a percentage in the agricultural business shows that the number declined and that there were more females working in this field than males both 2010 and 2018 (ibid). In 2019, the percentage of males in agriculture was 5 percent (World Bank 2021).

When it comes to agriculture’s share of the total economy, it made up 44.6 percent between 1954 to 1956 of South Korea’s GNP (Kim 1991, 7). In 1970, it had lowered to 23.3 percent of the country’s GDP (Qamar 2014). Ten years later, in 1980, the figure was 20 percent (Moore 1984, 61). Twelve years into the new millennium, in 2012, agriculture’s share of GDP had been further reduced to 2.63 percent (Qamar 2014). South Korea’s agricultural sector constantly showed a higher share of its GDP beginning in the 1950s until 2012 than in Taiwan.

6.2.2 Per capita energy consumed

Taiwan

Energy use per capita includes electricity, but also for instance transport, cooking, and heating. In 1965, Taiwan’s per capita energy use was 5,383 kilowatt hours (kWh). In 1970, it had increased to 7,199 kWh. A decade after that number, a further rise in energy consumption was visible, in 1980, the figure had risen to 17,385 kWh. In 1990, the energy consumption was 28,397 kWh per capita. By 2000, a sharp rise to 46,061 kWh can be noted. This development continued, and in 2010, 56,587 kWh energy per capita was used. Finally, in 2021, only a minor increase could be identified. Two years ago, the energy consumption per capita was 57,954 kWh which was an increase compared to the previous year (Ritchie, Roser & Rosado 2022a). When comparing the rise in energy consumption per capita to Taiwan’s increase in newspaper copies, radios, telephones, doctors, and motor vehicles, the connection to the increased per capita income becomes clear.

South Korea

In South Korea in 1965, per capita energy usage reached 2,564 kWh. Half a decade later, the increase was significant, now the energy use was 5,137 kWh in 1970. The trend continued, and by 1980, the per capita energy consumption had more than doubled to 11,895 kWh. That per
capita energy consumption doubled in the previous decade, occurred again in 1990. That year, the figure stood at 24,162 kWh. It did not double until 2000, but it was a sharp increase to 48,001 kWh which nearly meant 100 percent more energy usage at the turn of the millennium. In 2010, the per capita energy usage reached new grounds, 62,383 kWh. Just like in Taiwan, only a minor increase can be seen in recent years, the number increased to 67,397 kWh in 2021 after decreasing the two previous years (Ritchie, Roser & Rosado 2022b). Per capita energy consumption in South Korea was lower than in Taiwan until 1992 but since then the South Koreans have used more energy than the Taiwanese.

The following table shows the percentage of the labor force employed in agriculture and per capita energy consumed measured in kWh in several years:

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment in agriculture</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1952 (TW)</th>
<th>1971 (TW)</th>
<th>1980</th>
<th>2015 (TW)</th>
<th>2018 (SK)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>1955 (SK)</td>
<td>52.1</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>1970 (SK)</td>
<td>75.5</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>5,383</td>
<td>7,199</td>
<td>17,385</td>
<td>28,397</td>
<td>56,587</td>
<td>57,954</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>2,564</td>
<td>5,137</td>
<td>11,895</td>
<td>24,162</td>
<td>62,383</td>
<td>67,397</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.3 Taiwan’s and South Korea’s democratization from the index of education

6.3.1 Percentage literate

Taiwan

In 1940, Taiwan’s literacy rate was 21.3 percent (Scitovsky 1985, 219). The trend in Taiwan’s literacy rate was similar to the trends in per capita income and other wealth indices, it was rising
sharply at the time. In 1952, the literacy rate among people aged six or older had risen to 58 percent. Four years later, in 1956, the percentage of literate inhabitants rose to 63 (Freedman, Chang & Sun 1994, 318). However, if measuring literacy among people aged 12 or older, the rate was lower, it stood at 57 percent (Ho 1987, 232). In 1961, the literacy rate had grown to 78 percent and that figure was followed by the improved number of 85 percent in 1970 (Freedman, Chang & Sun 1994, 318). Among Taiwanese aged 15 or older, the literacy rate increased to 86.7 percent in 1972 (Wei 1976, 254). The literacy rate for adults was 82 percent three years later, in 1975 (O’Brien & Williams 2020, 269).

In 1983, the literacy rate advanced to 91 percent and that number was followed by 94 percent in 1991 (Freedman, Chang & Sun 1994, 318). When the new millennium began, in 2000, the literate people in Taiwan was 95.55 percent, the highest literacy rate recorded. In 2010, however, that record was beaten; at the end of that year, 98.04 percent of the Taiwanese people were literate, marking the fourth highest literacy rate in Asia. The reason for the earlier noted discrepancies between the lower literacy rate when counting all adults depends on the fact that there is generally a lower literacy rate among the elderly. In 2010, 13.11 percent of Taiwanese 65 or older were unable to read or write, whereas that number was zero among those aged 15-24 (Kuo 2011). A further improvement in literacy rate could be noted in 2021, that year 99.1% of the population at 15 years of age or older were literate (Wang et al. 2022, 79).

South Korea

South Korea’s literacy rate was 13.4 percent in 1945 (Scitovsky 1985, 219). In the coming decade, the 50s, the number had increased to 22 percent (Kobalia 2019). In 1960, among the population over 13 years of age, 72 percent were literate (Chun 2018, 7). Eight years later, in 1968, the literacy rate reached 85.3 percent (Kim et al. 2015, 22). Two years after that, in 1970, the literacy rate improved slightly to 87.6 percent (Kobalia 2019). In 1975, the new literacy rate figure was 93 percent (O’Brien & Williams 2020, 269). In the late 80s, the literacy rate remained at the same level, 93 percent (Middlebury Institute, no date). By 1998, the literacy rate in South Korea had increased to 97.5 percent (O’Brien & Williams 2020, 269). Two years later, in 2000, the literacy rate was slightly higher, 99 percent (Lew 2000, 28). That literacy rate at 99 percent remained the same in 2010 (Kuo 2011). For adults aged between 19-79 in 2008, 98.3 percent
were literate. The literacy rate shrunk by age, 20.2 percent in their seventies were illiterate (Kim et al. 2015, 20).

From this comparison, it can be concluded that Taiwan’s literacy rate was initially higher than South Korea’s in the 1940s, 50s, and the 60s. By 1970, however, South Korea’s percentage of literate persons had passed Taiwan’s by a small margin. In the mid-70s, the gap between the literacy rates increased but by the late 80s and early 90s, Taiwan’s inhabitants were to a slightly higher extent able to read and write than the South Koreans. In 2000, the tables turned once again, and South Korea’s literacy rate was markedly higher than Taiwan’s. Although the gap decreased, South Korea remained ahead of Taiwan in 2010.

