

Whither the Kuomintang?*

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On 18 March 2000, 82.69 per cent of eligible voters went to the polls to elect the new president of the Republic of China on Taiwan (ROC). It was embarrassing to the ruling Kuomintang (Nationalist Party, KMT) that its candidate Lien Chan, the incumbent vice-president, was not only defeated by the Democratic Progressive Party's (DPP) Chen Shui-bian but also lagged far behind the KMT-turned-independent James Soong (see Table 1). This marks the first time that the KMT has been defeated in a major national election in Taiwan.¹ Of course, the loss in the presidential election does not mean that the KMT will no longer play a significant role in Taiwanese politics. In fact, it still controls a majority, albeit a shaky majority, of seats in the Legislative Yuan, rendering it an important political force to be reckoned with. Given Taiwan's constitutional form of government, which is theoretically closer to the parliamentary system,² the KMT will continue to exert a great deal of influence on Taiwan's politics.

Nevertheless, the fact is that the KMT candidate was defeated badly in the presidential election. Immediately afterwards President Lee Teng-hui stepped down from the KMT chairmanship amid the protest of some traditional KMT supporters who demanded that Lee take responsibility for Lien's defeat, or more accurately, for Chen's victory. Lien succeeded Lee as acting chairman, and later chairman, of the party. The KMT seems to be seriously demoralized. Furthermore, the independent presidential

* An earlier version of this article was presented at the Conference on President Lee Teng-hui's Legacy: Formation and Implications, Taipei, Taiwan, ROC, May 2000. The author would like to thank Bruce Dickson, Chien-min Chao, Kuo-hsiung Lee and Shelley Rigger for their helpful comments and suggestions.

1. Actually, this is the second time the KMT lost the election on a nation-wide basis. The first time was the election for the county magistrates and city mayors held in 1997. But it was a local election.

2. That the ROC constitutional form of government is closer to parliamentarism can be seen in the following stipulations: the highest administrative organ in the country is the Executive Yuan (cabinet), not the presidency; the Executive Yuan is responsible to the Legislative Yuan by means of, among other things, a vote of no confidence exerted by the latter, rather than to the president; and in promulgating laws and issuing ordinances, the president shall obtain the countersignatures of the premier or of the premier and the ministers concerned. Even though the president is now directly popularly elected and can appoint the premier without the approval of the Legislative Yuan, it does not alter, in a fundamental way, the power enjoyed by the president. Indeed, quite a few parliamentary democracies (e.g. Austria, Ireland, Iceland and Portugal) have directly elected heads of state, and many heads of state, including the British monarch, in parliamentary countries can appoint the prime minister without a formal vote of investiture. Also, many people believe that a mixed system modelled after the French Fifth Republic has been instituted in Taiwan following the recent constitutional reforms. But this is not quite right given that the ROC president cannot do many things that a French president can (e.g. dissolving parliament in a more proactive manner, asking parliament to reconsider a law, bypassing parliament by appealing directly to the general public in a referendum, presiding over the Council of Ministers). For a discussion of the constitutional form of government in Taiwan, see John Fuh-sheng Hsieh, "Institutional design for the Republic of China on Taiwan," paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Boston, September 1998.

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Table 1: Results of the 2000 Presidential Election

<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Chen Shui-bian	Democratic Progressive Party	4,977,697	39.30
James Soong	Independent	4,664,972	36.84
Lien Chan	Kuomintang	2,925,513	23.10
Hsu Hsin-liang	Independent	79,429	0.63
Li Ao	New Party	16,782	0.13

Source:

ROC Central Election Commission.

candidate, James Soong, following his impressive performance in the election, decided to form the People First Party (PFP) which may be expected to attract many traditional KMT voters, and thus further erode support for the KMT. It is thus an interesting question whether the KMT will remain a formidable force in Taiwanese politics in the foreseeable future.

Party Alignment in Taiwan

Generally speaking, Taiwan's party structure has remained stable during the past decade or so. In Legislative Yuan elections since 1989, the relative strength of the pan-KMT camp, which includes the KMT, the New Party (NP) and the Democratic Alliance (DA), on the one hand, and the pan-DPP camp, which consists of the DPP, the Taiwan Independence Party (TAIP) and the New Nation Association (NNA), on the other, has not varied very much.

