

# SNTV and the Evolving Party System in Taiwan

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## Introduction

An important dimension of Taiwan's recent transition from one-party authoritarianism is the emergence of a competitive party system with a bona fide opposition party, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), challenging the ruling party in elections at all levels and engaging the incumbent elite in public debate on all kinds of policy issues. The development of a competitive party system is perhaps the most important expression of the liberalization of an authoritarian system that has been in existence for almost 40 years and is well-known for its resiliency and stability (Tien, 1989; Winckler, 1992). The rise of the opposition party elevated the legislature elections increasingly to a test of regime legitimacy as well as a true contest for the control of government. The intensification of party competition also crystalized partisan attitudes among the electorate (Chu, 1991). Both developments are predicted to have the effect of accentuating the partisan component in the electoral

choice of voters (Shyu, 1993).

Despite its significant rise in electoral competition, the magnitude of the DPP presence in the national legislature was severely hampered by the electoral rules throughout the 1980s. Taiwan's electoral system is distinctive in that it forces majority-seeking parties to field multiple candidates in most district. In both national and local elections, Taiwanese voters have a single vote, though the number of members per district ranges from one to nine<sup>1</sup>. Votes are not transferable to other candidates of the same party in the event that a voter's first choice has already made it past the post, as is the case in the single transferable vote system in Ireland and Finland. In Taiwan, any party fielding more than a single candidate in any district confronts the problem of dividing the votes among its candidates in order to win as many seats as possible.

Much of the existing literature points to two important political consequences of Taiwan's electoral rules as far as party competition is concerned: First, that the single nontransferable vote (SNTV) system is amenable to the sustained dominance of a single party (Chu, 1992; Rosenbluth, 1992; Cox and Niou, 1991). Second, that the SNTV system tends to suppress the importance of the partisan component in both candidates' campaign strategy and voters' decision-making (Lai, Chen et al., 1991). Alternatively, the SNTV system invites what Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina (1987) have called the personal-vote strategy, under which each candidate builds a personal support group on the basis of policy favors of constituency services for which he takes credit. This means that, for most of the electorate, a candidate's party affiliation no longer provides a useful cue for vote decisions because typically there are a number of candidates with the same party label in a district. This also means that the individual voter can not use his or her partisanship to reduce the cost of decision-making.<sup>2</sup>

This analysis does not challenge the partisan bias of the SNTV system, nor the strong influence of candidates and their local campaigns on voting. However, it questions the premise that a combination of multimember districts and intraparty competition necessarily reduces the importance of partisan attitudes in electoral choice.<sup>3</sup> It also challenges the premise that the kuomintang's (KMT's) strategy of vote equalization is built primarily around candidate-focused campaigns and a system of geographic zones. On the contrary, the effectiveness of the strategy is also assisted by a strong party tie between a large portion of the electorate and the KMT. This means that in the past a strong partisan component in electoral choice actually enhanced the partisan bias of the SNTV system. For the same reason, an erosion of this tie among KMT supporters and the strengthening of this tie within the DPP camp in recent years to some extent helped the DPP to wipe

out the KMT's past advantage in seat/vote ratio in the 1992 election.

### The Political Context of the SNTV System

Bradley Richardson once claimed that "nowhere is the constituency candidate dimension of electoral choice so plausible an influence on voting as in Japan" (1988: 696). In fact, it is more so in Taiwan. Unlike Japan, where a competitive party system coexisted with SNTV for more than half a century,<sup>4</sup> for most of the post-war period, Taiwan's SNTV system operated without a meaningful competitive party system.

The SNTV system has been in place for more than four decades and it is the dominant mode of electoral competition in elections for both national and local representative bodies. Multiple candidates are virtually the norm for the ruling party. Under this set of circumstances, candidates from the KMT always compete with each other as well as with independent candidates, and more recently candidates from other parties.

