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DEMOCRATIZATION

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For My Parents, Shih-li Chen and Hui-Chuan Hsu, with gratitude and
for the wonderful people of Taiwa

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates and examine how the Kuomintang has managed to weather critical challenges presented by the liberalization and democratization of Taiwan, while maintaining its political presence and consequently reconsolidating its crushing political dominance by recapturing the presidential seat and obtaining the most votes any presidential candidate in the history of Taiwan has ever captured.

The Kuomintang is anything but a pesky insect that refuses to go away. The Kuomintang is a tightly run, self-sustaining, and highly disciplined political machine that is deeply entrenched in all aspects of Taiwanese society through institutions at both the national and local level, as well as through different dimensions of institutions in the form of the five yuans, electoral rules, and local bureaucracies and representative offices. These institutions are essential to the Kuomintang's survival in Taiwan. This mutually engaging and interactive institutional relationship has helped sustain the Kuomintang for more than a century.

The Kuomintang's astonishing political success is a result of the collaborative, interlocking nature of national institutions, and most importantly, the Kuomintang's deep entrenchment in local institutions, along with the Kuomintang's cultivation of clientele and paternalistic social relationship

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION
THE PUZZLE OF THE KUOMINTANG RESILIENCE

They are like roaches. You thought you killed them by hitting them repeatedly with newspaper; then, you turned around, and you see them come alive and walking as if nothing has happened! They are just like those roaches that would not die. – Mr. Ku Po-Hsiung, a Pan-Green supporter.¹

The vivid usage of popular Taiwanese slang by Mr. Ku when asked to illustrate his feelings for the Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang or KMT) did not come unwarranted. In fact, most of the participants who attended the same commemoration ceremony endorsed Mr. Ku's view. On the other hand, how does Mr. Ku's description correspond to reality? Is the Kuomintang a pesky creature as Mr. Ku described? The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate and examine how the Kuomintang has managed to weather critical challenges presented by the liberalization and democratization of Taiwan, while maintaining its political presence and consequently reconsolidating its crushing political dominance by recapturing the presidential seat and obtaining the most votes any presidential candidate in the history of Taiwan has ever captured.

As this dissertation will demonstrate, the Kuomintang is anything but a pesky insect that refuses to go away. The Kuomintang is a tightly run, self-sustaining, and highly disciplined political machine that is deeply entrenched in all aspects of Taiwanese society through institutions at both the national and local level, as well as through different dimensions of institutions in the form of the

¹ "Da Bu Si De Jan Lang" (打不死的蟑螂) is a popular Taiwanese phrase used to depict something that is pesky and annoying. The Interview with Mr. Ku was conducted on July 15, 2007, the twentieth anniversary commemoration of the abolishment of martial law.

five yuans, electoral rules, and local bureaucracies and representative offices. These institutions are essential to the Kuomintang's survival in Taiwan. This mutually engaging and interactive institutional relationship has helped sustain the Kuomintang for more than a century. The Constitution of the Republic of China was written with the goal of providing the Kuomintang with institutional establishment and armed the party with the ability to pass and implement important legislation at critical political junctures, such as the liberalization and democratization of Taiwan. This dissertation thus contends that the political resilience of the Kuomintang is not a coincidence. The Kuomintang's astonishing political success is a result of the collaborative, interlocking (contrary to Western checks and balances) nature of national institutions, and most importantly, the Kuomintang's deep entrenchment in local institutions, along with the Kuomintang's cultivation of clientele and paternalistic social relationships. In addition, a lack of funds renders the political opposition unable to cultivate such international relationships.

Contrary to conventional regime change, the Chinese Nationalist Party was established prior to the Chinese revolution and the establishment of the Republic of China. The constitution of the Republic of China was tailored to make the Kuomintang *the* political party of China. National institutions shaped the procedures, routines, and norms of the Taiwanese political system. They also set the rules of the electoral game and shaped the top-down, paternalistic relationships between national and local institutions. The characteristics of national institutions also enabled the Kuomintang to deliver to voters what the

party had promised, prior to and after each vital election during and after democratization. More importantly, while national institutions implemented the rules and norms for political players, local institutions played the roles of facilitators and cultivators of electoral supporters for the Kuomintang. Local institutions nurtured the culture of clientelism and paternalism—the electoral strategies adopted by the Kuomintang. While other explanations attempted to attribute the political success of the Kuomintang to the embedded Confucian, culture, Taiwan’s economic prosperity under Kuomintang’s authoritarian governance and the Kuomintang’s willingness to negotiate and communicate with its political opposition. On the other hand, without the existing interlocking political institutions, Kuomintang’s political opposition could adopt similar policies and achieve the same political results as the Kuomintang. The current political dominance of the Kuomintang in Taiwan, with over 75% of the legislative seats and the presidency, demonstrates otherwise.

With so much attention in the field of political science focused on the rise of China, and all the research directed toward studying the Chinese regime and its policies, Taiwan-focused studies and studies on Taiwan’s domestic politics have been neglected. Taiwan is also often included as a subset of China studies, as a chapter in a book on China, or as part of the discussion on the disputed territories of China.² Furthermore, the majority of the articles and books on Taiwan

² Books on China that mention Taiwan are too many to list. Here are some examples: Susan Shirk, *China, Fragile Superpower—How China’s Internal Politics could Derail its Peaceful Rise* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Suisheng Zhao, *China-US Relations Transformed—Perspectives and Strategic Interactions* (New York: Routledge, 2008); David M. Lampton, *Same Bed, Different Dream —Managing US-China Relations 1989–2000* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2001); June Grasso, Jay Corrin, and Michael Kort, . *Modernization and*

generally focus on Taiwan's international relations, with some strongly biased by American foreign policy and US-China relations.³

Often, when people encounter articles and books on Taiwan's domestic politics, they indulge the fascination with Taiwan's transition to democracy with a minor focus on Taiwan's democratic consolidation.⁴ Shelley Rigger has been the most prolific scholar of domestic politics in Taiwan.⁵ Rigger wrote about Taiwan's democratization in her first book, *Politics in Taiwan – Voting for Democracy*, where she lauded electoral practices during the authoritarian era in Taiwan as the primary variable for Taiwan's successful transition to democracy. Subsequently, Rigger also focused on one of the most complex issues in Taiwan – the politics of identity. Rigger found, while the older generation of Taiwanese and Chinese were more adamant in identifying themselves as Taiwanese or

Revolution in China—From the Opium War to the Olympics (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2009); Robert Ross and Zhu Feng, *China's Ascent: Power, Security and the Future of International Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007).

³ Some examples: Robert Sutter, *Taiwan in World Affairs*. (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publisher, 1989); Robert Sutter, *Taiwan-Mainland China relations: Status, Prospects, US Interests and Options* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Steve Tsang, *If China Attacks Taiwan: Military Strategy, Politics and Economics* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Ted Galen Carpenter, *China's Upcoming War with America—A Collision Course over Taiwan* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006); Richard Bush and Michael E. O'Hanlon, *A War like No Other: The Truth about China's Challenge to America* (New Jersey: Wiley and Son Inc, 2007).

⁴ Taiwan's democratic consolidation is another area this author feels to be greatly lacking and neglected in the field of Taiwanese political studies. Some examples of literature on Taiwan's domestic politics: Parris H. Chang, Parris H. "Changing Nature of Taiwan's Politics," in *Taiwan—Beyond the Economic Miracle*. (Armonk: East Gate Books, 1992); John F. Copper, *(As Taiwan Approaches the New Millennium* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1999); Chun Chieh Huang, *Postwar Taiwan in Historical Perspective* (College Park: University Press of Maryland, 1998); Hung-Mao Tien, "Transformation of an Authoritarian Party State: Taiwan's Development Experience," in *Political Change in Taiwan* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1992) Hung-Mao Tien, "Dynamics of Taiwan's Democratic Transition," in *In the Shadow of China—Political Developments in Taiwan Since 1949*, ed. Steve Tsang (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993).

⁵ Shelley Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan—Voting for Democracy* (New York: Routledge Press, 1999); Shelley Rigger, *From Opposition to Power: Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2001); Shelley Rigger, *Taiwan's Rising Rationalism: Generation, Politics and "Taiwanese Nationalism"* (Washington: East-West Center, 2006).

Chinese with their political attitude toward China and the independent/unification issue correlating with their ethnic identity, second and third generation residents of Taiwan seem to overwhelmingly identify themselves as Taiwanese while bearing a more apathetic attitude toward China, for example, seeing China as just another foreign country to work and make money in.

The goal of this dissertation is to fill the void in Taiwan studies by providing a comprehensive examination of the extent to which the Kuomintang has managed to consistently control the institutional levers of power. Rigger argues that the Democratic Progressive Party was able to reap the benefit of the Kuomintang split and capture political power in 2000. This dissertation agrees with Rigger but also further contends that institutional variables, especially local institutions, contributed to the Kuomintang's securing a legislative majority through the DPP presidency (2000–2008). This dissertation represents the sole study focused exclusively on the strategic behavior of the Kuomintang and its resulting political success.

A Case Study of the Kuomintang

Sun Yat-Sen, whose idea of one-party democratic rule inspired the drafting of the Constitution of the Republic of China, initiated the enduring and self-sustaining features of national and local institutions. Sun's concept of "one-party democratic rule" was contradictory in itself. Sun's goal was to democratize China; therefore he saw the need to create a vanguard party for the country. Sun never addressed his theoretical contradictions, since one party rule is hardly

democratic. In addition, adopting the Leninist institutional structure for the Kuomintang, where the party chairperson retains most power, was hardly democratic either. Nevertheless, the Constitution of the Republic of China and its institutional features were subsequently adopted in Taiwan after the Kuomintang regime fled to the island in 1949 and have been in place ever since. The perseverance of the institutions can be first attributed to the decision of the Kuomintang to implement authoritarianism as its governing strategy when its regime first arrived Taiwan. Consequently, much as the Taiwanese identity emerged as an unintended consequence of KMT public policies, authoritarianism aided the persistence and carried forward the institutions over time. The Emergency Provisions Effective during the Period of Communist Rebellion imposed by the KMT in 1949 served as a constraint to the emergence of a democratic political system in Taiwan. The provision also gave legitimacy to the KMT's imposition of martial law by claiming the Chinese Civil War as justification. Martial law not only allowed the KMT to arrest and imprison political dissidents; it also allowed the KMT to ban the formation of other political parties, enshrining the KMT as *the* party of the party-state. As a result, with the suspension of the constitution, the institutions incorporated in the constitution were essentially suspended from performing their democratic duty as Sun Yat-Sen originally intended. The critical features of the institutions, such as the power to pass legislation and scrutinize budgets, or to craft civil exams conducive to the selection of individuals who agree with the political platform and

ideologies of the KMT, all explained the Kuomintang's success in maintaining its political influence, and thus resilience, through time.

In addition, the robustness of the explanation of the Kuomintang's political resilience also depends on the subsidiary task of reconceiving and reconciling the issue of identity. The complex identity issue in Taiwan was the unintended product of the Kuomintang's authoritarian rule and the practice of discriminatory policies toward the indigenous population. Taiwanese identity was one of the serious challenges to the Kuomintang's political success after democratization. The portion of the population who identify themselves as Taiwanese constitutes 85% of the overall population in Taiwan. As this dissertation will demonstrate, the self-sustaining nature of national institutions, and the Kuomintang's deep entrenchment in local institutions and its cultivation of clientele, paternalistic social relationships, are keys to the Kuomintang's astonishing political success. Case in point: even after the Kuomintang lost the presidential election for the first time in Taiwanese history, the KMT retains branch offices in every township and local districts and has the most card-carrying party members.⁶

The importance of the issue of identity can be exemplified by the case of Mr. Ku, the gentleman mentioned at the onset of this chapter. Mr. Ku was born in 1933, under the colonial rule of Japan. In addition to mastering the Japanese language, assimilation and adoption of Japanese culture and customs was

⁶ Chien Te Tu, Deputy Director-General, Mobilization and Development Committee of the Kuomintang, interviewed by author on December 7, 2007, in Taipei, Taiwan. The KMT currently has one million registered members while the DPP has about 300,000.

compulsory. The Japanese left Taiwan after surrendering in 1945. Taiwan was then received by the military forces of the Republic of China led by Chiang Kai-Shek, on behalf of the Allied Forces. The original intent behind Chiang Kai-Shek's receiving Taiwan from the Japanese was for Chiang to eventually aid the Taiwanese in self-determination. However, Chiang Kai-Shek's nationalist troops were lost to Mao Tze-Dong and the Chinese Communist Party forced Chiang and the Kuomintang administration to flee to Taiwan. Mr. Ku thus again became a compulsory citizen of another country, in accordance with a bilateral peace agreement signed by Chiang Kai-Shek's administration and Japan.⁷ After the 1947 annihilation of Taiwanese elites in a mass killing known as the 2-28 Massacre, martial law was declared for the next forty years (1947-1986), making the Kuomintang one of the world's longest ruling authoritarian parties.⁸

Mr. Ku was adamant about referring to himself as Taiwanese, not Chinese or Japanese. According to him, such self-categorization was due to his observation of the preferential treatment of mainlanders from housing, education, and grocery subsidies to employment and education opportunities. On the other hand, in public, Mr. Ku never referred to himself as Taiwanese or advocated the idea that Taiwan should declare de jure independence until recently. Mr. Ku's dormant behavior was attributed to the Kuomintang's systematic elimination of political opposition and potential threats to its governance during what it is known

⁷ The Kuomintang often cites the Treaty of Taipei (1952) as the document that arguably returned Taiwan to the governance of the Republic of China. The treaty incorporated the Taiwanese as citizens of the ROC; however, there were debates over the validity of the treaty as well as the legality of transferring the citizenship of the Taiwanese to the ROC.

⁸ Other authoritarian parties, for example, that have ruled their states for extended periods of times are the PRI from Mexico, CCP from China and PAP from Singapore.

today as the White Terror Era. The Kuomintang did so by accusing political adversaries of being communists, collaborators with the Chinese Communist Party, or simply revolutionaries scheming to overthrow the government for a new regime. During the White Terror Era, an unknown number of Taiwanese went missing, while an estimated 140,000 Taiwanese were imprisoned or executed on generally fabricated charges of treason.⁹ In addition, the Kuomintang's decision to implement certain public policies and acts of nepotism further separated those who saw themselves as Taiwanese from the Chinese, or mainlanders, as they are often referred to.¹⁰ The deepening ethnic cleavage was the unintended result of Kuomintang's attempt to secure itself as the legitimate governor of Taiwan. This ethnic divide also gave the Kuomintang's political opposition great ammunition to portray the Kuomintang as the party of the mainlanders. The issue of identity is one of the most important challenges facing the Kuomintang from an electoral perspective, for it often invokes great emotions from Taiwanese constituents and has a great effect on constituents' voting choices. The Kuomintang authoritarian governance created resentment in the indigenous population, who perceived the party as a foreign, colonial entity. As a result, the Kuomintang realized the need for the party to strengthen its association with the Taiwanese and the emerging

⁹It is still unclear the exact number of disappearances, imprisonments, and deaths during the White Terror Era in Taiwan. If one counts the death toll during the 2-28 Massacre, the number of victims during the White Terror Era would increase dramatically. An estimated 15,000 to 30,000 Taiwanese were killed, according to George Kerr and documents from the State Department. The government of Taiwan has yet to declassify all official records in the National Archive on the White Terror Era.

¹⁰ Some of the policies are granting public and supplemental housing to mainlanders while subsidizing their children's tuition. One of the policies that has consistently caused uproar is the 18% interest on bank savings that public servants, teachers and members of the military are able to enjoy. The KMT also favored mainlanders as employees for governmental agencies and teaching positions in public schools.

Taiwanese identity. The Kuomintang's utilization of its grassroots institutions and the cultivation of paternalistic social relations are at the heart of the party's success in adapting and recasting Taiwanese identity in its favor. The Kuomintang's accomplishments in embracing the Taiwanese identity and developing it as a tool to cultivate indigenous votes is the subject of chapter 4.

Regime legitimacy and recasting the research question of resilience

According to Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe Schmitter, authoritarian rulers that emerged after World War II suffered from a legitimization problem that interwar authoritarian regimes did not have.¹¹ O'Donnell and Schmitter argue that the "Achilles' heel" of post-1945 authoritarian regimes is what they call "ideological schizophrenia."¹² O'Donnell says, "[These] are regimes that practice dictatorship and repression in the present while promising democracy and freedom in the future. Thus, they can justify themselves in political terms only as *transitional power*, while attempting to shift attention to their immediate substantive accomplishments—typically, the achievement of 'social peace' or economic development."¹³ The Kuomintang regime on Taiwan faced this precise difficulty as defined by O'Donnell and Schmitter.

In the past fifty years, the Kuomintang has actively promoted and emphasized the ideas of reclaiming the "Chinese Mainland" and the unification of

¹¹ Guillermo O'Donnell and Phillippe Schmitter, *Transition from Authoritarian Rule—Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 15.

¹² O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1986, 15.

¹³ O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986 15; emphasis added.

China.¹⁴ There were reasons for such a policy decision: (1) the leaders of the Kuomintang truly believed that there was still an on-going civil war between the Nationalist Chinese and the Chinese Communist Party, and that there was still a chance for the Nationalist Chinese to return to China as their legitimate government, presumably with military aid from Western democracies;¹⁵ (2) the Taking Back the Mainland propaganda campaign was to also impel the indigenous population to support this endeavor with either physical or monetary support; and (3) the policy gave the Kuomintang permission to impose martial law and therefore suspend the ROC constitution, making governing Taiwan and suppressing political opposition an easier task. As Shelley Rigger points out, “ROC elites were willing to set [everything else] aside in the favor of another goal: maintaining political, economic and military stability in preparation for unifying Taiwan and the rest of China.”¹⁶ Nevertheless, hope for recapturing power in China began to dwindle as attention from the international community and the party’s allies began to shift elsewhere, and the People’s Republic of China became increasingly assertive internationally. Bruce Dickson accurately states, “The main goal and tasks of the KMT changed: Rather than concentrating on plans to retake the mainland, the party [now has to] devoted more of its energy to

¹⁴ The Kuomintang actively promoted the party’s political propaganda at schools, with public servants, and especially in the military. The party had a political slogan that said “Taking back the Mainland” (Fan Gong Da Lu 反攻大陸) painted in school yards, public spaces, train stations, and government buildings until 1997, when President Lee Teng-Hui declared that the Kuomintang had officially relinquished its claim as legitimate governor of all China.

¹⁵ Milton J. T. Shieh, *The Kuomintang: Selected Historical Documents, 1849–1969* (New York: St. John’s University Press, 1970), 28.

¹⁶ Shelley Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan—Voting for Democracy* (New York: Routledge Press, 1999), 9.

issues of immediate concerns to Taiwan and its own reputation.”¹⁷ Instead of conducting itself as the original revolutionary party set to unify China, the regime, under the leadership of Chiang Ching-Kuo and Lee Teng-Hui, redirected its focus to the reinvigoration and utilization of institutional features conducive to the party’s survival, such as legislative reform and modification of electoral rules in the name of electoral reform. In addition, the Kuomintang emphasized the entrenchment of party grassroots organizations, in the form of party cells, for the purpose of exerting influence on local institutions and monitoring party member behaviors.

In 2000, the Kuomintang suffered the first loss to the Democratic Progressive Party in the presidential election. The following year, the Kuomintang also lost its legislative majority when some of its more conservative members, as well as reform advocates, defected and formed their own splinter parties. The New Chinese Party was headed by legislative members of the former New KMT Alliance faction. The People First Party was led by former Provincial Governor James Soong, and the Taiwan Solidarity Union was a party founded by former President Lee Teng-Hui and former legislative members of the Collective Thoughts faction.¹⁸ The defection of party members and the formation of splinter parties seemed to have dealt the Kuomintang another blow to its prospects of survival in an increasingly competitive political system.

¹⁷ Bruce Dickson, “The Kuomintang before Democratization: Organizational Change and the Role of Elections,” in *Taiwan’s Electoral Politics and Democratic Transition: Riding the Third Wave*, ed. Hung-Mao Tien (Armonk: M.E. Sharp, 1997), 49.

¹⁸ New KMT Alliance (新國民黨連線; Hsin Kuomintang Lienhsien); Collective Thoughts Faction (集思會; Chi Si Hui).

Political pundits predicted the decline and disintegration of the Kuomintang,¹⁹ and scholars like Tun-Jen Cheng commented that “The Blue-camp is at a juncture where Benjamin Franklin’s aphorism applies: ‘hang together or be hanged separately,’” while identifying the Kuomintang as experiencing an identity crisis.²⁰ The Kuomintang did suffer from a loss of seats in the Legislative Yuan elections and of administrative power after democratization. The losses, coupled with the fragmentation of the party, created the illusion of the eventual disintegration of the party and the solidification of the opposition power. On the other hand, the DPP’s electoral achievements have been less than somewhat consistent but much less dominating; in the 1992 Legislative Yuan election, the DPP garnered fifty-one seats (31.68%); in 1995, the DPP obtained fifty-four seats (32.93%); in 1998, the DPP obtained seventy seats (31.1%), in 2004, the DPP obtained sixty seats (39.56%); in 2008, the DPP obtained only twenty-seven seats (23.89%); the Kuomintang has consistently maintained a legislative majority, even in 2001 after the loss of the presidential election. Therefore, compared with other parties of authoritarian regimes in post-communist Europe, South Korea, and Mexico, the reason for the Kuomintang’s consistency in durability and its political resilience is the interesting puzzle that deserves immense scrutiny and investigation.

¹⁹ A series of political talk shows emerged in the late 1990s and are now the most-watched programs on Taiwanese television. The viewing audience is allowed to call in during segments of the show to express their opinions on political issues. One of the most talked about topics of the popular show, *2100 Everyone Talks*, on the TVBS Channel, was whether the KMT would eventually survive the split of its members and the relentless attack of its political opposition.

²⁰ Tun-Jen Cheng, “Strategizing Party Adaptation—The Case of the Kuomintang,” *Party Politics* 12, no.3 (2006): 369, 389.

Political Party/ Year	KMT	DPP	Others (PFP, NP)
1992	59.01%	31.68%	0%
1995	51.83%	32.93%	21%
1998	54.7%	31.1%	11%
2001	30.22%	38.67%	34.44%
2004	35.11%	39.56%	27%
2008 (First Legislative Election under the new rule)	71.68%	23.89%	0.89%

Legislative election results (1992-2008). Election Study Center, NCCU.

Former authoritarian parties, such as the PDS of East Germany and the SdRP of Poland, as well as the Grand National Party of South Korea, were able to maintain their political resilience and influence after a string of electoral defeats in the 1990s and 2000s, while the CPBM of the Czech Republic and the PRI of Mexico could not.

The case of the Kuomintang is special as it is the only political party that suffered a civil war defeat but was able to carry its regime to another territory, all the while maintaining the party's original name, party structure, and political institutions. The political parties referenced in this dissertation, while in the process of reinventing themselves and adapting to the changing political environment, all adopted names more acceptable to the general constituents and more indicative of the far-reaching reorganization of the party.²¹ To have a comprehensive understanding of the political resilience of the Kuomintang, in the face of the identity challenge and the transitional power challenge identified by

²¹ The PDS of East Germany and the SdRP of Poland, as well as the Grand National Party of South Korea and the CPBM of the Czech Republic.

O'Donnell and Schmitter, is essential to a comprehensive understanding of the complexity of Taiwanese politics and its relationship with its neighbors, particularly with China.

Literature on Taiwan and the Kuomintang

Studies on Taiwan have been marred by the dominance of descriptive writings that are mainly historical and the undertheorization of Taiwanese politics.²² The authors of articles and books on Taiwan have diligently described the process of liberalization and democratization of Taiwan, the evolution to Taiwan's current international status, and the difficulties in Taiwan's relationships with China and the United States. The vast majority of the literature on Taiwan provides great depth on the three topics mentioned. For example, in *Reshaping the Taiwan Strait*, John Tkacik Jr. criticizes U.S. security in the Pacific as strategically deficient. Tkacik then offers an in-depth historical analysis of the United States policy toward Taiwan and offers suggestions, such as for the United States to rethink the concept of "One-China" as well as the continuation of arming

²² For example, Parris H. Chang, "Changing Nature of Taiwan's Politics," in *Taiwan—Beyond the Economic Miracle* (Armonk: East Gate Books, 1992); Joanne Chang, "Lessons from the Taiwan Relations Act," *Orbis* 44, no. 1 (2000): 63; John F. Copper, *As Taiwan Approaches the New Millennium* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1999); Chun Chieh Huang, *Postwar Taiwan in Historical Perspective* (College Park: University Press of Maryland, 1998); Ya-Li Lu, "Political Modernization in the ROC," in *Two Societies in Opposition: The Republic of China and the People's Republic of China After Forty Years* (Stanford: Hoover Institute Press, 1991); Chun Shan Shen, "Reflection of the Cross-Strait Relationship," in *Postwar Taiwan in Historical Perspective* (College Park: University Press of Maryland, 1998); Hung-Mao Tien, "Transformation of an Authoritarian Party State: Taiwan's Development Experience," in *Political Change in Taiwan*, ed. S. H. Tun-Jen Cheng (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1992). Hung-Mao Tien, "Dynamics of Taiwan's Democratic Transition," in *In the Shadow of China—Political Developments in Taiwan Since 1949*, ed. Steve Tsang (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993).

Taiwan with defensive weapons as the more feasible and advantageous policy toward Taiwan. Alan Wachman provides one of the most comprehensive analyses of China's persistent claim on Taiwan as part of its territory and the changing strategies of China toward Taiwan from hard to soft and to hard again, in *Why Taiwan?—Geostrategic Rationales for China's Territorial Integrity*. Richard Bush offered two superb volumes of the difficulties facing the United States in regards to its relationship with Taiwan in *Untying the Knot—Making Peace in the Taiwan Strait*, and *A War like No Other—the Truth about China's Challenge to America*. In *Untying the Knot*, Bush meticulously lays out the history of Taiwan from its colonial period to present, then identifies the United States's diplomatic challenges with regards to Taiwan.²³ Bush concludes that the Taiwanese should not be too dependent on the United States in any regard but should work toward improving the quality of Taiwan's democratic system. According to Bush, “[The Taiwanese] are ill-served by a system that makes decisions based on a distorted reflection of the popular will, one that cannot make decisions supported by the mainstream because small minorities can call the tune.”²⁴

What seems to be absent in the vast amount of literature devoted to Taiwan is attention to finding the answers to the “why” and “how” questions on the domestic political development of Taiwan and efforts to ascertain theoretically

²³ Bush identifies the challenges as the issues of sovereignty, economic cooperation, Taiwan's domestic split on the issue of unification or independence, and the pressure from China on both Taiwan and the United States.