In the 1989 Legislative Yuan election, for instance, the KMT captured 60.22 per cent of the vote according to the Central Election Commission (CEC) data. This figure included any candidate, nominated or not, who claimed to be a KMT member. In 1992, the CEC changed the rule regarding the candidates' party affiliations: only those who were nominated by the party could be recorded as its candidates.³ Thus, although the official CEC data show that the KMT received 53.02 per cent of the vote in 1992, if those candidates who ran as independents but later rejoined the

3. This change was brought about by the introduction of proportional representation (PR) for electing the Legislative Yuan members representing a nation-wide constituency and the overseas Chinese communities. A peculiar feature of the operation of PR in Taiwan is that voters do not have any chance to vote directly for the party lists; instead, their votes for candidates in regular districts were aggregated according to the candidates' party affiliations, and the PR seats were distributed on the basis of such aggregated party votes. As a consequence, the candidates were asked to get the parties' endorsements prior to the election so as to facilitate the aggregation process. For the introduction of PR to Taiwan, see John Fuh-sheng Hsieh, "Manipulating the electoral system under the SNTV: the case of the Republic of China on Taiwan," in Bernard Grofman, Sung-Chull Lee, Edwin A. Winckler, and Brian Woodall (eds.), *Elections in Japan, Korea, and Taiwan under the Single Non-Transferable Vote: The Comparative Study of an Embedded Institution* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1999), pp. 65–84.

KMT are included, the KMT actually won 60.5 per cent. In the Legislative Yuan election held three years later, the New Party which split from the KMT in 1993 entered the race. By combining the votes received by the KMT and NP, the pan-KMT camp garnered 59.01 per cent, not very different from the two previous elections. In 1998, putting together the votes obtained by the KMT, NP and DA, which included many former KMT and NP members, the pan-KMT force received 57.23 per cent of the total vote.

The DPP received 28.26 per cent of the vote in 1989, and increased to 31.03 per cent in 1992. It performed best in 1995 with 33.17 per cent. In 1998, it dropped to 29.56 per cent, but by adding the votes received by the TAIP and the NNA, the pan-DPP vote still reached 32.58 per cent, similar to three years earlier.

An important feature of the Legislative Yuan election is that an overwhelming majority of the seats are elected by the single non-transferable vote (SNTV) under which a voter casts only one vote in a district electing more than one candidate. Such a system displays a certain degree of proportionality referring to the match between each party's vote share and seat share.⁴ As a result, a small party or even an independent qua the smallest party is often able to gain a foothold.

In Taiwan, the SNTV is the major system used for the election of legislators at all levels of government, including the members of the Legislative Yuan. However, for the election of executive offices, such as president, provincial governor, county magistrates, city mayors and so on, the method is the single-member district first-past-the-post system which is very different from the SNTV in terms of its impact on party competition. Normally, only the two major parties are able to compete in these elections.⁵ Thus, the DPP, one of the two major parties, often did better in such elections, particularly at the county/city level or higher. In the elections of county magistrates and city mayors in 1993 and 1997, the gubernatorial and Taipei and Kaohsiung city mayoral elections in 1994, and Taipei and Kaohsiung city mayoral elections in 1998, for instance, the DPP was able to capture around 40 per cent of the vote. In this sense, Chen Shui-bian's 39.3 per cent in the 2000 presidential election was normal for the DPP.⁶ In such elections, there was greater fluctuation for the KMT candidates, but if those candidates who were

4. See Gary W. Cox, "SNTV and d'Hondt are 'equivalent'," *Electoral Studies*, No. 10 (1991), pp. 118–132, and John Fuh-sheng Hsieh, "The SNTV system and its political implications," in Hung-mao Tien (ed.), *Taiwan's Electoral Politics and Democratic Transition: Riding the Third Wave* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1996), pp. 193–212.

5. That such a system facilitates two-party competition has been dubbed Duverger's Law by William H. Riker. See his "The two-party system and Duverger's Law: an essay on the history of political science," *American Political Science Review*, No. 76 (1982), pp. 753–766.