The ruling elite fully recognized that the combination of the SNTV and multi-member districts would generate formidable intra-party competition. In fact, this was the intended consequence of its initial adoption. The electoral system was installed by the *emigre* regime at the local level as a way of coopting the native elite and incorporating existing local patron-client networks into a superimposed party apparatus.

The KMT regime entered the 1970s with a proven formula for maintaining the political dominance of the mainlander elite at the national level and for controlling a limited popular electoral process implemented at local level. Formally, the KMT state maintained a complicated five-branch (Yuan) national government, with a functioning legislature claiming to represent all provinces of China through its life-term members elected in 1948 on the mainland. Limited home rule was implemented in 1950. The natives were allowed to elect their representatives up to the provincial level and heads of government up to the county/city level. Limited opening of national representative bodies to election was first instituted in 1972 and expanded twice, first in 1980 and then in 1989.

The SNTV system was an important ingredient of the KMT's strategy for controlling the limited electoral process. The strategy combined elements of both the stick-and-carrot and divide-and-rule. First, under the pretext of national exigency, the right to form new political parties was categorically denied by the regime,<sup>5</sup> which at the same time, the *emigre* regime actively recruited party members from among the native elite and their followers. By the mid-1970s, KMT membership reached almost 18 percent of the entire male adult population

(Jiang and Wu, 1992).

The KMT's need to divide the vote among its candidates placed a premium on organization and reliability. KMT politicians invested substantial resources in building up their support networks and made alliance with existing social groups. Driven by the imperative of economies of scale, these candidate-centered electoral organizations gradually evolved into local factions, which maintained permanent organizational bases and sponsored candidates in all kinds of election, from executive offices to board directors in quasi-government organizations (Bosco, 1992). The economic benefits created by local governments' procurement and regulatory authority then accrued to the local factions, which typically had an economic stake in region-based oligopolies such as public transportation, credit unions, farm produce cartels, construction, public utilities, and certain illegal underground economic activities. Most of them also made huge profits from land manipulation with the help of low-interest loans from government-owned commercial banks and complacent zoning boards (Chu, 1989; Chen and Chu, 1992). The capture of economic rents, in turn, enabled local factions to replenish their campaign coffers. The local factions thus constituted a formidable entry-barrier for non-KMT candidates.

The disciplinary authority of the party was built on its capacity to make or break the political fortunes of a faction and its affiliated politicians by throwing its weight behind rival factions or fostering new competitors in the district. To this end, the KMT typically fostered the growth of at least two local factions in any district. The rivalry among KMT-sanctioned factions accentuated the strategic importance of the local party secretariat. Most local factions were subservient also because only the ruling party could provide the legal shield for their vote-buying practices and corruption. Thus, for almost three decades of its rule, the KMT faced a very unorganized and weak political opposition consisting primarily of a few defiant local factions which had no national political aims and posed little threat to the KMT's governing position.

The limited opening of national representative bodies for electoral contest provided a fertile soil for the formation in the late 1970s of an island-wide coalition among independent candidates with national political aims. It existed first as a loosely coordinated alliance among political dissidents, bearing the label of *tangwai*, literally, outside the party (KMT) (Lee, 1988). The leadership of the *tangwai*, encouraged by steady electoral gains, moved cautiously toward forming a quasi-party in the early 1980s (Chu, 1992). Finally, on the eve of the 1986 election, a formal party, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), was established in open defiance of the legal ban.

However, the competitive party system was not institutionalized

until two years later, when the status of the DPP was formally recognized by the authorities and protected by relevant state statutes. Before it was officially chartered under the Civic Organization Law, the Central Election Commission did not allow the name of the opposition party to appear on official election bulletins. The restrictive campaign and electoral law also prohibited DPP candidates from coordinating their campaign efforts across different election districts. In addition, the electronic media, which are under the KMT's direct control, were geared up to contain the reach of anti-system propaganda. The practice of allocating free television time to political parties for presentation of party platforms was not introduced until the 1991 National Assembly election campaign. In these early years, opposition tried to cast elections for the national legislature as a party-to-party contest, the KMT wanted to play down their political significance and therefore amplified the constituency orientation inherent the SNTV system.

