
From Multi-Party to Two-Party System

The Applicability of Duverger's Law and the Taiwanese Election Reform

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The Republic of China (ROC), more commonly known and accepted as Taiwan, has been ruled by the Kuomintang (KMT) for the greater part of its history. After the Nationalist Party fled to the island of Taiwan following the loss of China to the Mao-led Chinese Communist Party, the KMT froze the constitution granting voting rights to citizens. It was not until 1986 that the government lifted its restrictions on political participation, and the first direct presidential election was not held until 1996.

The elections of the Legislative Yuan, the highest legislature body in Taiwan, were also democratized in 1992, and the majority of legislators were elected under the Single Non-transferable Vote System (SNTV). Under the SNTV system, a voter casts one vote for one candidate in a multi-candidate race for multiple seats, and the candidates with the highest number of votes are elected.¹ In 2004, electoral reforms were put into place due to increasing public pressure against the negative aspects of the SNTV system, which included the cultivation of party factions and the opportunities for radical candidates who held niches in agendas and target only a specific minority to be elected.²

¹ Specifically, of the 225 members, 168 were elected under the SNTV system, 8 were elected to represent the aboriginal population, 8 were elected to represent overseas Chinese under proportional representation, and 41 were elected under proportional representation.

² Hans Stockton, "How Rules Matter: Electoral Reform in Taiwan," *Social Science Quarterly* 91, no. 1 (2010): 21-41.

Among the changes undertaken were the halving of the number of legislators to 113, and switching to a system of mixed member parallel (MMP), in which voters essentially participate in two separate elections, with one ballot for parties where the seats are decided through proportional representation, and another ballot for candidates where the winners are decided on a first-past-the-post basis. In the new system, 73 constituency seats are decided through the single member district (SMD) system, and 34 seats from party lists are decided through proportional representation. In addition, the party seats are allocated proportionally for parties that have gained at least five percent of the total party votes cast in the election cycle. The new system was enacted in the 2008 Legislative elections.³

This paper will examine the applicability of Duverger's Law on the electoral system before and after the reform. Duverger believes that under proportional representation systems, voters will be induced to vote based on their own preferences. However, under plurality systems, where only the candidate with the most vote(s) win the position, people tend to vote "strategically" for the candidate that they believe has the best chance of winning. This paper finds that while the law generally holds for the SNTV system and the SMD component of Taiwan's MMP system, namely the constituent vote, the smaller parties' ability to be represented in the legislature are actually being constricted, contradictory to the intention of Duverger's Law. The paper will be divided into three components. First, it will briefly outline the theory of Duverger's Law and the methodology applied in the paper. Then, an empirical analysis from the data available will follow. It will draw comparisons and provide explanations of the differences between the two results and between the results and expectations of the theory.

³ Jih-wen Lin, "The Politics of Reform in Japan and Taiwan," *Journal of Democracy* 17, no. 2 (2006): 118-131.

Lastly, possible explanations for the deviations of the actual outcomes from the predicted ones will be offered, and conclusions drawn.

DUVERGER'S LAW AND METHODOLOGY

Duverger's Law links the number of parties to the electoral system. Duverger finds that two-party systems often develop under plurality voting rules, in which every person only has one vote to cast for a candidate competing for a single seat in a district or a region (this is also known as the SMD system)⁴. Duverger provides two reasons for this phenomenon: the "fusion" or the coming together of weak parties to retain competitiveness, and the elimination of the weaker parties by the stronger parties through their superior resources and voters' strategic voting. Proportionality as electoral rule, on the other hand, encourages the formation of multi-party systems, since voters understand that their votes are more likely to influence the formation of the government. It is not impossible for two-party systems to form, but it is comparatively more difficult under proportionality systems than it is under plurality systems. These observations combined make up what is known as Duverger's Law.