6. In an interesting article, Christopher H. Achen argues that Chen's vote came essentially from the traditional DPP supporters. He compares, at the township level, the distribution of Chen's vote with that of the DPP vote in the 1995 Legislative Yuan election, and finds a tremendous degree of match between the two. See his "Plurality rule when polling is forbidden: the Taiwan presidential election of 2000," paper presented at the conference on Taiwan Issues held by the Center for Asian Studies, University of South Carolina, in Charleston, South Carolina, April 2000.

KMT-turned-independents are included, the fluctuation was not that great. Accordingly, even in elections for executive offices, there is again a certain degree of stability between the pan-KMT and pan-DPP camps.

The major factor contributing to such stability is the underlying cleavage in society that determines the party configuration in Taiwan. In this respect, Taiwan is very different from most of the Western democracies where the dominant cleavages underpinning the party structure are often class and religion, plus occasionally subcultural and rural–urban divisions.⁷ In the past few decades, such new political issues as environmentalism have also become important cleavages as well in moulding the party systems in many Western countries.⁸ However, the situation in Taiwan is quite different. Most of these cleavages are not that salient in affecting party configuration. A series of studies conducted by John Fuh-sheng Hsieh and Emerson M.S. Niou discovered that political rather than socioeconomic issues were more likely to determine popular support for political parties. The national identity issue, referring to people's attitude towards the political association between Taiwan and mainland China, is particularly important in this context.⁹ In this regard, Taiwanese society can be categorized as a divided society – mildly divided as compared to, say, Northern Ireland.

7. Seymour M. Lipset and Stein Rokkan, "Cleavage structures, party systems, and voter alignments: an introduction," in Seymour M. Lipset and Stein Rokkan (eds.), *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives* (New York: The Free Press, 1967), pp. 1–64.

8. See Russell J. Dalton, *Citizen Politics: Public Opinion and Political Parties in the Advanced Industrial Democracies*, 2nd ed. (Chatham, NJ: Chatham House, 1996).

9. See John Fuh-sheng Hsieh and Emerson M.S. Niou, "Issue voting in the Republic of China on Taiwan's 1992 Legislative Yuan election," *International Political Science Review*, No. 17 (1996), pp. 13–27, and "Salient issues in Taiwan's electoral politics," *Electoral Studies*, No. 15 (1996), pp. 219–235. A more comprehensive treatment of cleavages in Taiwan's electoral politics can be found in John Fuh-sheng Hsieh, "Continuity and change in Taiwan's electoral politics," in John Fuh-sheng Hsieh and David Newman (eds.), *How Asia Votes* (New York: Chatham House, 2002). Some people may argue that ethnicity may as well be an important factor here. There is no doubt about it. But ethnicity and national identity are closely related to each other as can be seen in the following table:

Ethnicity	Extreme independence supporters	Moderate independence supporters	Status quo supporters	Moderate unification supporters	Extreme unification supporters	Total
Taiwanese	5 (3.6%)	14 (10.1%)	70 (50.7%)	30 (21.7%)	19 (13.8%)	138 (99.9%)
Taiwanese (Minnan)	57 (7.6%)	130 (17.4%)	351 (47.0%)	152 (20.3%)	57 (7.6%)	747 (99.9%)
Mainlanders	0 (0.0%)	8 (7.3%)	39 (35.8%)	40 (36.7%)	22 (20.2%)	109 (100.0%)

This is based upon National Chengchi University Election Study Centre's 2000 survey (see the following discussion about this and other related surveys), and cell entries are numbers of respondents with row percentages in parentheses. Clearly, Minnan Taiwanese are more likely than others to support independence, and mainlanders are more inclined than others to be in favour of unification, with Hakka Taiwanese somewhere in between. However, with partisan attachments, it is national identity rather than ethnicity per se that determines how people react to political parties. A pro-independence mainlander is more likely to support the DPP or TAIP, for instance.