Despite these institutional obstacles, the DPP managed to build up its electoral support, which rose from less than 18 percent of the popular vote in the 1981 election to more than 31 percent in 1992. The DPP's adjustment to the SNTV system was less impressive. Initially, SNTV was not much of a hurdle for the opposition since it had only enough supporters to elect one candidate in most districts. However, as the magnitude of its electoral support grew, the *tangwai*/DPP tended to run either too many or too few candidates. In recent years, the problem of over-nomination became increasingly intractable as competition for nomination was entangled with intra-party factional conflict. In a way, SNTV reinforces the trend toward factionalization within the DPP.

### The Partisan Nature of the SNTV System

Conventional wisdom suggests that the SNTV system poses problems for large parties, which may run either too many or too few candidates in a district, and may also fail to equalize the vote among their nominees sufficiently (Cox and Niou, 1992: 1) In practice, however, the KMT has done quite well under SNTV. The proportion of seats the KMT wins tends to be substantially higher than the proportion of votes it gets. For example, in the 1986 election the KMT translated 69.1 percent of the popular vote into 80.6 percent of elected seats while the DPP received 22.2 percent of the popular vote but got only 16.7 percent of contested seats. In the last four elections for the Legislative Yuan (national legislature), the seats to votes ratios (STVR) for the KMT were consistently larger than one (see table 1). In contrast, the STVR for the DPP was consistently less than one.

Based on a case study of the four elections held in the 1980s, Cox

**Table 1. Distribution of Popular Votes and Seats of the Two Major Parties in Recent National Elections (Percentage of Total)**

Year	1983	1986	1989	1992
<b>KMT</b>				
Popular Vote	72.9	69.1	60.6	60.5
Elected Seats	87.1	80.6	71.1	64.0
Seat/Vote Ratio	1.20	1.17	1.17	1.06
<b>DPP</b>				
Popular Vote	16.9	22.2	28.2	31.9
Elected Seats	8.6	16.7	21.0	30.4
Seat/Vote Ratio	0.51	0.75	0.74	0.95

Source: Central Election Commission, Executive Yuan

and Niou concluded that the KMT's ratio of over- to undernomination is relatively high. Nevertheless, there are three factors that counterbalance the errors to which a large party competing under SNTV is prone. First, the errors are also committed by the opposition party. The factionalization of the DPP means that a certain number of seats that could have been won by a united opposition go to the KMT instead. Second, the relatively low district magnitudes (2, 3, 4, 5, and 6) that predominate in the Taiwanese system give the KMT a built-in advantage. Third, the KMT has proved better at equalizing votes because it is the governing coalition, and has access to more rewards to hold the coalition together and to effectively coordinate the vote mobilization strategy among party nominees (Cox and Niou, 1991: 16-18).

However, the above three factors do not tell the whole story. First, in evaluating the nomination strategy of the KMT, one must be aware that there is always a substantial disparity between the formal list of nominees and the informal list of targeted candidates. Only the targeted candidates receive the focused support of the party and they might or might not be party nominees. The reason for this disparity is threefold. To begin with, there is a strategic consideration. Since the KMT always concludes its official nomination process well before the DPP, sticking to its announced nomination strategy would make it a sitting duck, vulnerable to the counter strategy of the DPP. Next, in many cases the party wants to give the appearance of adopting an even-handed policy toward competing factions by nominating an equal number of candidates from each faction although not every nominee has an equal

chance of winning, nor will everyone be treated equally by the party. Thirdly, in other cases, the party wants to maintain some distance from a controversial candidate who, nevertheless, can mobilize sizable electoral support in a given constituency. In this case, the party gives this candidate permission to run without formal endorsement, so that the public image of the party will not be damaged. Thus the KMT's nomination strategy is more rational than it appears to be, and the party has probably committed fewer errors of overnomination and undernomination than its formal nomination figures suggest.