The third table shows the literacy rate in the two countries during a few years:

**Table 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage literate</th>
<th>1940 (TW)</th>
<th>1945 (SK)</th>
<th>1961 (TW)</th>
<th>1960 (SK)</th>
<th>1970</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>95.55</td>
<td>98.04</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>87.6</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>99</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**6.3.2 Primary education enrollment per 1,000 persons**

*Taiwan*

Between 1935-1940, 528 primary school-aged children per 1,000 people went to school in Taiwan (Benavot & Riddle 1988, 206). In 1940, the number grew so that 580 children per 1,000 children in primary school-age attended primary school (Woo & Kahm 2017, 198). In 1943, an increase had occurred, now 71.3 percent of school children went to school. In mountain areas, the number was even higher than that, landing at 86.4 percent (Lee 2014, 37-38). Thus, the primary education enrollment per 1,000 persons was 713 in total and 864 in mountainous regions. In 1948, school enrollment in primary schools had increased further and reached 771.4 per 1,000 persons (Jacobs 2012, 8). From 1949, it was mandatory to study at least six years in school, which increased the enrollment rate. The free school system was also a contributing factor to an enrollment rate of 814.9 per 1,000 primary school-aged children in 1951 (Chang
2011, 387). It was followed by 840 the year after, in 1952 (Wei 1976, 254). There was an even higher figure of 923.3 per 1,000 primary school-aged children in 1955 (Chang 2011, 387). That number was surpassed by a higher one in 1960, 960, which in turn was a much higher figure than what was expected for a country of Taiwan’s GNP per capita at the time (Rodrik, Grossman & Norman 1995, 76).

In 1965, the rate rose to 970 primary school students (Jacobs 2012, 8). In 1968, another increase in children attending primary school could be noted, now, 976.7 out of 1000 took classes (Chang 2011, 387). In 1969, obligatory education was increased to nine years (Jacobs 2012, 8). In 1972, 981.3 out of 1000 primary school-age children were enrolled, a new record (Wei 1976, 262-263). Half a decade later, in 1977, the new number ensured nearly universal primary school education in Taiwan with the figure reaching 995.7 children enrolled per 1,000 school-aged children (Jacobs 2012, 8). By 1985, the number reached 997 school-aged children enrolled per 1,000 (Scitovsky 1985, 219). The number of mandatory years in school was further extended in 2014, from that year 12 years of education was needed for the Taiwanese pupils (Coudenys et al. 2022, 79).

South Korea

Between 1935-1940, the primary school enrollment rate in South Korea averaged 235 per 1,000 primary school-aged children (Benavot & Riddle 1988, 206). At the end of that five-year period, in 1940, the number had more than doubled, it reached 640 (Woo & Kahm 2017, 198). In 1948, the number increased to 748 and by 1954, it was 830 (KEDI 2016). That year, a new law requiring children to study at least six years in school was introduced. This contributed to a sharply rising enrollment rate for primary school-aged children. In 1959, 960 per 1,000 persons were enrolled (Kim 1996, 1). In 1966, the enrollment rate had increased more; during that year, 965 primary school-aged children per 1,000 persons attended classes (Yeon, Baek & Park 1995, 7). By 1970, the enrollment rate increased to 1,007, which was followed by greater numbers half a decade later, 1,050 in 1975, and 1,029 in 1980. In 1985, another drop in primary school enrollment could be noted, the rate went down to 999 school-aged children per 1,000 persons. By 1990, the number increased again, now standing at 1,017 (Sung 2013, 35).

After three years, in 1993, the figure had shrunk in a small manner to 1,014. A higher enrollment rate for girls was noted which stood in contrast to the data from 1966 (Yeon, Baek & Park 1995,
1995 saw another small decrease, that year the number went down to 1,010 (Sung 2013, 35). Five years after that, in 2000, a sharp decline was seen since the number dropped to 972 (Kim et al. 2015, 10). A recovery could be seen in 2005, when the number reached 988. This pattern continued at the start of the millennium’s second decade, in 2010, 992 primary school-aged children per 1,000 people went to school (Sung 2013, 35). A small dip in attendance was recorded in 2012, 986 was the number for that year (Kim et al. 2015, 10). The number later increased to 991 in 2015 (Roser & Ortiz-Espina 2015).

South Korea’s amount of primary school-aged children who attended school between 1935-1940 was far behind Taiwan’s figures. But by the last year of that period, in 1940, South Korea had surpassed Taiwan. In the late 50s and early 60s the two countries shared similar numbers. Taiwan was slightly ahead of South Korea in the mid-60s, but South Korea took the lead once again in 1970 and remained in that position for three decades before its attendance numbers shrunk.

6.3.3 Post-primary education enrollment per 1,000 persons

Taiwan

Taiwan’s post-primary education takes place at the high school level, first in junior high school and then senior high school. In 1950, Taiwan’s junior high school enrollment rate was 317.8 per 1,000 persons. Among those who graduated from junior high school, 51.15 percent moved on to senior high school (Zhang 2018, 4867). The junior high school enrollment rate was similar although slightly lower in 1951, that year 310 students per 1,000 persons were admitted. It increased drastically in 1961, during that year, 510 students per 1,000 persons could start their junior high school education (Liu & Armer 1993, 316). Half a decade after that, in 1966, a further increase could be noted. That year, 590 out of 1000 people attended junior high school. The number of students who then went on to senior high school was 470 per 1,000 persons (Jacobs 2007, 244). In 1967, the number of students who studied at junior high school rose to 620 per 1,000 persons and that was followed by 750 in 1968 (Chou et al. 2010, 8). In 1971, the number of junior high school-aged children enrolled was 800 per 1,000 persons (Liu & Armer 1993, 316). Two years after that, in 1973, the number had increased to 840 (Chou et al. 2010, 8).
By 1977, the number had risen to 950 (Jacobs 2007, 244). That number remained the same in 1978 (Chou et al. 2010, 14). In 1980, a slight increase was visible, that year the figure rose to 960 (Liu & Armer 1993, 316). By 1990, senior high school enrollment had improved drastically compared to the 1966 figure, it nearly doubled and reached 850 per 1,000 persons. This was further bettered 16 years later, in 2006. In that year, more than 900 per 1,000 people went from junior high school to senior high school (Jacobs 2007, 244). The junior high school enrollment rate in Taiwan reached new heights in 2014, 999.5 per 1,000 persons attended that level of schooling that year. Of those people, 995.2 per 1,000 persons went on to senior high school, another groundbreaking figure (Zhang 2018, 4867).