These studies are based upon surveys conducted by the Opinion Research Taiwan and by the Election Study Centre of National Chengchi University.¹⁰ The respondents were asked to pick up a position between 0 standing for the immediate declaration of independence for Taiwan and 10 for negotiation with mainland China on unification without further delay. (They were also asked about the positions of the various political parties on such an issue.) To simplify the matter, the respondents were regrouped into five categories: extreme independence supporters (0 or 1), moderate independence supporters (2 to 4), status quo supporters (5), moderate unification supporters (6 to 8), and extreme unification supporters (9 or 10). As can be seen in Table 2, prior to the 1999 survey, there was a clear trend towards the status quo, neither independence nor unification. On the one hand, the number of independence supporters had gradually increased, and on the other, the number of unification supporters had decreased drastically, with more and more people moving towards the status quo. Indeed, the status quo became truly dominant as time went by. However, in the 1999 and 2000 surveys, the latter of which was conducted after the 2000 presidential election, there seemed to be a reverse trend moving away from the status quo and becoming more polarized. Even so, the status quo remained the largest mode, attracting more people than other positions along the national identity spectrum.

Generally, even if there have been changes in the distribution of voters on the national identity issue, the broad pattern remains quite stable over the years, explaining, to a large extent, the stability in the relative strength between the pan-KMT and pan-DPP forces in Taiwan's electoral politics. The pan-KMT camp attracts most votes in the middle and the unification side while the pan-DPP camp gains support from the other side plus some in the middle. Nevertheless, despite this relative stability, there have been significant changes within each camp. The KMT, originally the only party in its camp, was later joined by the NP, DA and PFP. Similarly, on the DPP side, the TAIP and NNA emerged to join the DPP.

An important factor contributing to the fragmentation within each camp is the multi-modal nature of the distribution of voters on the national identity issue. Although the status quo has been the largest mode, there are also two smaller modes on both sides of the independence-unification spectrum. Under such circumstances, a multiparty system is, indeed, quite natural.¹¹

Figure 1 draws the 2000 curve for the respondents on the 0–10 scale on the national identity issue. It also shows the median positions of the respondents and the four major parties as perceived by the respondents. As can be seen in the figure, the voters' position is in the middle with the

10. These surveys were conducted by the Opinion Research Taiwan in December 1992, and by the Election Study Centre in January 1995, March 1996, January 1999 and June 2000. They are all nation-wide surveys in which the wordings are not always the same, but do not deviate too much from each other.

11. See, for example, Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1957), ch. 8.

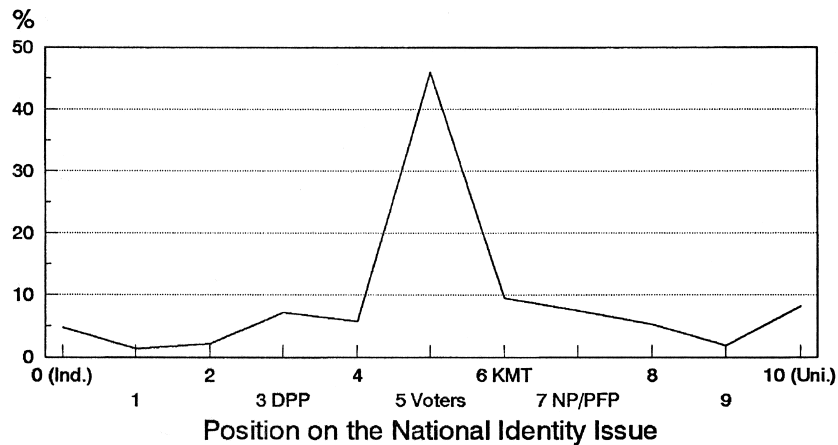
Table 2: Voters' Attitude towards the National Identity Issue (%)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Extreme independence supporters</i>	<i>Moderate Independence Supporters</i>	<i>Status quo supporters</i>	<i>Moderate unification supporters</i>	<i>Extreme unification supporters</i>	<i>Total</i>
December 1992	6.2	6.3	30.6	30.1	26.9	100.1
January 1995	6.6	8.6	51.1	20.7	12.9	99.9
March 1996	9.1	12.4	53.5	15.4	9.7	100.1
January 1999	12.9	14.8	43.5	17.4	11.4	100.0
June 2000	6.2	15.3	46.0	22.4	10.1	100.0

Note:

Row percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Based on surveys conducted by Opinion Research Taiwan in 1992 and the Election Study Centre of National Chengchi University in other years.