Next, no explanation of the KMT's superior ability to equalize votes among its nominees is complete without taking into account the party's two prevailing vote mobilization strategies. The first is the practice of voting buying and the second the allotment of "iron votes."

Vote-buying is so rampant in most districts that the practice is incorporated into the KMT's nomination strategy. Most prospective KMT candidates must demonstrate to the local party secretary that they have the financial resources and the vote-buying networks (usually made available by a local faction) necessary to be elected (Chen and Chu 1992).

Interestingly, both the sociology and economics of vote-buying make it an effective device for the KMT to coordinate campaign strategy among its multiple candidates. First, vote-buying is almost always transacted through interpersonal networks based on existing lineage groups, work units, or communal ties. Therefore, it is relatively easy for the party to divide up territory among party nominees and monitor whether the segmentation is being observed. Second, there is a natural limit to the cost-effectiveness of vote-buying due to the familiar agent-principal problem (Jensen and Meckling 1976). The return rate goes down as the money travels through too many intermediaries. Therefore candidates have no incentive to buy more votes than one needs to win, because the marginal cost of buying more vote tends to rise rapidly while the marginal utility of extra votes diminishes considerably after the target is reached. It is fairly easy for an experienced campaign manager to calculate how much margin is needed and it is also not too difficult to monitor one's progress toward the target zone by counting the namelists supplied by the middlemen. Thus, the dependence of KMT candidates on vote-buying serves another function for the party. It provides a self-enforcing mechanism for vote equalization.

In contrast, DPP candidates rely primarily on propaganda, political rallies, and canvassing. This means that they must depend on a strategy of ideological spacing to divide the votes. This poses several problems, the most serious one being unpredictability. It is extremely difficult to know, on the basis of platform and propaganda alone, who will vote for whom (Rosenbluth 1992: fn 4). Second, it is impossible to reach a

binding agreement among party nominees to divide up constituencies when their potential supporters do not present themselves in clearly delineated social and/or communal segments. As a result, most DPP candidates pursue a vote-maximizing strategy without due consideration for maximizing the number of seats for the party as a whole.

Another key to the KMT's superiority in equalizing votes is the availability of "iron votes." These consist primarily of loyal mainlander party members, veterans, and military personnel and their families. The loyalty of these people to the party makes them subservient to the directives of local party secretaries. The relative size of this voting army varies from one district to another, but it accounts for, on average, close to 10 percent of the popular vote,<sup>6</sup> enough for it to be used by local party leaders for a last-minute fine-tuning of vote equalization. This is an important observation because it suggests that once a dominant party has established direct organizational ties with its supporters, a high level of mass partisan commitment serves the party well under the SNTV system.

### **The Partisan Component in Electoral Choice under the SNTV System**

The two prevailing mobilization strategies, interestingly enough, suggest two polar hypotheses concerning the influence of partisan orientation on voting. Under the vote-buying mode, a voter's motivation is primarily materialistic, or apolitical. It is reasonable to assume that when a voter offers his/her vote for an economic return he/she does not bother to acquire and process information about the candidate's party affiliation. In this case, there is not even a conscious choice of party. The observed partisan choice is simply an epiphenomenon of the effect of a candidate's campaign mobilization. Under the mode of "iron votes," on the other hand, partisan consideration dominates electoral choice to the extent that the candidate dimension is virtually nonexistent. In this case, the observed candidate choice is simply an epiphenomenon of the effect of party mobilization.

Between the two extremes, there are at least two alternative ways to incorporate the partisan component into a psychological model of voting choice. The first, which may be called a strong version of partisan voting, suggests that partisan orientation<sup>7</sup> is the dominant force in electoral choice as it provides a "coarse sieve" which filters out candidates on different political wave-lengths. This version presents a two-step decision-making in which the candidate dimension of electoral choice surfaces only at the second stage after a choice of party is made. This decision model fits strong party identifiers whose perceptions of politics and evaluation of political objects are structured by party identification. The trademark of their voting behavior is habitual



partisan voting and a high degree of congruence among various measures of partisan orientation.