²⁴ Richard Bush, *Untying the Knot—Making Peace in the Taiwan Strait* (Washington DC: The Brookings Institute Press, 2005), 348.

grounded answers to these questions.²⁵ For example, there is a literary gap on the questions Why did the KMT elite ultimately decide to take the leading role in liberalization? or How did the KMT elites reconcile the issue of Taiwan identity amongst its members and with the public with its political platform of unification with China? These questions make up the central puzzle of this dissertation— To what should be attributed the Kuomintang’s ability to retain its political presence without “bleeding to death,” and consequently consolidate its crushing political dominance?— all the more important.²⁶

Conventional literature on Taiwan, books such as *The Changing Nature of Taiwan’s Politics* by Parris Chang, *Taiwan—Nation-State or Province?* by John Copper, *In the Shadow of China—Political Developments in Taiwan Since 1949* by Steven Tsang, and Tien Hung-Mao’s *Political Change in Taiwan*, all encompass detailed accounts of the political transformation of Taiwan from an authoritarian regime to a democracy state; however, there is a general absence of theoretical explanations as to the reason behind the Kuomintang’s ultimate decision to take a leadership position in the liberalization and democratization

²⁵ Joanne Chang, “Lessons from the Taiwan Relations Act,” *Orbis* 44, no. 1:(Winter 2000), 63; Hung Dah Chiu, . “Taiwan in Sino-American Relations,” in *China and the Taiwan Issue*, ed. Larry Diamond and Doh Chull Shin (Taipei: INPR, 1979); Carl Clark, “The Republic of China in the international Arena: Conflict, Clientelism, and the Search for Stability,” in *Taiwan’s Development—Implications for Contending Political Economy Paradigms* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989); Ho Wang, “The Republic of China’s Policy Toward the United States 1979–1989,” in *Foreign Policy of the Republic of China on Taiwan* (Taipei: Institute of National Policy Research, 1992); Gary Klintworth, “Taiwan’s American Interlude,” in *New Taiwan, New China—Taiwan’s Changing Role in the Asia-Pacific Region* (New York: St. Mary’s Press, 1995); Gary Klintworth, “Australia’s Taiwan Policy—1942–1992,” in *New Taiwan, New China*. (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1995); Chun Shan Shen, “Reflection of the Cross-Strait Relationship,” in *Postwar Taiwan in Historical Perspective* (College Park: University Press of Maryland, 1998); Steve Tsang, *In the Shadow of China—Political Development in Taiwan since 1949* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993).

²⁶ By 2008, the KMT captured three-fourths of the Legislative Yuan seats and President-elect Ma Ying-Jeou won by a landslide with 58.45% of the votes, the highest votes obtained by any presidential candidate in Taiwanese history.

process of Taiwan. Alan Wachman attempts to provide such explanation by mentioning it very briefly in his book, *Taiwan—National Identity and*

Democratization:

Huntington wrote that in “noncommunist authoritarian systems, the standpatters . . . [are] normally perceived as right-wing, fascist, and nationalist.” In the case of Taiwan, the epithets “right-wing” and “nationalist” could easily have been applied to the “hard-liners” in the KMT. The reformers on Taiwan are those viewed as “soft-liners,” people who favor democratization over continued authoritarian rule, but who wish to monitor the pace and direction of reform so that the transformation occurs gradually, peacefully, and in such way that they are able to retain power for as long as possible.”²⁷

In a recent interview on the resignation of the Kuomintang party secretary general, King Pu-Tsun, Tien explained that King’s resignation was a reflection of President Ma Ying-Jeou’s quest to further democracy in Taiwan. Tien’s interpretation might seem plausible if there were no other upcoming major political events in the future. However, the joint election for the Legislative Yuan and the presidency is now set for January 14, 2012,²⁸ and Tien has provided no explanation about the effects of upcoming elections on the political behavior of the Kuomintang.

More importantly, what has been underacknowledged is also the extent to which the Kuomintang managed to avoid marginalization during and after democratization and remain politically powerful. The literary deficiency also stems from the assumption that the Kuomintang as durable, since the party has been in existence for more than a century and has weathered two world wars, a

²⁷ Alan Wachman, *Taiwan—National Identity and Democratization* (New York: East Gate Books, 1994), 43.

²⁸ Hung Mao Tien made the comment at the Making Democracy Work in Interesting Times Conference cosponsored by the Heritage Foundation and the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy, Jan 10, 2011, Taipei, Taiwan.

civil war, and displacement. One of the most well-researched and detailed books on Taiwanese domestic politics is *Politics in Taiwan—Voting for Democracy* by Shelley Rigger. In the book, Rigger hails consistent elections as the variable that explains Taiwan’s democracy and praises the Kuomintang for leading the democratization process and for its willingness to negotiate and compromise with its political opponents.²⁹ While Rigger identifies the growing diplomatic isolation of Taiwan and international events such as the OPEC embargo as reasons for reform, Rigger’s book portrays the actions of the Kuomintang as reactive without truly explaining why the “DPP performs best in head-to-head competition; even after more than ten years in existence, the party still cannot equal the KMT in [all other] races.”³⁰

Other Explanations of the Kuomintang’s Political Dominance

Most domestic studies on Taiwan’s democratization and of the Kuomintang’s political dominance generally center on two major variables: the Kuomintang’s leadership role in the socioeconomic development of Taiwan, and the Kuomintang elite’s willingness to interact with the opposition. Studies on socioeconomic development by and large focus on examining Taiwan’s industrialization, urbanization, education reform, living standards, and the growth of the middle class. It was assumed that voters would lend their support to the political party that sustained economic growth and bettered the lives of citizens. The socioeconomic development of Taiwan is not an adequate causal variable to

²⁹ Rigger, 1999, 3.

³⁰ Rigger, 1999, 188.

explain the sustainability of the Kuomintang because under the DPP administration, the unemployment rate was kept under 4% and there was continued economic growth of 8%.³¹ While the Kuomintang claims credit for Taiwan's rapid economic accomplishments, this did not prevent voters from voting for its opposition. In fact, support for the opposition started to increase after 1980 when Taiwan was labeled as one of the Four Tigers of Asia along with Singapore, Hong Kong, and South Korea.³²

Another reason cited by some was that effective communication between the Kuomintang regime and its opposition reinforced the Kuomintang's endurance and sustainability.³³ According to this explanation, the Kuomintang is seen by the voters as the party of democratization and compromise and not the authoritarian party it was before. This explanation also does not seem to be convincing. The Kuomintang was the only political party allowed under the Temporary Provisions Effective during the Period of Mobilization for the Suppression of Communist Rebellion or the Temporary Provision that lasted from 1949 to 1987. According to Tien Hung-Mao, "The party completely monopolizes power within the government, the armed forces, and the police force, [and] . . . all key officers in the various branches of the government, the military and the policy force are party members. At times, distinctions between the party and the

³¹ The Government Information Office of Taiwan, "The Story of Taiwan: Economy—The Fruits of Economic Development," www.gio.gov.tw/info/taiwan-story/economy/.../3-5.htm.

³² Shelley Rigger, *From Opposition to Power—Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), 47–49.

³³ Linda Chao and Ramon Myers, *The First Chinese Democracy: Political Life of in the Republic of China on Taiwan* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); Shao-Chuan Leng, ed., *Chiang Ching Kuo's Leadership in the Development of the Republic of China on Taiwan* (Lanham MD: University Press of America, 1993); Steve Tsang, ed., *In the Shadow of China: Political Developments in Taiwan since 1949* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993).

government blur.”³⁴ After democratization, the Kuomintang state apparatus was never completely removed and reinstalled. In addition, unlike political parties in Western Europe or the United States, neither the KMT nor the DPP were used to coalition building. In other words, the KMT itself was not used to having to compete for support. The communication between the Kuomintang and its opposition was not the type of communication and negotiation political parties in Western Europe or the United States engage in. Since the beginning of liberalization and democratization, both the KMT and the DPP have more often engaged in mud-slinging. Both political parties criticize the other as the party of “no” or the party who opposes for the sake of opposing.³⁵ Instead of coalition building, the DPP and Pan-Green social organizations regularly hold both large- and small-scale protests to oppose KMT policies, since the KMT has always had a legislative majority. One of the prime examples of this deadlock behavior was when the Pan-Blue majority stalled the Arms Procurement Bill forty-four times, before finally passing the same bill after the KMT president took office in 2008. Between 2000 and 2007, with Chen Shui-Bian as the president and his party in the legislative minority, the DPP was unable to pass most of the bills in the Legislative Yuan.

Other than the socioeconomic achievements of Taiwan under the leadership of the KMT and the alleged capability of negotiation with the political opposition, there is also the culturalists’ explanation of KMT political resilience.

³⁴ Hung-Mao Tien, *The Great Transition—Political and Social Change in the Republic of China* (Stanford: Hoover Institute Press, 1989), 71.

³⁵ The common phrase used in Taiwan was “wei fang dui er fang dui” (opposing for the sake of opposing).

Academics like Peter Moody attribute KMT's political success to the party's ability to adapt and therefore maintain its political presence, due to the party's prodemocracy ideological framework. Nevertheless, Moody's culturalist explanation can be rather insufficient. In his book, *Political Change in Taiwan—a Study of Ruling Party Adaptability*, Moody ascribes the KMT's ability to adapt to the changing political environment to the party's Confucian ideological framework. Moody then concludes that even though the Kuomintang is a *strong* political party with a Confucian ideological framework that is prodemocracy, the party's traditional form and institution might be too strong for democracy.³⁶

The weakness of Moody's culturalist explanation is two-fold. First, whether Confucianism is prodemocracy is a debatable philosophical issue. Confucius's writings advocate a paternalistic society with strict rules on interpersonal relationships. Confucius outlined rules for the five relationships he deemed most important between individuals: (1) ruler to ruled; (2) father to son; (3) husband to wife; (4) elder brother to younger brother; and (5) friend to friend. According to Confucius, the relationship between father and son is the most important, and "filial piety" is the most essential virtue one must observe in Confucianism. In his other writings, Confucius offers advice on governance to emperors much like Machiavelli did in *The Prince*. Confucius emphasizes that an emperor should possess a paternalistic attitude toward his subjects and take care of his subjects because most of the time, subjects do not know what is best for themselves. In other words, it should be fair to say that Confucius advocated a

³⁶ Moody, 1992, 189; emphasis added.

governing system that has an overarching governing state apparatus instead of a representative form of government or majority rule. In addition, Confucian writing does not mention political participation of citizens or contestation between different political factions. Therefore, the Kuomintang political resilience should not be attributed to the “prodemocracy” ideological framework as identified by Moody. On contrary, the Kuomintang’s ability to adapt rests on following the paternalistic relationship Confucius advocated, as the Party promotes such relationships within local institutions through tiao-a-kas. Furthermore, the KMT also follows the Confucian proposed government structure by maintaining the overarching governing apparatus as its national institutions in the form of the five Yuans.³⁷

In addition, the argument that contends that Confucianism is supportive of democracy stems from the interpretation of Confucian texts that Heaven does not recognize the power of an unworthy ruler. Rebellions and natural disasters would occur if the ruler neglected to perform his proper paternalistic duties. A successful rebellion resulting in the toppling of an emperor means that the heavenly forces recognized the failure of the emperor, as the emperor is supposedly ordained by the Gods. Nevertheless, this interpretation does not explain the Confucian advocacy of the paternalistic, patron-client relationship between the emperor and his subjects as well as in all other aspects of interpersonal relationships. This also

³⁷ A tiao-a-ka is an elected local representative or simply a community leader who is familiar with the area he resides in. The tiao-a-ka serves as a bridge between the residents of his district and the KMT through activities such as hosting monthly meetings for KMT legislators so community members can air their grievances, offering free classes, banquets, and even “vote buying.” The tiao-a-ka constitutes one of the most important parts of local institutions necessary for the political success of the KMT. The role of the tiao-a-ka will be the subject of a subsequent chapter.

doesn't portray Confucianism as supportive of regime change or as philosophically supportive of democratic transition. According to Confucius, there would not be a need for regime change or the occurrence of revolution if all individuals, including the emperor, fulfilled their roles in society and behaved properly according to his teachings. As Huntington puts it:

Confucian societies lacked a tradition of rights against the state; to the extent that individual rights did exist, they were created by the state. Harmony and cooperation were preferred over disagreement and competition. The maintenance of order and respect for hierarchy were central values. The conflict of ideas, groups, and parties was viewed as dangerous and illegitimate. Most important, Confucianism merged society and the state and provided no legitimacy for autonomous social institutions at the national level.³⁸

In other words, the weakness of the explanation is that the Confucian culture is used to explain and interpret both the absence of democratic behavior of the ruler and the presence of democracy and executive decisions that honor the preferences of the people.

The second weakness of the culturalist explanation is that it tends to characterize unexplainable or complicated political behavior as simply "cultural." In addition to the on-going philosophical debate on the prodemocracy foundation of Confucianism, Francis Fukuyama argues that Asian countries are able to generate and maintain democracies because it is the *Confucian culture* in those countries that allows them to do so.³⁹ Fukuyama uses Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan as examples of successful Asian democracies that arose after the political arenas in those countries were dominated by one political party for decades. Fukuyama states, "Let us begin with ways in which Confucianism is *obviously*

³⁸ Samuel P. Huntington, "Democracy's Third Wave," *Journal of Democracy* 2, no. 1 (1991):24.

³⁹ Francis Fukuyama, "Confucianism and Democracy," *Journal of Democracy* 6, no. 2 (1995):25–26.

compatible with democracy . . . [it] is the Confucian emphasis on education itself [and it is a] doctrine that unified the political and social spheres and legitimated the state's authority in all areas of life."⁴⁰ Fukuyama then moves to elaborate on the extent to which Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan have all achieved the status of developed nations through rapid economic development, and that Seymour Lipset's Modernization theory offered validation for the genesis of democracy in the abovementioned Asian democracies.

The deficiency in Fukuyama's culturalist explanation is that it is difficult to distinguish whether he attributes the genesis of democracy in Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan to the Confucian nature within the political leadership and/or in the civil societies of those countries, or to the level of economic development and prosperity in those countries. Perhaps the most important fallacy in Fukuyama's analysis lies in his misinterpretation of Lipset's Modernization Theory. The Lipset article Fukuyama refers to numerous times was dedicated to elucidating the maintenance of democracy rather than the genesis of democracy. In this seminal article, Lipset offered empirical evidence to demonstrate that the level of economic development would in essence create a political environment conducive to the maintenance of democracy. On the other hand, Lipset did not draw similar conclusions about the genesis of democracy.⁴¹

In addition to the dearth of theoretical explanations for Taiwan's political development, the few alternative explanations can be summed up in three

⁴⁰ Fukuyama, 1995, 21, 24–25.

⁴¹ Seymour Martin Lipset, "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy," *American Political Science Review* 53, no. 1 (1959):69–105.

subcategories: functionalist, essentialist, and exogenous. The functionalist explanation argues that the political resilience of former authoritarian parties is the inevitable result of lacking other political alternatives. The KMT, according to the functionalist explanation, adapted to the changing international and domestic environment by adopting voter-friendly public policies, revamping the pro-unification platform, and promoting the party's original prodemocracy ideology for the purposes of maintaining political support from the population and remaining politically relevant. In other words, they adapt and adjust because they have to. Parris H. Chang, in "Changing Nature of Taiwan's Politics," holds that "the opposition (mostly Taiwanese), the attentive public" along with "external pressure" from the United States and the People's Republic of China, all added up to the mounting pressure for the Kuomintang to change in order to remain politically relevant.⁴² Chang argues that the Kuomintang was "suffering from a crisis of confidence, despite denial by government spokesman."⁴³ Consequently, the KMT "saw the writing on the wall" and the decision was made to take the lead on democratization in order to stay in power.⁴⁴ Alongside Parris Chang, Tien Hung-Mao and Steve Tseng also contend that the changes within the KMT, whether they were ideological or programmatic, were inevitable.⁴⁵ Tien and

⁴² Parris H. Chang, "Changing Nature of Taiwan's Politics," in *Taiwan—Beyond the Economic Miracle* (Armonk: East Gate Books, 1992), 27–29..

⁴³ Chang, 1992, 29–30.

⁴⁴ Chang, 1992, 32.

⁴⁵ Parris H. Chang, "The Changing Nature of Taiwan's Politics," in *Taiwan—Beyond the Economic Miracle* (Armonk: East Gate Books, 1992); Hun-Mao Tien, "Transformation of an Authoritarian Party State: Taiwan's Development Experience," in *Political Change in Taiwan* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1992); Hung-MaoTien, "Dynamics of Taiwan's Democratic Transition," in *In the Shadow of China—Political Developments in Taiwan Since 1949*, ed. SteveTsang (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press,1993).

Tseng contend that the combination of opposition forces, the general public, and external pressure made changes compulsory for the KMT. However, Tien and Tseng neglect to explain the timing of such adaptation. The Kuomintang has always faced opposition from indigenous groups as well as pressure to survive after its relocation after the Chinese Civil War. It managed to stay afloat through its authoritarian governing methods.

The exogenous explanation asserts external compulsion. This explanation holds that the extent of political resilience of the Kuomintang, as the result of adaptation, is dependent on Taiwan's external relationships, especially those with the United States and China. Tien Hung-Mao argues that the democratization of Taiwan was propelled by the KMT administration's struggle to survive in the international community, and by the Party's jockeying for international space with and support from China.⁴⁶ Joanne Chang in "Lessons from the Taiwan Relations Act," Carl Clark in "The Republic of China in the international Arena," and Wang Ho all argue that the leaders of the Kuomintang have obvious incentives, such as self-advancement within the party and within the national government, if the political party remains in power; therefore, they will always find methods to entice the masses to vote for them.⁴⁷ However, as Stathis

⁴⁶ Hung-Mao Tien, "Dynamics of Taiwan's Democratic Transition," in *In the Shadow of China—Political Developments in Taiwan Since 1949*, ed. Steve Tsang (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993).

⁴⁷ Joanne Chang, "Lessons from the Taiwan Relations Act," *Orbis* 44, no. 1 (Winter 2000): 63; Hung Dah Chiu, "Taiwan in Sino-American Relations," in *China and the Taiwan Issue* (Taipei: INPR, 1979); Carl Clark, "The Republic of China in the international Arena: Conflict, Clientelism, and the Search for Stability," in *Taiwan's Development—Implications for Contending Political Economy Paradigms* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989); Ho Wang, "The Republic of China's Policy Toward the United States 1979–1989," in *Foreign Policy of the Republic of China on Taiwan* (Taipei: Institute of National Policy Research, 1992).

Kalyvas argues in his book on the formation of confessional parties in Western Europe, it is crucial to examine the extent to which political leaders choose one political decision over the other. Kalyvas asserts that one cannot assume that the mobilization of the masses is what politicians and their political parties are expected to do and will do.⁴⁸ The exogenous explanation, so goes the logic, is that the KMT was coerced, by the threat of losing support from its traditional Western democratic allies, to democratize and adopt voter-friendly policies in the name of survival. The exogenous explanation ignores the possibilities of alternative choices and their consequences.

The last explanation is essentialism, which served as a basis for the prediction of the marginalization and disintegration of the Kuomintang. Essentialism conceives social and ethnic identities to be primordial, and they are “naturally strong, dominant and collective sentiments.”⁴⁹ Furthermore, essentialism asserts, social and ethnic identities would inexorably transform to a political identity, as a country’s political environment continued to change. In other words, essentialism posits that the transition from social identity to political identity is something innate and unavoidable. Following essentialist logic, the political Taiwanese identity would emerge inevitably through a vehement eruption as Taiwan liberalized then democratized. Consequently, the Taiwanese political identity would motivate the Taiwanese to cast their ballots for the KMT’s political adversary, the DPP, a party that emerged out of the social movement of

⁴⁸ Stathis Kalyvas, *The Rise of Christian Democracy in Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 7–8.

⁴⁹ Kalyvas, 1996, 8.

mostly indigenous activists that demanded liberalization and democratization of Taiwan.⁵⁰

The Democratic Progressive Party and its Pan-Green coalition have always campaigned under the slogan “We are the political party of the Taiwanese, and Taiwanese vote for Taiwanese.” Furthermore, according to the most recent TEDs survey, 75% of those surveyed agreed that the Democratic Progressive Party is the party representing the interests of the Taiwanese.⁵¹ Following such logic, there would be no puzzle about Kuomintang’s political resilience and success.⁵² The Taiwanese-identified voters and the majority would consistently vote for the DPP. Interestingly, the election results contradict the essentialist expectation. The KMT and its coalition not only has never lost the legislative majority; in the presidential election in 2008, the KMT presidential candidate received 58.4% of the overall votes, making Ma Ying-Jeou the highest vote-obtaining presidential candidate since democratization. In addition, in the five-municipality election in November 2010, the KMT captured three out of the five cities.

Each of the abovementioned explanations may sound plausible, and some of them can explain the KMT’s political success to a certain extent; but they also

⁵⁰ According to the most recent public opinion survey from Chengchi University’s Election Study Center, more than 70% of the population in Taiwan identify themselves as Taiwanese. Taiwanese/Chinese Identification Trend Distribution in Taiwan survey conducted by the Election Study Center of National Chengchi University. 台灣民眾 台灣人/中國人認同趨勢分析. 資料來源：國立政治大學選舉研究中心. The survey shows that the of the population who identify themselves as Taiwanese has been consistently increasing since 1992.

⁵¹ Taiwan’s Election and Democratization Study, 2008 (TEDs2008P): Presidential Election Survey. The percentage of those surveyed who thought of the KMT as the party representing the interests of the Taiwanese was 37.5%.

⁵² Over 90% of DPP and TSU politicians are Taiwanese, and the two parties’ political platforms have always been “Taiwanese should vote for Taiwanese.”

suffer from identifiable defects, as the above section has illuminated. There is also a common thread that can be woven through these explanations that makes them disputable. These conventional explanations assume inevitability coupled with external compulsion. The failing of these explanations is that they do not recognize the extraordinary importance of institutions, at the national and local level. They assume as long as political parties are willing to be flexible and adapt to the changing political environment, the parties will be able to maintain a political presence. However, explanations based on such assumptions fall short in explaining the reason some authoritarian parties became electorally successful and some did not. In addition, conventional explanations also flounder in elucidating the opposition's lack of electoral success, even though most constituents identify the DPP as the party of the indigenous population, and the DPP has also engaged in adaptive behaviors.⁵³

In contrast to previous scholarship, this dissertation takes political institutions in Taiwan seriously and argues that they are most indispensable to the Kuomintang's electoral success and the reason behind the party's ultimate consolidation of political power. The combination of the many dimensions of political institutions and the levels of institutions creates an impervious security framework for the Kuomintang to (1) recover from initial electoral setbacks; (2) be ideologically and programmatically flexible to adapt to the changing political

⁵³ Taiwan's Election and Democratization Study, 2008 (TEDs2008P): Presidential Election Survey. The Democratic Progressive Party has modified its ideological platform from strongly proindependence to the 1996 Consensus, advocating that Taiwan become an independent country after its first democratic presidential election, to the Constitutional Consensus, advocating a platform agreeing with the Republic of China's constitution that Taiwan is part of the Republic of China, and the Taiwan Consensus, advocating Taiwan's de facto independent status while keeping the official country name, the Republic of China.

environment; and lastly (3), engage in proactive and aggressive political campaigns to reconsolidate the party's political power. In other words, the procedures, routines, and norms established and embedded within the five governmental branches, the constitution, electoral rules, and the clientele nature of grassroots institutions serve as safety valves for the KMT. The constitutional design also enables the routines and norms to be carried over time and the self-sustaining nature of institutions also keeps the KMT deeply entrenched within Taiwanese society. It is this deep entrenchment and the ability to keep close tabs on the citizens that makes national and grassroots institutions the most important variable in the Kuomintang's political resilience.

Research Methodology

In order to discern the most critical elements of party structure and institutions, this dissertation incorporates forty in-depth interviews with political actors, from party elites from the Kuomintang and the Democratic Progressive Party to local grassroots leaders (tiao-a-kas"). The interviews were indispensable to understanding the structure and operation of the Kuomintang. In addition, the interviewees bore witness to legislative processes and were also participants in the collaboration of national institutions. More importantly, the interviews of grassroots organization leaders provide valuable understanding of the recruitment process of Kuomintang cells and shed light on the depth of party entrenchment at the most local level. Questions were posed to the grassroots leaders on whether they are a member of the Kuomintang, and they are not, then follow up questions inquire their preferred political affiliation and why. It is through questions as

such, the author was able to obtain information on the motivation behind an individual's desire to become a tiao-a-ka for the Kuomintang and whether the individual would defect if KMT's political opposition is able to offer the same incentives. Questions were also posed to political actors at both the national and local level, since there are political actors embedded within institutions at both the national and the grassroots level. A list of interview questions will be provided in the addendum section.