From these two rules further expectations could be inferred about different systems. In the SNTV system, similar to the SMD, voters only have one vote, with the major difference being that there are multiple seats up for contest. Hence, Duverger's Law, when applied to SNTV, predicts that in districts with M seats open for election, there will be M+1 viable candidates contesting for them.⁵ The empirical study on the SNTV system in

Taiwan done by Hsieh and Niemi provides evidence to support this. It also shows that the larger the district magnitude, the lower the level of strategic voting, since it would be more difficult for candidates and voters to calculate the probabilities of winning.⁶ This means that the more seats that are up for grabs in a single district, the more the voters will vote based on their real preferences and not because they believe that certain candidates stand higher chances of winning. Thus, in larger districts, the results will be more proportional in nature, and with a higher possibility of having more than M+1 candidates competing.

Although there have not been many studies done on the applicability of Duverger's Law to mixed systems, it is still possible to formulate expectations to the outcomes of the elections. Since Taiwan's system is an unlinked parallel one (MMP), there is a relatively clear separation between the proportional representation (PR) and the SMD aspects of the ballots. It is true that in a mixed system, the party leaders or decision-makers may have other considerations. These include the placement of candidates on the party list or running in constituencies, and of candidates deciding whether to vie for a higher place on the party list or run in "safe constituencies." However, for voters, since the party vote and the constituent vote are largely unconnected, it is safe to assume that their decisions for the two votes would also be separated instead of being interconnected. This is because voters do not need to consider the effects of splitting their ballots among different parties or candidates on the overall representation of their preferred parties. Therefore, for the SMD portion of the seats, we can expect to observe the dominance of two parties, while for the PR seats we can expect to see the presence of smaller parties, as per Duverger's theory. Whether the system leans towards a two-

⁴ Maurice Duverger, "Factors in a Two-Party and Multiparty System," in *Party Politics and Pressure Groups: A Comparative Introduction*, Maurice Duverger (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1972), 23-32.

⁵ Steven R. Reed, "Structure and Behaviour: Extending Duverger's Law to the Japanese Case," *British Journal of Political Science* 20, no. 3 (1990): 335-356.

⁶ 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* 18, no. 1 (1999): 101-116.

party system or a multi-party system depends on the relative ratio of the PR seats and the SMD seats.⁷

This paper will utilize the data of the Legislative Yuan elections from 1992 to 2012, which comprises seven election cycles, because 1992 was the first year of direct legislative elections. Thus, to avoid the problem of regime change, this paper will not consider the data before 1992. The next section will examine the makeup of the different legislatures for each election cycle, a general empirical pre-reform and post-reform comparison.

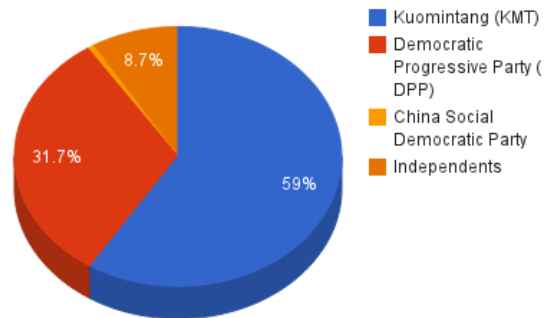
EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

This section will analyze the seven Legislative Yuan elections individually, and then the pre-reform and post-reform differences will be examined comprehensively. Due to the number of new parties participating in each election cycle and the fluidity of small parties, apart from the few large parties that have maintained a somewhat steady presence in the elections since democratization, the majority of the parties participating in Legislative elections have changed from year to year. Hence, instead of recording the number of seats, or the percentage of seats that each party took in the elections, this section will explore the relative proportion of “small” to “large” parties in the Legislative Yuan. The “large” parties refer to the two main parties, the Kuomintang and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), while the rest of the contending parties are defined as “small” parties. By using this method, consolidation of, or the lack of, the two-party system can be more clearly calculated, instead of being distracted by minor issues.