**South Korea**

The South Korean post-primary education system is divided into middle school and high school (Kim 2010a). Thus, middle school corresponds to Taiwan’s junior high school. In 1940, the post-primary education enrollment in South Korea was 23.9 per 1,000 persons (Chang 1975, 44). By 1955, two years after the end of the Korean War, the enrollment rate at middle schools jumped to 310 per 1,000 persons and 180 for high schools. In 1960, the new, improved, numbers for enrollment were 330 for middle school and 200 for high school. Half a decade later, in 1965, middle school enrollment rose to 390 per 1,000 persons and high school enrollment to 270. That was followed by the numbers of 530 to middle school and 290 to high school in 1970. Further improvements were visible in 1975, for middle school, the enrollment rate was 740 per 1,000 persons and the high school figures were 410. At the start of the next decade, in 1980, universal attendance at middle schools was nearly reached with the number at 950. 690 was the high school enrollment number that same year. In the middle of the decade, in 1985, middle school enrollment grew to 990 per 1,000 persons. For high school, the number was lower but higher than in the past at 840 (Jeong & Armer 1994, 539). Universal middle school attendance was thereby reached.

In 1990, the enrollment rate for middle school dropped a bit, landing at 982 per 1,000 persons while the number for high school increased to 880. By 1995, the middle school number was 1,016 and the one for high school 918. At the start of the current millennium, year 2000, the enrollment rate for middle school was 995 and the figure for high school was 956, yet a new high school record. 2005 saw a drop in both numbers, for middle school 977 per 1,000 persons were
enrolled and for high school it was 946. Five years after those figures, in 2010, further drops were seen. The number for middle school was 970 and for high school it went down to 939 (Sung 2013, 35). In 2013, 999 out of 1000 students made it to middle school and 997 advanced from middle school to high school (Kim et al. 2015, 14).

Initially, South Korea’s secondary school enrollment numbers were lower than Taiwan’s. South Korea started to close in on Taiwan in 1980, just being slightly behind. In the 90s, South Korea passed but from around 2005 to 2014, Taiwan was once again ahead with a small margin.

6.3.4 Higher education enrollment per 1,000 persons

Taiwan

In 1952, the college enrollment in Taiwan for people aged 18-21 was 14 per 1,000 persons (Wei 1976, 254). By 1960, that number had increased to 32. In 1968, a further improvement had taken place; that year, 123 per 1,000 persons took part in higher education (Kondonassis & Tseng 1976, 149). 125 university students per 1,000 persons was the new figure for 1972 (Wei 1976, 254). For senior high school graduates who wanted to advance to college in the mid-70s, around 30 percent passed the tests (Rubinstein 1999a, 378). For the academic year 1979-1980, college enrollment surpassed the 1972 figure, reaching 193.8 students per 1,000 persons (Taiwan Today 1981). In 1998, among those who graduated from high school, 394.8 per 1,000 students continued to university. In 2002, the figure rose to 563.6 which was followed by 807.6 in 2006 (Huang, Yuan & Huang 2008, 4). Last year, 2022, saw a new record figure for Taiwanese students advancing from senior high school to university, 880 per 1,000 students (Chen 2022).

South Korea

In South Korea in 1955, for people aged between 18-21 the college enrollment rate was 50 per 1,000 persons. In 1960, it increased to 60. This number was followed by 70 in 1965, 90 in both 1970 and 1975, and 150 in 1980. In the mid-80s, in 1985, the number rose to 280 and it remained the same in 1988 (Jeong & Armer 1994, 539). The number went up to 395 in 1992, and reached a new record, 645 in 1997 (Isokazi 2019, 219). In 2005, the college enrollment rate per 1,000 persons was 656. Five years later, in 2010, the number had increased to 701 (Sung 2013, 35). Among high school students, 698.5 per 1,000 students continued to university in 2018, the enrollment rate was higher for girls (Statista 2019).
In the beginning of the post-World War Two era, South Korea was far ahead of Taiwan in terms of university enrollment rates. South Korea had higher enrollment rates until the late 60s. After that, Taiwan surpassed South Korea and stayed ahead for about 2.5 decades. In the beginning of the 90s, South Korea’s enrollment rate was higher, and that position remained until 2003. Since then, Taiwan’s university enrollment numbers have been greater.

6.4 Taiwan’s and South Korea’s democratization from the index of urbanization

6.4.1 Urbanization rate

In Lipset’s (1959, 77) modernization theory, there are three indices for urbanization: percent in cities over 20,000, percent in cities over 100,000, and percent in metropolitan areas. Due to lack of data availability on the percentage of Taiwanese and South Koreans living in small to medium size cities, this index will instead be captured by one criterion, urbanization rate.

Taiwan

In 1952, the urbanization rate was 47.6 percent (Wei 1976, 255). In 1961, the urban population of Taiwan reached 5 million which equaled a bit more than 50 percent of the total number of inhabitants, a slight increase was thus visible compared to the 1952 figure (Knapp 1999, 23). The 60s saw a continued rise in Taiwanese people moving to urban areas, this led to that by 1972, the urbanization rate went up to 61.1 percent (Wei 1976, 255). The urbanization pace was marginal in the coming eight years, in 1980, 61.6 percent of the population was living in non-rural areas (Liao 1988, 130). In 1999, 75 percent of the people of Taiwan lived in cities, almost 50 percent of the inhabitants lived in the metropolitan areas of the cities of Taipei, Kaohsiung, and Taichung (Knapp 1999, 23). In 2015, the urbanization rate increased to 76.9 percent, followed by 78.9 percent in 2020 (Textor 2022).

South Korea

South Korea’s urbanization rate was 14.5 percent in 1945 (Kim 1998, 107). In 1960, the urbanization rate rose to 28 percent, and it was followed by 41 percent a decade later, in 1970 (Kwon no date). In 1975, the urbanization rate increased to 48.4 percent (Kim 2010b, 115). In 1980, the urbanization rate reached 57.2 percent (Kim 1998, 107). With 74.4 percent, South Korean urbanization reached a new record figure in 1990 (Kim2010b, 115). Ten years later, in
2000, urbanization in the country had further increased, that year reaching 79.62 percent (Dronina et al. 2016, 18). 2005 saw another increase, the urbanization rate was 81.5 percent in the mid-00s (Kim 2010b, 115). In 2010, only a minor increase could be noted compared to 2005, the new number was 81.93 percent (Dronina et al. 2016, 18). By 2013, the urbanization rate once again increased only on the margins, now reaching 82 percent (Kim 2015, 3). In 2021, South Korea’s urbanization rate was slightly lower than in 2013, the new figure was 81.41 percent which was the same number as in 2020 (O’Neill 2023).

From this comparison it is visible that South Korea’s urbanization rate following the two countries’ de facto independence was lower than Taiwan’s. It took until the 90s for South Korea to catch up and by 2000, its urbanization rate was slightly higher. Since then, South Korea’s urbanization rate has been higher, reaching more than 80 percent since the early 21st century whereas Taiwan’s urbanization rate is yet to rise above 80 percent.