The author spent numerous afternoons at local tiao-a-ka offices observing "constituent services" provided by the tiao-a-ka, and at afternoon tea gatherings of local community members with the tiao-a-ka. The documentation of the interactions between the tiao-a-ka and community members served as confirmation of the thesis of this dissertation—that grassroots institutions are one of the two ingredients in Kuomintang resilience. It is also widely known that high level Kuomintang officials rarely grant interviews to outsiders; therefore, this dissertation provides an unusual insider's look into the tight-knit Kuomintang party apparatus. One of the Kuomintang elites this dissertation paid special attention to is the Kuomintang Organization and Development Committee director, Tu Chien-Te. Mr. Tu has been a member and official of the Kuomintang for thirty-two years. Tu began his political career as a grassroots organization leader and moved his way up to the director position of the Kuomintang's organization and mobilization apparatus. This particular party organ Tu is in charge of bears the responsibility of organizing and mobilizing party members from all levels. Tu was called to assist the Taichung mayoral candidate, Jason Hu,

in the most recent five-municipality election, where the Democratic Progress Party was favored to obtain the mayoral seat. Hu eventually defeated the DPP candidate, winning by 30,000 votes.⁵⁴

In addition to the political elite interviews, the compilation of national and local election results from the Election Study Center of National Chengchi University help to elucidate the relationship between the electoral successes of the Kuomintang and the timing of public policies the KMT chose to advocate at the time of elections.⁵⁵ Furthermore, the documentation from the Kuomintang party archive help shed light to the discriminatory policies of the Kuomintang and the subsequent development of the Taiwan identity. Moreover, biannual ethnic identity and party preference surveys serve as evidence of the lack of transformation of social and ethnic identities to constituents' party preferences. The survey demonstrated that even though there is an increase of individuals identify themselves as Taiwanese, the party preference stayed consistent, where the Kuomintang retaining majority electoral support. Political party identification and satisfaction surveys are the most popular and frequently conducted surveys in the political science field in Taiwan. The survey results demonstrate a significant relationship between the issues the Kuomintang actively pursued and the citizens' desire to vote for the party. Moreover, the surveys provide statistical evidence that

⁵⁴ Election results from the Central Election Commission, Taipei, Taiwan. Hu won 730,284 votes out of the 1,428,642 total votes casted.

⁵⁵ The data sets from NCCU ESC were Party Preferences Trend Distribution in Taiwan (June 1992–December 2007),” Taiwanese/Chinese Identification Trend Distribution (June 1992–December 2007),” Taiwan Independence vs. Unification with China Preference Distribution (December 1994–December 2007),” and most importantly, the face-to-face survey conducted after the 2008 presidential Election.

social and ethnic identity in Taiwan does not automatically translate into political identity.

The author was also able to obtain the results of the face-to-face survey and the follow-up survey for the 2008 presidential election from National Chengchi University. The survey shows that 45% of the respondents agreed that the most important issue of the election was economy, and 0.9% of the respondents thought unification/independence was the most important issue; 0.7% of those survey identified national identity as the most important issue of the 2008 presidential election.⁵⁶ The theme of the Kuomintang presidential candidate for the 2008 election was “economics first, politics later” in combination with the advocacy of a policy goal named “6-3-3.”⁵⁷ The survey respondents identified the Kuomintang candidates as the most capable of resolving the economic issues facing Taiwan. The survey results will be discussed in greater detail in subsequent chapters.

Organization of Dissertation

Since the levels (national verses local) and the dimensions (executive, legislative, judicial, examination, control yuans, party organization, and electoral rules) of institutions are the variables identified by this dissertation as the

⁵⁶ 2008 presidential election follow-up survey, Taiwan Election and Democratization Studies, 2009.

⁵⁷ “Economic first, Politics Later” was Ma Ying-Jeou’s campaign promise in dealing with China and the difficult relations between Taiwan and China. Ma advocated a plan to work with China to improve economic relations between Taiwan and China, while putting aside the political questions of unification and independence, arguing that the unification and independence issue was too complicated for anyone to resolve in a short time. The policy goal of “6-3-3” refers to Ma Ying-Jeou’s promise to obtain economic growth of 6% while reducing the unemployment rate to 3% and increasing Taiwan’s GDP to \$30,000 USD. In 2008, the GDP of Taiwan was roughly \$18,042 USD.

explanation for the Kuomintang's electoral resilience, they are the focus of two chapters of the dissertation. Chapter 2 provides the framework of national institutions as laid out by the Constitution of the Republic of China, which was brought to Taiwan by the Kuomintang trustee government and reinstated after the abolishment of martial law. The Constitution of the Republic of China instituted five branches of government. The five branches of government provide more reinforcement for each other compared to the checks and balances that the United States constitution stipulates. Analysis of the operation of the five Yuans demonstrates that while the Executive, Legislative and Judicial Yuans reinforce and consolidate the Kuomintang's political power, the functions of the Examination and Control Yuans are not only to recruit potential members for the Kuomintang; the operation of the two Yuans also keeps those who are unsupportive of the Kuomintang from retaining financial sources and from career advancement. Then, the complicated election rules are also designed to prevent challengers from penetrating the web of party-sponsored candidates.

The following chapter presents local or grassroots institutions with a close examination of the tiao-a-ka, or the "Small Pillars" phenomenon in Taiwan. The tiao-a-ka serves as bridges between national political actors and the local community. They are also the reason for the Kuomintang's deep entrenchment in Taiwanese society. As stated at the outset, the clientele nature of the tiao-a-kas has enabled them to not only keep precise track of potential votes in their districts but also to reward and be rewarded for delivering the maximum votes for the Kuomintang. The close interaction between national and local institutions and the

self-sustaining nature of the institutions have made them endure over time, even after democratization. With the Kuomintang retaining the legislative majority, the Kuomintang was also able to offer and advocate its programmatically flexible policy platforms at critical times.

Chapter 4 addresses the issue of identity. Taiwanese identity is the unintended product of the Kuomintang authoritarian legacy. Although the ethnic and social Taiwanese identity did not translate to political identity, the Kuomintang's political adversaries were still able to utilize the island's authoritarian past against the ruling party. The chapter tackles the methods the Kuomintang employed to revamp the party's authoritarian image and the party's quest to reinvigorate the party's original ideology of democracy and human rights. With the issue of identity effectively dealt with, the Kuomintang consolidated its political power in 2008.

Chapter 5 concludes by providing an analysis of the 2008 legislative and presidential election, where the Kuomintang consolidated its absolute power by capturing 75% of the seats in the Legislative Yuan, then moved to also capture the presidential seat with 58% of the overall votes, the highest percentage of any presidential candidate in the history of democratic elections in Taiwan. The chapter also examines the party structure of the DPP, the political adversaries of the Kuomintang. The chapter presents an analysis on the Democratic Progressive Party's deficiencies and inability to challenge the Kuomintang with a consistent vote share.

The case of the Kuomintang can serve as the starting point toward a theoretically grounded explanation of authoritarian party resilience after democratization. The KMT is the governing party of a former authoritarian regime that has managed to remain without changing the name of the party. Even though party members have defected in the past, most Kuomintang members have returned since 2007, and the Pan-Blue coalition captured three-fourths of the seats in the Legislative Yuan election in January, 2008.⁵⁸ In addition, even some members of the Pan-Green coalition also defected from the Democratic Progressive Party to join the Kuomintang.

This dissertation integrates analyses of multidimensional institutions in Taiwan at both the national and local level. This dissertation concludes that enduring and interactive institutions entrenched at all levels of Taiwanese society offer the most valid explanation for Kuomintang's political resilience.

⁵⁸ The list was presented at a joint press conference by the Pan-Blue coalition on November 14, 2007.

CHAPTER TWO

OUR PARTY'S LOYALTY IS TO THE THREE PRINCIPLES OF THE PEOPLE

(三民主義, 吾黨所忠).¹

National Institutions and the Political Resilience of the KMT

*Our enemy is neither the military police nor the riot police. The independence of Taiwan is not just about destroying the Kuomintang. It is about building a new country with a new political system and institution with our wisdom, organization and determination. – Yao Chia-Wen, Former Minister of the Examination Yuan and one of the Formosa Eight defendants.*²

This chapter seeks to explain the extent to which institutions at the national level contribute to the political resilience of the Kuomintang after democratization (1987 – present). As Table 1 in the previous chapter has indicated, the KMT and its Pan-Blue coalition have consistently dominated legislative majority since 1987. This chapter explicates dimensions of national institutions in Taiwan and asserts that the procedures, routines, and norms established and embedded within the five government branches, the KMT party-state corporatism, and the “Single, nontransferable Voting in Multi-Member districts” (SVMM) electoral system act as safety valves for the Kuomintang³. The constitutional design brought to Taiwan by the KMT government permitted the party to keep its complete entrenchment within governmental bodies, local

¹ This is the first line from the national anthem of the Republic of China, and it currently is also the official national anthem used by Taiwan. This first line literally translates to, “Our party’s loyalty is to the Three Principles of the People.” Critics of the anthem claim that the song should be the party anthem for the KMT, and the Three Principles of the People the song refers to is the theory of governance drafted by Sun Yat-Sen, the founder of the Republic of China. In addition, the lyrics to the rest of the song are also teachings of Sun Yat-Sen.

² Chia-Wen Yao, *Formosa in the Wind* (Feng-Chue-Mei-Li-Dao 風吹美麗島) (Vanguard Publishing: Taiwan, 2008).

³ The SVMM system of Taiwan is what is usually referred to, in the field of political science, as the SNTV system. The SVMM system was used by Taiwanese politicians and then Taiwan studies scholars, so it remained unchanged; however, some scholars of Taiwan have been trying to refer to Taiwan’s old electoral system as the SNTV system. The SVMM/SNTV system is explained in detail in the following section.

governmental units, and grassroots organizations, while also allowing the party to monitor behaviors of both party and nonparty members and to award or punish those who consistently offer their support to the KMT or choose to defect.

National institutions also set the rules of the electoral games for the Kuomintang and its political adversaries. In *Politics in Taiwan—Voting for Democracy*, Shelley Rigger argues that elections can help transform an authoritarian regime, and that one of the major functions served by regularly held elections in Taiwan was to facilitate mobilization and political participation.⁴ Elections in Taiwan, as limited and controlled as they were, set precedents in unintended directions for subsequent democratic government of the country.

The pre-democratization Taiwan exhibits the characteristics of competitive authoritarianism. According to Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way,

“In competitive authoritarian regimes...violations of these [minimum] criteria [of modern democratic regimes] are both frequent enough and serious enough to create an uneven playing field between government and opposition. Although elections are regularly held and are generally free of massive fraud, incumbents routinely abuse state resources, deny the opposition adequate media coverage, harass opposition candidates and their supporters, and in some cases manipulate electoral results. Journalists, opposition politicians, and other government critics may be spied on, threatened, harassed, or arrested. Members of the opposition may be jailed, exiled, or—less frequently—even assaulted or murdered”⁵.

During the authoritarian era, the KMT inflated the importance of elections for the purpose of establishing legitimacy in Taiwan; thus, elections and the electoral system became one of the most important institutional factors in the political resilience of the KMT to date. Not only are the institutions at the national level mutually reinforcing, local institutions are also lodged deeply in civilian organizations from parent-teacher associations, folk dancing clubs at local parks,

⁴ Rigger, 1999, 3.

⁵ Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way, “The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism,” *Journal of Democracy* 13, no.2 (2002): 52, 53

community martial arts classes, to Rotary Clubs in order to reflect the preferences of the constituents to the political players at the national level.⁶ For example, the head of the parent-teacher association at Jen-Ai elementary school has always been a KMT parliamentary member. Jen-Ai Elementary school is located in one of the most “blue” or pro-KMT districts in Taipei. In addition, the KMT’s Organization and Operation Department was established for the sole purpose of keeping track of and monitoring social and grassroots organizations in Taiwan. The predecessor of the Organization and Operation Department was called the Civil Tasks Department. The tasks of the various internal party organizations will be discussed later in the chapter.

Ultimately, a chief executive officer, the premier, was appointed by the president, and the head of the Legislative Yuan, who has always been a member of the Kuomintang, worked together with the premier in determining the precise public policy to promote at each critical time. For example, the 1990s proved to be the most challenging time electorally for the Kuomintang. Most political parties in democratic countries would consider the KMT’s 60% vote share and 71% seat share in the 1989 supplementary legislative election a great victory. However, for the KMT, the shrinking majority was a troubling trend, suggesting a raise of concern of legitimacy not only for the party but for the very state it had founded.⁷ Moreover, at the grassroots level, the cost of winning elections was increasing. Local factions of the KMT were extremely effective in voter

⁶ The Organization and Operation Department (組織經營部) was established for the sole purpose of keeping track of and monitoring social and grassroots organizations in Taiwan. The predecessor of the Organization and Operation Department was called the Civil Tasks Department (社工會).

⁷ Rigger, 1999, 149.

mobilization; on the other hand, the local factions of the KMT were unable to employ compulsory mobilization methods, so they demanded funds from the party for buying votes in order to maintain the electoral quota. With its vote share dropping significantly and steadily and the cost of winning increasing, the leaders of the national institutions thus organized and mobilized legislators from the KMT to first force members of the National Assembly to retire and then conduct Taiwan's first democratic legislative election in history, showcasing the Kuomintang as the leader and supporter of democracy.⁸

The collaborative nature of the national bodies facilitated the endurance of both national and local institutions and allowed the Kuomintang to be programmatically flexible at each critical juncture of Taiwan's political history, from assuming the leadership role in democratization to advocating specific public policies targeting specific cross sections of potential voters, such as universal health care, women and minority rights legislation, public assistance for the elderly, and the "18-pa interest rate programs" for the *Jungongjiao*.⁹ Both national and local institutions in Taiwan "provide information relevant to the behaviors of others, enforcement mechanisms for agreements, penalties for defections, and the like."¹⁰ The combination of the unblemished institutional design and the Kuomintang's ability to embrace precisely targeted and

⁸ The other successful electoral maneuver of the Kuomintang will be discussed in later sections of this chapter.

⁹ *Jungongjiao*(軍公教) is the encompassing term given to those who are members of the military, the education sector, and civil services.

¹⁰ Peter A. Hall and Rosemary C. R. Taylor, "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalism," *Political Studies* XLIV (1996): 939.

exceedingly practical electoral platforms consequently catapulted the Kuomintang to the status of one of the most durable and dominant political parties in the world.

The Authoritarian Party-State and the KMT as “the” Party of the Republic of China

One-Party Rule

The Republic of China emerged from the Chinese Revolution during which the last dynasty of China was overthrown. The Republic of China began as a revolutionary social organization named the Society to Rebuild China (Hsing Chung Hui). The secret society was organized by Sun Yat-Sen in 1894 in the Kwangtung Province. Shortly after its founding, the Society to Rebuild China was reorganized and became the Chinese Revolutionary Alliance (Chung-guo Ke-ming Tung-meng-hui) in Tokyo in 1905. The goal of Sun Yat-sen and his followers were, as stated in their alliance declaration, to “drive out the Tartars, to restore the Chinese nations, to establish a republic and to equalize land ownership.”¹¹ After the successful October 10^t, 1911, revolution that toppled the Qing Dynasty, the Republic of China was established, and the Chinese Revolutionary Alliance was then formalized into the Kuomintang.

Prior to the 1920s, the Republic of China was weak and plagued by regional warlords, and the KMT was very loosely organized. Sun, who had escaped to Japan during the Period of Warlords, returned from exile and reorganized the party with the help of Comintern along the Leninist line of democratic centralism. The top-down style of party discipline has continued until

¹¹ Milton J. T. Shieh, “Inaugural of the Hsing Chung in Honolulu, Nov 24, 1894.” in *Kuomintang Selected Historical Documents, 1894–1969* (New York: St. Johns University, 1970), 1–5.

the present day.¹² KMT party members are held to stringent Leninist discipline. According to Article 44 of the KMT Party Charter, members of the KMT are to follow party orders, keep party secrets, and refrain from attacking the party or other comrades in the presence of outsiders. They are not to join other political parties, nor are they allowed to organize small groups within the party.¹³ The strict party discipline and the harsh punishment of violators held the KMT together for almost a century and also prevented factionalism that has in contrast plagued the DPP since the establishment of the party.¹⁴ The KMT party officials and apparatus had always been merciless in expelling members who defied the party. Like any political party, there were also instances of cohesion erosion. For example, in the subsequent five-municipality speakers and vice speakers of the legislature election, ten KMT legislators from the city of Tainan decided to vote in accordance with merit or their personal desire rather than according to the party.¹⁵ The KMT stripped the ten legislators of their party membership. The loss of party membership not only would prevent a political candidate from representing the party, but the politician would also essentially lose all monetary

¹² The warlords dominated most of China from 1917 to 1927. The ROC temporary revolutionary regime named Sun its provisional president. The KMT revolutionaries negotiated with the loyal imperialist forces and Sun agreed to step aside in favor of imperial general Yuan Shih-Kai, who would sell out the Manchus, as president. The KMT hoped to act as loyal opposition; however, Yuan soon suppressed the party, declared himself the new emperor, and killed the parliamentary leader. Sun fled to exile in Japan. Source of the Party structure: <http://www.kmt.org.tw>.

¹³ KMT Party Charter, <http://www.kmt.org.tw>.

¹⁴ The DPP has long suffered from the kind of factionalism that at times almost threatens the breakup of the party. The factions of the DPP are differentiated by political generations based on when the politician enters the Dangwai movement. In all, the DPP has the Kang (Centrist) Faction, the Formosa Faction, the New Tide Faction, the Justice Alliance and Welfare State Alliance, the Taiwan Independence Alliance, and the Main Stream Alliance.

¹⁵ “Party Disciplined 10 Legislators for Runaway Votes in Tainan City(南市10位跑票議員, 市黨部考紀會建請開除黨籍),” *NOW News*, December 29, 2010, <http://www.nownews.com/2010/12/29/91-2677585.htm>.

support, along with mobilization support from the grassroots organization loyal to the Kuomintang.

Sun, who is recognized as the father of the Republic of China or “Guo Fu,” had been composing a series of articles designated to be the blueprint for the political institutions of the Republic of China and the role the KMT should play in the newly founded country. Among Sun’s writings were articles on the structure, organization, and discipline of the KMT. Sun also dedicated a large portion of his writings to the arrangement of political institutions for the Republic of China and to his political ideology—the Three Principles of the People. The Three Principles of the People consists of three parts: the Principle of Nationalism, the Principle of Democracy, and the Principle of People’s Livelihood. Each part of the Principles is comprised of a series of lectures elucidating the appropriate governance of the Republic of China, with the Kuomintang taking the lead as the only party suitable to ultimately modernize China.¹⁶

The long-standing KMT policy regarding the governance of the Republic of China was that one party rules the state. The founders of the Kuomintang coined the phrase *i-tang-chih-kuo*, or “a one-party-run country” (一黨治國), to describe the guiding principle of governance of the KMT.¹⁷ According to Peter Moody, “The principle that the party rules the state is an expression of the KMT’s revolutionary commitment, its self-concept as a political vanguard.”¹⁸ Sun Yat-Sen’s original intent was to create a political party that was capable and strong

¹⁶ Yat-Sen Sun, *The Three Principles of the People*, 4th ed. (Taipei: China Publishing Company, 1982).

¹⁷ Sun, 1982, 56–59.

¹⁸ Moody, 1991, 99.

enough to rule a territory as big as China.¹⁹ In the Three Principles of the People, Sun repetitively mentioned the classical English model that allows virtually unlimited freedom of action to the party that controls a majority in the House of Commons within the flexible confines of a constitution. In the case of Great Britain, the constitution was uncodified. On the other hand, Sun and the founders of the Republic of China adopted a written constitution for the ROC modeled after the republican-style representative democracy of the United States. The Constitution of the Republic of China was written with enough elasticity that it incorporated the three branches of government that resembled the powers and functions of Western democracies, along with two additional branches modeled directly from the old Chinese examination and bureaucratic system to aid in the recruitment of government officials and to keep a check on the bureaucracies and their members. The Republic of China constitution was implemented in Taiwan by the KMT administration after it retreated from China. The Constitution of the Republic of China is still the constitution honored by the government of Taiwan today.²⁰

¹⁹ China has the world's third largest territory, 3.7 million square miles, after Russia and Canada.

²⁰ As mentioned in the previous chapter, President Lee Teng-Hui advocated many constitutional amendments of electoral rules and regulations, and for the equality and social benefit of ethnic groups, that allowed the KMT to fulfill its campaign promises and obtain the majority of votes during elections.

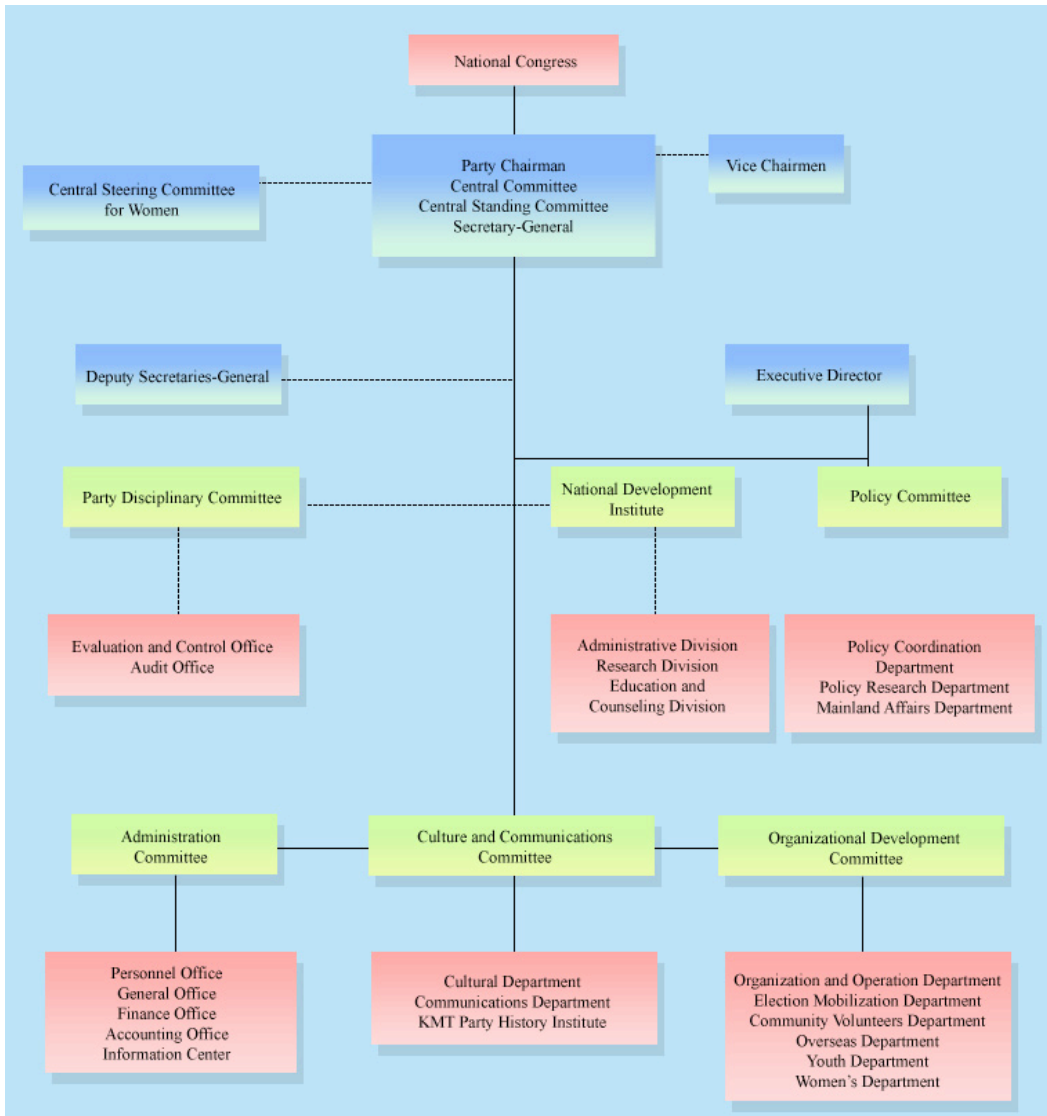


Figure 1: The Kuomintang Party Structure²¹

The ROC constitution and its amendments are the basis for institutions in Taiwan, creating the ideal electoral environment for the KMT. In other words, under the ROC constitution, which was written by founder Sun Yat-sen with the electoral dominance of the KMT in mind, the KMT has the political advantage of playing

²¹ Kuomintang official party website:
<http://www.kmt.org.tw/english/page.aspx?type=para&mnum=107>.

at a game in which rules and conditions have been tailored to the KMT's political advantage in the forms of electoral rules and mutually reinforcing institutions.²²

The Lasting Structure of the Authoritarian Party-State

As mentioned in the previous section, the KMT was reorganized in the 1920s, and its organization owes a great deal to Leninism. The party emphasized “democratic centralism, leadership by a professional political vanguard, and mobilization.”²³ During the First National Congressional Meeting, the KMT established a military academy, Whampoa, with Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek as commander. The Whampoa Academy was created to train a party army with an internal control system similar to the Soviet commissar system.

At the base of the party structure are numerous basic units. The basic unit of the KMT is the “cell.” Cells are organized based on the members’ occupations rather than geographic location. The cell directs each member’s political activity and is responsible for mobilization. “Ever since democratization and the DPP trying to go after our party assets, we have to reduce the number of our cells, but this just means the cells are now bigger. They still have the same functions. All the cells would come alive prior and during every election.”²⁴ The cell, according to Ping-Lung Jiang and Wen-Cheng Wu, is characterized by “tight discipline and is organized not only for electoral mobilization, but for agitation, propaganda,

²² The constitution and the branches of government will be discussed in greater details under the Formal Institution section of the chapter.

²³ Rigger, 1999, 64.

²⁴ Tu Chien-Te, Deputy Director-General, the KMT Organization and Development Committee, interviewed by author on June 14^t, 2007.

discipline, and if necessary, clandestine action.”²⁵ The party cells often have close ties with local government officials such as heads of villages (tzun zhang), wards (li zhang), neighborhoods (lin zhang), county magistrates (sian zhang), and commissioners and community leaders known as *tiao-a-kas*. Some officials who hold local administrative offices would assume roles as *tiao-a-kas* for the KMT. The *tiao-a-kas* are the links between the constituents, the KMT, and its institutions. The KMT party constitution requires the cells to meet once a month. Local officials also conduct their own monthly meetings with residents of their villages, wards, and neighborhood. Huang Chung-Chuan, the head of Li-Chung ward, says that he has never missed conducting the monthly meetings for the residents of his ward.²⁶ In addition to local cells, which are responsible for mobilizing and monitoring party members, the KMT also has full-time party employees responsible for the local party headquarters, which are often referred to as “service centers for constituents (Shuan-Min-Fu-Wu-Chung-Shin).” The service centers are local institutions in which the KMT interacts with the public, and are the primary tools in cultivating the culture of patronage and clientelism within local institutions.