The first direct legislative election was held in 1992. Figure 1 shows the

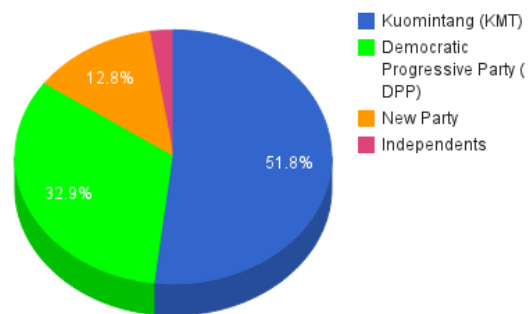
relative votes that each party gained in the election.⁸

Figure 1. Legislative Election 1992



Although 15 parties participated in the election, only four were able to gain seats in the legislature. The KMT was able to gain a majority, winning 59 percent of the seats, with the DPP lagging behind at 31.7 percent. Together, the smaller parties, the China Social Democratic Party, and the independent candidates only managed to win 9.3 percent of the seats.

Figure 2. 1995 Legislative Election



In the 1995 election cycle (shown in Figure 2), the smaller parties did relatively better. Although the KMT still maintained a majority, retaining 51.8 percent of the seats,

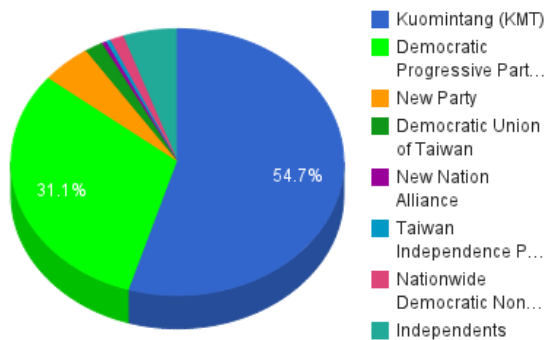
⁷ Misa Nishikawa and Erik S. Herron. “Mixed Electoral Rules’ Impact on Party Systems,” *Electoral Studies* 23, no. 4 (2004): 753-768.

⁸ All the data on Taiwan elections utilized in this paper are sourced from the *Taiwan Central Election Commission Database* at <http://engweb.cec.gov.tw/bin/home.php>, and from *Adam Carr’s Election Archive* at <http://psephos.adam-carr.net/>.

the DPP managed to improve its performance, clinching 32.9 percent of the seats, and the “small” parties, including independents, won 15.2 percent of the seats. The number of parties contesting for seats also drastically decreased to seven, which is understandable given the lackluster performance of small parties in the first direct legislative election.

The 1998 election cycle, impacted by the first direct presidential election two years before, saw an increase in the number of small contending parties. 12 parties nominated candidates for election, among which eight managed to gain seats (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. 1998 Legislative Elections

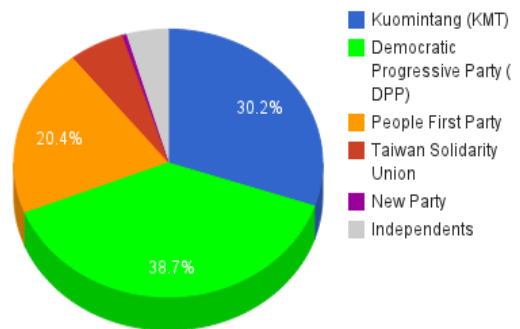


While the KMT increased its seat share to 54.7 percent, the DPP managed to keep 31.1 percent of the seats. Although the “small” parties and independents only gained 14.2 percent, six parties (counting independents as a party) shared the percentage of seats.

The 2001 election is an important turning point because it marked the end of KMT’s continual one-party dominance in the legislature. From Figure 4, it can be observed that the KMT not only lost its absolute majority, but also became the second-largest party at 30.2 percent of the total seats falling short of DPP’s 38.7 percent. In addition, the number of seats that the “small” parties and independents hold dramatically increased, mainly due to the votes garnered by the newly-created People’s First Party and Taiwan Solidarity

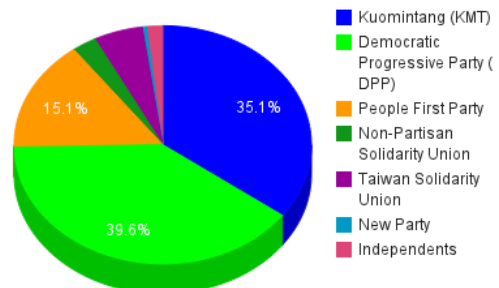
Union, which together made up 26.2 percent of the Legislative Yuan. Such drastic change in the makeup can be attributed to the 2000 presidential election in which Taiwan elected a non-KMT president for the first time in history. This opened up rooms for people to consider other non-KMT party candidates, and boosted the confidence of smaller parties.