Figure 1: Voters Distribution and Voters' and Parties' Positions on the National Identity Issue, 2000



Source:

The Election Study Centre, National Chengchi University.

KMT somewhat to their right, the NP and PFP further to the right, and the DPP very much to the left.

For a very long time, the KMT was a party advocating reunification between Taiwan and mainland China, but since the late 1980s, under the leadership of President Lee Teng-hui, it has downplayed such a theme, resulting in, on the one hand, an intraparty power struggle between the less pro-unification mainstream faction and the more pro-unification non-mainstream faction, and on the other, the split of some young supporters to form the NP in 1993.

Within the DPP camp, a similar trend took place. The DPP has long been known for favouring Taiwan independence. But recently, sensing the popular mood towards the status quo, it began to moderate its stance, thus alienating some staunch independence supporters who later formed the TAIP.

Apart from the multi-modal nature of voters' distribution on the national identity issue, another important factor contributing to the fragmentation of Taiwan's party structure is the electoral system used for the legislatures at various levels of government. As noted above, the SNTV system exhibits a certain degree of proportionality, thus giving small parties or even independents a good chance of winning elections. Hence, small parties may flourish. Indeed, it can be shown that the number of viable candidates will approach the number of seats available in a district plus one, meaning the larger the district magnitude,

the greater the opportunities for small parties to survive.¹² The use of SNTV in the legislative elections is often strong enough to bring about a degree of fragmentation in Taiwan's party structure.

KMT's Strengths and Weaknesses

As is obvious from the above discussion, the KMT, being a kind of status quo party, is in an advantageous position vis-à-vis other political parties. There are simply more people in the middle than at any other point along the national identity spectrum. This to a large extent explains the KMT's success in Taiwan's electoral politics over the years.

Nevertheless, many observers of Taiwan politics often attribute the KMT's success to its superb organizational strength, its huge enterprises, its undue influence over the electronic media, its reliance upon vote-buying, and so forth. This is certainly true, but only to an extent.¹³ Indeed, if the KMT relied solely upon such factors while being disliked by the people, it might have collapsed long ago. As Barbara Geddes notes, when democratic transition began in many East European countries, "support for Communist parties and their successors declined – dramatically in most countries" despite the fact that they "had tremendous advantages over other parties in regard to local organization, control of government resources and patronage, and control of the media."¹⁴ Apparently, this does not apply to the case of the KMT.

Moreover, in view of the fact that the DPP has recently greatly improved its organizational capability but still seems unable to increase its vote share in elections, other factors must be operating. Since the relative strength of the (pan-)KMT and (pan-)DPP camps has been stabilized, such factors must be both deep-rooted and very resilient. The cleavage in the society, which facilitates the emergence of political parties in the first place, is something that should not be overlooked. And as mentioned earlier, the major cleavage which affects the formation of political parties in Taiwan is national identity which also exhibits a certain degree of stability over the years. Given the KMT's position on this issue, it does enjoy a continuing advantage vis-à-vis other political parties in Taiwan.

A related issue is political stability since deviation from the status quo on the national identity issue is often seen as provoking internal instability or even inviting invasion from China. When the respondents were asked to make a trade-off between reform and stability, an overwhelming

12. Steven R. Reed, "Structure and behaviour: extending Duverger's Law to the Japanese case," *British Journal of Political Science*, No. 20 (1990), pp. 335–356; and John Fuh-sheng Hsieh and Richard G. Niemi, "Can Duverger's Law be extended to SNTV? The case of Taiwan's Legislative Yuan elections," *Electoral Studies*, No. 18 (1999), pp. 101–116.

13. For an alternative view, see Shelley Rigger, "The Democratic Progressive Party in 2000: obstacles and opportunities" in this issue of *The China Quarterly*.

14. Barbara Geddes, "Initiation of new democratic institutions in Eastern Europe and Latin America," in Arend Lijphart and Carlos H. Waisman (eds.), *Institutional Design in New Democracies* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1996), p. 19.

majority of the respondents chose stability (see Table 3).¹⁵ In this respect, the KMT, again as the status quo party, which has ruled the country and maintained stability for half a century, has a clear advantage over other political parties on the island.