Taiwan political experts like Shelley Rigger, Peter Moody, Tun-Jen Cheng, and Stephan Haggard defined the predemocratized Republic of China as an authoritarian party-state.²⁷ The Kuomintang not only is deeply embedded within

²⁵ Ping-Lung Jiang and Wen-Cheng Wu, “The Changing Role of the KMT in Taiwan’s Political System,” in *Political Change in Taiwan*, eds. Tun-Jen Cheng and Stephan Haggard (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1992), 77.

²⁶ Huang Chung-Chuan, Head of the Li-Chun Li, Hsin-Yi District, City of Taipei, interviewed by author on June 29, 2007.

²⁷ Rigger, 1999, 74–80; Moody, 1991, 99–132; Cheng and Haggard, 1992, 74–82; Chao, 1992, 43–67.

national institutions; the Kuomintang has also infiltrated social, trade, and political organizations from Housewives Associations, Doctors Unions, Teachers Unions, and Farmers Associations, to Labor Unions. There has always been a blurry line between governmental institutions and the Kuomintang party apparatus, which extends to Kuomintang party assets and the national reserve. In past decades, it was nearly impossible for one to pinpoint where the governmental institutions ended and the Kuomintang party apparatus began.²⁸

Since democratization, the KMT has consistently and consciously deemphasized Sun Yat-Sen's original "one party-run country" governing stance to distinguish the KMT from the ROC. During Lee Teng-Hui's inaugural speech in 1996, he said, "This gathering does not celebrate the victory of any candidate, or *any political party*, for that matter. It honors a triumph of democracy for twenty-one million people. It salutes the confirmation of freedom and dignity—the most fundamental human values."²⁹ Lee further elaborated, "The job of president was not something I had inherited from someone else; I had been chosen for it by the people themselves."³⁰ Ma Ying-Jeou, the second democratically elected president from the KMT, distanced himself from the KMT tradition of inherent leadership in his inaugural speech:

Upon being sworn in, I had an epiphany about the significance of accepting responsibility for the 23 million people of Taiwan. Although I have never felt so honored in my life, this is the heaviest responsibility that I have ever shouldered. . . . The new government will be for all the people. It'll remain non-partisan and uphold administrative neutrality.

²⁸ One of the most controversial issues in the blurring of government and party lines is the issue of pension for public servants and government officials. When an official retires, he can count the years he spent as a KMT party member as years of public service and receive a pension in accordance with the years the official was both a KMT party member and in public service.

²⁹ Lee, 1999, 197–198.

³⁰ Lee, 1999, 197.

The government will not stand in the way of social progress, but rather serve as the engine that drives it.³¹

Nevertheless, there are observable examples that demonstrate that the KMT and the ROC are still intimately linked to each other. For example, the KMT party flag and the ROC national flag are variations of each other. As the title of this chapter points out, the Republic of China's national anthem celebrates the KMT's ideological foundation—the Three Principles of the People. The first line of the anthem exclaims:

Three Principles of the People. The foundation of our party.
Using that, we established the Republic.
Using that, we advanced into a state of total peace.
Oh you Warriors, For the people, Be the Vanguard.³²

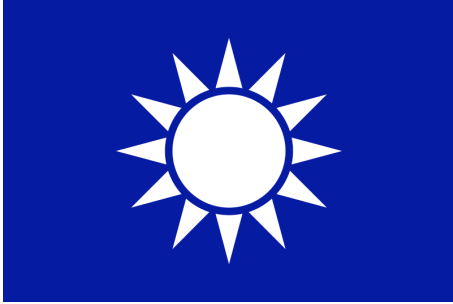
The lyrics of the ROC national anthem were derived from Sun Yat-Sen's keynote speech at the opening of Whampoa Military Academy.³³ More poignantly, in the information on the origins of the Republic of China national flag and national anthem, they are still listed as “Party Flag and Party Anthem” on the official KMT website. In addition, the glorified leaders of the Republic of China, Sun Yat-Sen, Chiang Kai-Shek, Chiang Ching-Kuo, and Lee Teng-Hui were all chairpersons of the KMT at one point or another, and all played significant roles in KMT and ROC history.³⁴

³¹ *China Post*, May 21, 2008, 8, <http://www.chinapost.com.tw/taiwan/national/national-news/2008/05/21/157332/p4/Full-text.htm>.

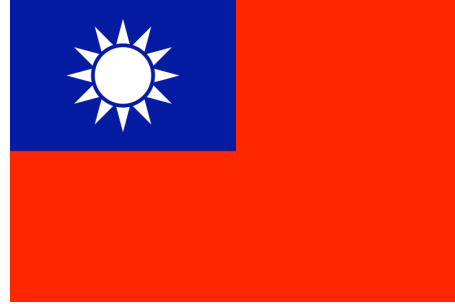
³² Kuomintang Official Website, <http://www.kmt.org.tw/hc.aspx?id=29>.

³³ Kuomintang Official Website, <http://www.kmt.org.tw/hc.aspx?id=29>.

³⁴ Lee Teng-Hui fell out of favor with the KMT after his vice president and 2000 presidential candidate, Lien Chan, lost the presidential election to the DPP's Chen Shui-Bian, and Lee took a more aggressive stance on establishing Taiwan as a separate state from the People's Republic of China. Lee was eventually forced out of the KMT and formed another party called the Taiwan Solidarity Union.



Kuomintang Party Flag



Republic of China National Flag

National Institutions and the Kuomintang Resilience

Institutions are defined as collections of interrelated rules and routines that define actions in terms of relations between roles and situations³⁵. National institutions, as defined in this dissertation, are structures that ultimately serve as a basis and blueprint for the operation of the polity. Local institutions, on the other hand, are grassroots organizations that cultivate norms, habits, and relations between individuals that steer the behavior of political actors. Local institutions cultivate two tiers of norms and relationships: first, the relationships between the individual constituents, and secondly, the tiao-a-kas and the community leaders' relationship with the party.

There are several dimensions to national institutions in Taiwan, which interactively created an irreproachable system for the Kuomintang. The dimensions are the five branches of government and the electoral rules designed by Sun Yat-Sen and amended by subsequent KMT legislators. In examining the horizontal and vertical security provided by national and local institutions, one

³⁵ Stephen Bell. "Institutionism: Old and New" (2011) http://printfu.org/read/institutionalism-old-and-new-1b9d.html?f=1qeYpurpn6Wih-SUpOGumK6nh7Xd6dnd3Nrk29jcl dLe4NKmj8XR2IjG3taJvNndl6jYpqGwh-jch6vlo5-loJfX2t_j49XEuMrc14up56Cmp4fSkbHYrp2dqpTR4ujWr5yU0eLmxtfNk-Xjl9PY26PO2pvU6crm3pTFw6Onqp-unK7a4urO6N3Z2eHXz-DP6NqT3NPch6_1

must also remember that the two levels of institutions are not independent. They operate in interrelated ways and sustain each other. For example, the Single Non-transferable Multi-member district (SVMM) system, as part of the national institutions, not only helped in reducing intraparty conflict, it also facilitated cooperation among KMT candidates; therefore, it consolidated the party's overall control over electoral outcomes. The SVMM system also created a "candidate oriented" voting environment that encouraged voters to vote for their favorite candidate instead of along party lines. Additionally, the habit of candidate-orientated voting patterns generated by the SVMM system not only allowed the KMT greater flexibility in nominating candidates; it also facilitated clientelistic characteristics within local institutions that were upheld and sustained by the tiao-a-kas. In all, institutions at the national level served as the foundation and master plan for the KMT to recruit members and win elections. During the eight-year administration of the Democratic Progressive Party, the DPP, due to the lack of legislative majority, was prevented by the Kuomintang and its Pan-Blue coalition legislative majority from adopting a new constitution or amending the existing one for it to become more objective; therefore, the DPP was competing in political games where the rules were still being set by the KMT. The KMT has been practicing in the same electoral arena for decades, even though it has been with strictly controlled local elections and minor political parties approved by the KMT. Moreover, this political system in itself has made it extremely difficult for the KMT's political adversaries to capture enough political power to implement any changes.³⁶ To win an election under the SVMM system, "a candidate does

³⁶ Even though Chen Shui-Bian and the DPP won the presidency in 2000 and 2004, Chen

not a majority of the votes cast; it is necessary only to finish near the top”³⁷. The larger districts demands more candidates to enter the electoral race. As the number of candidates increases, the percentage of the vote required to win a seat diminishes. This system favors large, well-organized parties with resources to manage candidates and mobilize supporters; in other words, the system favors the Kuomintang.

The Constitution

There is a two-fold contribution of the Constitution of the Republic of China and its subsequent provisions to Kuomintang’s political resilience and success. First, the ROC constitution embodies Western democratic characteristics while instituting Chinese-style bureaucratic recruitment agencies through the examination system, rewards for supporters, and close monitoring of governmental employees and officials. The second aspect of the constitution that positions the Kuomintang in a politically favorable light is that it is ideologically democratic. According to the founders of the Republic, the ROC is designed to be a mixed system of representative democracy, even though in practice the constitution’s democratic provisions were suspended from 1949 to 1986, and the Temporary Provisions Effective during the Period of Communist Rebellion was instead put in place, with the Kuomintang claiming an on-going civil war with the

remained a minority president and was unable to capture a legislative majority to implement the policy promises he made to the voters. Even when the KMT lost the majority in the legislative election of 2001, the KMT and its splinter parties still constituted the majority of the legislative seats. This period saw the emergence of the Pan-Blue coalition, which refers to the KMT and its splinter parties, which routinely worked together to block or pass legislative proposals.

³⁷ Shelley Rigger, *From Opposition to Power: Taiwan’s Democratic Progressive Party* (Lynne Rienner Publisher, Inc, 2001), 42.

Chinese Communist Party and vowing to take back the mainland.³⁸ During the authoritarian era, the KMT party-state harnessed strict control of Taiwan and all aspects of the citizens' lives. After the constitution was restored under President Lee Teng-Hui, the ROC constitution and its components carried through and replaced the Temporary Provision as the institutional and ideological basis to establish a Chinese democracy with the Kuomintang as its vanguard.

The ideological and philosophical basis of the ROC constitution was the Three Principles of the People formulated by Sun Yat-Sen, who was a medical doctor based in San Francisco. According to Sun, the three ingredients to constructing a great Chinese nation are nationalism, democracy, and livelihood of the people. The original intention of Sun was to establish a democratic China; thus, the constitution incorporated both characteristics of presidentialism and parliamentarianism. The political system for the ROC included the presidency and five separate branches of government, or the five yuans. The first three yuans, executive, legislative and judicial, were modeled after the American three-branch system, but instead of the Western concept of checks and balances, the three yuans support and sustain each other with the premier and the Speaker of the Legislative Yuan often working together as the advocates of governmental policies. The latter two yuans, the Examination and Control Yuans, are derived

³⁸ The Temporary Provisions Effective during the Period of Communist Rebellion was a series of temporary constitutional provisions passed by the National Assembly of the Republic of China on May 10, 1948. Usually referred to as the Temporary Provisions, the provisions allowed the president, Chiang Kai-shek, and his son Chiang Ching-Kuo after his passing, sole governing power due to the on-going Chinese Civil War. The provisions also allowed the president and vice president to be exempted from the two-term limit. These provisions were originally designated to remain in effect until China could be recovered from the CCP. During democratization, President Lee Teng-Hui declared the Period of Communist Rebellion had ended on April 30, 1991, after the National Assembly abolished the Temporary Provisions on April 22.

from the imperial Chinese watchdog and the examination recruitment system of civil servants and public offices.

With the Kuomintang as the legislative majority, the party's legislative proposals almost always receive support from the legislators, while the opposition's legislation is often unable to even make it out of committee. The interaction between the Executive Yuan and the Legislative Yuan ensured the Kuomintang's programmatic and policy flexibility at critical junctures of Taiwan's political history. For example, prior to the first democratic legislative election in 1992, the Legislative Yuan adhered to President Lee Teng-Hui's request and voted to forcibly retire the members of the National Assembly, who were elected in 1947 on the mainland, solidifying the Kuomintang's position as the leader of democratization. Moreover, in 1992, the Executive Yuan pushed for the application for Taiwan to rejoin the United Nations, and the resolution was passed overwhelmingly by the Legislative Yuan.³⁹ The Kuomintang thus utilized such legislation to create a new image of the party as an advocate of the Taiwanese before the 1993 local municipal, township, and village executive elections.⁴⁰ To further cement the KMT as the party champion for the people's livelihood, the Department of Health, at the guidance of the Executive Yuan, drafted the National Health Insurance Bill and submitted it to the Legislative Yuan at the end of 1993, prior to the governor and mayoral elections of 1994.⁴¹ According to Lin Cheng-Chieh, a former DPP legislator, the NHI bill was passed

³⁹ In the 1992 election, the KMT took 103 seats out of the possible 161.

⁴⁰ The KMT captured 67% of the council seats and 82% of the executive posts while the DPP captured only 7% of the council seats and 11% of the executive posts.

⁴¹ The KMT candidate for the governor of Taiwan, James Soong, won the election by capturing 56% of the vote.

by the KMT majority after only two or three days' discussion.⁴² The NHI came into full effect in 1995, just in time for the 1996 first democratic presidential election in Taiwan.⁴³ Therefore, for a succinct understanding of KMT political resilience, one should first examine institutions at the national level. The successive sections are dedicated to this purpose.

The Executive Yuan

The Executive Yuan is considered the most powerful branch of the government under the ROC constitution. The president has direct control over this particular branch of government. The branch consists of the premier, the vice premier, and eight ministers and other ministerial-level organs with heads all appointed by the president. The eight ministries are Foreign Affairs, National Defense, Justice, Education, Economic Affairs, Finance, Interior, and Transportation and Communication. In addition, other ministerial-level institutions were created to encompass other aspects of society; in particular, ministries such as the Government Information Office are responsible for distributing official statements from the government and monitoring the media. The Mainland Affairs Council was established by President Lee Teng-Hui to deal with issues with the People's Republic of China. The Central Elections Commission was established to ensure elections are free and fair. In addition, other ministerial-level institutions are the Council of Economic Planning and Development; the National Youth Commission, responsible for cultivating the young to participate in the political structure; the National Science Council; the

⁴² Fell, 2005, 39.

⁴³ Lee won by obtaining 54% of the overall vote, while Peng of the DPP received 21% and the New Party candidate captured 14%.

Council of Agriculture; the Environmental Protection Administration; the Council for Labor Affairs; the Central Bank; the Council for Aboriginal Affairs; and the Central Personnel Administration. The numerous government organs under the direction of the Executive Yuan reflect the Executive Yuan's all-encompassing responsibility for public policy formulation and oversight. The Executive Yuan initiates policy formulation. It is also the Executive Yuan, not the Legislative Yuan, where most legislation, bills, and laws are drafted; upon legislative passage, the bills are then implemented by the ministries of the Executive Yuan. The Executive Yuan thus has the ability to exercise a powerful influence over the policy agenda.

Even more importantly, all government offices and ministries have within them party cells.⁴⁴ The party cells serve as communication bridges and monitors between the premier, the ministers, and the president and high-ranking party officials. Thus, the Executive Yuan is the national institution that bears the responsibility for all policy formulation as well as all administrative duties within the state. During the authoritarian era, almost all members and employees of the ministries were members of the KMT. It was impossible for the DPP to fire and replace all personnel, who were also civil service workers, in all the ministries and ministerial agencies after capturing the presidency from 2000 to 2008. Habitually, these agencies would then still hire and recruit KMT supporters as employees over nonparty or DPP members.

Legislative Yuan

⁴⁴ Rigger, 1999, 61.

The legislative branch is the elected body of representatives that was designed to bear responsibility similar to the American Congress. While policies are formulated in the Executive Yuan, the purpose of the Legislative Yuan is to check the Executive Yuan. The Legislative Yuan has the power to pass, reject, or alter the wording of legislation formulated by the Executive Yuan. The legislative branch originally consisted of the Legislative Yuan and the National Assembly.⁴⁵ Before the constitutional amendment of 1994, the most important purpose of the National Assembly was to elect the president and the vice president. Other purposes for the National Assembly were to recall the president and vice president and to approve appointments by the president. The National Assembly would later be abolished in 2004 by the Pan-Blue-dominated Legislative Yuan in preparation for electoral reform. The 2005 electoral reform replaced the SVMM with the single-member-district system. The new system reduced the seats of the Legislative Yuan from 225 to 113 and changed the terms of the legislators to four years, so that legislative elections coincide with the presidential election. Expecting its next presidential candidate to be the charismatic, American-educated Ma Ying-Jeou, who had a rather immaculate reputation compared to the usual political candidates, the Kuomintang sought to have Ma Ying-Jeou eradicate the party's authoritarian and corrupt image and encouraged constituents to vote for the KMT in the legislative election as well.⁴⁶ The election results of the

⁴⁵ After the adoption of the amendment that allows the president and vice president to be directly elected by the constituency, the National Assembly essentially became useless. The National Assembly was suspended from 2000 to 2005 by another amendment. In 2004, the Legislative Yuan passed another series of amendments abolishing the National Assembly.

⁴⁶ In the legislative election in 2008, the first time the single member district system was in practice, the KMT and the Pan-Blue coalition obtained three-fourths (85 out of 113) of the seats.

2008 legislative election demonstrated that electoral reform is another step that consolidated KMT's political prowess.

As mentioned above, the function of the Legislative Yuan is to confirm emergency orders, approve budgets, pass or reject legislation submitted by the Executive Yuan, and propose amendments to the constitution. The Legislative Yuan provides grants-in-aid to local governments, redistricting and settling disputes between the national government and local governments. Accordingly, the Legislative Yuan possesses the tremendous power of resource and funding distribution. During the authoritarian era, the Legislative Yuan was a rubber stamp and would only have to resolve minor budgetary disputes between local and provincial government. However, during the eight years of DPP administration (2000–2008), the KMT-dominated legislature often aggressively impeded many of President Chen Shui-Bian's policies and delegated resources to local governments that were headed by fellow KMT members. In other words, the Legislative Yuan was able to indirectly assist, in combination with the party-controlled media, in creating the image of Chen's incompetence as president while facilitating a positive public image for KMT government officials.

One of the most important actions of the Legislative Yuan in recent years was the passing of electoral reform in 2005 and 2009. Electoral reform not only amended the electoral rules to amplify the KMT's electoral strength in the form of patronage and clientelism, it also created new municipalities by redistricting according to demographics supportive of the KMT. For example, before 2008, only the election of the mayors of Taipei and Kaohsiung were held by special

election. In 2009, the Legislative Yuan passed new redistricting and electoral reforms that upgraded and renamed Taipei County to Xinbei City. It also upgraded Taichung City to Greater Taichung City and merged Tainan and Kaohsiung Counties with their respective cities, turning them into Greater Tainan and Greater Kaohsiung cities.⁴⁷

Xinbei City can be considered one of the prime examples of the Legislative Yuan shaping an advantageous electoral environment for the KMT. The Taipei County Magistrate, Zhou Xi-Wei, had been performing poorly since taking office. His approval rating was in the lower 20%. Zhou also was involved in various negative publicity scandals that caused his support to dwindle. First, the director of Zhou's county office was caught and charged with receiving expensive gifts, such as overseas vacation trips and luxury cars, from local big businesses in exchange for his help in obtaining government construction bidding.⁴⁸ Secondly, Zhou's vice magistrate, who is married, was caught in a very public affair with a female legislator.⁴⁹ The vice magistrate resigned after the affair was discovered. Lastly, Zhou, in order to boost his accomplishments in protecting and improving the environment in the Danshui River area, had county employees purchase \$3,6000NT worth of mudfish and clams to put in the muddy sections of riverbeds right before the celebration of Zhou's success in protecting the Danshui River's

⁴⁷ Three-fourths of the legislators from the Legislative Yuan were members of the KMT in 2009. The name Xinbei City means "The New Northern City." The New Northern City will have 2.6 million residents and the area will be greater than Taipei City, including cities and townships such as Shanchung, Banchiao, Yonghe, Beitou, Danshui, Pingxi and Pingli.

⁴⁸ "Director of Zhou Xi-Wei's Office, Mai Huei-An allegedly receiving bribes. Prosecutor requests issue of arrest warrant," *Now News*, November 9, 2008, <http://www.nownews.com/2008/09/11/138-2333515.htm>.

⁴⁹ "Due to the Affects of Extramarital Affair, Lee Hung-Yuan's Resignation Granted," *The United Daily News*, March 20, 2009, http://mag.udn.com/mag/news/storypage.jsp?f_ART_ID=185272.

ecosystem. Locals reported seeing county employees making arrangements and buying the river creatures at the local market, and the media also was able to obtain Zhou's budget, which showed funds specifically dedicated to the animal purchases.⁵⁰ The KMT realized if Taipei County was to hold an election along with the other counties in December, 2009, Zhou was bound to lose. Therefore, the Legislative Yuan voted to upgrade Taipei County and rename it as Xinbei City in order to postpone the election for one year, therefore buying the party more time to decide whether to nominate Zhou again as a candidate or support another candidate.⁵¹ The electoral result of the five-municipality election in 2010 was also another success story for the KMT. The KMT candidate captured three out of the five municipalities, including Xinbei City. The KMT ultimately replaced incumbent magistrate Zhou with Vice Premier Eric Chu, who bears a striking resemblance to Ma Ying-Jeou in age, reputation, and political family background. Chu won Xinbei City with 56% of the vote share.

The upgrade of Xinbei County gave the legislative branch the ability to influence and to better the chances for candidates of a particular party, in this case the Kuomintang. In addition, the redistricting and upgrading of municipalities also means the elected mayors of the newly established cities will govern considerably more residents, wield more political power, and, most importantly, receive more funds for policy implementation, such as building the MRT system for Taichung,

⁵⁰“Exposing the Fakery of Environmental Protection. Taipei County Buys Mudfish to Lie to Citizens,” *The Apple News Daily*, October 26, 2009, <http://ipobar.com/read.php?tid-83641.html>.

⁵¹ Zhou ultimately announced that he will not seek reelection on February 22, 2010, and the KMT is looking to nominate the current vice premier and former Tao-Yuan county magistrate, Chu Li-Luen, as candidate for Xinbei City mayor . . . “Low Approval Rating: Zhou Announced Bowing Out of Election,” , <http://video.chinatimes.com/video-report-cnt.aspx?tid=851&nid=7669>.

improving schools, roads, and libraries, environmental protection, and social welfare.⁵² Critics of the municipality upgrades claimed that the legislative action was a preventive strategy on the part of the KMT to ensure that if the opposition captured another presidency, the local governments are still being controlled by its own party members, to ensure the Legislative Yuan's ability to delegate funds to the municipalities supportive of the party, and to reward those who cast their votes for the KMT in forms of public services, welfare, and infrastructures.

The legislative branch was weak during the authoritarian era and served as merely a rubber stamp to the executive branch. In addition, the Kuomintang was also deeply entrenched in the legislative bodies. Both the Legislative Yuan and the National Assembly, similar to other government bodies, had embedded party cells, which are called "party units," inside their buildings in order for the KMT to better coordinate and monitor actions of its party members. With the Kuomintang retaining a legislative majority, the Legislative Yuan passed legislation proposed by the Executive Yuan without much debate. Some opposition members dubbed such action as "legislative escort." In addition, after the DPP took the presidency, the Pan-Blue-dominated Legislative Yuan rejected legislation submitted by the DPP premier while passing policies that were conducive to portraying the KMT in a positive and capable light. For example, the Legislative Yuan refused to pass the arms procurement bill and budget, which would have allowed Taiwan to purchase

⁵² MRT is the abbreviation for Mass Rapid Transit. It is the equivalent of the Metro in Washington DC or the subway system in New York. Taipei was the first city to have an MRT system, which was initiated by former president Lee Teng-Hui and approved by the Executive Yuan and the Legislative Yuan. The city of Kaohsiung also received its own MRT system that began operating in 2008. One of the most popular platforms for the candidates running for Taichung City was to lobby the central government for an MTR system in Taichung.

defensive weapons from the United States, sixty-two times during former President Chen's administration, but passed an almost identical bill and budget in 2009 after President Ma Ying-Jeou took office. After democratization, the Legislative Yuan possessed the power to be selective of the public policies. The modifications to the KMT-conducive electoral rules will be discussed in the later section.

The Judiciary

The ROC constitution did not explicitly mention an independent judiciary. The courts in Taiwan do not have a jury system. Judicial reform became one of the most contentious issues, after Taiwan's democratization. The Democratic Progressive Party and other KMT political adversaries have consistently accused and labeled the judicial branch as no more than a tool for the Kuomintang to legitimize harassment and persecution of its political opponents.

The organization of the judiciary of the ROC is quite different than that of its Western democratic counterparts. Judges, prosecuting attorneys, and defense attorneys have to pass examinations implemented by the Examination Yuan. The judiciary is composed of a president, a vice president, and fifteen justices who serve six-year terms. All are appointed by the president and approved by the Legislative Yuan. The Judicial Yuan is organized into the Council of Grand Justices and a hierarchy of courts: the Supreme Court, the high courts and district courts, administrative courts, and a Committee on the Discipline of Public Functionaries.⁵³ The judges from the Council of Grand Justices and the Supreme Court are appointed by the president with tenure. Thus, the important implication

⁵³ Copper, 2009, 124.

here is that most justices who are now serving in higher courts in Taiwan were most likely appointed by a KMT president at one time or another and were also screened by the Examination Yuan, while being closely monitored by the Control Yuan. According to John Copper, “Critics of the Judicial Yuan have argued that it is not as strong as a judicial body of government should be and not sufficiently independent of ruling party influence.”⁵⁴ Advocates of judicial reform allege that the judges are simply life-long government employees recruited by the heavily Pan-Blue-influenced Examination Yuan and the civic exam system designed by the Kuomintang government; thus, judges are never impartial.⁵⁵ Former President Chen Shui-Bian promised judicial reform when campaigning for the presidency; nevertheless, due to his party’s minority status in the Legislative Yuan, the judicial reform Chen promised never took place.