Figure 4. 2001 Legislative Election



The 2004 election followed the same pattern, with no one single party managing to gain a majority (see Figure 5). Again, all the participating parties managed to secure seats in the legislature. Apart from the addition of the Non-Party Solidarity Union, all the parties that partook in the 2001 election also participated in 2004. Nonetheless, the “small” parties’ seat decreased to 24.9 percent, as opposed to 31.1 percent in 2001.

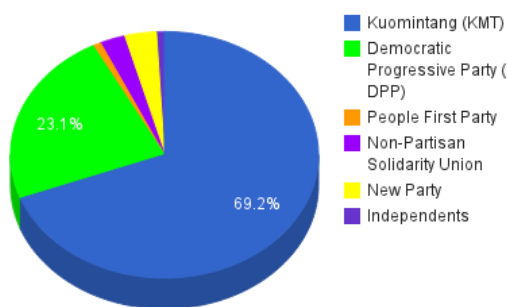
Figure 5. 2004 Legislative Yuan Election



The next election, held in 2008, marked the first post-reform Legislative Yuan election post-reform. Again, with the

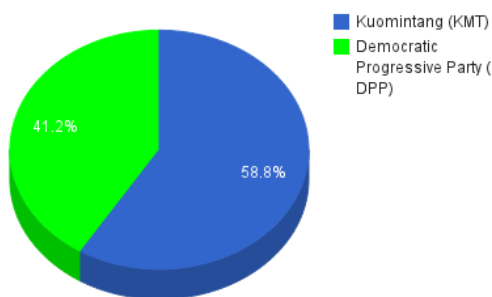
change in the electoral system, many smaller parties were encouraged to seek their chances, and thus the election cycle saw 14 parties in total, including independents, contesting for legislative seats. However, only six out of the 14 were able to successfully gain seats. From Figure 6, we can see that the KMT once again regained its majority, holding 69.2 percent of the total seats, while the DPP held 23.1 percent, giving these two largest parties 92.3 percent of the total Legislative Yuan seats.

Figure 6. 2008 Legislative Election Total Seats



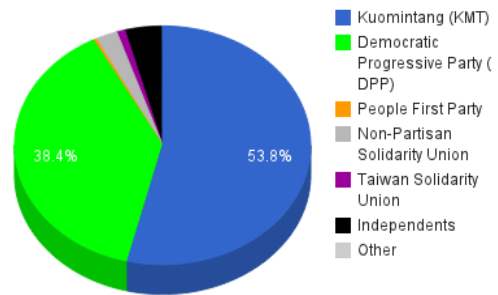
To break down the results further, from Figure 7 we can observe that none of the “small” parties managed to successfully gain a party seat, in spite of the fact that 12 fielded candidates.

Figure 7. Party Seats 2008 Legislative Election



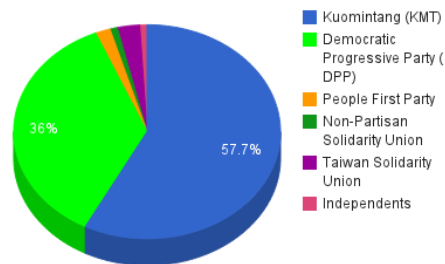
According to Figure 8, a few “small” parties have managed to successfully put candidates into the legislature even though the DPP and the KMT together made up 92.2 percent of the constituency and aboriginal seats,

Figure 8. Constituent Seats 2008 Legislative Election



The skewed partisan shift in the election is most likely due to the unpopularity of the DPP at the time, not entirely resulting from strategic considerations on the part of the voters.