The KMT's performance in the economic sphere helps as well. Indeed, Taiwan's economic development is known not only for high growth rates but also for relatively equitable distribution of income and wealth. This certainly contributes to the KMT's success in elections.¹⁶ However, given the fact that Taiwanese society is divided along the line of national identity, economic issues often play a secondary role in voters' support for political parties.¹⁷

Of course, the KMT has weaknesses. Perhaps the most serious one is its being identified as the party closely tied to "black and gold," namely, organized crime and big businesses. Its huge party enterprises, although helpful in maintaining a formidable organization and in providing money for campaigning in elections, reinforce such an image. This, along with the image of being unresponsive, hurts the party, particularly among the young, urban and better-educated voters.

Another problem for the KMT is that its internal power structure has been highly centralized – even centralized to one man. As a result, it often did not adapt enough to the changing environment. The lack of clear and open rules, particularly for the nomination of candidates for public offices, harms the party from time to time. In the 2000 presidential election, for instance, the lack of clear rules resulted in the division of the party between its official nominee Lien Chan and the popular former governor of Taiwan Province James Soong, thus losing the election to the DPP's Chen Shui-bian.

The 2000 Presidential Election and Its Aftermath

For the KMT, the 2000 presidential election was similar to the 1996 election in the sense that, on both occasions, the KMT was divided. In 2000, there were Lien Chan and James Soong, and in 1996, besides the KMT official candidate Lee Teng-hui, the incumbent president, there were Lin Yang-kang and Chen Lü-an, both of whom left the party to run as independents.¹⁸ However, the results were quite different. Fortunately

15. In these surveys, the respondents were asked, similarly to the national identity issue, to pick up a point between 0 standing for reform and 10 for stability. Again, in order to simplify the matter, the respondents are regrouped into five categories: extreme reform supporters (0 to 1), moderate reform supporters (2 to 4), neutrals (5), moderate stability supporters (6–8), and extreme stability supporters (9–10).

16. In the survey conducted by the Election Study Centre in January 1999, the respondents were asked which party was most capable of solving Taiwan's economic problems. 51% picked up the KMT, followed by the DPP with only 9.1%.

17. For economic voting, see, for example, John Fuh-sheng Hsieh, Dean Lacy and Emerson M.S. Niu, "Economic voting in the 1994 Taiwan elections," *American Asian Review*, No. 14 (1996), pp. 51–70, and "Retrospective and prospective voting in a one-party-dominant democracy: Taiwan's 1996 presidential election," *Public Choice*, No. 97 (1998), pp. 383–399.

18. Lin later got the endorsement from the NP.

Table 3: Voter's Attitude towards the Reform/Stability Issue (%)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Extreme reform supporters</i>	<i>Moderate reform supporters</i>	<i>Neutrals</i>	<i>Moderate stability supporters</i>	<i>Extreme stability supporters</i>	<i>Total</i>
December 1992	1.3	2.8	15.5	31.0	49.4	100.0
January 1995	3.2	9.3	20.9	30.0	36.6	100.0
March 1996	1.7	3.2	35.1	28.2	31.8	100.0
January 1999	6.5	8.2	17.1	25.2	43.1	100.1
June 2000	4.5	9.9	15.7	28.4	41.6	100.1

Note:

Row percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Based on surveys conducted by Opinion Research Taiwan in 1992 and the Election Study Centre of National Chengchi University in other years.

for the KMT in 1996, President Lee, as the first Taiwanese president and ambiguous about his attitude towards the independence-unification issue,¹⁹ was able to make inroads into the DPP camp. Thus, although Lin and Chen captured 24.88 per cent of the vote, mostly from the traditional KMT voters, Lee was able to win the election by gaining votes from DPP supporters, ending up with 54 per cent of the total vote, leaving DPP's Peng Ming-min with only 21.13 per cent. However in 2000, Lien lacked the kind of charisma that Lee had. He not only lost ground to Soong, but was also unable to offset the loss by gaining support from the DPP side. With the pan-DPP camp unified behind Chen Shui-bian, the KMT, for the first time, lost in a major national election.