There are a few Taiwanese axioms concerning the judicial branch. The most famous saying that is still widely quoted, especially by the KMT opposition, is from a former KMT secretary general, Hsu Shui-Te. Hsu once proclaimed that “the Courts belong to the KMT.”⁵⁶ Hsu was attending the 14th Party Representatives Conference of the Kaohsiung and Pingtung areas and was in the process of appeasing his comrades after they expressed great discontent over the court’s investigations and indictments of corruption. In his attempt to calm the attendees, Hsu asserted that the Kuomintang essentially ran the courts. There are two additional popular maxims referencing the Judiciary—one is “When elected,

⁵⁴ Copper, 2009, 125.

⁵⁵ The examinations are administered and implemented by the Examination Yuan, another governmental organ within the ROC government that bears a striking resemblance to the imperial Chinese examination system for civil offices.

⁵⁶ Po-Fu Chang, *The Journalist Magazine*, no. 437 (July 1995).

the person passes the challenge. When one is not elected, one goes to jail,” and the other maxim is in reference to KMT officials who find themselves in hot water with the law: “First trial: retry; Second trial: sentence turns to in half; Third trial: everything is all right.”⁵⁷ These popular sayings of mockery refer to the general public’s belief and the fact that most cases against members of the KMT will either be reduced to a lesser charge or the defendants will ultimately be acquitted. On the other hand, if the defendant is from a political adversary of the KMT, the outcome of the trial will be quite different.⁵⁸ Former President Chen Shui-Bian was charged with corruption forty-five minutes after his term ended as president and was then taken into custody five months after Ma Ying-Jeou took office as president. Chen remained in jail without bail while no charges were filed for a year. Chen and the first lady, along with ministers of his administration, were then convicted of corruption and sentenced to life in prison, while KMT officials who engaged in similar behavior remained free.⁵⁹ The concept of separation of powers under the ROC constitution, unlike the Western democratic system it mimics, did not create a system of checks and balances. The heavy influence of the executive branch on the Legislative Yuan and the partisan nature

⁵⁷ “當選過關, 落選被關 (Dan-Quan Guo-Guan, Lo-Quan Bei-Guan)” and “一審重判, 二審減半, 三審不算 (Yi-Shen-Chun-Pan, Er-Shen-Jian-Ban, San-Shen-Bu-Xuan.”

⁵⁸ In 2008 and 2009, academics and politicians in the United States, Australia, and United Kingdom signed five separate letters to the newly elected president, Ma Ying-Jeou, urging transparency of the judicial process and the release of former President Chen Shui-Bian, who has been held without specific indictment for more than a year. In September of 2009, Chen was convicted of corruption but is still being held at Tu-Cheng Prison while he waits for his appeals.

⁵⁹ James Soong, the KMT presidential candidate, former governor of Taiwan, and chairperson of the People First Party, was accused of taking campaign contributions and special funds for the governor and transferring the funds to his personal account. The scandal caused Soong to lose the presidential seat in 1997, but Soong was never charged with any crime. In addition, Ma Ying-Jeou himself was also charged with the same crime when he served as Mayor of Taipei. Ma was acquitted, even though his banking records indicated that he had directly deposited special mayoral funds in his wife’s personal account.

of the Legislative Yuan prevented the opposition from effectively implementing legislation of its choosing. The judiciary and officers of the courts often arrest, charge, and convict members of the political opposition. Even if members of the KMT opposition are found not guilty, they have already been tied up in the court processes for years. Moreover, the KMT party cells within each branch facilitate the interactive, mutually sustaining workings of the branches, and the national institutions serve as safety valves for the KMT.

The Examination and Control Yuan as Recruitment Tool and the “Big Brother”

The first three Yuans were designed as and have fulfilled the role of cultivators of routines, procedures, and norms of national institutions. In addition to the previously mentioned three Yuans, the latter two Yuans, Control and Examination, were developed to be tools of recruitment and monitoring agencies of potential KMT members and government officials. Both Yuans were inspired by the Chinese imperial bureaucracy of examination and the disciplinary agency of accountability and virtue.

The Control Yuan was established to serve as a governmental watchdog and was modeled after the Imperial Censorate in dynastic China. The Control Yuan possesses remarkable power and can impose tremendous pressure on government officials. The Control Yuan retains the powers to impeach, censure, and audit all government officials, including the Executive Yuan and its ministries. The Control Yuan also manages the Ministry of Audits and has the power to investigate any public official based on complaints from the public. The twenty-nine members of the Control Yuan and the minister of the Control Yuan are

appointed by the president and confirmed by the Legislative Yuan. In effect, the Control Yuan has been serving as a tool for the KMT to surveil activities of government officials and party members. Since the Control Yuan does not have to reveal the source of complaints, the official who is the subject of censure is essentially at the mercy of the yuan and its members. For example, one of the most recent controversies surrounding the power of the Control Yuan was sparked by the censuring of the minister of the Government Information Office and Taiwan's representative to Germany, Hsieh Jhy-Wey, along with other government officials under the previous DPP administration, based on allegations of corruption and misusing governmental funds. Opposition to the KMT claimed that the Control Yuan was merely a mechanism utilized by the KMT to harass and intimidate those who held government positions under the DPP administration. Furthermore, the opposition also accused the current president of only appointing those he knew would not actively investigate corruption and fraud involving his government officials. Moreover, the Legislative Yuan also made it extremely difficult for non-KMT presidents to exercise control power. For example, when President Chen Shui-Bian submitted his list of Control Yuan members to the Legislative Yuan for approval, the KMT-dominated Legislative Yuan refused to approve any of the members on the list.

The Examination Yuan, like the Control Yuan, emerged out of Chinese tradition. The Examination Yuan is responsible for writing and administering what is similar to civil service exams in the United States. To Sun and the founders of the ROC, the examination function and the merit-based selection of

government officials and bureaucrats was so important that it deserved a separate branch of government to oversee it. The Examination Yuan is also responsible for recruiting and screening applicants for government services.

Critics of the Examination Yuan claim that the exams were deliberately constructed to benefit mainlander applicants, including the usage of the Mandarin language and the exams' emphasis on Chinese culture, geography, and history. Since the Examination Yuan is also responsible for job qualifications, job security, and retirement benefits, the Examination Yuan possesses the overarching power to hire or fire those who are supportive or unsupportive of the KMT. In other words, the Examination Yuan is responsible for hiring almost all members of *Jungongjiao*.⁶⁰ As a result, during the fifty-year KMT dominance, the majority of the members of the *Jungongjiao* were mainlanders or the children of mainlanders, and those Taiwanese who passed the civil service exams and served as public officials adopted similar habits, including their voting preferences, in order to guarantee job security, retain positive evaluations, and receive handsome retirement benefits. As former Government Information Office Minister Shieh Jhy-Wey once exclaimed, "The biggest cult in Taiwan is *Jungongjiao*!"⁶¹ According to Dafydd Fell, "The political loyalty [to the KMT] of these sectors was [also] rewarded with a generous system of social welfare benefits, which stood in stark contrast to the complete lack of welfare provisions for most of the other occupational groups."⁶² For instance, one of the most contentious benefits

⁶⁰ As the previous chapter indicates, *Jungongjiao*(軍公教) is a name given to those who are members of the military, the education sector and civil services.

⁶¹ Shieh Jhy-Wey at the March 16, 2008, Highfive Rally in Taipei, Taiwan. Attended by author.

⁶² Fell, 2005, 10.

includes the Jungongjiao's 18% savings, retirement benefits, tax exemption, and now even funeral funds for those who served in the ROC military during the Chinese Civil War.

Most Taiwanese refer to the interest and welfare benefits the members of the Jungongjiao receive as "18-pa," meaning "eighteen percent." Jungongjiao members are allowed by law to receive an 18% fixed interest rate on their savings accounts. In addition, Jungongjiao members can also receive their retirement funds as a lump sum with 18% fixed interest regardless of the economic situation of the country. During the eight-year DPP administration, DPP legislators and party members aggressively lobbied for the abandonment of 18-pa; however, the Pan-Blue-dominated legislature refused to pass such a measure. The Legislative Yuan finally made modifications under extreme public pressure to reduce the number of the Jungongjiao who are able to enjoy such benefits; however, the benefits were never eliminated and are still in place as of today.⁶³ According to the Central Personnel Administration, retired members of the Jungongjiao who were receiving the 18% savings benefit totaled 410,000, with Jun (members of the military) totaling 190,000, Gong (civil servants) totaling 60,000, and Jiao (teachers) being 150,000. On the other hand, the Ma administration restored the original benefits for the Jungongjiao in 2010, and every member is now entitled to all benefits. In addition to the savings and retirement benefits (unlike the United States, which has tax-free grocery stores only on military bases), members of the civil service, public school system, and the military can all shop at specialty tax-

⁶³ During the DPP administration in 2006, the Jungongjiao benefits were being modified so that the 18% only applied to those who retired; however, the Ma administration restored the original benefit of 18% in 2010.

free stores throughout the cities and enjoy reduced pricing and tax-free products. Therefore, most members of the Jungongjiao become what scholars have labeled “iron voters” for the KMT. The villages and public housing units where the members the Jungongjiao reside are called “iron vote areas.”⁶⁴

The two government branches inspired by ancient Chinese tradition inadvertently assisted in maintaining the political space for the KMT, even after democratization, by providing the vote share the party needed in order to sustain itself in the new competitive political environment. The operation of the Control and Examination Yuans created “iron vote areas” for the KMT by generating a political and social environment in which those who support the KMT policy, ideology, and teachings ultimately receive greater benefits than those who do not. Therefore, as the previous section demonstrated, the Constitution of the Republic of China institutionalized the KMT party-state and the blurring of the line between the state and the party. The KMT essentially is able, in combination with fluid programmatic platforms, to infiltrate all levels of government while employing its coercive power from the traditionally Pan-Blue-dominated Legislative Yuan by fiddling with constitutional design and electoral rules to achieve the necessary electoral advantage while maintaining solid support from the iron voters.

In all, the Constitution of the Republic of China supplied the Kuomintang with the institutional establishment that helped maintain and sustain the party

⁶⁴ Yun-Han Chu, “A Born-Again Dominant Party? The Transformation of the Kuomintang and Taiwan’s Regime Transition,” in *The Awkward Embrace: One-Party Domination and Democracy*, eds. Hermann Giliomee and Charles Simkins, et al. (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1999), 70.

through the passage of important legislation at critical junctures to guarantee the party's political influence and space. The ROC constitution also put in place institutions at the national level embedded with party cells for maintaining and recruiting those who would ultimately remain loyal to the party in the long run and for preventing the political opposition from obtaining positions within the governmental bodies as well. The ROC constitution not only endowed the KMT with the ideological basis to portray the party to the constituents as the political party that advocates democracy, it also furnished the KMT with levels of institutional support. The procedures, routines, and norms established and embedded within the five government branches serve as safety valves for the KMT. Because of constitutional design, the KMT is able to keep its deep entrenchment within government bodies, monitor behaviors of party members and punish them if necessary, and recruit new party members and create iron voters.

Institutional Effects of KMT Programmatic Flexibility and Electoral Success

After democratization, the KMT was faced with the challenge of constructing a solid, coherent political platform to compete with other parties for votes. The KMT needed to address salient campaign issues that political parties from industrialized democracies must address and pitch to voters: the issues of social welfare, the economy, and class relations. The Kuomintang needed to become as ideologically and programmatically flexible as other democratic parties in order to remain politically significant and maintain support. As the KMT moved away from its original claim to unify all of China's lost territories, the KMT then found itself having to turn to the indigenous population originally

oppressed by the party as a source of support and legitimacy. The KMT's decision to adopt a flexible ideological and social policy platform would not have translated into electoral success if the national institutions were not as mutually supportive and interactive as the Executive Yuan and the Legislative Yuan in implementing the political platforms of the Kuomintang while bypassing the opposition. The KMT was thus able to weather the constraints and criticisms it encountered as a result of anti-Chinese sentiment espoused by the emerging Taiwanese identity, and the opposition's characterization of the Kuomintang as a resource-extracting, authoritarian, imposing, foreign colonial ruler. The Kuomintang was then able to transform itself into a pragmatic party, characterized by inclusionary or aggregative policies, and successfully counter the constellation of forces with which it had to bargain.⁶⁵

The 1991 National Assembly Election—Legislative and Executive Yuans Shaping Electoral Victory

The 1991 National Assembly election was the first full democratic election in Taiwan. All of the parliamentarians of the first National Assembly were forced to retire at the end of 1991, and the 1991 National Assembly election was for the voters to elect 225 new parliamentarians. An additional 100 seats were to be appointed by the political parties to fill at-large seats and to represent members of the overseas community. The 1991 elections were the first in which it was possible to broadcast campaign advertisements on television. After experiencing the four highly publicized events mentioned in the previous section, and with the KMT's political legitimacy under severe scrutiny, the DPP went

⁶⁵ Giovanni Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 226–227.

forth with its “Taiwan for Taiwanese” platform with full force. The DPP called for a Republic of Taiwan (ROT) and a new Taiwan constitution. Even though the DPP would later split into factions that advocated aggressively pushing for Taiwan independence and those who were more moderate, in 1991, the DPP party headquarters and the candidates all campaigned under the platform of Taiwan independence and the call for the voters to drive foreign authoritarianism out of Taiwanese politics. This radicalization culminated when the DPP passed the Taiwan Independence Clause to add to the Party Charter. The clause states,

The DPP’s position on Taiwan’s future is the “people’s self-determination,” and it maintains that all inhabitants should jointly determine their common destiny. As Taiwan’s largest opposition party, the DPP has the responsibility to reflect the aspirations of the masses of society, to vigorously try to obtain accelerated implementation of constitutional government reform, and to avoid Taiwan’s losing its way in the abyss of unification.⁶⁶

The DPP party headquarters then released a television ad with the on-screen slogan “Let us establish a sovereign, independent Republic of Taiwan.”⁶⁷ Many of the candidates gave their individual campaigns similar titles. For example, Lin Cho-Shui (林濁水), one of the senior DPP legislators, ran under the slogan, “ROT defeats ROC” in 1991.⁶⁸ Wu Ming-Yang (吳銘洋) called on the voters to write ROT on their international mail to show the world that the Taiwanese deserved a republic of their own instead of the defeated residue of the Republic of China.⁶⁹ The DPP also attacked the KMT’s reunification policy with China by claiming that unifying with the poor and backward China could only hurt Taiwan.

⁶⁶ Resolution of the DPP National Party Congress, October 7, 1990.

⁶⁷ Under the old Central Election Committee rule on television ads, the characters for “Taiwan” were blacked out of the DPP ad, so the ad broadcast on television only showed the characters for “Let us establish a sovereign, independent republic.”

⁶⁸ “ROT Defeats ROC” (台灣共合國大勝中華民國), *Liberty Times*, December 14, 1991, 1

⁶⁹ *Liberty Times*, December 11, 1991, 1.

The KMT dealt with the opposition's harsh attack by leaping to the offensive with several bold moves. First, the KMT did not formally sever itself from the original ideology of reuniting all China and establishing a Chinese Republic, but President Lee Teng-hui issued a statement, with the support of the premier and the Legislative Yuan, stating that due to the changes in the international environment, the growing strength of the PRC, and the increase of cross-strait interaction, there was a need for creating an institution to handle mainland affairs. Lee then established the Presidential Advisory Council on Mainland Affairs in September of 1990. A few months later, in January of 1991, the Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) was established by the Executive Yuan and its funds were provided by the Legislative Yuan. On March, 1991, the Executive Yuan approved the council's National Unification Guidelines. The guidelines established three preconditions for unification: democracy, liberty, and equal prosperity on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. The MAC and the national Unification Guidelines were implemented in order to send a direct message to the voters that the leaders of the KMT were dedicated to the promoting and maintaining democracy and liberty. In addition, Lee argued that the establishment of the MAC was a clear indication that Taiwan, although under the official name of ROC, was already an independent country run by a Taiwanese president.⁷⁰ In Lee's acceptance speech as party chairman, he stated,

A leader of this county, I have upheld the ideal of popular sovereignty. This is also the principle advocated by Dr. Sun Yat-Sen. The people of our society already have a strong awareness of popular sovereignty today. We all possess the aspiration to be masters of this state . . . we have just begun to practice democratic government, and our institutionalization process has not caught up with democratic development. Therefore,

⁷⁰ Lee Teng-hui was the first president who was ethnically Taiwanese.

we must admit that different opinions exist in this society, which affect the formation of a symbiotic community. This goal can only be achieved through our mutual understanding, cooperation, wisdom and tolerance and brotherly love.⁷¹

In April of 1991, Lee ended the Temporary Provisions that had circumvented the granting of full civil and political rights to citizens. In the following month, just a few months before the National Assembly election, Lee went further and canceled the Period of Mobilization for the Suppression of Communist Rebellion, officially ending China's civil war. Lee also forfeited the ROC claim to be the rightful government of all China with an amendment passed by the Legislative Yuan modifying the territory of the ROC to include Taiwan, with the capital in Taipei. Instead, the Executive Yuan then promoted the platform that China was divided into two areas, under the jurisdiction of two states. In addition, the KMT also campaigned under the slogan "reform, stability and prosperity" and claimed credit for Taiwan's economic and political successes to date. The KMT was careful in constructing its television advertisements, so that the ads did not remind the constituents of the authoritarian era. Instead, the television ads portrayed the KMT as an "experienced, responsible political party with enough flexibility for reform." It also advocated the idea that the constituents should view the KMT as a "faithful old friend." "The protective and nurturing role of the KMT was illustrated with the image of a naked infant boy lying on the rich blue expanse of the KMT party flag."⁷² The ad underscored that over the past four decades, the KMT had helped Taiwan through many political storms and led Taiwan from economic, social, and political infancy to maturity. In other words, the television

⁷¹ Teng-Hui Lee, *The Road to Democracy: Taiwan's Pursuit of Identity* (Tokyo: PHP Institute, 1999), 60–61.

⁷² Wachman, 1994, 208

ads depicted the KMT as the devoted guardian of Taiwan that would do whatever it took to protect Taiwan from external threats or from its own population, such as the advocates of independence.⁷³ As former KMT legislator Mu Min-Chu pointed out in an interview, “We’ve not changed on [our stance on] national identity . . . we may have different methods.”⁷⁴ The KMT also capitalized on the voters’ sentimental attachment to Taiwan’s first native-born president. Another featured KMT slogan stated, “To support Taiwan’s President Lee Teng-hui, please vote for the KMT.”⁷⁵

The combination of the KMT’s television advertisements, and President Lee’s actions prior to the National Assembly election and his interpretation of the status of Taiwan as an existing independent state run by a native president, proved persuasive to the voters. The 1991 National Assembly election was an electoral victory for the KMT. The KMT captured 179 out of the 225 available seats with 71.2% of the overall 8.93 million votes cast. This entitled the party to appoint 60 out of the 80 available at-large seats and 15 of the 20 seats reserved to represent overseas citizens. The DPP won 40 seats with 23.9% of the votes. The DPP was able to appoint 20 at-large delegates and 5 overseas representative seats. While there were still mixed feelings within the KMT on Lee’s way of adapting to the

⁷³ Former President Lee elaborated in an article from the *Free China Journal*, “I am the president of the Republic of China. Faced with a small group of people advocating secessionism, I am naturally concerned. I will do my best to dispel the doubts of these people and help them believe in the government’s determination to promote democracy, and have faith that all actions taken by the government will respect the rights of the people in Taiwan.” Teng-Hui Lee, *Free China Journal*, July 5¹, 1991: 7.

⁷⁴ Interviewed by Dafydd Fell in Taipei on October 2, 2001. Fell, 2007, 99.

⁷⁵ Political campaign pamphlet supplied by the KMT Party Archive, accessed on July 7, 2007.

new political environment, one thing was clear: the KMT had deflected another challenge posed by its opposition and the new democratic political environment.

1992 New Legislative Yuan Election—Executive Push for Taiwan-Centered International Policies

A year after the National Assembly election, the Taiwanese were due to elect a brand new Legislative Yuan. The last time the Republic of China had a Legislative Yuan election for the entire legislative branch had been in 1947. There were supplementary elections in between due to the Temporary Provision of the Constitution and the enactment of the Period of Mobilization for the Suppression of Communist Rebellion. The year 1992 was the first time in almost four decades when all seats in the legislature were contested.

Lee Teng-Hui and the KMT headquarters made the decision to not restrain the KMT candidates who were challenging the idea of One-China. In addition, Lee and Premier Hau Pei-Tsun filed application with the United Nation to recognize Taiwan as a nation-state. The KMT legislative candidates also added “UN for Taiwan” as a campaign platform, while promising to amend the constitution to include the direct popular election of the president. The KMT party cells within the national institutions under Lee’s leadership turned a blind eye to a Taiwanese candidate within the KMT, who advocated the same ethnic stance as their DPP counterparts, that “Taiwanese should vote for Taiwanese.”⁷⁶ While the Taiwanese legislative candidates from the KMT were energized by Lee’s encouragement to run campaigns that catered to the local population’s increasing

⁷⁶ Julian Baum, “Building the Ballot: Enter a New Generation of Politicians,” *Far Eastern Economic Review*, October 1, 1992, 17.

sense of Taiwanese identity, the campaigns also demonstrated to potential voters that the KMT was no longer the same “China KMT” or “Old K.”⁷⁷

The Legislative Yuan election was held on December 19^t, 1992. Voters were to elect 161 legislators for the Legislative Yuan. Thirty at-large representatives and six overseas representatives were chosen from lists submitted by the parties before the election. Similar to the election results of the National Assembly, the legislative election results gave the KMT a solid majority in the legislature. The KMT took 103 seats out of the 161 total seats in the Legislative Yuan. Twenty out of the thirty members of the Wisdom Coalition were elected. In addition, the conservative, pro-unification wing allied with the hard core old guard of the KMT also did very well. Eleven out of the twelve members from the New Alliance were elected. The results of the 1992 Legislative Yuan election demonstrated that by encouraging and supporting its members to adopt a Taiwan-centered political platform and to campaign under a more moderate pro-Taiwan theme, the KMT was able to continue to obtain a majority when facing critical attacks from the DPP and the challenge of winning the trust of the electorate after the four atrocious events in the 1980s. The DPP also claimed political victory as it was able to capture fifty seats and 31.9% of the popular vote, which was more than it ever had; nevertheless, the KMT’s solid majority in the Legislative Yuan remained.⁷⁸

National Institutions and the Successful Invigoration of the Welfare System

⁷⁷ “Old K” was the nickname given to the KMT by the Taiwanese. It signified the KMT’s ideological rigidness and fear of change. “Old K” also meant the king in the deck of poker cards.

⁷⁸Election results from the Election Study Center of National Chengchi University.

Prior to democratization, Taiwan's welfare system modeled other authoritarian regimes, which were systems benefiting progovernment groups. According to Kirchheimer, political parties responded to changes in the socioeconomic structure by giving up on particular social groups that articulated relatively narrow interests.⁷⁹ The "platforms of *Volksparteien* (people's party) would have to be broadened as they attempted to transcend traditional economic, religious, and territorial divides."⁸⁰ Gordon Smith further concludes that the future of political party systems would be dominated by "parties free from the ballast of ideology and able to appeal to diverse social groups . . . whilst the old-style 'narrow' parties would languish in gentle decline and pine away in helpless opposition."⁸¹ Similar to political parties in Western Europe, as Taiwan underwent economic development and democratization, the KMT not only de-ideologized the original party position only to uphold Sun and Chiang's legacy, the party's public welfare programs also underwent drastic transformation, so that they would become more and even all inclusive. Moreover, while pushing for several nationalized welfare programs such as the Universal National Health Insurance (NHI) to offer benefits to all citizens, the KMT also promoted and implemented different social welfare programs, such as contributory pensions, a welfare allowance for aged farmers, a senior citizens allowance, and a childcare allowance and paid maternity leave, targeting specific social groups. All the

⁷⁹ Kirchheimer, 1990, 52.

⁸⁰ Daniel Hough, "The PDS and the Concept of the Catch-all Party," *German Politics and Society* 20, no. 4 (2002): 28.

⁸¹ Gordon Smith, *Democracy in Western Germany: Parties and Politics in the Federal Republic* (London: Heinemann Press, 1979), 86.

policies were drafted and proposed by the premier and then passed by the Legislative Yuan.

While identity constitutes the most divisive issue in Taiwan due to the country's historical experiences, social welfare seems to be one of the most polarizing and salient issues all political parties in democracies must tackle. For example, the Republican Party since Ronald Reagan and the British Conservative Party under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher both campaigned under the platform of welfare state retrenchment and tax cuts. The debate over nationalization versus privatization of social programs amplified the left-right divide in many industrialized democracies in Western Europe and in the United States. On the other hand, it was the issue of identity that divided the political parties as well as the constituents in Taiwan. Following Sun Yat-Sen's Three Principles of the People, the KMT should be considered as a party from the left. Conversely, DPP, the Democratic Progressive Party, is the political adversary of the KMT and has also been the advocate of equal rights, welfare, and fair treatment of all residents of Taiwan. Therefore, while many of the policies for the implementation of social programs are similar for the KMT and the DPP, the KMT, in collaboration with the Executive and Legislative Yuans, was the political party capable of passing the appropriate legislation, and thus obtained more votes by (1) maintaining the party's iron votes by not reforming existing social welfare programs for the Jungongjiao, and (2) taking over and actually implementing DPP social welfare programs proposals. According to Sheng Shing-Yuan, a political science professor at National Chengchi University, "Everyone

thinks social welfare programs are important, the people, the KMT and the DPP. People would vote for the political party they believe would give them what they want the fastest, so political campaigns on social welfare in Taiwan became who is better at issue-stealing and a race of legislative leapfrogging.”⁸² Even though initially both political parties undertook different social welfare issues, the KMT with National Health Insurance and the DPP with pension policies, the KMT was able to establish issue ownership of almost all social welfare issues by either proposing similar legislation or simply taking over the DPP platform on social welfare in subsequent elections.

*“Eighteen Pa” and Maintaining the Iron Votes*⁸³

The specific social groups who benefited most during the authoritarian days of the KMT were those who were members of the military, civil servants, and public school teachers, all of whom had to pass the necessary exam administered by the Examination Yuan. Once admitted, members of the Jungongjiao were able to obtain public housing, subsidies for rent and utility bills, pension plans, tax breaks, and for those who chose early retirement, the government rewarded the decision by offering a fixed 18% interest for their pension savings. After democratization, the Kuomintang administration sought to create an inclusive welfare system to entice potential voters; on the other hand, as

⁸² Interviewed by author in Taipei, June 19, 2007.