Figure 9. 2012 Legislative Election Total Seats



The pattern of large parties dominating the legislature could again be seen in the 2012 election cycle. As seen in Figure 9, the KMT and the DPP again took up 93.7 percent of the seats, an increase from 2008. Disenchanted by the 2008 election, only six of the more successful and established parties fielded candidates to vie for seats in the Legislative Yuan, and as such all six managed to place candidates into the legislature.

Unlike the election of 2008, however, the DPP and the KMT together only managed to retain 85.3 percent of the party seats in 2012, while the People First Party and the Taiwan Solidarity Union managed to split the rest (Figure 10). Figure 11 shows, however, that 97.4 percent of the constituency and aboriginal seats went to the two largest parties, almost completely squeezing out the “small” parties.

Figure 10. 2012 Legislative Election Party Seats

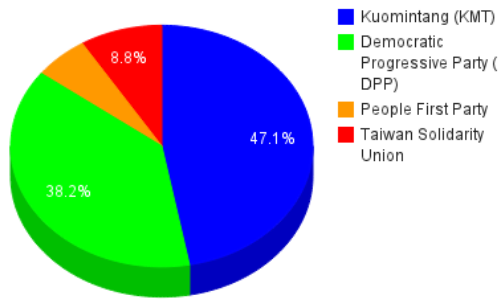


Figure 11. 2012 Legislative Election Constituency and Aboriginal Seats

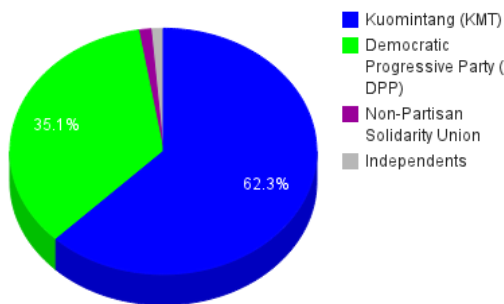


Figure 12 and the corresponding Table 1 display the relationship between the “large” parties and the “small” parties throughout the seven elections. It can clearly be seen that, apart from the first direct legislative election (1992), pre-reform “small” parties always retained at least 14 percent of the legislative seats, obtaining more than 30 percent of the seats at times. However, post-reform, the proportion of “small” parties shrunk dramatically down to less than 10 percent. The difference was all the more striking given the two preceding election cycles where the “small” parties managed to gain unprecedented victories. The next section will examine whether this change is in adherence to Duverger’s law, or whether there are indeed results that are unexpected by the theory.

Figure 12. % of Seats Large and Small Parties Have in Legislature

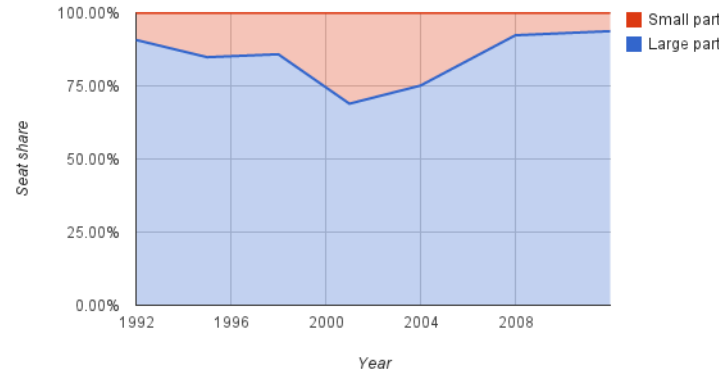


Table 1.

Year	Large	Small
	parties	parties
1992	90.70 %	9.30 %
1995	84.80 %	15.20 %
1998	85.80 %	14.20 %
2001	68.90 %	31.10 %
2004	75.10 %	24.90 %
2008	92.30 %	7.70 %
2012	93.70 %	6.30 %

SNTV vs Mixed Member System

Given what we already know about Duverger’s Law and its speculations concerning the results of SNTV, SMD, and PR systems (discussed in the second section), it is not difficult to examine its applicability to the recorded results of the Taiwanese legislative elections. This section will first apply Duverger’s Law to the pre-reform system, and then discuss its predicted results and the actual results in the post-reform system.