The fourth and final table illustrates the development in Taiwan’s and South Korea’s urbanization rates:

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Urbanization rate</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1952 (TW)</th>
<th>1961 (TW)</th>
<th>1972 (TW)</th>
<th>1980</th>
<th>2020 (TW)</th>
<th>2021 (SK)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>61.1</td>
<td>61.6</td>
<td>78.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>57.2</td>
<td>81.41</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. Taiwan’s and South Korea’s democratization from Dahl’s democracy theory

7.1 Taiwan’s and South Korea’s democratization from the first institution of polyarchy

The first institution is: “Control over governmental decisions about policy is constitutionally vested in elected officials.”

Taiwan

As mentioned earlier in the thesis, local elections were held prior to democratization. But being elected to a county or a municipality meant limited political power since the local government was dominated by the KMT party-state (Göbel 2004, 3). Elections for the national level were first held in 1969 as a supplementary election. These elections had been suspended since 1947 (Tien & Shiau 1992, 58-59). Holding national elections in Taiwan presented a dilemma for the KMT since they claimed to be the government for Mainland China too. In the 1969 supplementary election, 15 new members were elected to the National Assembly and 11 new members made it to the Legislative Yuan (Wei 1976, 264-265). The parliamentarians elected were however few compared to the ones chosen in the late 40s, but this gave the Taiwanese the opportunity to impact national politics for the first time (Fell 2012, 31). It was not, however, sufficient to satisfy the first institution of polyarchy.

In 1972, another supplementary election was held which meant more Taiwanese parliamentarians, 53 were elected to the National Assembly and 51 for the Legislative Yuan (Wei 1976, 265). Another supplementary election was held in 1986, the same year the DPP was founded. In the December election, the opposition party won 11 National Assembly seats and 12 seats in the Legislative Yuan. This election was critical since it marked the first multi-party election in Taiwan (Fell 2012, 33). The DPP seats made up 16.7 percent of the total seats and 22.2 percent of the votes (ibid, 57).

In December 1989, yet another supplementary election was held. The DPP were looking to improve their share of the votes compared to 1986 and set the goal at 30 percent of the votes. They received 31 percent of the votes compared to the KMT’s almost 60 percent. The increased
number of votes gave the DPP 21 seats in the Legislative Yuan. Since 20 seats are needed to introduce legislation, the DPP were now able to do so unlike in 1986 (Dreyer 1990, 54-55). Earlier that year, in January, the Law on the Organization of Civil Groups was passed which legalized the formation of political parties, and by the December election, over 50 parties were registered (Fell 2012, 33).

Despite all the supplementary elections held, in 1990, 140 of the 216 Legislative Yuan members and 630 of the 835 National Assembly members were the same as the ones elected in China in 1947-1948. They had to retire at the end of 1991 after a decision by the Council of Grand Justices (Tien & Shiau 1992, 61). This ruling paved the way for the first parliamentary elections where all seats would be elected by the Taiwanese. The election to the National Assembly occurred in December 1991 (ibid, 59). For the Legislative Yuan, the first election where all members were chosen was held in December 1992 (Hsieh & Nioi 1996a, 13). Thus, by 1992, control over governmental decisions about policy was constitutionally vested in elected officials. The background to the elections, and the results will be elaborated in the next section which concerns the second institution of polyarchy.

South Korea

In August 1948, as earlier written, the ROK was established. General elections were held that year which founded the first National Assembly, the legislative body which elected the president. The first president of the country was Syngman Rhee, an independence leader during the Japanese colonial rule and a genuine anti-communist. The democratic republic was not stable, and by December, the National Security Law was enacted, officially intended to deal with a national security crisis, however, it turned out to be used against political opposition. Rhee became increasingly authoritarian and proposed an end to the two-term limit and a revised constitution (Woo 2018a, 30-31). This contributed to growing opposition, and by April 1960, a student revolt led to the downfall of Rhee and an end to the First Republic. The Second Republic started later that year (Lew 2000, 28).

Premier Chang Myŏn became the new leader of South Korea (ibid, 28). Democracy returned to South Korea and the parliamentary system reduced the power of the president and distributed it to the various branches of government. His government was, however, characterized by weakness and incompetence, they proved unable to meet the demands of the student protesters.
The economy deteriorated and this combined with a national security crisis led to a military coup by Park Chung-hee in May 1961 which marked the end of the Second Republic and the start of the Third Republic (Woo 2018a, 31). South Korea had thus had a brief period of democratic rule prior to its later democratization, an experience which was not shared by Taiwan (Kassomeh 2021, 3).

Another military coup followed which ended Park-Chung-hee's authoritarian rule. Park was assassinated and the coup by Major-General Chun Doo-Hwan led to an extension of martial law and an end to the temporary student protests which followed Park’s death (Gray 2008, 111). National Assembly elections took place in 1985, with Chun’s party, Democratic Justice Party (DJP), having financial and organizational resources unmatched by other parties, and an electoral system that benefitted the ruling party (Kim 1986, 67-68). The DJP won the election, gaining 35.3 percent of the votes compared to the main opposition party, New Korean Democratic Party (NKPD), who received 29.2 percent (Koh 1985, 888). This election did not mean the arrival of democracy, but it was a key step closer in that direction (ibid, 897).

The struggle for democratization continued in South Korea, and two years later, in 1987, the June Democracy Movement took to the streets to protest. Millions of people participated in the protests, mostly students, but also other groups in society (Andersson & Mechkova 2016, 4). This movement was led by the National Coalition for a Democratic Constitution (NCDC) (Lee 2002, 834). In that month, the government presented the Declaration of Political Reforms which included direct presidential elections and improved civil rights. A referendum supported the revised constitution, and the first direct presidential election was held that year, 1987 (Andersson & Mechkova 2016, 4). In the new constitution, the president could be elected for one five-year term (Kassomeh 2021, 3). The presidential election that year will be elaborated for one five-year term under the next institution of polyarchy. The 1988 election to the National Assembly was held in April (Kim 1989, 480). It will also be analyzed in the upcoming section. South Korea’s reaching of the first institution of polyarchy, and their democratization thus arrived earlier than Taiwan’s.

7.2 Taiwan’s and South Korea’s democratization from the second institution of polyarchy

The second institution is: “Elected officials are chosen and peacefully removed in relatively frequent, fair and free elections in which coercion is quite limited.”
Taiwan

In the summer of 1990, an important event for the future of Taiwan’s political system was held. It was the National Affairs Conference which was initiated by President Lee Teng-hui following massive student protests against the National Assembly. Several groups took part in the conference for instance KMT politicians, scholars, businessmen and DPP politicians. There, many decisions were taken including holding a full re-election to the National Assembly in 1991 and the Legislative Yuan in 1992. It was also decided that an election to the presidency would be held in 1996, but there was disagreement on whether it would be a direct election or an election by the members of the National Assembly (Fell 2012, 35).