⁸³ “18-Pa” which literally translates to “eighteen percent,” is the nickname given to those who are in the military, or who hold public civic positions, or who are educators (Jun-gong-jiao 軍公教), by those who do not work in those fields.

contentious and costly as the Jungongjiao benefits are and were, the KMT made no modification to such a beneficial system.⁸⁴

The origins of the Jungongjiao's special benefits originated from the KMT's transition to Taiwan in 1949. The KMT not only established an authoritarian state apparatus to prevent uprisings and the formation of political opposition, the KMT, while taking control of the military, also planted mainlanders to work in civil servant positions and to become teachers in public schools. In this aspect, the KMT acted very similarly to South Korea under the leadership of Park Chung-Hee. Both regimes utilized the implementation of welfare provisions to raise their political legitimacy and to formulate a welfare system benefiting progovernment groups. Since the 1950s and 1960s, legislation has been passed to ensure that the Jungongjiao communities receive the most extensive welfare provisions and benefits. This behavior correlated with the KMT's attempt to implement public policy that would eventually create a China-centered identity for indigenous groups as well as create political stability. Not only did the KMT offer high interest rates for the members of the Jungongjiao, the KMT majority in the Legislative Yuan also passed the Retired Public Servant Pension Lump Sum Collection Benefit's Act, the Military Veteran Old-age and Maintenance Benefit's Act, and the Educators Pension Savings and Interest Benefit Act.⁸⁵ According to the Central Personnel Administration, retired public

⁸⁴ For example, in 2001, the spending on the Jungongjiao benefits alone cost the government 1.2 billion USD. In 2008, the Jungongjiao spending was 2.3 billion USD.

⁸⁵ Retired Public Servant Pension Lump Sum Collection Benefit's Act (退休公務人員一次退休金優惠存款辦法), Military Veteran Old-age and Maintenance Benefit's Act (陸海空軍退伍除役官

servants and educators who are currently receiving the 18% interest benefit total more than 129,000 . Retired military personnel who are currently receiving the 18% interest pension benefit total more than 203,000 individuals. In other words, there are more than 332,000 individuals as well as their family members receiving benefits from the government-implemented Jungongjiao policies. Therefore, one would find the Jungongjiao and their family members to be “iron voters” of the KMT. Furthermore, according to Huck-Ju Kwon, the welfare system in Taiwan was so imbalanced that in 1991, 74% of the central government welfare expenditure was spent on the Jungongjiao.⁸⁶ The DPP has always been extremely critical of the expenditure imbalance and advocated reform to get rid of the 18-pa and Jungongjiao benefits all together. However, the Executive and Legislative Yuans are protectors of the benefits for the Jungongjiao. Thus, the members of the Jungongjiao community are also considered “deep-blue” or die-hard supporters of the KMT.

National Health Insurance

As Kirchheimer argued, political parties will ultimately respond to socioeconomic changes by giving up their particularistic characteristics and articulating inclusive policy platforms to widen their electoral appeal.⁸⁷ The National Health Insurance was one of the largest national welfare provisions implemented by the KMT under the leadership of Lee Teng-hui. After

兵退除給與及保險退伍給付優惠儲蓄存款辦法), Educators Pension Savings and Interest Benefit Act(學校教職員退休金優惠存款辦法).

⁸⁶ Huck-Ju Kwon, “A Comparison on East Asian Welfare Systems,” in *The East Asian Welfare Model: Welfare Orientalism and the State*, Roger Goodman, Gordon white and Huck-Ju Kwon, eds. (London: Routledge, 1998), 27–75.

⁸⁷ Kirchheimer, 1990, 52.

democratization, the KMT expanded the scope of its welfare provisions. The public was notified of the submission of the National Health Insurance bill to the Legislative Yuan by the Ministry of Health toward the end of 1992. After the KMT captured a legislative majority in 1992, the NHI bill was reviewed and passed by the legislature after two days' discussion. By 1994, 60% of the population was covered by health insurance.⁸⁸ “The most significant move away from the previous pattern of concentrating welfare on core-pro-KMT groups was the introduction of National Health Insurance in 1995.”⁸⁹ The NHI is also a successful issue initially proposed by the DPP but was co-opted by the KMT, and Lee Teng-Hui captured 54% of the votes in the first democratic presidential election in Taiwan.

Throughout the 1980s, one of the policy reforms advocated by the Dangwai Movement and then the DPP was the creation of a healthcare system for all residents of Taiwan. The advocacy of a nationalized healthcare system was to elucidate the preferential treatment pro-KMT groups received. While Lee and his Mainstream Faction continued to receive support from the overall population, the plan to pass the National Health Insurance program by 2000 was pushed forward to 1995 with direction from the Executive Yuan and the support of the Legislative Yuan. Within the first year of the passage of the NHI bill, the government managed to insure 95% of the population. The percentage of the population covered by the NHI increased approximately 1% per year until the percentage reached 98%. According to William Hsiao, professor of economics at the Harvard

⁸⁸ Fell, 2005, 30.

⁸⁹ Fell, 2005, 31.

School of Public Health and one of the healthcare advisors to the Taiwanese government, “They had trouble with the last 2 percent, because some were living overseas and others were homeless. The government literally sent people to find homeless under the bridges and enroll them. Now they have close to 99 percent coverage.”⁹⁰ With the legislative majority, the KMT was able to pass the NHI bill after only two or three days of debate, taking ownership as well as the credit for the proposal that originated with its political opposition. The NHI turned out to be extremely popular with the population, with more than a 70% satisfaction rating.⁹¹

According to Dafydd Fell, in 1992, the KMT placed a number of television ads promoting its plan to introduce the NHI. “As soon as NHI came into operation . . . the KMT began to trumpet its successful implementation.”⁹² One of the most influential television commercials on the NHI was during the 1998 legislative election. In a television ad titled “Capability of the KMT Led Government,” the ad compared the KMT’s success in introducing the NHI to the failure of Bill Clinton’s healthcare program.⁹³ The NHI ad featured the members of the Legislative Yuan and hailed them as champions of ordinary citizens. The NHI has been one of the accomplishments the KMT utilizes in every election to demonstrate the effectiveness and capability of the party in implementing welfare policies beneficial to the population.

The KMT Takeover of the DPP “Welfare State”

⁹⁰ Anne Underwood, “Health Care Abroad: Taiwan,” *New York Times*, November 7^t, 2009, <http://prescriptions.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/11/03/health-care-abroad-Taiwan/#comments>.

⁹¹ Fell, 2005, 39.

⁹² Fell, 2005, 39.

⁹³ From the KMT Party Archive, accessed June 22, 2007.

The term *welfare state* was also originally introduced by the DPP in 1992. In the 1992 Legislative Yuan election the DPP proposed the concept of turning Taiwan into a state of welfare, “fu li guo” (福利國). Initially, the DPP proposal targeted the elderly as a strategy to entice potential voters. The DPP proposed “old-age pensions” (老人年金) and linked the old-age pension proposal to the existing ethnic cleavage in Taiwan. The DPP criticized the existing KMT welfare policy on the elderly by accusing the KMT of only taking care of old Chinese Civil War veterans. Since the Asian value of filial piety was still very prevalent in Taiwan, most couples, at one time or another, would face the burden of raising children as well as taking care of their elderly parents. Sensing that the old-age pension plan might also be very popular amongst electorates, the KMT launched an offensive; on the one hand, they attacked the DPP for making campaign promises to voters that the party could not keep due to the party’s lack of control in the Legislative Yuan; on the other hand, the KMT legislators rushed to draft their own bill, the Senior Citizen Allowance (資深國民津貼), which was almost identical to the bill proposed by the DPP. The Senior Citizen Allowance promised to pay NT\$5,000 per month to the elderly sixty-five years of age or older. In addition, the KMT then turned and accused the DPP for the party’s unwillingness to take care of war veterans by stating that the battle involving pensions and fixed interest provisions is a battle no soldier can afford to lose.⁹⁴

While the election results demonstrated that the KMT takeover of the DPP’s proposed welfare provisions was successful, the KMT then expanded the

⁹⁴ Chien-Te Tu, interviewed by author June 14, 2007, in Taipei, Taiwan.

target social groups by proposing the Welfare Allowance for Aged Farmers (Lao-Non-Jin-Tie老農津貼) in 1997. The implementation of the Welfare Allowance for Aged Farmers plan permitted farmers age sixty-five or older to receive NT\$ 3,000 per month to subsidize living costs. By 1999, the welfare plan had seven hundred and three thousand recipients.⁹⁵ Many KMT legislators, mostly Taiwanese members of the party, were very supportive of the welfare provisions proposed by the party due to the agricultural background of the Taiwanese. The Welfare Allowance bill did not receive any opposition when passed, even from the DPP. The DPP, as the emerging political party, could not afford negative publicity and risk losing votes. The KMT thus continued to expand its welfare provision to family-oriented plans to attract women voters and younger couples who are looking to purchase their first house or having their first child. For example, during the 2004 and 2008 presidential elections, the KMT proposed the Better Environment for Kids Plan (優質生育環境,兒童快樂平安). The proposed plan offered newlywed couples NT\$2 million to mortgage their first house with 0% interest. In addition, before their first child turns two years old, parents are eligible to receive 60% of their salary during paternal and maternal leave. If one of the parents is not employed, then the government would offer NT\$5,000 per month for childcare until the child turns two. In addition, the KMT offered free public preschool for children under the age of five and subsidized tuition for those who chose to go to privately run preschools. Not only did the KMT platform cover regular families, the Executive Yuan also drafted legislation to increase

⁹⁵ Aldershot Aspalter, *Democratization and Welfare State Development in Taiwan* (Ashgate Press, 2002), 75–78.

welfare benefits for families with special-needs children by establishing funds to pay for medication, rehabilitation, and counseling for special-needs children. In addition, legislation was also passed so that special-needs children receive free annual checkups. The Executive Yuan advocated a “family first” welfare program supported by the legislature and proposed more welfare provisions for (1) single-parent households; (2) foreign-spouse households⁹⁶; (3) special-needs families; (4) aboriginal families; (5) low-income families; (6) families of prison inmates; and (7) cross-generation families.⁹⁷ The KMT administration proclaimed that the welfare program needs to reflect the importance of family and family values, and that family should be the center of an individual’s life.⁹⁸

According to surveys conducted by TVBS, 44% of those surveyed felt that the KMT valued public needs and opinions in 1999. The percentage increased to 47% in 2002, 54% in 2005, and 55% in 2006.⁹⁹

Year	1999	2001	2004	2005	2006	2007
Political Party						
KMT	44%	45%	44%	54%	55%	47%
DPP	61%	48%	47%	44%	27%	33%

Table 1 on Survey Question: Which political party considers public needs and opinion as important to the party?¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ In recent years, there have been an increasing number of Taiwanese men who are married to women from Vietnam, the Philippines, and Thailand.

⁹⁷ The Ma-Siew Welfare Proposal for presidential Election, 2008. The number of grandparents-raising-grandchildren households also increased in the past decade in Taiwan.

⁹⁸ Ma-Siew Social Welfare Provision, 2008 presidential election.

⁹⁹ TVBS Poll Center, opinion surveys conducted in November 1999, March 2002, May 2005, and July 2006.

Furthermore, according to the survey conducted by the Election Study Center of NCCU, after the 2004 presidential election, 49.9% of the voters surveyed considered the KMT candidates more capable of dealing with economic and social welfare issues, whereas 33% of the voters surveyed considered the DPP more capable of dealing with economic and social welfare issues. In addition, 39.1% of the voters surveyed considered the KMT more capable of bridging the ethnic cleavage in Taiwan's society, whereas 34.7% of the voters surveyed felt the DPP was more capable. Moreover, 36.6% of the voters surveyed considered the DPP more capable of establishing political stability and 41% of the voters felt that the KMT was more capable of establishing political stability.¹⁰¹ The percentage of voters identifying the DPP as more capable and effective in dealing with economic and social welfare issues has increased to 11.2%, and the KMT still leads the DPP with 30%.

Political Party Capability	KMT	DPP
Economic and Social Welfare Issue	49.9%	33%
Bridging Ethnic Cleavage	39.1%	34.7%
Political Stability	36.6%	41%

Table 2: 2004 Presidential Election Interview¹⁰²

The examination of subsequent results of Taiwan's national elections from 1990 to 2008 demonstrates a causal relationship between the KMT's ideological

¹⁰⁰ TVBS Poll Center, opinion surveys conducted from 1999–2006

¹⁰¹ Election Study Center, National Chengchi University, 2004 Presidential Election Interview Survey.

¹⁰² Election Study Center, National Chengchi University, 2004 Presidential Election Interview Survey.

and public welfare programmatic flexibility and public opinion regarding the party. On the other hand, the KMT's ability to deliver its campaign promises rests on interlocking national institutions. Instead of providing the checks and balances similar to Western democracies, the ROC constitution was written with the purpose of designating the Kuomintang as the political party for the Republic of China. Therefore, the five branches, while possessing different governmental powers, also were designed to support the KMT in establishing self-reinforcing procedures, routines, and norms. The KMT transformation from an authoritarian party into a catch-all party has proven to be effective and successful. Moreover, along with the branches of government, the electoral system is also another dimension of the national institutions that is essential to the Kuomintang political resilience.

The Electoral System

March 23, 1996, was a historical and triumphant day for Taiwan and its people. Despite the two antiballistic missiles deployed by the People's Liberation Army on March 8 and 15 just twenty-five miles outside of the ports of Taipei and Kaohsiung, over 75% of the island's population cast their votes in Taiwan's first direct election of the president ever. In addition to previously scheduled political rallies, block parties simultaneously broke out the night before the election. Thousands of people crammed the streets with their small party flags and election gear in support of their favorite candidates. The different colors of the party flags created an impression of swimming schools of fish as the crowd moved around and about on the streets of Taipei and Kaohsiung. The block parties finally

disbanded about forty-eight hours later. The festivities and excitement of the presidential election did not represent the first time Taiwan has experienced the practice of elections. Local elections were regular occurrences during the authoritarian era.

The electoral system in Taiwan bears everlasting institutional significance to the political resilience of the Kuomintang. The electoral system in Taiwan is not only part of the national institutions contributing to the unwavering political dominance of the KMT, it also is an ineluctable part in the establishment of local institutions such as the grassroots clientele political environment and the tiao-a-ka phenomenon.

According to Shelley Rigger, the Republic of China “crafted a variant of authoritarian government [that she calls] ‘mobilizational authoritarian.’”¹⁰³ Mobilizational authoritarianism, as Rigger states, is a form of authoritarianism that the institutions of the government used to encourage political participation by citizens, but they channeled that participation in ways that favored the regime.¹⁰⁴ One of the methods for the Kuomintang regime to channel participation was to create electoral rules that were beneficial to the dominant party. To experts on Taiwanese politics, the electoral system was nothing but peculiar; nonetheless, this particular system “permitted competition and broad participation in local elections under the ruling party banner.”¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Rigger, 1999, 7.

¹⁰⁴ Rigger, 1999, 7.

¹⁰⁵ Rigger, 1999, 21; Rigger, 2001, 41–44; Copper, 2009, 138–143; Bush, 2005, 164–166.

The KMT utilized the regularity of local elections to recruit grassroots leaders from wards, villages, and neighborhoods and then co-opt them into the party. In other words, the KMT did allow political space for local leaders and factions to compete for votes in the tightly controlled local elections; however, nearly all candidates were affiliated with the KMT, since under the Temporary Provision of the Constitution, no other political parties were allowed to form. The mobilizational authoritarian regime formulated by the KMT that solidified the party's political resilience was multifaceted. First, it demonstrated to the domestic population and the international community that the party was adhering to Sun Yat Sen's original intent of creating a democratic China. The Chinese Civil War was the sole reason the KMT had to suspend the democratic constitution; otherwise, the KMT would most certainly have channeled the public's desire for rights and liberty into effective political participation. Secondly, the operation of the national institutions insulated the KMT administration from opposition challenges and public pressure and guaranteed that policymaking and implementation remained under the control of the party. Lastly, it created clientele and paternalistic electoral routines and behavior at the grassroots level and facilitated the formation of local institutions.

The electoral system in Taiwan is referred to as Single, Nontransferable Voting in Multimember Districts or the SVMM system. The SVMM not only produced favorable electoral outcomes for the KMT, it also helped to shape political behavior and environment. As a result, the KMT and the Pan-Blue

coalition never lost the majority even with the loss of the presidency.¹⁰⁶ The previous sections demonstrated that the interaction of the branches of the government enabled the KMT to be extremely flexible with its policy and program proposals during election years. The Pan-Green Coalition, led by the Democratic Progressive Party, originally intended to use the constitutional amendment and electoral reform platform to generate support from potential voters to compel the KMT to revise the constitution and electoral rules, so the electoral system could be more conducive to opposition success. The KMT and its Pan-Blue Coalition, in return, assumed the same position as the Pan-Green and also advocated for constitutional amendment and electoral reform.¹⁰⁷ However, with the legislative majority, the Legislative Yuan passed a new electoral system that changed the SVMM to the Single Member District, Two Votes system in 2005, which reduced the number of legislators by half, so the party can concentrate its resources in support of its legislative candidate and redistribute other funds to local institutions and the tiao-a-kas. The following section will elucidate the SVMM system and the KMT electoral advantage.

The SVMM System

The Single, Nontransferable Voting in Multimember District system was the electoral system in Taiwan prior to 2005. The SVMM was not only the electoral rule established by the constitution; it was also the facilitator of local

¹⁰⁶ The KMT lost its legislative majority as a party in 2001; however, the Pan-Blue Coalition, which consists of the KMT, the PFP (the People First Party), and the NP (the Chinese New Party) still retained a legislative majority in the Legislative Yuan.

¹⁰⁷ The TSU, or Taiwan Solidarity Union, is the political party founded by former President Lee Teng-Hui after he was forced out of the party by other KMT elites. The TSU essentially has taken a more radical position on advocating for Taiwan independence. Along with the DPP, the coalition is called the Pan-Green Coalition, because green represents independence and is also the color for the DPP.

institutions: coalition building, clientelism, grassroots mobilization, and the tiao-a-ka phenomenon.

Most legislative districts under the SVMM system consisted of municipalities, townships, and cities, which fluctuated greatly in size. Most legislative districts consisted of a municipality, while districts of the National Assembly followed townships and city lines.¹⁰⁸ For example, Taipei City and Kaohsiung City, two of the largest cities in Taiwan, were divided into two legislative districts, while the islands of Jinmen and Matzu were also individual districts.¹⁰⁹ In order to provide equal representation of the constituencies, the number of legislators each district was allowed to elect was based on the population of the district. For example, the residents of another large county, Taipei County, were allowed to elect seventeen legislative seats; on the other hand, residents from the smaller peripheral municipalities were allowed to elect one legislator per district.¹¹⁰ Under the SVMM system, the candidate did not need a majority of the votes cast in large districts. As in the case of Taipei County, the candidates who ranked as the top seventeen vote getters were considered as elected. In other words, the candidate only had to make sure they garnered as many votes as possible, which also meant the bigger the district, the smaller the percentage of votes for a person to win. This also meant a candidate did not need an overwhelming number of votes to win. Some candidates were elected with less than 20% of the votes.¹¹¹ In addition, there was no limit to the number of

¹⁰⁸ Rigger, 1999, 39.

¹⁰⁹ National Chengchi University, Election Study Center.

¹¹⁰ National Chengchi University, Election Study Center, 1995 Legislative Election data.

¹¹¹ Rigger, 1999, 40.

candidates a political party could have. As the Central Election Commission reported, in the 1992 Legislative Election, one district in Taipei County had forty-eight candidates competing for sixteen seats. The sixteen elected legislators each received less than 3% of the overall votes.¹¹²

The SVMM system encouraged cooperation between candidates within the party and coalition building, which came in extremely handy when the KMT had to deal with its splinter parties, the PFP and the NP, after its 2000 presidential defeat and after the implementation of the new Single Member, Two Votes system. The SVMM electoral competition was not a winner-takes-all, zero-sum game. In other words, just because one candidate from a political party was elected, it did not spell defeat for the other candidate from the same party. As Rigger states, “SVMM elections have many winners, allowing the KMT to reward several factions in each district.”¹¹³ Essentially, in the SVMM system, careful coordination of candidates and campaign strategies was compulsory. The political party not only had to ensure that the largest number of its candidates received the necessary number of votes to be elected, the party also had to make sure one candidate did not receive the majority of votes. In essence, decades of electoral practice with the SVMM system gave the KMT innumerable opportunities to perfect its electoral strategy to reduce intraparty conflict. Furthermore, the SVMM system was rewarding to those who cooperated instead of competed; therefore, the system generated the expectation of cooperative behavior from party members and cultivated a cooperative tradition within the

¹¹² Rigger, 1999, 40; Central Election Commission, Report on 1992 Legislative Election.

¹¹³ Rigger, 1999, 40.

party. Lastly, the political consequences of the SVMM system were that the system favored large political parties with the resources to mobilize supporters, provide incentives to tiao-a-kas, and manage its nominees.

Over the years the KMT developed an effective strategy to ensure positive outcomes for the party. The concept is called “pei piao” or vote rationing.¹¹⁴ The pei piao method is best utilized when the potential votes garnered by the parties are of a larger sum. In Taiwan, the tiao-a-kas serve as tools for the Kuomintang to estimate the number of potential votes the party would be able to receive. Prior to election, the KMT secretary general, the director of the Organization and Development Committee, and party candidates and local faction leaders would meet to approximate the number of votes the KMT could capture in a particular district. According to the estimation, the KMT would then assign candidates according to responsibility zones created by the party. The creation of responsibility zones also instituted two campaign practices employed by the Kuomintang, which have remained strong and consistent until today. Shelley Rigger labels the practices “the two faces of political campaigns.” According to Rigger, there are the private and the public faces of Kuomintang political campaigns. The public face incorporates conventional campaign activities as in other democracies, such as political rallies, public speeches, posters, and newspaper ads.¹¹⁵ On the other hand, it is the private face of political campaigns

¹¹⁴ Pei piao (配票) literally translates into “vote rationing” or “vote redistribution.” The opposition alleged that the term “vote redistribution” bears an extremely negative connotation and was an example of the KMT’s corruptive nature.

¹¹⁵ Rigger, 1999, 41.

that has proven to be most effective. The private face of political campaigns emphasizes and encourages the practice of clientelism.

Strategically, the KMT would nominate only as many candidates as the party estimated it could elect, given the research on the number of available votes, the socioeconomic situation, and the demographics of particular districts. Before democratization, the KMT utilized the *pei piao* strategy to assign seats to conciliate factions and reduce intraparty competition. After democratization, the *pei piao* strategy enabled the KMT to assign the appropriate candidate the party saw fit for the district. The habit of the KMT, according to the director of the Organization and Mobilization Committee, was to nominate candidates for all available seats in large districts and leave room for opposition candidates in smaller districts in hopes of creating conflict between oppositions and provoking intraparty competition within the opposition.¹¹⁶ Official party nomination also ensured the votes captured by the KMT did not spread too thin. Once the list of nominees was created, the candidates then were responsible for mobilizing the constituents in their districts.

There were several distinctive characteristics of the *pei piao* strategy and the responsibility zones. First, the candidates were assigned to zones in which they had good personal connections and in which their demographic profile, especially ethnic origin, matched the zones and, subsequently, the district. A good personal connection had been established through clientelism and by *tiao-a-kas*. Secondly, knowing the incumbent advantage, the incumbents were normally

¹¹²Te, Chien-Te, interviewed by author on 7/12/2007 in Taipei, Taiwan.

assigned to their previous zones. The assignment helped to further interpersonal relationships and the candidates' taking root within the community. Third, the zones were created not only according to demographics; some zones were created based on the occupational makeup of the community; for example, candidates with familial or previous occupational ties with the Jungongjiao community were usually assigned to the responsibility zones where members of the Jungongjiao resided. In addition, candidates with labor or union backgrounds were generally assigned to areas where blue collar workers resided. According to Lin Yu-Siang, a former Taipei City council member and three-term legislator, the most difficult part of the electoral process was nomination, where he had to negotiate with party bosses and factional leaders, as well as potential candidates, for his district. "The Pei Piao strategy worked perfectly once you became a nominee of the district," said Mr. Lin, "Your chances of winning are pretty high, because the party does a great job with grassroots mobilization."¹¹⁷

As Mr. Lin indicated, the electoral system was closely associated with the clientelism and the tiao-a-ka culture in the local electoral arena. While the political campaign signified the public face of electoralism in Taiwan, the private face of a campaign was cultivated and sustained by local institutions, which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.¹¹⁸

New Electoral System

In 2005, with 70% of public support, the Legislative Yuan voted 217 to 1 to change the SVMM system to the One Member District, Two Votes system. The

¹¹⁷ Yu-Siang Lin, interviewed by author on July 10, 2007, August 10, 2007, and March 17, 2008, in Taipei, Taiwan.

¹¹⁸Rigger, 1999, 41.

new system favored large, well-organized and disciplined parties and put the smaller political parties at a disadvantage. In Taiwan, the well-organized and disciplined party is the Kuomintang. The Democratic Progressive Party has been plagued by factionism since its founding and is still unable to rid the bitter division among its elites, which are nicknamed, “The Kings of Heaven”. The factionalism of the DPP will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five. The new electoral system reduced the total seats of the Legislative Yuan from 225 to 113 and increased the term from three to four years. In the new electoral system, 73 out of the 113 seats were directly elected by the constituents with 6 seats dedicated to aboriginals and 34 seats filled proportionately by the political parties with the minimum of 5% of the votes.

In the first legislative election in 2008, none of the KMT splinter parties were able to obtain more than 5% of the overall votes to receive the opportunity to place one of their own members in a seat. The new system subsequently eliminated the splinter party problem for the KMT, while still placing the KMT in an advantageous position based on the party’s geographic strongholds.