While Taiwan was still under the SNTV system, the “small” parties held relatively large proportion. Though the “small” parties only contributed slightly over 9 percent of the total legislative seats in 1992, it could be attributed to the voters getting used to their new found democracy. Afterwards, the “small” parties managed to gain footholds. This is compatible with Duverger’s Law in relation to the SNTV

system. It proposes that the larger the district magnitude or the number of representatives from one district elected to a legislative body, the more proportional the election results would be. By default, smaller parties and independents would have a higher chance to be elected. Taiwan has comparatively large district magnitudes, with almost half of the districts having more than three representatives, with the highest at 17, which rounds to an average of 5.6.⁹ Given that the literature suggests that strategic voting fades out when the district magnitude is larger than 5,¹⁰ the vibrancy of the “small” parties in the pre-reform period is not surprising. However, I argue that unprecedented successes experienced by the “small” parties in the 2001 and 2004 elections were not the norm, since disenchantment with the KMT and the exuberance of electing the first non-Nationalist president shifted voters’ support towards other smaller parties during that particular period of time, resulting in a rather unique period of multi-party presence in the Legislative Yuan.

In the post-reform period, it is also easy to find Duverger’s Law at play. It is evident that strategic voting is at work since the “small” parties and independents did only manage to gain less than 10 percent of the constituency and aboriginal seats. The SMD districts have effectively restricted and stifled the chances of “small” parties being able to win votes, whereas previously in the SNTV system they were able to target niche voter groups. This and the very small proportion of PR seats that already existed in the pre-reform system in all likelihood contributed to the seemingly more majoritarian trend that accompanied the electoral reforms. However, at a closer look, it seems that the constituency seats were not the only places where smaller parties were

constrained. Duverger’s Law asserts that when a PR system is present, instances of strategic voting decrease, and smaller parties have more opportunity to win seats in the legislature. However, the exact opposite happened in Taiwan. The seats of the smaller parties reduced dramatically in the party list portion of the mixed system. For 2008, the party seats were entirely made up of the KMT and the DPP, while in 2012, the two parties constituted around 85 percent of the party seats. Though the dominance of the “large” party had receded somewhat and the “small” parties’ performance in the party seats this year was certainly better than in the constituency seats, only two smaller parties managed to gain enough votes to be allocated with party seats, leaving two other parties without any representative. This is a far cry from the expectations that Duverger’s Law provides.

This paper will now examine the puzzle of why the smaller parties’ seats constricted simultaneously with the constituency seats, despite the fact that one is under a PR system and the other is under the SMD system.

POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS FOR THE REDUCTION OF PARTY SEATS FOR SMALLER PARTIES

While electoral theory helps to predict the results of the elections, there are still a number of reasons that would induce the outcomes to deviate from the expected ones. This section offers possible explanations for the deviation of outcomes. The explanations are: the existence of strategic voting, the political contexts of partisan ideology, the relatively high social homogeneity and the growing maturity of the Taiwanese democracy, the confusion of voters, and finally, the switching of allegiances to large parties by small party members.

While the PR system is supposed to encourage voters to vote in a “truthful” manner, strategic voting nevertheless persists. In the Taiwanese context, the 5 percent of total votes threshold that parties have to pass in order to be allocated with

⁹ John Fuh-sheng Hsieh and Richard G. Niemi, “Can Duverger’s Law be Extended,” 101-116.

¹⁰ Thomas Gschwend, “Institutional Incentives for Strategic Voting and Party System Change in Portugal,” *Portuguese Journal of Social Science* 6, no. 1 (2007): 15-31.

seats in the Legislative Yuan could have induced voters to act strategically. If voters believed that there was a chance that the party that they support would not make the threshold, it is likely that they would deserted their party in favor of larger parties that is more likely to place their candidates into the legislature. Granted, gaining 5 percent of the total votes was not an incredibly high mark to meet at the time, and in fact most “small” party leaders supported it, but the results show that the threshold was in fact oftentimes insurmountable for most of the smaller parties. It would seem, therefore, that the effects of strategic voting were larger than expected, and to find out why that is, a closer look needs to be taken at the political context of Taiwan.