In the 1991 National Assembly election, 325 seats were to be filled. 667 candidates representing 16 different parties participated in the election. The KMT secured a convincing win, they got 67.72 percent of the votes while the DPP did worse than during the 1989 Legislative Yuan supplementary election. In the 1991 National Assembly election, the DPP only received 22.78 percent of the total votes (Long 1992, 217). Ahead of the election, the DPP based their campaign on independence for Taiwan, they wanted to hold a referendum on declaring formal independence. This view on independence was not supported by the voters (Rubinstein 1999b, 455). Five years later, in 1996, the next National Assembly elections were held. The KMT lost support, getting 49.68 percent of the votes whereas the DPP went in the opposite direction, increasing their support to 29.85 percent (Bellows 1996, 244). Therefore, some of the KMT’s elected assembly members from 1991 lost and were removed in this fair and free election, the second institution of polyarchy was thus reached.

1992 saw the first election to the Legislative Yuan where all seats were available. The election was called the most important one in Taiwan at the time by some observers. The campaign began on the 9th of December and lasted ten days. 403 candidates campaigned for the 161 seats. 71 parties were registered in Taiwan at the time, an increase from the 1989 supplementary election (Copper 1992, 71-72). The KMT received more votes than the DPP, securing 61.67 percent of the votes compared with 36.9 percent for the opposition party. The results were still considered a failure for the KMT as they lost support compared to the National Assembly election in 1991 (ibid, 74).
As decided in 1990, the first direct presidential election was held in 1996. In March that year, the sitting president, Lee Teng-hui was reelected, he received 54 percent of the votes and thus secured the presidency for a four-year term. He defeated the DPP candidate Peng Ming-min (Hsieh & Niou 1996b, 545-546). Peng got 21.1 percent of the votes which was less than expected. One reason for that is that some DPP voters turned to Lee since he was the first native Taiwanese to hold the presidency. One estimate was that 14 to 15 percent of KMT’s 54 percent vote share came from DPP supporters (Bellows 1996, 242-243).

March 2000 proved to be a crucial month in Taiwanese history. In the presidential election, Chen Shui-bian, representing the DPP, won the election by getting 39 percent of the votes. The reason this minority support was enough was because of internal divisions in the KMT. The former member Soong Chu-yu ran as an independent and received 37 percent support while the KMT candidate, Lien Chan, got 23 percent (Rigger 2001, 944-946). This was the first time in Taiwanese history that a democratic transfer of power took place. It was a peaceful transfer of power (Hsiao 2002, 204). In 2000, Taiwan thus reached the second institution of polyarchy at the presidential level through the free and fair election combined with the non-coercive transfer of power. It was clear Taiwan had achieved a more democratic and inclusive political culture at the time.

South Korea

In 1987, the direct election of the president in South Korea marked the progress of the democratization process (Wakabayashi 1997, 423). Roh Tae Woo was the chairman of the DJP and thus their nominee for president in the election. He won the election by getting 35.9 percent of the votes. With the start of his rule, South Korea started its Sixth Republic (Lee 1993, 356). The two main opposition candidates, Kim Dae Jung, and Kim Young Sam could not unite behind one nominee, and thus their votes were spread out. That enabled Roh to win the tight race (Cumings 1997, 389). During the election, Kim Young Sam represented the Unification Democratic Party, (UDP) and he received 28 percent of the votes. Kim Dae Jung formed a new party, the Party for Peace and Democracy, (PPD) and his votes were slightly fewer, landing at 27 percent. Another Kim among the opposition candidates, Kim Jong-pil, ran for the New Democratic-Republican Party (NDRP). His support from the voters turned out to be 8.1 percent.
This fragmentation among the opposition led to anger among the pro-democracy protesters (Woo 2018a, 39).

1992 saw the second consecutive presidential election in South Korea. In this election, the first civilian president and former opposition leader, Kim Young Sam was elected (Heo & Woo 2007, 151). One factor facilitating Kim’s victory was a spectacular party merger that took place in early 1990. His party, UDP, merged with Roh’s DJP and Kim Jong-pil's NDRP to form the Democratic Liberal Party (DLP) (Cumings 1997, 390). In the December election, Kim Young Sam achieved 42 percent of the votes cast. Kim Dae Jung, who had formed a new party, the Democratic Party, (DP) got 34 percent of the votes. An outsider among the nominees, the then billionaire leader of Hyundai, Chung Ju Yung, led the Unification National Party, (UNP) and he received 16 percent of the votes in an election that was viewed as the freest one at the time in South Korea (Scalapino 1993, 70). Just like in the 1987 presidential election, it was clear that the division among the opposition candidates meant that the winner could secure the presidency without a majority of the votes. With this election, South Korea came closer to achieving the second institution of polyarchy.

The third presidential election in a row was held in December 1997. Kim Dae Jung ran for president for the third straight time, and this time he was elected president. This was historic since it was the first time an opposition party won the election, and a peaceful transfer of power happened (Croissant 2002, 233). A key to the victory was his agreement in October with Kim Jong-pil, which meant that he would become the candidate for both their parties (Baker 2014, 70). Thereby, South Korea achieved the first peaceful transfer of power from the governing party to an opposition party three years earlier than Taiwan.

This was Kim Dae Jung’s fourth presidential campaign, and he faced six other rivals with Lee Hoi-chang and Rhee In-je being the most prominent candidates. Kim represented the National Congress for New Politics, (NCNP) while Lee campaigned for the Grand National Party, (GNP) and Rhee led the New Party by the People (NPP). The main battle stood between Kim and Lee (Park 1998, 58). Lee received 38.7 percent of the votes while Rhee got 19.2 percent of the South Koreans’ vote. But it was Kim who won, and he became the first progressive leader in nearly four decades (Woo 2018b, 51). Kim had been leading in many opinion polls prior to the election and ended up getting 40.3 percent of the votes. Other than the collaboration with Kim Jong-pil,
internal conflicts in the GNP also facilitated Kim Dae Jung’s victory (Kang & Jaung 1999, 603-604). By this election, South Korea achieved the second institution of polyarchy since it was a free and fair election followed by a peaceful transfer of power. A more democratic and inclusive political culture had been formed.

The first National Assembly elections in a democratic South Korea were held in 1988. Election day was the 26th of April (Kim 1989, 480). The governing party, DJP, were unable to secure a simple majority but they won the most seats of all parties (Sun 1997, 10). Due to the difficulties of establishing working majorities, the three-party merger previously mentioned creating the DLP took place in 1990. After that, the government had a two-thirds majority in the National Assembly (Park 2000, 29). On the parliamentary level, this year was when South Korea reached their second institution of polyarchy, and it happened earlier than in Taiwan.

7.3 Taiwan’s and South Korea’s democratization from the third institution of polyarchy

The third institution is: “Practically all adults have the right to vote in these elections.”