The new electoral system is set up so each county has at least one seat. Small counties such as Yilan, Hsinchu, Kinmen, and Penghu, which now each have one seat, are traditionally KMT strong holds.¹¹⁹ Due to population distribution, northern counties now are divided into more districts with more legislative seats than the south. Geographically, constituents from the north generally favor the Kuomintang, and demographically, more ethnic Chinese also

¹¹⁹ Kinmen and Penghu are offshore islands of Taiwan and are locations of military bases; the residents are largely members of the Jungongjiao.

live in the northern parts of Taiwan. The south is traditionally labeled as “green” or the strongholds for the Democratic Progressive Party. With the new electoral system, the south, with a less dense population, has fewer legislative seats. In the new electoral system, each voter casts two votes; one for the candidate and one for the party.

In the 2008 legislative election, partly due to the voters’ disappointment in former president Chen Shui-Bian’s admission to improper use of his campaign funds and the possibility of corruption charges, the KMT-led Pan-Blue Coalition won 65 directly elected seats, and the party received 55.9% of the overall votes cast for the party, which made the KMT eligible to nominate 20 members to fill the at-large seats. On the other hand, the DPP received 13 seats, and with 40.7% of the overall votes for the party, the DPP was able to put 14 party members in the remainder at-large seats. In all, the KMT was able to capture 85 out of the possible 113 seats, making the 2008 legislative election the most successful legislative election for the KMT to date. With election results like this, even if the Democratic Progressive Party won the presidential election ten weeks after, the DPP would not be able to push for any legislation, due to the overwhelming majority of the KMT in the legislature.

Conclusion

The electoral results indicate that the KMT has been extremely resilient since liberalization, and its agility grew after Taiwan became democratized. The arrangement of the national institutions is one of the essential keys to the KMT’s political resilience. The dimensions of the national institutions carried over time

established the procedures, routines, and norms conducive to the KMT's electoral success. The five governmental branches are designed to be more cooperative rather than to counterbalance and check. Along with the electoral system and the established routine from the heyday of KMT party-state corporatism, the national institutions ensured the legislation advocated by the KMT was effectively proposed, debated, and passed at critical junctures. The successful adaptation of the KMT would not have come to fruition if it had not been for the safety net created by the institutions. Furthermore, party cells established during the authoritarian era also permitted the Kuomintang to keep its unshakeable entrenchment within governmental bodies, local governmental units, and grassroots organizations, while simultaneously engaging in active recruitment of potential supporters and monitoring party members and officials. The SVMM electoral system also facilitated the generation of unwritten sociopolitical habits and routines of clientelism. The pei piao strategy and the tiao-a-ka system became the foundations of voter generation for the KMT that continues until today. In all, having an adaptive and flexible policy platform can only get a political party so far. The policies need to be promoted, and the implementers and bureaucrats need to be loyal to the political party. The next chapter will illuminate the aspects of local institutions and their affect on KMT political resilience.

CHAPTER THREE

“SMALL SOLDIERS CAN ACCOMPLISH GREAT THINGS (小兵力大功)”¹ Local Institutions and KMT Political Resilience

I am the go-between. I take care of the one thousand plus people living in my community. If the street light outside of your house goes out, I will do my best to help you. With my good relationship with Legislator Fei, he would have the lights fixed in no time – Huang Chung-Chuan, Head of Li-Chung ward, Xinyi District, Taipei City.²

The previous chapter offered insights into the extent to which institutions at the national level contribute to the political resilience of the Kuomintang. The mutually reinforcing nature of the national institutions was what made the KMT's decision to adopt its programmatically flexible platform possible at critical times during the political history of Taiwan. Moreover, the characteristics of the national institutions enabled the KMT to deliver to voters what the party had promised, prior to and after each vital election. Just as the habit of regularly held elections in Taiwan set the KMT's authoritarian regime in an unintended direction and led to the populations' demand for democratization, the routines and norms established by the national institutions created a protective and sustaining political arena for the Kuomintang and its enduring political presence and success. In essence, the national institutions designed by Sun Yat-Sen are like a fortress that guards the Kuomintang. Moreover, the ROC constitution was written as a safety valve and specified that the Kuomintang was to be the vanguard party of a democratic China; the dimensions of the national institutions made political conditions extremely arduous for the political opposition to challenge the existing

¹ One of the slogans of the KMT Employees' Union.

² Huang Chung-Chuan, Head of the Li-Chung ward, Shin-Yi District, Taipei City, interviewed by author on June 28, 2007, in Taipei, Taiwan.

political order, even when the population was granted rights to freely elect their political representatives.

The focus of this chapter is to explicate the contribution of local institutions to the Kuomintang's political resilience and competitiveness. The chapter contends that while the national institutions implemented the rules and norms for political players, the local institutions played the role of facilitators and cultivators of electoral supporter for the Kuomintang. Parallel to the mutually enforcing characteristics of the national institutions, the local institutions are also closely tied to the national institutions and the Kuomintang by party cells and grassroots leaders known as the *tiao-a-kas*. The local institutions nurtured the culture of clientelism and paternalism that was part of the electoral strategy adopted by the Nationalist Chinese Party, which was seen by the Taiwanese as a foreign ruler, in order to capture votes from the ethnic majority. Furthermore, during the authoritarian era, the local institutions collaborated with the Kuomintang in allowing the Taiwanese majority to compete and participate politically in a controlled setting in return for incentives for the faction leaders. The Kuomintang thus was able to retain governing power and set public policy agendas. After democratization, the culture of local institutions remained, and the faction leaders maintained a stable relationship with the Kuomintang, as long as the incentives continued.

Taiwan experts like Shelley Rigger argue that under the SVMM electoral system, Taiwanese politicians developed informal institutions for mobilizing

votes they needed to win elections.³ This chapter argues that local institutions in Taiwan are anything but informal. The local faction leaders and tiao-a-kas regularly engage in systematic mobilization activities in correspondence with the Kuomintang and hold community meetings at the request of KMT politicians. The relationship between local faction leaders and potential voters is more than informal. Local faction leaders and tiao-a-kas attend weddings and funerals of community members as favors for the families to showcase their connection and influence, but then request the return of such favors at election time. The mutually beneficial relationship is the norm of the local community; therefore, it should be considered as a set of institutions at the grassroots level, even though the roles of the political actors in these institutions are not written into the constitution. Most importantly, while national institutions guaranteed the preservation of the policies that kept the support of KMT's iron voters, the local institutions were essential in cementing the relationship between the population and the Kuomintang by including the Taiwanese in the political system through closely monitored political participation.

This chapter addresses three dimensions of local institutions and their relations with the KMT political resilience. The dimensions are (1) the necessity for grassroots mobilization imposed by the electoral system; (2) local factions; (3) and the tiao-a-ka phenomenon. Each of the dimensions is related to the others and they work interactively to sustain the source of their incentives, the Kuomintang. As stated at the onset, the national institutions compelled the KMT's political adversaries to play the electoral game in accordance with the rules designed for

³ Rigger, 1999, 83.

the party; local institutions, thus, are the social and political structures that ultimately kept the KMT deeply entrenched in Taiwanese society and are the key to the KMT's endurance after democratization.

The Electoral System and Local Institutions

The Kuomintang is one of the largest political parties in the world and is also considered the richest. At one point, the party assets of the Kuomintang, including public and privately party-owned enterprises, newspapers, publishers, television and radio stations, and even a movie studio, were valued at over ten billion US dollars.⁴ The strictly disciplined party culture and organization have kept party members in sync with party ideology and platforms. More importantly, the tremendous resources, especially financial, have enabled the KMT to sustain and maintain support by rewarding those who are consistent advocates for the party. The Kuomintang offers incentives in the forms of societal status and financial prosperity to local faction leaders and then to voters who support the party in elections.

In order for the SVMM electoral system and the “vote rationing” strategy to be successful, close interpersonal relationships were required. The intimate relationship between the Kuomintang, local faction leaders, and potential voters is the trifecta of electoral success. Those who are interested in becoming politicians are faced with the challenges imposed by the electoral system—in order for a candidate to be elected, mobilization from the grassroots level is imperative. Therefore, local faction leaders and tiao-a-kas bear the important task of

⁴ Michael Bristow, “Wealth Probe for the ‘Richest Party in the World,’” *BBC News*, October 26, 2001, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/1621048.stm>.

providing the KMT and its candidates with the preferences of the constituents and the possible votes to be garnered within the communities, while also relating the KMT's platform and policies to potential voters. The electoral system and the electoral routine and norms also help solidify the political legitimacy of the KMT by drawing the Taiwanese into the political system without completely relinquishing the power of agenda setting and policymaking to the constituents.

Grassroots Mobilization Strategies

The electoral system is designed to favor the KMT. On the other hand, just having the national institutions designed to be conducive to a party's electoral success is not enough. The political party in a democratic regime has to make sure potential voters keep voting for it. Over the years, the KMT developed an effective strategy to ensure positive outcomes for the party, and the strategy involved active participation of local community leaders. The concept is called "pei piao" or vote rationing.⁵ Candidates representing the KMT are selected by a committee consisting of the party's secretary general or his representative, director of the Organizational and Development Committee, and local faction leaders. Once the party candidates are selected, the candidates are responsible for the mobilization of party supporters for themselves. Local KMT party offices are then directed to lend their support as the mobilizational units.⁶ It is also the local party offices that oversee and allocate resources to the responsibility zones

⁵ Pei piao (配票) literally translates into "vote rationing" or "vote redistribution." The opposition alleged that the term "vote redistribution" bears an extremely negative connotation and is an example of the KMT's corruptive nature.

⁶ Chien-Te Tu, interviewed by the author, June 14th, 2007, in Taipei, Taiwan.

assigned to the KMT candidate. Local party offices then communicate with local factions and entice them to endorse the party nominees.

Local factions often engage in negotiations with each other, so members from each faction are able to share the spoils of an electoral victory. The members of the local factions consist of community leaders, residents who have resided in the community for generations, and gangsters. Some local leaders are often referred as “local snakes” by the residents of the communities.⁷ Local factions are different from the national institutions or the national party apparatus. Local factions are institutions created for the sole purpose of election mobilization. Even though members of local factions do have preferences of one candidate over another, almost all are affiliated with the Kuomintang.⁸ For example, there are two major local factions in Taichung, the Red and the Black. The Red Faction is headed by the current KMT secretary general, Liao Liou-Yi. The Black Faction leader is Chen Shui-Tan. During the nomination process for the KMT candidate for the mayor of greater Taichung, then KMT Secretary General Kim Pu-Tsun traveled to Taichung more than five times to request the support of both factions for the KMT candidate Jason Hu. Liao was then promised the position of Secretary General of the President’s Office in exchange for his endorsement of Hu. Liao then made a public statement with both Kim and Hu, proclaiming his loyalty to the KMT and his support of Hu. Liao also encouraged his grassroots members to campaign for Hu to guarantee Hu’s victory. Hu was subsequently elected mayor of Taichung on November 27, 2010.

⁷ “Di-tou-she” (地頭蛇).

⁸ Chien-Te Tu, interviewed by author on July 12, 2007, in Taipei, Taiwan.

Since almost all local factions have affiliated themselves with the Kuomintang, opposition candidates are viewed as pariahs and targets of local factions.⁹ On the other hand, as mentioned in the preceding discussion, local factions are also only interested in the spoils of an electoral victory; therefore, the Kuomintang garners loyalty from local factions as long as the party can supply local factions with rewards, whether they be political offices, monetary compensation, business deals, or just prestige within the community. During the authoritarian era, grassroots mobilization activities by local factions created the competitive political environment and the electoral routine for the party candidates and local residents. Even though all candidates were members of the KMT, the established habits of negotiation and cooperation allowed KMT candidates to fulfill their political ambitions while maximizing their own self-interest through working with other candidates from the same party. Consequently, grassroots mobilization is a habit carried over from the KMT authoritarian era, when limited local elections were sanctioned by the party. However, this practice and the establishment of local factions became the key for the KMT to maintain its entrenchment and electoral support at the local level.

Local Factions and the KMT Resilience

As the previous section indicated, local factions are vital to the maintenance of the KMT's political presence. Local factions are also an enduring institution from the authoritarian era when limited elections were allowed. Today, the KMT still prefers to nominate faction-linked candidates, because not only does faction mobilization work, faction-linked candidates also require fewer

⁹ Chien-Te Tu, interviewed by author on July 12, 2007, in Taipei, Taiwan.

mobilization efforts from the party center. According to Rigger, “Local factions are neither rational nor ideological; instead they exist to accumulate and distribute material goods and prestige (or ‘face’).”¹⁰ The local faction’s survival depends on its ability to create a bridge between the party’s power center and delivering goods to the voters. This also explains the extent to which local factions are slow to question the Kuomintang’s legitimacy as a governing entity or to challenge the political platform promoted by the party. Local factions are thus engaged in mutual back-scratching behavior with the KMT. The local faction helps the KMT promote its policy agenda, while the KMT reward the faction leaders with goods, financial gain, and political space for power. The incentives local factions desire most are not about Taiwanese identity and national integrity advocated by the opposition party. Therefore, local factions continue to operate to endorse KMT-nominated candidates, because a KMT victory means more goods, financial benefits, and political prestige for faction leaders. Furthermore, this also helps explain why the transition from social and ethnic identity to political identity never came to fruition.

“The Pillar Legs” —The Tiao-a-ka

The tiao-a-ka is often considered the most important person in local politics, sometimes even more important than the faction leaders. In order to become a tiao-a-ka, the person not only has to be influential and possess knowledge about the details of the community, the tiao-a-ka also needs to have the trust of community members so he can be the go-to person when community members have difficulties or complaints. Sometimes, the tiao-a-ka and local

¹⁰ Rigger, 1999, 85.

faction leader are the same person, and some tiao-a-kas also hold local political offices. Routinely, KMT party leaders, local faction leaders, and potential nominees meet to develop a nomination strategy based on the estimation of potential votes that the party is expecting to capture in the election. Election experts might be surprised by the source of the estimations in Taiwan. They do not come from academic institutions or polling firms. The source is the local grassroots boss or the tiao-a-kas. *Tiao-a-ka* literally translates into “small pillar legs” in Taiwanese. Tiao-a-kas are small columns or pillars often used at construction sites in Taiwan that are made of wood for the purpose of propping up the large structures under construction. The tiao-a-ka brokers votes for the political party that is able offer the most incentives to them and to the voters, whether the incentives are material, political, about status, or psychological. In Taiwan, the KMT was and still is the largest and most resourceful political party and the party most capable of delivering incentives. During the time of an election, the tiao-a-ka is considered the most important person in a candidate’s local office. The tiao-a-ka, who is a member of the community and possesses detailed knowledge of the community, goes around, speaks to potential voters, and recruits support for the party that can offer the most incentives. In most cases, the party is the KMT. Most tiao-a-kas do not hold formal political offices. Some hold lower-ranking offices in the local government. The value of the tiao-a-kas, as well as their political power, come from the high-ranking people they know and their ability to “get things done.”

The tiao-a-ka is the personification of Taiwan's local factions. The position and the responsibility of the tiao-a-ka are not written into the constitution or any local government by-laws. The tiao-a-kas can also be people who hold formal electoral positions such as the heads of villages, neighborhood, or wards, or official positions such as the heads of farmer, fisherman, or labor unions. On the other hand, a tiao-a-ka can just be the patriarch of a group of very closely associated neighbors or families, a prominent local physician, or even the coach of the local little leaguers. Initially, the KMT used the spoils of the party to entice and seek out local leaders, and as the local leaders become more willing to work for the party, the party then delegated greater sources for the tiao-a-ka and incentives for the tiao-a-ka to offer those who live in his responsibility zone. The tiao-a-ka is so essential to the KMT entrenchment of local politics that some scholars label them the most fundamental political institutions in Taiwan.¹¹

According to Rigger's interview with the head of the China Youth Corps in a Kaohsiung County township,

The County executive [representative] is much too busy to attend to every little thing, so she relies on people in the villages to help out. If someone has a problem and they want to see the county executive about it, first they go to the tiau-a-ka in their town, then the tiau-a-ka and the voter go to see the county executive together. That way the person is more likely to get what he wants. In recruiting people to be tiau-a-ka, politicians look for people who are influential in their communities, respected by local people, loyal to the politician and respectful in dealing with him . . . during election, the tiau-a-ka are the most important people in a candidate's organization. They go around and talk to everybody and drum up support.¹²

The tiao-a-ka is sometimes responsible for mediating disputes between local residents, and he is also the messenger to elected officials and constituents.

¹¹ Fell, 2005; Rigger, 1999 and 2001; Copper, 2009.

¹² Rigger, 1999, 86.

According to an office-holding tiao-a-ka, Mr. Huang, from the Li-Chung Li in the Shin-Yi District in Taipei,

I am the go-between for the residents of my li and the government. I take care of the one thousand plus people living in my li. If the street light outside of Mrs. Li's house goes out, and she is concerned about falling when she goes out at night, she comes and tells me. I will do my best to help her. With my good relationship with Legislator Fei (the Legislator representing the Shin-Yi District), he would have the lights fixed in no time. No longer than a week! That's how good of a relationship I have with the Legislator. Sometimes I even provide help for the residents during tax season. The people who live here are just common working class people. They don't know how to approach parliamentary members. My job is to provide a venue for people to voice their concerns and needs to their representatives and let the representatives relate the incentives of voting for them.¹³

Moreover, Mr. Huang also allows the legislator representing his ward to come for a three-hour session every month to listen to the complaints and needs of the residents. While Mr. Huang fervently denies that as a dedicated public servant, he bears no political party affiliations, his office is decorated with plaques, service awards, and commemoration banners from KMT officials, including the current president. A photograph of Mr. Huang and the current president, then Taipei City mayor, is framed and displayed in the most visible place in the office.

The great majority of the ward heads are KMT members; for example, as of 1990, there was only one DPP-affiliated ward head in all of Taipei City.¹⁴ "It is very difficult for the DPP to entice these 'pillars of community' with limited financial resources," states Taiwan elections expert Professor Liu I-Chou. "How is one going to offer the free folk dancing, flower arrangement lessons for the women and free martial arts lessons for the children when the party has no funds? The KMT has billions of dollars worth of party assets, and the companies owned

¹³ Huang Chung-Chuan, Head of the Li-Chung ward, Shin-Yi District, Taipei City, interviewed by author on June 28, 2007, in Taipei, Taiwan.

¹⁴ Rigger, 1999, 88.

by the KMT are all profitable, so they continue to generate money on their own.”¹⁵. With allocation of campaign funds from KMT local offices, candidates are then able to elicit the help of local tiao-a-kas by offering them gifts, banquets, trips, opportunities on business deals, and cash. The term of enticing potential tiao-a-kas is called “tying the pillar” or “bang zhuangjiao.” After the tiao-a-ka is approved for the incentives, he then invokes his local connections to mobilize support for the political party.

The business card of Mr. Huang demonstrates the deep implantation of the tiao-a-ka. Mr. Huang has several titles aside from the head of the Li-Chung Li. Among the informal, communitarian positions are (1) chairperson of the Shin-Yi District Dispute Resolution Committee; (2) chairperson of the Jen-Te Lion’s Club; (3) the Da-An District Cooperation Committee chairperson; and (4) the International Lion’s Club District 300 A2 chairperson. More importantly, on the back of Mr. Huang’s business card is a picture of him with a slogan, “Ah-Chuan invites you to come have tea anytime and help you resolve your problems.”¹⁶

¹⁵ Rigger, 1999, 88; Liu I-Chou, Associate Professor of Political Science and Director of the Election Studies Center, National Chengchi University, interviewed by author, June 2, 2007, in Taipei, Taiwan.

¹⁶ “Ah-Chuan” is Mr. Huang’s name in endearing format in the Taiwanese language. The endearing format is mostly used by family members to address each other. One might add “ah” in front of the person’s first name as a nickname to demonstrate the closeness of the relationship.



17

As one of the office-holding tiao-a-ka, Mr. Huang holds one of the most important positions for the KMT’s electoral success. In order to deliver the most accurate estimation of votes, Mr. Huang’s responsibility is to monitor his ward as closely as he can. Mr. Huang goes to the extent of having six closed circuit television monitors installed in his office, so he is able to observe views of the streets at the local police station. Mr. Huang is familiar with popular local hangouts and can easily identify the areas where supporters of the KMT or the DPP congregate. As Professor Liu points out, “When I go to the rural areas to conduct research on local elections, I often see members of the community congregating in front of local temples playing Chinese chess. You would also see the tiao-a-ka playing chess and having tea with the group, and the conversations often centered on local gossips and politics.” Through the friendships generated from chess playing and gossiping, the tiao-a-ka is able to penetrate the lives of the local population and cue the voters on how to cast their votes. “I try to help the

¹⁷ Business card of Chung-Chuan Huang.

residents to become informed voters,” explained Mr. Huang. “I tell them the platforms of political parties, and I let them know the party that will come to their aid more quickly if they have any complaints.”¹⁸

The tiao-a-ka is not only responsible for providing an estimate to the KMT central committee; he is also in charge of delivering the votes. Some were even rumored to hire local gangsters to intimidate residents into voting for the KMT, but the claims were never validated. Many voters accept the recommendations of the tiao-a-ka due to the close association of the tiao-a-ka and the community. This was especially true in the SVMM system when many candidates were competing and it was difficult to choose a candidate from the long list of candidates. The basis of this simple yet complex political institution, the tiao-a-ka, is benefits and services; also, the clientelistic relationship tends to form chains.¹⁹ A city council member or legislator might act as a patron for several wards, villages, or neighborhoods, while also acting as a client for the county magistrate or mayor. Thus, ward heads such as Mr. Huang would rely on Legislator Fei and other city council members to make sure complaints and needs are met quickly, and in return, he would encourage the residents to vote for Legislator Fei on the ballot. In addition, Legislator Fei would also encourage Mr. Huang and the residents to vote for the mayor, in this case Mayor Hau Long-Pin, who in return would pressure the city bureaucracy to take special care of the legislator’s district. The opposition has been consistently complaining about the preferential treatment of

¹⁸ Chung-Chuan Huang, interviewed by author, June 29, 2007, in Taipei, Taiwan.

¹⁹ According to the Deputy Director of the KMT, the local offices provide “constituent services” or “shuan-min-fu-wu” that cater to the needs of local residents from pottery and flower arrangement classes, yoga/taichi lessons, to the representative attending or helping arrange funerals and weddings.

residents in districts supportive of the KMT; however, the tradition of clientelism puts a human face on the public service rendered, and the face of public service is the face of a KMT representative and tiao-a-ka.²⁰ “The KMT is not a political party in my book,” as former Minister of Examination Yuan, Yao Chia-Wen annoyingly relates “it is a giant vote-generating machine. It plays dirty by dumping loads and loads of money into local ward lords, so they would help generate votes for the party. You know the Chinese proverb, ‘If one has money, one can even make ghosts work

In addition to the chain of relationships, every service, or “fu wu,” no matter how automatic, is portrayed by the tiao-a-ka as a favor from the elected representative to a specific group. Mr. Huang regularly attends, and requests Legislator Fei to accompany him, weddings and funeral services. It is a Taiwanese tradition to invite well-known politicians or community leaders to attend weddings and funerals as a demonstration of the family’s “face.”. According to Mr. Huang, “If you have two requests for appearances, let’s say you received a red envelope and a white envelope, you always go to the white event (meaning the funeral).”²¹. Director Tu also agrees with Mr. Huang that he would encourage representatives from the KMT to attend funerals before weddings. Director Tu elaborates that it is always culturally easier to ask a person to “return the favor” by casting his or her vote for a candidate when it was the person’s loved one’s funeral the legislator or council member attended.²²

²⁰ Taipei City Mayor Hau Lung-Pin was elected with 53.8% of the votes.

²¹ Huang Chung-Chuan, interviewed by author, June 29^t, 2007, in Taipei, Taiwan; Chieng-Te Tu, interviewed by author, June 12^t, 2007, in Taipei, Taiwan.

²² Chieng-Te Tu, interviewed by author July 12, 2007, in Taipei, Taiwan.

Being a tiao-a-ka is not an easy job. A tiao-a-ka like Mr. Huang is always busy because of the numerous titles and responsibilities he bears. In addition, providing estimates and mobilizing votes for the KMT candidate allows the candidate to receive the fruits of Mr. Huang's labor. In the clientelistic relationship, there are plenty of incentives the tiao-a-ka receives in return for his work in the daily grinds of ward life. First, the tiao-a-ka is rewarded with a prestigious position in the community, where residents have to go to him to resolve bureaucratic problems, disputes with neighbors, and even domestic quarrels. If the village or ward head has a very close relationship with the elected official, the better the chance he has to display his "face." In the case of Mr. Huang, his work for the KMT has earned him and his ward a six-floor community center next to his own house. Mr. Huang can thus organize different types of classes and entertainment for the residents of the community as well as demonstrate to the residents his efforts to improve and provide for the community.²³ Secondly, being a tiao-a-ka for the KMT is a show of good faith and loyalty to the party and helps aspiring politicians to secure of the KMT central committee and leaders. The former Minister of Internal Affairs and the current Secretary General of the President's office, Liao Liao-Yi, was a very prominent tiao-a-ka in Taichung County. Many current legislators such as Yen Chin-Biao and Chang Wen-Shuo were both tiao-a-kas from Da-Jia and Yu-Lin Counties. Lastly, some tiao-a-kas work for merely emotional rewards. Due to some of the intimate friendships some tiao-a-kas have with politicians, the tiao-a-

²³ Mr. Huang hosted a big community banquet during the time of the author's visit. He set up a special table for the author and the former deputy-director of KMT Legislative Policy Research and many others.

kas were able to accomplish special projects for their communities, such as better drainage for the village or roads. During the time of the election, the tiao-a-ka would then visit the constituents and remind them of the good that the tiao-a-ka was able to accomplish due to his friendship with the public officials. He would also remind them that they should cast their votes for the same candidate as the tiao-a-ka would. The incentives for the tiao-a-ka seem to endure even after democratization as the clientelistic culture of local politics continues to flourish, and the KMT continues to achieve positive outcomes in elections.