The second, which may be called a weak version of partisan voting, suggests that the partisan dimension of electoral choice enters the decision-making at the same stage as the candidate dimension. Partisan consideration is no longer the primary determinant, it is only one of the components in decision-making and its relative weight may vary from one voter to another, and from one election to another. This decision model may fit weak party identifiers or independent leaners, as the trademark of their voting behavior is low consistency in partisan choice and a moderate degree of congruence among various measures of partisan orientation.

It is of course difficult to differentiate the four modes of voting decision based on survey data. Both "vote-buying" and "iron votes" are too sensitive to ask about in a face-to-face survey. A conclusive analysis of the validity and relative empirical relevance of either the strong or weak version of partisan voting requires a multi-wave panel design. With only a one-time post-election survey, we can at best come up with some indirect evidence.

The data base for the following analysis is an island-wide post-election survey of the 1991 National Assembly Election.<sup>8</sup> My first task is to show some indirect evidence for vote-buying. In the survey, we asked voters the following question: "To our knowledge, many voters in your neighborhood received gifts and entertainment from certain candidates, are you aware of this?" Close to 30 percent of voters acknowledge that they are aware of this phenomenon taking place in their neighborhood (see table 2).

Next, we asked the voters to identify the party affiliation of the candidate they voted for. The result is presented in table 3. The most interesting observation here is that as many as 10.9 percent of voters cannot recall the candidate's party affiliation only a few weeks after the campaign. It is likely that for these respondents a conscious evaluation of the party factor never enters into their voting decision. In another retrospective question, we asked voters to identify the party affiliation of the candidate they voted for in the 1989 Legislative Yuan election. Now the "cannot recall" percentage increases to an astonishing 31.2 (see table 4). If we combine the answers to party affiliation in the last three elections — the 1991 National Assembly election, the 1989 Legislative Yuan election, and the 1989 county magistrate election — the distribution of level of party information is as follows: 9.7 percent of voters do not recall the candidate's party affiliation in any of the three elections, 11.7 percent can only recall one out of three, 16.0 percent can recall two out of three, and 62.6 percent recall all three (see table 5). Information is the basis of any conscious decision.<sup>9</sup>

Therefore, it is reasonable to infer that for as much as a third of Taiwan's voters partisan dimensions are not always the main determinants of voting decision.

Next, we examine the level of partisanship among voters. The two measures of partisan orientation we use here are party identification

**Table 2. Awareness of Vote Buying in the 1991 National Assembly Election**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Aware	357	29.80
Not aware	809	67.53
Decline to answer	32	2.67
Total	1198	100.00

Missing cases: 186

**Table 3. Partisan Choice in the 1991 National Assembly Election**

Vote Choice	Frequency	Percent
Vote KMT	728	62.2
Vote DPP	145	12.4
Vote other candidates	68	5.8
Cannot recall	128	10.9
Decline to answer	101	8.6
Total	1170	100.0

**Table 4. Partisan Choice in the 1989 National Legislature Election**

Vote Choice	Frequency	Percent
Vote KMT	504	45.8
Vote DPP	158	14.4
Vote other candidates	18	1.6
Cannot recall	344	31.2
Decline to answer	77	7.0
Total	1101	100.0

and party closeness.<sup>10</sup> The party identification measure is modeled after the traditional seven-fold index with a unidimensional scale.<sup>11</sup> Party closeness is a measure of the relative distance between a voter's issue position and that of major parties. It is constructed as a two part question with a multidimensional scale: "At present, there are a number of parties in our society. They have different political opinions and positions. Which party's political opinions and position do you feel are closer to your own? (Specify) How close? Very close, close, or somewhat close?"