Taiwan

When it comes to the third institution of polyarchy, practically all adults have the right to vote in Taiwan, but there are some restrictions. When it comes to the voting age, it is not 18 but 20 years. Thus, 18- and 19-year-old adults are unable to vote. For presidential elections, the voters must have lived in Taiwan at least six months in a row. For eligible voters residing in other countries, they are unable to vote there, but can apply to go back to Taiwan to vote. For other elections, the residency criterion is reduced to four months (CEC no date, a). Discussion about allowing voters to vote from other parts of Taiwan and the world has been taking place for over 20 years but concerns about electoral integrity have meant no reforms. This is an issue for young voters studying in other cities or countries, and even more so it would impact voters in the age of 18 and 19 if the voting age would be lowered (Rich, Eliassen & Einhorn 2021). For referendums however, the voting age was lowered to 18 in 2018 (Chou 2020). To actually lower the voting age to 18 in presidential and other elections could contribute to a more inclusive political culture in Taiwan.

In light of this, a constitutional referendum was held in 2022 on whether to lower the voting age to 18 or not. This was the first constitutional referendum, and it was known as “18-Year-Old
Civil Rights”. The November 26 referendum also included a lowering of the age for candidates in elections to 18 (CEC no date, b). In order for this referendum to pass, a simple majority of the eligible voters had to vote yes, which meant more than 9.6 million votes out of the more than 19.2 million voters. Among those who voted, a majority voted in favor of a lower voting age, 5.6 million in total while 5 million wanted to preserve the current age requirement. Had this proposed constitutional revision passed, around 411,200 more people in the age group 18-19 would have been able to participate in local elections coming after the referendum (Teng 2022). The time when this institution of polyarchy was reached was written earlier this chapter, 1991 for National Assembly elections, 1992 for Legislative Yuan elections and 1996 for presidential elections.

South Korea

Just like in Taiwan, practically all adults have voting rights for the elections. But, just as in the other East Asian nation, there are some limitations. South Korean citizens aged 18 or older have the right to vote in presidential and National Assembly election. However, regarding local elections, the voter must be at least 19 years old. Voting in those elections is also possible for non-Korean citizens if they are registered in a local constituency and have had a residence visa for at least three years. Apart from the constraints in terms of voting age in local elections, there are a few additional factors that might stop you from voting. If you are declared incompetent or sentenced to prison, you cannot vote. Moreover, if you have committed a crime in relation to the election or violated the Election Act or the Political Fund Act, you are not welcome to vote either. If elected members of the National Assembly, local councils, the head of local government or the president commits these crimes they are not entitled to vote either. Finally, if a court ruling or another Act suspends the citizen’s right to vote, then voting will also be impossible (NEC no date).

In 2019, an initiative aimed at increasing inclusiveness in South Korean political culture was taken by the National Assembly. An electoral bill reform lowered the voting age from 19 to 18. In 2020, 18-year-olds could vote for the first time, they numbered around 540,000 people which represented 1.2 percent of all voters. South Korea was prior to this the only member of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) which denied voting rights for people aged 18 (The Korea Times 2022). After this reform, the gap when voters could vote
for the first time increased between South Korea and Taiwan, with the former developing in a more inclusive direction in terms of voting rights.

7.4 Taiwan’s and South Korea’s democratization from the fourth institution of polyarchy

The fourth institution is: “Most adults also have the right to run for public offices for which candidates run in these elections.”

Taiwan

Regarding this fourth institution of polyarchy, most adults have the right to run for public offices for which candidates run in these elections in Taiwan. The minimum age for running for office is 23 years (Teng 2022). The earlier mentioned 2022 referendum known as “18-Year-Old Civil Rights” also concerned lowering the age of running for office to 18. But since that referendum did not pass, the age for running for office remains at 23 (CEC no date, b).

Fewer adults have the right to run for president in Taiwan. The conditions for running for president are less inclusive than running for other offices. This is mainly visible in the age requirement. In order to be eligible to be a presidential candidate in Taiwan, you must be at least 40 years old. Moreover, citizenship in the ROC is required combined with residency in the country for at least six months in a row, and Taiwan must have been the person’s home for at least 15 years in total. In addition to that, there are a few more restrictions including a ban for military men in active service, for people handling election affairs, and for those with a foreign citizenship. People who acquire citizenship in the ROC through naturalization or people in the PRC, Hong Kong or Macao who have a legal right to enter Taiwan may not run for president or vice president. Finally, those who have been convicted for specific crimes, who are declared bankrupt, deprived of civil rights which have not been restored, and those who have been put under guardianship or assistantship are also unable to run for president (CEC no date, c). In sum, Taiwan achieves this fourth institution of polyarchy but the laws regulating the right to vote are more inclusive than the laws for running for office.

South Korea

In South Korea, like in Taiwan, most adults enjoy the right to run for public offices for which candidates run in these elections. To run for National Assembly elections, the candidate must be
25 or older. To run for local council election, or for head of the local government, the minimum age of the candidate is the same but there are also residency demands. The person must be registered as a resident in the relevant constituency for a period of at least 60 straight days until election day. For presidential elections, the lowest possible age for the nominee is substantially higher, 40 years. There is also a rule that the candidate must have lived in South Korea for the last five years leading up to the election. South Korean citizenship is a demand for all candidates at these various levels (NEC no date).

The age requirement regarding running for president has been debated. One opposition party, the Justice Party (JP) proposes a lowering of the minimum age so that people in their 20s and 30s can run as well. A Realmeter poll of 500 adults showed that a slight majority, 50.3 percent, were in favor of lowering the age requirement. Opponents to that proposal made up 44.8 percent of the respondents. Support for a lower age requirement was especially common among people in their 20s and 30s, people living in Seoul, and conservatives (The Korea Herald 2021).

The lowest age for nominees for the presidency is the same in both South Korea and Taiwan but the residency regulations mean that the candidate must have lived longer in the country prior to the election in South Korea than what the law indicates in Taiwan. In South Korea you must be two years older to run for other offices than in Taiwan. It is a minor difference, but it still shows Taiwan having a more inclusive form of polyarchy in this fourth institution.

7.5 Taiwan’s and South Korea’s democratization from the fifth institution of polyarchy

The fifth institution is: “Citizens have an effectively enforced right to freedom of expression, particularly political expression, including criticism of the officials, the conduct of the government, the prevailing political, economic, and social system, and the dominant ideology.”

Taiwan

The constitution of the ROC (Taiwan) was adopted on the 25th of December 1946 in Nanjing, China, and came into force on the 25th of December 1947. Chapter 2, Article 11 stipulates that people shall have freedom of speech, teaching, writing, and publication (Office of the President: Republic of China (Taiwan) no date). However, the year after, in 1948, the “Temporary Provisions during the Period of Communist Rebellion” was introduced which provided the legal framework for martial law in 1949. The constitution was thereby frozen, and it would remain so
for the coming four decades (Mobrand 2020, 623). Due to that, the Taiwanese citizens were unable to express themselves freely at the time.