Political contexts of nations have always played a huge part in shaping the outcomes of elections, and are often the main contributing reasons why the election results were not as predicted. Taiwan stands in stark contrast in that the partisan line is not divided down left or right, but along pro-China and anti-China ideologies. While it is true that there are several variations of communist parties in Taiwan, these are also defined by their pro-Beijing leanings as opposed to their socio-economic ideals. Furthermore, in spite of the fact that most tend to associate the KMT with political elites and old money families, and the DPP with comparably less well-off voter groups such as agricultural producers, neither party could be clearly situated on a liberal-conservative spectrum, unlike political parties in other countries.¹¹ Both parties have candidates who support issues such as gay rights, abortion, death penalty, and more expansive social welfare. One example of the interchangeability of ideological stance in the socio-economic aspect of the parties is the abolishment of tax breaks for government employees, specifically public school teachers and military personnel. The

¹¹ Weiming Tu, “Cultural Identity and the Politics of Recognition in Contemporary Taiwan,” *The China Quarterly* 148 (1996): 1115-1140.

DPP first raised the issue of abolishing tax breaks for these public servants, since most of these positions were held by people whom DPP considered were from the privileged class that descended from the Mainland Chinese who escaped to Taiwan to get away from the civil war, and that these government employees were benefiting from the hard-earned money of local Taiwanese. When the policy was announced, it caused an outcry amongst the affected groups, which were also KMT’s strongest voter base, and this resulted in the DPP postponing its plans. However, when KMT resumed power in 2008, due to wide societal pressure against the perceived privileged class, the Nationalists had to push ahead with DPP’s ban on tax breaks.

This unclear divide also extends to the “small” parties. Taiwan Solidarity Union, concerned with the localization of the Taiwanese people, is perhaps a bit more extreme on the anti-China scale, while the People’s First Party has had cozier relations with China than the KMT does. However, apart from this one clear ideological divide, the policies of the “small” parties are more often than not interchangeable with the dominant parties,¹² and together the pro-China and the anti-China parties form the pan-blue and pan-green coalitions, respectively.¹² “Small” parties that focus on particular issues, such as the Green Party on environmental issues, have never had particularly strong preferences. Therefore it is quite easy for voters to switch party allegiances within the same coalition, which induces strategic voting behavior, or makes any considerations of strategic behavior easier for the calculus of the voters.

Furthermore, Taiwan is a relatively homogenous society, which according to Moser (2001) would constrain the number of political parties in existence.¹³ Although

¹² Ching-Hsin Yu, “The Evolving Party System in Taiwan, 1995-2004,” *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 40, no. 1-2 (2005): 105-123.

¹³ Robert G Moser, *Unexpected Outcomes: Electoral Systems, Political Parties, and Representation in Russia* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001).

there are clear differences between the demands and the needs of the aboriginals and the ethnically Chinese citizens, reserved seats for representatives of the indigenous population effectively alleviated the want for separate parties that specifically fight for the rights of the aborigines. The second divide in the Taiwanese society would be the “new” Mainland Chinese immigrants who fled from China in the late 1940s and the “old” Taiwanese whose ancestors had crossed the straits around five hundred years ago. Again, the “new” immigrants are the major supporters of the KMT and the “old” Taiwanese people make up a large proportion of the DPP voter base. The existing two parties, the pan-blue and pan-green coalitions, already adequately represent the distinct interests of these two different groups of voters, thus limiting the room for new parties to successfully establish themselves.

Moser also noted that as a democracy matures, the number of parties would decrease. This is due to the fact that the political systems in gradually maturing democracies are moving towards the equilibrium number of political parties that it could support. In addition, this effect is especially prominent in new democracies, with parties converging at a higher rate than in more mature democracies.¹⁴ Since Taiwan is a new democracy, having only fully granted citizens the rights to political participation in the early 1990’s, the movement towards a two-party system may simply be the course of party consolidation. Thus, the Taiwanese democracy’s growing maturity is also a factor in the reduction of the number of parties that are able to successfully get the candidates they fielded elected in the political system.