Undoubtedly, many factors are involved which may have affected the election in one way or another. In addition to such a long-term factor as party configuration, other short-term factors like candidates' personal characteristics and the specific issues raised during the election campaign may have shaped the outcome. In the legislative elections where there are a large number of seats, some of the short-term factors may be cancelled out among the candidates, and election results may be more likely to reflect, in a statistical sense, the long-term party configuration in the country. In contrast, in the presidential election where only one seat is available, short-term "accidental" factors may play a much larger role in shaping election results, thus distorting, to a certain extent, the long-term party structure.

Although in the 2000 presidential election, voters' partisan attachments, the personality of individual candidates and the issues of the day have all affected the outcome, the vote obtained by Chen on the one hand, and the combined total by Lien and Soong on the other, conform so nicely to the previous pattern that it attests once again to the high degree of stability in Taiwan's party structure, and to the key role played by partisanship, which reflects the national identity cleavage, in Taiwan's electoral politics.²⁰

Now, will the stability exhibited by the competition between the pan-KMT and pan-DPP camps be changed in the foreseeable future as a result of the 2000 presidential election? To some extent, yes; but not too much. It is true that, with Chen Shui-bian's victory, the pan-DPP camp may be able to gain more popular support for a time, but this hardly changes the pattern of competition between the two camps in a fundamental way. (In fact, given Chen's poor performance as president, the increased support may be eroded quickly.) So long as voters' positions on the national identity issue remain relatively unchanged (as shown by the

19. In the Election Study Centre's 1996 survey, respondents were asked to judge President Lee's position on the national identity issue. Interestingly, 22.9% of the respondents thought he was in favour of "unification as soon as possible" or "status quo first, unification later," 22% believed he supported "independence as soon as possible" or "status quo first, independence later," and 23% said he favoured "status quo for good" or "status quo first, then depending upon the situation to move toward either unification or independence." The responses were truly divided.

20. See also Achen, "Plurality rule when polling is forbidden."

survey results in Table 2, which include the data collected after the 2000 presidential election), the relative strength between the two major camps will be more or less stabilized.

Indeed, if there is any realignment in Taiwan's party politics, it will be most likely to take place within each camp. In the pan-KMT camp, the KMT, PFP and NP split the traditional KMT support. Whether the KMT will be able to retain its strength depends very much upon how the PFP and NP, particularly the former, fare. Currently, it is not entirely clear where the PFP stands on the national identity issue although the 2000 survey indicates that it occupies roughly the same position as that of the NP (see Figure 1). However, it is likely that such a perception may change as time goes by. Indeed, the PFP may end up with a position between the KMT and NP, even somewhere very close to the KMT.²¹ As a result, the KMT may be greatly affected, but given that it has occupied its position for so long, it will be very difficult for any other party to replace it. Thus, unless the PFP is able to create a new issue dimension (such as the clean government issue) to attract people who are not that concerned about national identity, the PFP may not be able to take over the KMT as the leading party in the pan-KMT camp. Under the current circumstances, it will be very difficult, if not impossible, to create such a new issue dimension.²²

In addition, whether the KMT will remain a formidable political force in Taiwan depends also upon its ability to curb further splits from within its own ranks. One of the major factors contributing to the previous splits was the choice made by the party leadership to move away from a more to a less pro-unification stance, which alienated a lot of people on the unification side, some of whom later split from the party. Since the new KMT leadership seems more accommodative towards China, they, in actuality, turn the party somewhat back to a position closer to the old KMT stance. This may irritate such people as Lee Teng-hui, the former party chairman, and his followers who may split from the party to protest against its current policy.

As mentioned earlier, even though the electoral system used for the elections of executive offices – the single-member district first-past-the-post system – may place constraints on the fragmentation of the party system, the electoral system adopted for legislative elections – the SNTV system – will, to a certain extent, lift such constraints. Thus, in future elections, there may be opposite trends: in the elections for executive offices, a trend towards convergence, while in the legislative elections, a trend towards fragmentation. This will certainly lead to confusion about the future direction of Taiwan's party politics. However, on balance, it may not be easy to halt fragmentation in Taiwan's party structure, but

21. James Soong is a shrewd politician. He has tried very hard to change his mainlander image. On the national identity issue, he has been very cautious about not being seen as too pro-unification.