By the late 80s, in 1989, an improvement in this area could be noted, but it could not yet be viewed as freedom of speech since people could be arrested for supporting Taiwanese independence (Fell 2012, 1). In 1990, the situation remained the same since arguing for Taiwanese independence or communism was still considered a crime (ibid, 33). In 1992, Article 100 of the Criminal Code was amended which meant that people could express views in favor of Taiwanese independence. Freedom of speech was thus legalized (Wakabayashi 1997, 435).

Taiwan achieved the fifth institution of polyarchy in 1992, the same year as the first complete Legislative Yuan election. That Taiwanese could speak in favor of Taiwanese independence and criticize the dominant ideology, Chinese nationalism, showed that freedom of expression was real in the country.

South Korea

The creation of the ROK in 1948 also led to a democratic constitution but from that year until 1960, the real characteristics of the political system were not democratic (Setiawati 2005, 229). That includes a lack of freedom of expression. That freedom is guaranteed for South Korean citizens following the amended constitution from the 29th of October 1987. In Article 21, it is stated that everybody enjoys freedom of speech, press, assembly, and association. It is also written that censorship of speech shall not be recognized (Ministry of Government Legislation 2010, 47).

Progress in the field of freedom of expression could be seen in the late 1980s. With the democratic transition in 1987, it was clear that freedom of expression improved. But laws enacted during the authoritarian era such as the National Security Law still gave the government tools to use against political opposition (Haggard & You 2015, 171). Legal improvements could be seen in March 1989 when new laws safeguarding freedom of expression were enacted. This especially concerned political protests (Strnad 2010, 215).

Freedom of expression in South Korea was less free than Taiwan especially from the year 2008 to the years after (Haggard & You 2015, 167). Although South Korea reached this fifth institution of polyarchy earlier than Taiwan, in the late 80s compared to the early 90s, that
development has not continued. Instead, freedom of expression is greater in Taiwan than in South Korea.

7.6 Taiwan’s and South Korea’s democratization from the sixth institution of polyarchy

The sixth institution is: “They also have access to alternative sources of information that are not monopolized by the government or any other single group.”

Taiwan

In Taiwan in mid-1946, freedom of the press worsened since reporters were either sued, harassed, or arrested. For example, attacks were carried out against the newspaper *Jen-min tao-pao* since it was critical of the KMT government. The paper was forced to cease to exist (Phillips 1999, 287). Another case of media suppression took place in the 60s and was directed towards the magazine *Free China Fortnightly*. This was a liberal magazine critical of the growing authoritarianism of the government. The founder, Lei Chen, was arrested when he tried to form a political party, the China Democratic Party, in 1960. He was sentenced to ten years in jail, and along with that, his magazine was shut down too (Wang 1999, 330-331).

This lack of alternative sources of information continued in the coming decades. The KMT led the media through owning and censoring media. There was a ban on new newspapers. In 1987, there were 31 newspapers in Taiwan of which 20 were privately owned and 10 were owned by the government, the KMT or the military which meant that they were all KMT papers in the then KMT party-state in Taiwan. Electronic media was even more controlled by the KMT. *Broadcasting Corporation of China* was governed by the KMT, and this company was the most dominant one in the radio networks. The main owners of the three tv stations were the KMT, the Provincial Government and the Ministry of Defense and Education. Media diversity could only be found in magazines and journals where satire of the KMT could be found. But it occasionally led to prison for the satirists (Fell 2012, 21-22).

Changes to printed media began in 1988 when the ban on new newspapers was lifted. 1989 was the first year with political advertisements in newspapers. Despite these liberalizations, the KMT was still the dominant force in both printed and electronic media (ibid, 33). In 1991, further liberalizations were made as election advertisement was legalized on tv too (ibid, 35). By 1992, access to mass media was closing in on the levels of many European countries (Tien & Shiau
In 1992, thus, the sixth institution of polyarchy was reached, contributing to a more inclusive political culture in Taiwan.

**South Korea**

The constitution of South Korea states that freedom of the press is guaranteed in Article 21 (Ministry of Government Legislation 2010, 47). But that was initially not the reality, the National Security Law was used in several ways, and one such way was to restrict freedom of the press (Woo 2018, 30-31). Media censorship was increased by Chun Doo Hwan on the 17th of May 1980 following massive protests. Publishing licenses of 172 periodicals ended, the news media was forced to change, and almost 700 journalists were fired in connection to the media censorship process (Baker 2014, 68).

Improvements in this field started with the 29 June Declaration in 1987 by President Roh Tae-woo. Before that day, there were 32 daily newspapers, 201 weekly magazines, and 1,203 monthly journals in South Korea. In June 1992, the numbers had risen to 117 newspapers, 1,561 weekly magazines, and 2,745 monthly magazines. In November 1987, the Basic Press Act of 1980 was terminated and so was the Bureau of Information Policy. Moreover, press restrictions in the South Korean Criminal Code and the National Security Law were amended or cancelled. In March 1989, the ban on publishing and owning material on communism and North Korea was lifted (Strnad 2010, 215-216). Given this, it can be said that South Korea reached the sixth institution of polyarchy slightly earlier than Taiwan, although both countries showed fast progress in the late 80s and early 90s.

**7.7 Taiwan’s and South Korea’s democratization from the seventh institution of polyarchy**

The seventh institution is: “Finally, they have an effectively enforced right to form and join autonomous associations, including political associations, such as political parties and interest groups, that attempt to influence the government by competing in elections and by other peaceful means.”

**Taiwan**

In the constitution of the ROC, (Taiwan) freedom of assembly and association for the people is guaranteed in Article 14 (Office of the President: Republic of China (Taiwan) no date). But due
to the 1949 introduction of martial law, the constitution was essentially irrelevant, and the citizens were thus denied freedom of assembly and association along with many other rights spelled out in the constitution (Mobrand 2020, 623).

During martial law, the KMT attempted to control associational life, and it was not until the end of martial law in 1987 that liberalizing changes for civil society could be seen (Fell 2012, 7). From 1952 to 1987, the number of interest groups grew from 2,560 to 11,306 while the members increased from 1.3 million to 8.3 million. However, most of these groups were controlled by the KMT; it was not a free civil society during that period (ibid, 173). In late 1989, there were at least 18 social movements that had formed. 6,000 new civic groups were registered in 1987 but by 2001, the number had risen to 18,456. In 2009, it was even higher at 34,171 (ibid, 178). Associational life in the form of social movements contributed to Taiwan’s democratization, but they were at the same time able to develop thanks to the same democratization process (ibid, 190). From this, it can be argued that Taiwan reached this seventh institution of polyarchy in the late 80s.

South Korea

Just as in Taiwan, the South Korean constitution includes freedom of assembly and association. That is explicitly stated in Article 21 (Ministry of Government Legislation 2010, 47). Similar to the Taiwanese case, these freedoms were not upheld initially, since the 1948 National Security Law gave the Rhee government the chance to use the law to restrict freedom of association (Woo 2018, 30-31).