Given the long history of one-party rule, it is reasonable to expect asymmetry in both the level and intensity of party identification with different parties — in particular between the long-time incumbent party and the opposition party which has differential capacities to gain power and govern (Hu and Chu 1993). The distribution of party identification among Taiwan's voters confirms this expectation. Close to 46 percent of voters report themselves as KMT identifiers. In contrast, only 7.7 percent of voters are DPP identifiers, while 34 percent reportedly stay neutral (see table 6). The distribution of the party closeness measure is not much different (see table 7).<sup>12</sup> If we inflate the percentage for the DPP by as much as 80 percent due to possible underestimation,<sup>13</sup> the ratio of KMT identifiers to voters is still significantly larger than that of DPP identifiers to its voters. This means that in terms of strength of mass partisanship the quality of electoral support for the KMT is more solid than that for the DPP.

The difference in quality of electoral support has two important implications. First, based on this asymmetrical distribution, we expect to find a significantly higher percentage of habitual partisan voting among KMT voters than DPP voters, if partisanship is one of the main determinants of voting decision. Second, we also expect to find a higher degree of stability in partisan support for the KMT at the aggregate level. Both predictions are supported by our empirical analysis.

In table 8, we present the consistency of partisan choice in the last three elections. Out of the 435 valid cases,<sup>14</sup> 54.7 percent are habitual KMT voters and only 8.0 percent are habitual DPP voters. If we again inflate the percentage of DPP habitual voter by 80 percent, the ratio of habitual KMT voters to the KMT's average share of the popular vote in the last three elections is still far larger than the DPP's ratio.

For a more conclusive finding, we analyze the association between consistency of partisan voting on the one hand and partisan orientation on the other. The correlation coefficient between our index of habitual partisan voting and party identification is .73.<sup>15</sup> The correlation between the index and our transformed index of party closeness is .69.<sup>16</sup> In table 9, the result of multiple regression of the index of habitual voting on party identification and party closeness are shown. The

**Table 5. Recollection of the Candidate's Party Affiliation in Last Three Election**

Information Level	Frequency	Percent
None	66	9.7
One out of three	79	11.7
Two out of three	108	16.0
All three	424	62.6
Total	677	100.0

Missing cases: 707

**Table 6. Distribution of Party Identification among Taiwan Voters(1991 Election Survey)**

Party Identification	Frequency	Percent
Strong KMT Identifier	122	10.5
Moderate KMT Identifier	309	26.5
Weak KMT Identifier	104	8.9
Independent	397	34.0
Weak DPP Identifier	21	1.8
Moderate DPP Identifier	52	4.5
Strong DPP Identifier	16	1.4
Don't know	131	11.2
Decline to answer	14	1.2
TOTAL	1166	100.0

**Table 7. Distribution of Closeness to Party Position among Taiwan Voters (1991 Election Survey)**

Position Closeness	Frequency	Percent
Very close to KMT	88	7.5
Close to KMT	267	22.9
Somewhat close to DPP	122	10.5
Close to neither party	382	32.8
Somewhat close to DPP	35	3.0
Close to DPP	43	3.7
Very close to DPP	10	.9
Don't know	216	18.5
Decline to answer	3	.3
TOTAL	1166	100.0

two measures of partisan orientation alone explain more than half of the variance in consistency of past voting. All statistical evidence suggests that habitual partisan voting is a valid measure of a party's long-term electoral strength.<sup>17</sup> The empirical evidence also supports the hypothesis that a sizable portion of the Taiwan electorate consists of partisan voters, whose voting decision fits either the "iron vote" or the "coarse sieve" model (or a combination of the two), predicting the dominant influence of partisan orientation.