Voter’s confusion of changing electoral rules might also be a factor in the observed strategic voting. Voters who split

¹⁴ Ekaterina R Rashkova, “Political Learning, Legal Constraints and Party System Development: How do Party Law and Democratic Maturity Affect the Number of Parties?” *The Legal Regulation of Political Parties Working Paper Series* 5 (2010).

their party and candidates votes could be doing so because they do not understand the relative importance of their ballots (Karp *et al*, 2002).¹⁵ However, this explanation seems unsatisfactory. This is because Taiwan runs on an MMP system, whereas the literature of voter confusion is focused on the compensatory version of the mixed electoral system.¹⁶ In an MMP system, the importance of each of the votes should be relatively clear to the voters, because the number of seats a party will receive for the PR portion of the legislature is completely separate from said party’s candidates’ performance in the constituent votes. Furthermore, it has been argued that split voting is actually a rational behavior whereby voters cast their ballots for candidates of different parties to attempt to maximize the effects of their votes, and that the voters know the implication of their actions.¹⁷

During the past few years there have been many examples of prominent politicians from the “smaller” parties switching allegiance to the dominant party in their respective coalitions. For example, politicians from the People’s First Party, which originally split from the KMT, have been trickling back to the KMT since 2005. Shu-Lei Lo, Hung-Yuan Li, and former Taipei City mayor Shi-Wei Chou are all such examples. The smaller parties in the pan-blue coalition are not the only ones that suffered from the defection of their members. Yu-Yen Chien, originally from the Taiwan Solidarity Union, also defected to the DPP after falling out with the party leaders. The frequency of this kind of

¹⁵ Jeffrey A. Karp *et al*, “Strategic Voting, Party Activity, and Candidate Effects: Testing Explanations for Split Voting in New Zealand’s New Mixed System,” *Electoral Studies* 21, no. 1 (2002): 1-22.

¹⁶ Neal Jesse. “Falling into a Niche: Institutional Equilibrium Between Plurality and Proportional Representation for Large Political Parties.” *Political Research Quarterly* 51, no. 2 (1998): 481-503.

¹⁷ Kathleen Bawn, “Voter Responses to Electoral Complexity: Ticket Splitting, Rational Voters and Representation in the Federal Republic of Germany,” *British Journal of Political Science* 29 (1999): 487-505.

defections clearly illustrates the interchangeability of parties among parties in the same coalition, as mentioned before. Furthermore, it also encourages voters to further place their confidence and votes in the larger parties.

CONCLUSION

The change from the SNTV electoral system to MMP has brought about a huge transformation in the Taiwanese political scene. The partisan tilt post-reform towards the KMT could be partially explained by the relative unpopularity of the DPP during the 2008 and the 2012 election cycles, just as the constriction of space for “small” party candidates vying for constituency seats could be adequately explained by Duverger’s Law. However, what could not be explained is the reduction of the number of small parties and the party seats they held in the Legislative Yuan, since all evidence of Duverger’s Law points to the decrease of strategic voting in a PR system.

Throughout this essay some possible explanations for this deviation from the expected results have been offered. It seems that the political context of a nation does play an important role in shaping election outcomes, not just electoral rules. Hence, the unique pro-China and anti-China ideologies, the relative social homogeneity, and the growing maturity of the Taiwanese democracy all put constraints on the number of parties able to gain seats in the legislature. Furthermore, given the interchangeability of parties within the same coalition, many politicians switch allegiances. This also induces strategic voting behavior since similar policy stances across coalition parties reduce the cost for constituents to vote for a larger party over a smaller one. Thus, even a benign 5 percent of the total votes cast could become insurmountable for small party. This means that while electoral reform may have been able to solve the original problems of overabundance of party factions and extreme opinions, the reform comes with its own drawbacks. MMP system, or at least the version that Taiwan employs, is still unable

to prevent strategic voting or provide equal opportunities for smaller parties to be represented in the legislature.



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