Quiz Time
● Were you the leader of the KMT, how would you want to win the next presidential election? Build an even closer relationship with Beijing? Or clean up the corrupted politicians? What if you are heading the DPP?
● Were you in the Beijing leadership, which party in Taiwan should be your main target? The KMT? The DPP? Or the non-partisans?

Taiwan’s Party System on the World Map of Democratization
● The clues to the above questions can be found in Taiwan’s history of democratization.
● Unusual experiences with democratization: democratization from scratch; relatively bloodless; preservation of ruling party’s powers but satisfy the “two regime turnovers” condition; most important, the KMT and the DPP remain to be the dominant parties.
● Rule of law? The peculiar history of the Constitution of the Republic of China: main text is quasi-parliamentary but almost not practiced (December 25, 1947); the Temporary Provisions Effective During the Period of Communist Rebellion (May 10, 1948 to May 1, 1991) gave president the supreme and unchecked powers; seven constitutional amendments were added since 1991 but the main text was untouched; almost impossible to revise the constitution again since 2005.
● The two processes are correlated: Chiang Ching-kuo’s decease was a predictor with immense impacts; the “main text” is frozen by international pressure but political parties maximize their gains by “adding” the additional articles.
● A question is: Have the social bases of political parties changed? This issue attracts not only observers of Taiwan politics but also laymen who care about the quality of democracy.

Demographic Bases of Taiwan’s Political Parties
identification? We have to evaluate these factors by Taiwan’s transition from authoritarianism to democratization.

- A clue is the supports received by the KMT from the Min-nan (Hoklo) Taiwanese, who should be most sensitive to the transformation. Figure 1 displays the declining popularity of the KMT among the Min-nan Taiwanese. We can at least mark 2000 as a juncture after which the political map becomes stabilized. Just by looking at the change of support rates, sub-ethnicity is almost a precondition of national identity, hence party identification. However, the data do not show the rate of the “no response”.

Table 1. Partisan Identification and Sub-ethnicity (%)

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Source: Taiwan Social Change Survey, Institute of Sociology, Academia Sinica

- Quiz: What happens after 2004? Any major change?
- There is still uncertainty, and the “undecided voters” can be decisive. An often mentioned but rarely studied phenomenon is local governance and the expansion of the DPP’s southern territory. The DPP has a higher chance winning the county magistrate elections, after which the Min-nan voters become more accessible to the party. But there are other incentives as well. A hunch: does the rise of “Taiwanese consciousness” accompany infra-structure building?

- In contrast with the DPP’s independence-leaning strategy, the KMT represents “stability”, at the risk of losing votes to its splinter parties.

How Do We Explain the Political Map?

- Now we use different data to show a longer pattern. The data reveal the absolute support rate of the political parties and the camps they represent.
Figure 1. Support Rates for the KMT and the DPP (1995-2012)

Source: Election Study Center, National Chengchi University

Figure 2. Support Rates for the Pan-Blue and the Pan-Green Camps (1995-2012)

Source: Election Study Center, National Chengchi University
It appears that the support rates of the anti-independence pan-blue camp and the pro-independence pan-green camp became relatively stable since 2000, with the former almost always higher than the latter. Why then is Beijing worried, especially when Taiwan held its presidential elections? Do the graphs illustrate the results of Taiwan’s presidential elections?

- How about the choices made by the “neutrals”?
- The gap between the result of the presidential election and the political map creates minority governments. How much does that matter?

Political Parties in Power
- Majority and minority governments: Guess which one has the greatest non-partisan ministers? Why?
- Can we evaluate the performance of the majority and minority governments by legislative efficiency? Why or why not? Consider legislation as a sequential game where the legislators are the last movers. Expecting the bill to be boycotted by the legislative opposition, will the minority leader make any proposal? Why would they sometimes deliver bills to the Legislative Yuan? What does legislative rejection mean?

The Future
- Project your guess: Will Taiwan’s party system remain the same? Coming back to the quiz, which party will claim the seats in the coming elections, especially 2016? Why?
- Will the setback of the 2012 presidential race force the DPP to adjust its cross-strait platform? How much does the platform affect the DPP’s social bases?
- The KMT? Who is going to run for 2016? How would the likely candidates affect the KMT leadership?
- Almost for sure, politicians will be situated in the combination of semi-presidentialism and the mixed-member majoritarian system. Will that make the DPP more moderate? Will that change the nature of partisan rivalry? How much can Beijing influence the result of the competition?

References