Finally, an analysis of the stability of partisan support based on

**Table 8. Consistency of Partisan Choice in Last Three Elections**

Voting pattern	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
All KMT candidates	238	24.1	54.7
Twice KMT candidates	89	9.0	20.5
No party more than once	56	5.7	12.9
Twice DPP candidates	17	1.7	3.9
All DPP candidates	35	3.5	8.0
Incomplete information	553	56.0	Missing
Total	988	100.0	100.0
Valid Cases	435		
Missing Cases	553		

**Table 9. Partisanship and Habitual Partisan Voting: Summary of Multiple Regression**

Dependent Variable: Index of Habitual Partisan Voting			
Independent Variables:		Beta	T-value
Party Identification		.399	(7.20)
Party Closeness		.259	(4.42)
		R <sup>2</sup> = .56	
		N = 271	

Note: All regression coefficients are standardized beta. parenthesized numbers are T statistics.

county-level aggregate data for three past elections reveals an unequivocally clean pattern in three pairs of correlation coefficients, which individually measure the consistency of electoral support (in terms of per cent of popular vote) that a given party received between two elections across twenty-five county-level units (see table 10).<sup>18</sup> The KMT enjoys a higher degree of stability than the DPP in any comparable pair of elections. This is a very significant finding. First, it reconfirms our earlier conclusion that the quality of partisan support for the KMT is more solid than that of the DPP. Second, it means that, other things being equal, the DPP is more likely to commit the error of overnomination or undernomination than the KMT simply because it is unable to extrapolate its future electoral gains from its past electoral record.

**Table 10. Analysis of the Stability of Partisan Support at County Level: Correlation Coefficients (N=25)**

	KMT	DPP
Pair of Elections		
1986 Legislative Yuan Election with 1989 Legislative Yuan Election	0.73	0.56
1986 Legislative Yuan Election with 1989 County magistrate Election	0.82	0.66
1989 Legislative Yuan Election with 1989 County Magistrate Election	0.63	0.41

Source: The aggregate data for 1986 and 1989 are obtained from the three official Election Bulletins published by the Election Commissions of the Taiwan Provincial Government, Taipei Municipal Government and Kaoshiung Municipal Government.

### Conclusion

Our findings present a mixed picture of the Taiwan electorate. On the one hand, there are a large number of voters who acquire scanty information about candidates' party affiliation and their voting decisions are influenced primarily by materialist incentives and/or conformist pressure channeled through social intermediaries. On the other hand, there is also evidence of a strong partisan component in electoral choice among well-informed voters, especially among KMT supporters. This contrast should not surprise us given the great social and economic

disparity between the rural and urban areas and across generations. This is actually quite natural in a transitional society.

The effectiveness of the KMT's vote equalization strategy is assisted by the party's strong ties with a sizable portion of the electorate. This also means that in the past a strong partisan component in electoral choice actually enhanced the partisan bias of the SNTV system. Lack of stability in electoral support, on the other hand, makes the DPP more likely to commit the error of overnomination or undernomination.

Once this is established, the surge in the DPP's seat-to-vote ratio in the 1992 Legislative Yuan election becomes easily explicable. In that election, the DPP translated 31.86 percent of the popular vote into 29.6 percent of elected seats. This is a quantum leap. From a strategic point of view, three factors contributed to the DPP's recent success: First, party's unexpectedly poor performance in the 1991 National Assembly election made the DPP leadership determined to avoid overnomination in most districts. Second, the DPP leadership came up with a "do-it-yourself" formula to outwit the KMT's vote equalization scheme. They educated their supporters to split the votes in their families more or less equally among hopeful DPP candidates. Third, and most important of all, the DPP advance was largely due to a breakdown in the KMT's internal coordination mechanism, a direct casualty of the intra-party feud between the "mainstream" and "non-mainstream" factions (Tien and Chu, 1994). With a long accumulation of mutual distrust and animosity, the autonomous party organizations under the Council for Veterans Affairs and many government agencies and state enterprises refused to cooperate with the Central Secretariat. The "iron votes" had simply become rusty. These traditionalist party members, consisting mainly of mainlander veterans, civil servants, and military personnel, had been alienated by the swift Taiwanization of the party leadership over the last five years and thus became susceptible to the influence of candidates from the non-mainstream faction. This turnaround suggests that the "iron votes" comprise more strategic voters than ideologues. Their past obedience was due to a convergence between their long-term political interests and that of the party leadership. When they can no longer trust their leaders, these strategic voters stop taking orders from the party strategists.