22. When it was first formed, the NP did try to downplay the national identity issue by stressing instead the clean government theme. But clearly, it did not succeed. Indeed, it has been gradually "forced" to turn back to the national identity issue.

there will be a certain limit imposed upon it.²³ As far as the KMT is concerned, the incentive for splitting cannot always be ruled out, but only to a certain extent. Besides, the KMT has a special advantage. The fact that it remains a rich party and better organized than other parties will further hinder splitting. In general, as long as the national identity issue continues to be the major cleavage underpinning the party structure, and the distribution of voters on this issue remains relatively unchanged, the KMT will continue to be a formidable force in Taiwanese politics if it is able to hold itself together.

The KMT is undoubtedly hurt by its “black and gold” image. This ruins its reputation particularly among young, urban and better-educated voters. However, it may not be easy for it to solve this problem when its very survival in the political arena becomes the paramount concern. Indeed, although the KMT has to be responsible for its wrongdoing, an important factor bringing about corruption is the electoral system used for the legislative elections. The SNTV system often leads to intraparty competition in election campaigns. In a district electing five seats, for instance, the KMT may nominate three candidates, and given the relative stability between the pan-KMT and pan-DPP votes, competition among the three KMT candidates is often fiercer than that between the KMT and DPP. Since the party has to remain impartial among its own candidates, they cannot expect to get support from the party to fight against their co-partisans, and thus have to rely upon themselves to get elected. This provides opportunities for big businesses and gangsters to intervene in the electoral process on a large scale. Moreover, since all three candidates come from the same party with an identical set of platforms, party label and campaign issues, at least as far as the competition among the three is concerned, become irrelevant. In order to distinguish among themselves, they may have to rely heavily upon, say, services they are able to provide to their constituents. Pork barrel politics of one kind or another becomes almost inevitable.²⁴ Consequently, unless the electoral system is changed, the “black and gold” problem cannot be easily solved.²⁵

Immediately after the 2000 presidential election, the KMT did try to do something to alter its image in this regard. In nominating candidates to run for elections scheduled for December 2001, it deliberately tried to avoid some controversial figures. But given the incentives inherent in the electoral system, it is doubtful how far the party can go. There have also been talks about holding the party enterprises in trust. Although this may

23. For a similar argument, see Matthew Soberg Shugart and John M. Carey, *Presidents and Assemblies: Constitutional Design and Electoral Dynamics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), ch. 10.

24. This occurred in Japan before the 1994 electoral reform, too. See J. Mark Ramseyer and Frances McCall Rosenbluth, *Japan's Political Marketplace* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

25. The KMT has advocated the Japanese type of mixed system with as many seats reserved for the single-member district portion as possible, while the DPP, along with some other smaller parties, has opted for the German type of mixed system, essentially a variant of PR. Thus, it will be difficult for the major parties to reach an agreement regarding the electoral reform.

increase transparency and reduce the conflicts of interest in business dealings, the KMT will remain a rich party. It is hard to imagine that the KMT would voluntarily give up its enterprises altogether under the current circumstances. It needs money to run the organization and the campaigns, but, of course, the party enterprises will also damage its image in terms of fair play.

Moreover, the KMT has to reformulate its rules for resolving internal conflicts, particularly the ones concerning the nomination of candidates. These rules must be clear and open to mollify the losers after the nomination is over. This is especially important in the elections for executive offices, where only one seat is available. The party is apparently still struggling to find a way to accomplish such a goal.

Conclusion

In the 2000 presidential election, the KMT lost badly. But it remains the majority party in the Legislative Yuan. In the parliamentary election scheduled for December 2001, it may lose its majority status, but will, in all likelihood, control a substantial portion of seats in the new Legislative Yuan. It will continue to be an important player in Taiwan politics as long as it is able to hold itself together. Its strength derives essentially from its unique position along the national identity spectrum, the most salient cleavage underpinning Taiwan's party structure, and will be affected mainly from within and from competition with other parties in the pan-KMT camp – the parties which split from the KMT early on.