Improvements in this area could be seen in the 80s. In June 1987, the Declaration of Political Reforms was introduced by the authoritarian government, calling for respect for civil rights which included freedom of assembly. A referendum later that year led to a revision of the constitution which further strengthened freedom of assembly (Andersson & Mechkova 2016, 4). After these developments, a sharp increase in civil society participation could be noted in South Korea (ibid, 7).

The development in South Korea for freedom of association and assembly largely coincided with Taiwan’s development in the field. From an official protection of this right but a de facto denial until the late 80s when a liberalization process took place. Political rights for the South Korean
citizens came earlier than for the Taiwanese and it could be argued that the South Koreans were also slightly ahead in terms of freedom of assembly.
8. Discussion

From the analysis of Taiwan’s and South Korea’s democratization from modernization theory it becomes clear that a remarkable progress took place in the variables of wealth, industrialization, and education, especially from the 1960s to the 1990s even though improvements after that can also be noted. For the variable of urbanization, both Taiwan and South Korea became more urbanized over time which is in line with modernization theory. This modernization process was highlighted by Ginsburg (2008, 101) as it paved the way for social and political changes. The economic growth created a larger middle class who demanded political liberalization.

Rigger (1999, 140-141) also finds that modernization theory can contribute to understanding Taiwan’s reforms. But according to her, ethnicity provides a better explanation. The Mainlander/Taiwanese divide is more likely to determine political preferences than socioeconomic status according to her. It is crucial to focus on that dimension as well, one view alone cannot explain this democratization process.

Lipset (1959, 75) found that the better off a country is, the more likely it is that democracy will be preserved. As the application of modernization theory has shown, a steady improvement in the economy of Taiwan and South Korea has occurred combined with a later democratization. This belief proved to be true in the two cases as these democracies remain intact, and there are no domestic threats to these two democracies today.

For South Korea, Kwon, (no date) emphasizes the importance of the Confucian heritage for its modernization process. The socioeconomic development was facilitated by some of this philosophy's characteristics: importance of education, centralized authoritarian bureaucracy, and a unified principle in hiring government staff. This is another valuable perspective that adds to the knowledge of the country’s development, and democratization. This perspective also facilitates understanding Taiwan’s democratization.

The influence of external actors, especially the US, but also the UN has also impacted the democratization of the two countries. This was shown in the literature review.
Another relevant perspective in Taiwan’s and South Korea’s democratization is strategic culture. Gray (1999, 51-52) argues that one important dimension of strategy is culture. Culture makes up social ideas passed on from one generation to the next one as well as traditions, methods, habits, and values in a geographical security community with a unique history. While culture changes more slowly, strategic culture is more likely to change under new circumstances such as new experiences happening, being coded, and later applied in the particular culture. Moreover, there is a generational dimension to strategic culture where people from different generations will have their own strategic worldview based on historical experiences. Thus, a state’s strategic culture will be reinterpreted by each generation of leaders based on their and their country’s experience at the time (ibid, 67-68).

A central aspect of Taiwan’s strategic culture is its complex international status with few other states recognizing Taiwan as a state with the result being Taiwan’s exclusion from full participation in international organizations. The creation of Taiwan’s strategic culture was largely shaped by two events. The first was the KMT occupation of Taiwan following the end of the Second World War. The second was the democratization of Taiwan which as noted earlier began in the 80s (The National Bureau of Asian Research 2017). This is relevant for the generational aspect of Taiwan’s strategic culture, the first two leaders after the KMT takeover, Chiang Kai-shek, and his son Chiang Ching-kuo, were both born in China and staunch Chinese nationalists. The first democratically elected leader, Lee Teng-hui, was a native Taiwanese, and he played a key role in the democratization process. Thus, the different leaders’ background and historical experiences shaped Taiwan’s strategic culture and political development.

Taiwan’s strategic culture is also impacted by its geographical position being a small island-state next to the vast Chinese Mainland. The response to the military threats from China is a key dimension in Taiwan’s strategic culture (Edmonds 2003, 244). Related to Taiwan’s democratization, a successful Chinese attack and subsequent occupation of Taiwan would put an end to the country’s democratic system.

For South Korea, its strategic culture is also greatly impacted by its geographical location close to the greater powers of the region, China, and Japan (Cha 2001, 116). Regarding this geographical position, one of the three parts of South Korea’s strategic culture is the threat from North Korea. The other parts are increasing prosperity and power and upholding a robust alliance
with the US. The South Korean strategic culture is also impacted by its history and the view of themselves as an ancient and homogenous people (Kim 2014, 270). Regarding South Korea’s democracy and its strategic culture, the threat from North Korea is the one most closely connected. If the North Koreans would invade South Korea and prevail, then South Korea’s status as a democracy would end.

Taiwan and South Korea were found to be MDP countries in the 80s by Dahl (1989, 254). Democratic values, such democratic movements and political opposition were formed, but it was not sufficient to develop a polyarchy. However, as has been proven in the analysis, many political reforms have been carried out in the two countries since Dahl’s writing in 1989. Especially in the Taiwanese case, democratization took place in the following decade and Taiwan’s development into an MDP society facilitated this.

Regarding Dahl’s (1971, 40) three identified ways an authoritarian and independent nation-state develops into a polyarchy, it becomes clear after the analysis that both Taiwan and South Korea followed the first route. That is, a gradual transformation of the old regime into a polyarchy that takes place peacefully.

In the second part of the analysis, it becomes clear that Taiwan and South Korea have reached all seven institutions of polyarchy in Dahl’s democracy theory. The time of reaching the various institutions have differed, some in the 80s and others in the 90s. Generally, South Korea reached the institutions of polyarchy earlier than Taiwan.
9. Conclusion

The aim of the thesis was to reach an increased understanding of Taiwan’s and South Korea’s democratization from their domestic perspectives. Especially relevant was the economic and institutional dimension. Through modernization theory and Dahl’s democracy theory centered around the concept of polyarchy, that increased understanding was reached. In relation to the research questions, the analysis has showed that modernization theory and Dahl’s democracy theory can increase understanding of the domestic factors for the democratization of Taiwan and South Korea. However, further perspectives such as for example culture, external influences, geopolitics, strategic culture, and in the Taiwanese case, ethnicity, can provide additional knowledge on this topic.

In conclusion, Taiwan’s and South Korea’s democratization was facilitated by the development in the four variables of modernization theory. Dahl’s democracy theory provided a framework for assessing the democratization process in the two countries which showed that South Korea was generally earlier than Taiwan in reaching the seven institutions of polyarchy.

Through my researching of this topic during this semester, it is clear that my understanding of the initial prospects for democratization in Taiwan and South Korea and the actual democratization process’s combined with the democratic consolidation phase has increased. My hope is that readers of this thesis will also experience this increased understanding.

In the introduction, under limitations, I thought that modernization theory and Dahl’s democracy theory would be a good match for Taiwan and South Korea. As the analysis has shown, that proved to be the case.
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