### Notes

1. For the 1992 national legislature election, Taiwan had five single-member districts, four two-member districts, five three-member districts, three four-member districts, two five-member districts, three six-member districts, three seven-member districts, two nine-member districts, and one sixteen-member district.

2. For a discussion of the rational function of party identification, see Shively (1979).
3. Bradley Richardson also made a similar challenge in his recent analysis of Japanese voting behavior (1988).
4. The SNTV system was first adopted by the Meiji oligarchs in 1925 to keep political Parties weak and small (Rosenbluth, 1992: fn 3).
5. When this was first attempted in 1960, the regime responded with a swift crackdown (Lee, 1987). In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the momentum of a new wave of opposition was arrested by the KMT's demonstrated resolve to enforce the legal ban, culminating in the arrest and jailing of many prominent opposition leaders in the aftermath of the Kaohsiung incident (Lee, 1987).
6. This figure is based on various journalistic accounts. See, for example, a special report in *The Journalist*, November 28, 1992.
7. Partisan orientation may include party identification, party imagery, approval of party performance, and partisan issue attitudes.
8. The 1991 post-election survey was administered by the NTU Workshop on Political System and Change, led by Professor Fu Hu of National Taiwan University. The development of a conceptual framework, questionnaire design and sampling were a team effort by all members of the workshop. The data of the island-wide survey for the 1991 National Assembly election was collected in February 1992. The survey was based on multi-phased quota sampling at the individual level. City/county, district/town (or village), and precinct were selected by probability-proportional-to-size criteria; then quotas by electoral turnout were drawn, utilizing both the official household registration data and the official elector registration record. The number of respondents from the island-wide population 20 years of age and older in the survey is 1381.
9. It is also worth mentioning that the level of party information is significantly associated ( $r=.34$ ) with the strength of party identification.
10. We included three more measures of partisan orientation in our survey: a thermometer rating of party, party imagery, and approval of party performance. For the sake of brevity, they are not discussed in this paper.
11. Outside the United States and Britain, common language terms such as "Republican" and "Democrat" for psychological are loyalties to parties are generally lacking. In our construction, we ask voters, "Of the two major parties, the KMT and DPP, which party are you mentally inclined to accept?" (direct translation). Those who identified their partisan inclination were then asked, Would you say you are strongly, moderately, or somewhat inclined to accept (KMT, DPP)?



12. We recognize that the level of partisan commitment toward the DPP might be underestimated. However, the level reported here is quite consistent with the results of other surveys (Shyu, 1993).
13. It is important to point out that the electoral choice for the DPP is always under-reported in any surveys in Taiwan. Ours is no exception. The reported figures are quite off the mark. In that election, 66.7 percent of the popular vote went to the KMT and 22.8 percent went to the DPP. The level of electoral support for the DPP is underestimated by as much as 80 percent. It is quite possible that some DPP supporters conceal themselves behind the "decline to answer" response.
14. The large number of missing cases was due to the many respondents who either did not remember the party affiliation of the candidate he/she had voted for in any of the past three elections or declined to indicate his/her partisan choice for any of the three elections.
15. The index was constructed as a five-point scale, with 1 representing "all for KMT candidates," 2 "twice for KMT candidates," 3 "no more than once for a same party," 4 "twice for DPP candidates," and 5 "all for DPP candidates."
16. For simplicity, we transform the party closeness measure into unidimensional scale, parallel to party identification, by deleting a small number of respondents who felt closer to the positions of minor parties.
17. The above statistical analysis is confined to a subset of the sample. Those who did not recall the party affiliation of the candidate or declined to provide the information in any of the three elections are excluded.
18. In the case of the county magistrate elections, there are only twenty-one valid cases.

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