In addition to office-holding tiao-a-kas, socially and association-based tiao-a-kas are also very effective in raking in votes for the KMT. Social tiao-a-kas approach constituents via social and sometimes business networks. The heads of prominent and traditional families still possess great control over other family members and relatives. In Taiwanese culture, families represent reciprocity and filial obligations. Many patriarchs serving as tiao-a-kas issue voting cues to their family members and request their family members to persuade their friends to vote for the KMT. This also leads to another source for the social tiao-a-ka, friendship. Friendships are also greatly valued in Taiwanese society, and friends usually consult on another on issues such as voting. In addition to the socially based tiao-a-kas, association-based tiao-a-kas operate within established organizations, such as the Lions Club, the Rotary Club, Parent-Teacher Associations, Women's Associations, Farmers and Fishermen's Associations, Labor Unions, and even local folk-dancing groups. Since there are already KMT cells embedded within local associations, many tiao-a-kas are also party cell

members. As the director of the KMT Employees' Union, Liu Chien-Sun, states, "My job is to advocate for the employees of the KMT and ensure they get the best benefits and protections as workers. Even though I am a KMT member, not all the employees are. I would tell them that the KMT is the best employer they could get, because of all the benefit packages the party is providing its employees, and it's to their best interest that the KMT stays in power, so the resources don't get cut off. The DPP has been scheming to bankrupt us since they became a party."²⁴ The Kuomintang realized that without party assets, the party would encounter tremendous difficulty offering material and monetary incentives to the tiao-a-kas. This is also the reason the Legislative Yuan has yet to pass the Sunshine Bill, which would have the KMT party assets audited and force the party to return properties and pay restitution to those the KMT took properties from during the authoritarian era.

Conclusion

The political resilience of the KMT requires the collaboration of the party and political institutions at the national and local level. While the previous chapter explains the role of national institutions and their contribution to KMT resilience as the foundation of governmental operations and electoral rules, this chapter elucidated the function of local institutions in capturing and maintaining electoral support for the KMT. In short, seasoned politicians with long-cultivated relationships with the local community have many advantages in the Taiwanese political system. In Taiwan, most seasoned politicians are also KMT members due to the country's authoritarian history. The well-organized and financially

²⁴ Chien-Sun Liu, Director of the KMT Employees' Union, interviewed by author, July 10th, 2007.

wealthy KMT is still the only political party that affords the incentives required by local factions and tiao-a-kas and that retains local party offices/cells to monitor activities at the local level. Therefore, the KMT, as the previous authoritarian party and the foreign governing entity, is able to maintain a mutually beneficial relationship with potential voters through the workings of local factions and taio-a-kas.

As the electoral results indicate, the KMT has been extremely resilient since liberalization. Its adaptability grew after Taiwan became democratized. Some of the resilience of the KMT should be attributed to the institutions and the structure of the ROC government. The pei piao strategy and the tiao-a-ka became the foundation of campaigning, which is in practice today. In all, having a flexible policy platform can only get a political party so far. The policies need to be promoted and the implemented. Voters in democracies hold politicians accountable for empty campaign promises and understand their ability to remove the politician from office in the next election. The two levels of institutions in Taiwan took on the role of catalyst and shield for the KMT. They permitted the KMT to promote the party's original democratic ideology and its flexible policy platform to targeted constituents groups. The next chapter undertakes the issue of identity and the extent to which the KMT has successfully dealt with its authoritarian past to remain politically resilient and has now again solidified its political dominance in Taiwan today.

CHAPTER FOUR

I LOVE TAI-MEI, TAI-MEI LOVES ME!– 我愛台妹 台妹愛我!¹ The Development of Taiwanese Identity and Party Politics

Taiwan is a society of immigrants. Whether early settlers or late arrivals, all of us cultivated this land by the sweat of our brows. Believing that Taiwan is ours, loving Taiwan and wholeheartedly devoting ourselves to its cause—these are the real significance of being Taiwanese. – Lee, Teng-Hui, acceptance speech as KMT Presidential Candidate, 1995.

The political resilience and success of the Kuomintang rests on the political institutions of Taiwan. The multifaceted institutions at the national and local level bestowed on the Kuomintang the ability to adapt to the changing political environment and become programmatically flexible. The national institutions established the habits and customs for political processes and assured the Kuomintang's ability to propose and deliver legislation targeting specific constituents; local institutions, on the other hand, abetted the Kuomintang's goals by providing the necessary electoral support that the Kuomintang needed to remain politically significant and then successful. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the extent to which the Kuomintang tackles the issue of identity by recasting itself from a foreign governing force to becoming one with the local population. While the Kuomintang is able to employ tiao-a-kas in districts where

¹ The terms “tai-ke” (台客) and “tai-mei” (台妹) were originally derogatory terms used by KMT politicians and the mainlander population in reference to Taiwanese young men and women. The terms bear the connotations of lack of sophistication, lack of education, and bad manners. However, the terms became popular in the late 1990s among youngsters and were used to express their pride in being Taiwanese. In 2005, a group of young Taiwanese musicians named their band Tai-Ke. This was an example of contemporary Taiwanese youths embracing the language of Taiwan's oppressive past by using derogatory terms as terms of endearment toward each other. Younger Taiwanese often use expressions such as “You are very Tai” in reference to someone who is proud to be Taiwanese. Many commentators parallel the language movement amongst Taiwanese youths to the homosexual community, embracing the word “Queer.” “I love tai-mei, tai-mei loves me” is a popular phrase that emerged in recent years to emphasize the cuteness of Taiwanese girls.

material and power incentives are enough to garner votes, cities such as Tainan and Kaohsiung, where the Kuomintang committed the most atrocities during the White Terror Era, might require more persuasion than mere material or power benefits. This chapter argues that institutional advantage is also key to the KMT's successful "Taiwanization" campaign. The chapter will first address the issue of identity discourse in Taiwan and within the Kuomintang, and the party's strategy to resolve its internal issues under the Lee administration. The chapter will then examine the KMT's attempt to mitigate negative public perceptions of the party and turn Taiwanese identity from being a challenge to its power to being an asset to its own resilience and political success.

Even though the political opposition only brought up the issue of identity periodically in political debates, it is still the undercurrent that pushes political parties to adopt one policy over another.² More importantly, the issue of identity is directly related to Taiwan's foreign policy, national security, relations with the United States, threats from China, and the future of the country, in which all potential voters find significance.³ Ironically, the emergence of Taiwanese identity was the unintended consequence of the KMT's authoritarian rule, its brutal crackdown on its political dissidents, and its tremendously slanted favoring of mainlanders. Prior to the KMT's arrival in 1949, the Taiwanese or "Formosan Chinese" as addressed by Ambassador John Leighton Stuart, welcomed the

² Policies like the KMT's decision to maintain the 18-pa program while extending welfare programs to farmers, aged farmers, single-parent families, and some labor organizations.

³ In the 2008 presidential election survey conducted by the Taiwan Election and Democracy Studies Center, 57.6% of those surveyed agreed that if Taiwan can maintain a peaceful relationship with China after it declares independence, then Taiwan should become an independent country. On the other hand, 58% of the respondents disagree that Taiwan should declare independence if China will attack militarily.

arrival of the Nationalist Chinese and considered their arrival as the return to the motherland.⁴ However, the unfair treatment of the Taiwanese and the favoring of the Chinese created two separate and distinct identities between the 85% of the island's population who had been residing on Taiwan for generations and those who arrived after the KMT's defeat in China in 1949. Since then, political disagreements and debates between the KMT and its political opposition over policies can all be related back to the issue of identity—Taiwanese verses Chinese.

March 23, 1996 was a historical and triumphant day for Taiwan's democratization. On that day, Taiwan held its first democratic presidential election. The night before the election, thousands of people crammed the streets with their political party flags and election gear in support of their favorite candidates. The different colors of the party flags created an impression of swimming schools of fish as the crowd moved around and about on the streets of Taipei and Kaohsiung. The Kuomintang and its candidate Lee Teng-Hui were victorious. Lee garnered 54% of the votes and became Taiwan's first democratically elected president.

While it is natural to mark a country's first democratic election of its chief executive as a historical moment, for Taiwan, February of 1993 marked another significant moment in the island nation's political history. In February 1993, Premier Hau Pei-Tsun resigned after assuming office almost two years before. President Lee Teng-Hui appointed Lien Chan as the next premier. The end of Hau's term as premier marked the end to the mainlander-dominated political era

⁴ Memorandum on the Situation in Taiwan, submitted by Ambassador John Leighton Stuart to President Chiang Kai-shek on April 18^t, 1947.

in Taiwan. “The symbolic import of change is that for the first time since the Nationalist Party fled to Taiwan, in the aftermath of the communist victory on the mainland in 1949, the ROC [Taiwan] is governed by a president and a premier who are both Taiwanese.”⁵

Defining “Taiwanese Identity” and the Identity Discourse in Taiwan

The term *Taiwanese identity* should not be intermixed with and used as exchangeable with what some have labeled *Taiwan nationalism*. Moreover, the term *Taiwanese consciousness* is also too ambiguous to be used interchangeably with *Taiwanese identity*. The word *consciousness* implies a person’s simplistic awareness of his or her ethnicity, whereas identity is multilayered and does not derive automatically and naturally. Furthermore, the interchangeable usage of *Taiwan nationalism* and *Taiwan identity*, and the exaggeration of the effects of Taiwan nationalism by political pundits and the media, created the illusion that when over half of the island’s population identified themselves as Taiwanese, this identity automatically led to a certain electoral outcome in favor of a particular political party.

The pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party and the Pan-Green coalition have consistently invoked identity in their political campaigns and when advocating for the independent status of Taiwan. While the Pan-Green coalition has claimed to be the protector and champion of Taiwanese identity, Taiwanese identity emerged from Kuomintang policies under the authoritarian era. In other words, this particular identity that is distinct from the Chinese identity

⁵ Alan M Wachman, *Taiwan: National Identity and Democratization* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1994), 3.

materialized as an inadvertent result of the policies of control implemented by the KMT in its fifty years of authoritarian governance. For this dissertation, a Taiwanese identity means that a person recognizes that he or she is Taiwanese.

As Taiwan began to liberalize then democratize in the late 1980s, the usage of the term *Taiwanese* began to emerge. It is unclear when and who first made reference to the residents of Taiwan as Taiwanese; nevertheless, tracking surveys from the Election Study Center at National Chengchi University show that from 1992 to 2007, those who identified themselves as Taiwanese increased from 17% to 44%, and those who identified themselves as Chinese decreased from 26% to 5%.⁶ In addition, the survey from the Elections and Democracy Study Center demonstrate that in 2008, more than half the respondents identified themselves as Taiwanese only.⁷ The survey findings coupled with the KMT loss of the presidential seat in the 2000 election gave way to the popularization of the concept known as *Taiwan nationalism*. The assumption derived from the emergence of Taiwan nationalism was that as the majority of the population identified themselves as Taiwanese, they would turn against

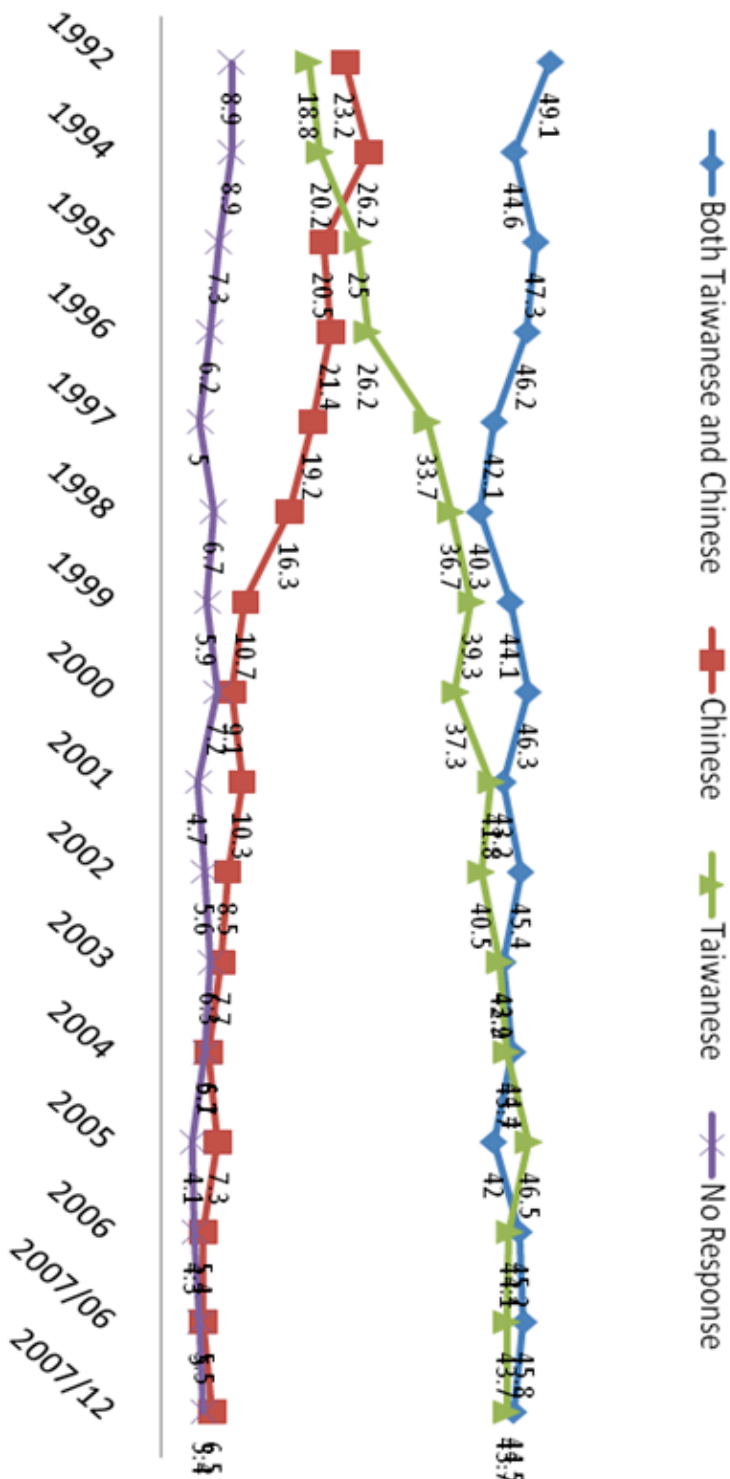
⁶ Data obtained from the Election Study Center of National Chengchi University during field research in Taiwan (July, 2007); Data from the postelection survey conducted by the Election and Democracy Study Center in 2008, obtained by the author.

⁷ Data from the postelection survey conducted by the Election and Democracy Study Center in 2008, obtained by the author.

Table 2.1

Taiwanese/Chinese Identity Tracking Survey (1992-2007)

Source: Election Study Center, National Chengchi University



the Kuomintang and reject the party's unification platform. Most media reports and popular writings on Taiwan covered the increasing vote gain by the opposition but neglected to also highlight what has remained constant—the Kuomintang, while losing some votes to its political opposition, still managed to retain a legislative majority and kept the presidency until 2000, then recaptured it again by a landslide victory in 2008.

Twenty years ago, when academics in Taiwan first posed the question to potential voters on whether they considered themselves Taiwanese or Chinese, an overwhelming majority of the population identified themselves as Chinese. Moreover, according to the survey, 34% of the respondents said they preferred the Kuomintang as the governing party.⁸ On the other hand, in the most recent and comprehensive survey conducted by the Election Study Center of National Chengchi University, 53% of those surveyed identified themselves as Taiwanese and only 4.8% identified themselves as Chinese.⁹ Moreover, importantly, 33% of the respondents still preferred the Kuomintang as the governing party.¹⁰ When survey participants were asked, “Do you agree that loving Taiwan means supporting parties like the Democratic Progressive Party?”¹¹, forty percent of the

⁸ National Chengchi University, Election Study Center tracking survey on political party preferences (1992–2010).

⁹ The survey was made available for this dissertation in January, 2009. The survey was accessed with permission from the Election Study Center of National Chengchi University. The survey was conducted June through August, 2008, and the survey title is “Taiwan’s Election and Democratization Study, 2008—Presidential election.”

¹⁰ In 1994, 12% preferred the DPP. In 2001, when the KMT lost the legislative majority to its splinter parties and the DPP, 25% preferred the DPP, whereas the support for the KMT dropped to 18% with the support of the PFP (KMT splinter) at 14%. Most respondents in 2001 refused to identify their preferences. In 2009, 19% preferred the DPP, while 33% preferred the KMT.

¹¹ The term “bentu” is used to identify things, including political parties and cultures, that are uniquely Taiwanese. The survey question asked the participants if they thought loving Taiwan meant supporting a party that is “bentu”(本土).

participants disagreed. The survey results also demonstrated that the Kuomintang has consistently retained popular support, while support for its opposition swayed between 12% and 25%. Why? This dissertation contends that the constant support for the Kuomintang is the outcome of the party's efforts to, first, redefine the definition of *Taiwanese*, then recast itself as a political party of Taiwan, then adopt public policies that kept the mainlander population close to the State, while drawing and incorporating the Taiwanese majority into the political system.

Obtaining the abovementioned goals would not have been possible if it weren't for strict party discipline, the top-down governing nature of the party, and the mutually reinforcing characteristics of political institutions. In order to understand the challenges posed by the Taiwanese identity, one must be familiar with the unique history of Taiwan and its relationship with the Kuomintang.

Political History and the Origins of Contesting Identities

One of the most contentious issues for politicians in Taiwan is the issue of identity. The root of this difficult issue lies in Taiwan's authoritarian past. *Identity* is defined as a mental construct based on social experience and driven by emotion attachment, and this position is not a carefully reasoned one. Identity is also multifaceted. In Taiwan, people have different notions about what it means to identify with a particular ethnic group, and this notion extends into social, educational, and generational categories as well.¹² "If people possess a political

¹² For example, Pan-Blue Coalition supporters have consistently used the phrase "two low, one high" (er-di-i-kao二低一高) to describe opposition supporters who are predominately Taiwanese. The two lows are low socioeconomic stature, low education level. The one high refers to the age

identity regarding themselves and where they live, that subjective construct becomes an objective fact. They brand as outsiders or alien those who they decide do not share their identity . . . that too becomes an objective political fact.”¹³ The formation of identity is not always natural. Identities are invented or “the result of a political experience.”¹⁴ The formation of Taiwanese identity and the identification of “outsiders” began when the KMT and two million Chinese arrived in Taiwan more than sixty years ago. The Taiwanese are often seen as unwilling participants in the larger conflict of World War II and the Cold War.¹⁵ “The KMT government in Taiwan is usually characterized as having no legitimacy and as a failed and corrupted right-wing political and military force that was maintaining its position on Taiwan against all logic.”¹⁶ Hill Gates, author and ethnographer, describes his interpersonal encounters in Taiwan: “The common social chat among strangers attending dinner parties begins by establishing the origins of all persons present with jocular references to foods, speech peculiarities, or personality traits supposedly characteristic of each ethnic group.”¹⁷

of the supporters (社經地位、學歷低，年齡高). In other words, the Taiwanese who vote for the Pan-Green Coalition are often poor old citizens with no formal or higher education.

¹³ Richard Bush, *Untying the Knot—Making Peace in the Taiwan Strait* (Washington DC: Brookings Institute Press, 2005), 43. Richard Bush was the former Director of the American Institute in Taiwan, the de facto embassy for the United States.

¹⁴ Bush, 2005, 43 .

¹⁵ Alan Wachman, *Taiwan —National Identity and Democratization* (New York: M.E. Sharpe Books, 1994), 56–63.

¹⁶ Mark Harrison, *Legitimacy, Meaning and Knowledge in the Making of Taiwanese Identity* (New York: Palgrave MacMillian Press, 2006), 34.

¹⁷ Hill Gates, “Ethnicity and Social Class,” in *The Anthropology of Taiwanese Society*, eds. Martin Ahern and Hill Gates. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1981), 254.

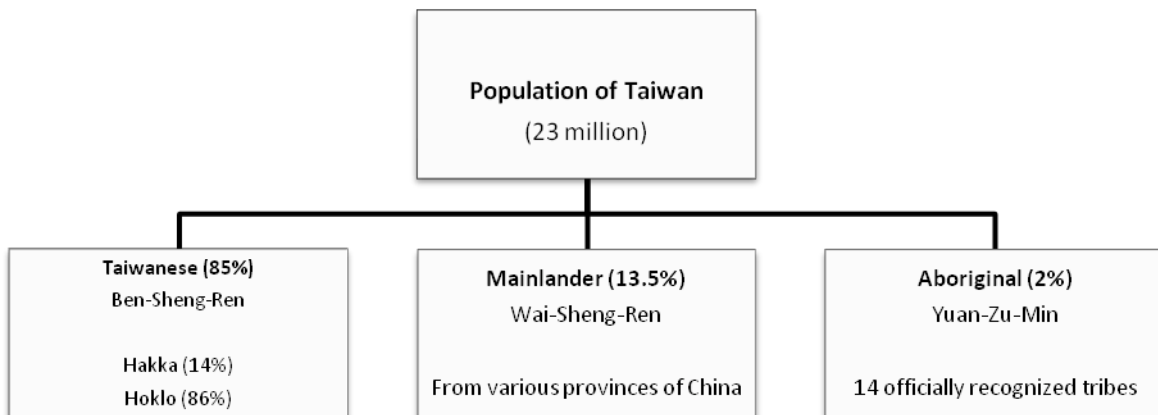
The KMT's personal identification procedures also created a deep sense of difference among the population. The state-employed administrative procedures mandated people to identify themselves on the basis of their ethnicity by identifying their "provincial origin." Until the 1990s, every citizen in Taiwan over fifteen was required to carry an identification card similar to the driver's license in the United States with the person's name, address, identification number, and provincial origin. If the person was born in Taiwan, then his or her father or grandfather's provincial origin was also listed. After democratization, the government eliminated listing provincial origins on the government-issued identification card. The requirement of an identification card was one of the examples of practices that induced exclusivity among the island's residents.

Taiwanese is also often used by historians and scholars to refer to the native or local people of Taiwan. *Taiwanese* is often referred to as "ben-sheng-ren" (本省人), which literally means "people from the province." Ben-sheng-ren are categorized as those who have been residing on the island since the 1600s prior to the KMT's defeat in China. Two different ethnic groups of different provincial origins were amongst the ben-sheng-ren population. The Hakka emigrated from the Guangdong Province, and the Hoklo were from the Fujian Province. Immigration to Taiwan began in mid-sixteenth century and continued until late nineteenth century until the Qing Dynasty ceded Taiwan to Japan under the Treaty of Shimonoseki. Approximately 2% of the ben-sheng-ren are aboriginals or "yuan-chu-min" (原住民), which means "original dwellers." In 2008, the democratic record reflected that there were fourteen official aboriginal tribes

recognized by the government of Taiwan. The aboriginals are target groups of the KMT, and the KMT has been consistent in passing legislation to offer welfare assistance, affirmative action programs, and extra points on entrance exams for the aboriginal population to retain electoral support.

The third group of residents in Taiwan is made up of the Chinese or “mainlanders.” The mainlanders are the Han population relocated to Taiwan after the end of China’s Civil War. Most mainlanders are KMT soldiers, governmental workers, and party personnel and their family members. The mainlanders are referred as “wai-sheng-ren” (外省人), which means “people from outside the province.” The wai-sheng-ren population constitutes approximately 14% of Taiwan’s population

Demographic chart of ethnic groups in Taiwan



Even though the residents’ sense of “us” versus “them” was not a new phenomenon, the KMT was the political force that created the deepest cleavage between the ethnic groups residing in Taiwan. Alan Wachman elaborates that even today, the people of Taiwan was well aware of the “we” and “they”

dichotomy, and “the propensity to classify people into ‘we’ and ‘they’ categories is a reflection of the division between Taiwanese and mainlanders and manifests itself most prominently in politics.”¹⁸

The two groups of Han and aboriginal tribes fought each other for resources and better settlement prior to the arrival of the Japanese in 1895. When the Japanese arrived, the three groups set aside their differences to battle Japanese imperial control.¹⁹ There were sporadic uprisings against Japanese colonial rule, the most violent being the Wushe Incident, where 1200 of the Atayal tribal members clashed with the Japanese colonial police, government officials, and residents. One hundred and thirty-four Japanese were killed and more than 200 Japanese were injured. The Japanese government reacted quickly, sending soldiers to the Wushe area with guns and poison gas canisters. At the end of the Japanese crackdown, 700 Atayals were dead and the Atayal chief committed suicide.²⁰ The Japanese spent more than two decades to ultimately consolidate control. The Japanese did, however, contribute greatly to the infrastructure, transportation, economic and educational development, and public safety in Taiwan. “The colonial government built transportation and communications infrastructure, established an education and a public health system,”²¹ and the Japanese were the first to go “green” for cleaner sources of energy and agriculture in Taiwan. More importantly, the Japanese appointed civilian technocrats instead

¹⁸ Wachman, 1994, 58.

¹⁹ Bush, 2005, 43.

²⁰ A quick summary of the Wushe Incident can be found at <http://www.taiwanfirstnations.org/Wushe.html>.

²¹ Bush, 2005, 15.

of military generals as governors of Taiwan to help the island develop its economy even further. The Japanese then used the island of Taiwan to cultivate the resources it needed to exercise dominance in Asia. Many Taiwanese went to Japan to study during the colonial period. They came back to Taiwan as physicians, lawyers, professors, architects, and engineers. The Japanese governing mechanism effectively severed Taiwan from China by establishing a new set of educational, commercial, judicial, and agricultural systems, and in doing so, the Japanese were able to raise the standard of living in Taiwan significantly. Despite the strictness and harshness of Japanese colonial rule, some older Taiwanese who lived through the Japanese occupation often express nostalgia for the colonial period compared to the oppression from the KMT, who retreated to the island after losing the civil war on the mainland. Thus, the first challenge for the KMT, after democratization, would be to weather the nostalgia in the older generation and recruit the young by presenting the party as one with the indigenous identity.

Much of the older generation's nostalgia stemmed from the period of Japanese occupation that was the first time in Taiwan's history that a political power was able to govern the island in a comprehensive manner. After nearly a century under Japanese rule, most Taiwanese assimilated themselves with the Japanese under the Kominka Movement.²² The Taiwanese's first encounter with mainlanders was in 1945, when KMT officials and troops arrived to replace the Japanese administration after the unconditional surrender of Japan after World

²² The Kominka movement was implemented by the Japanese colonial government in Taiwan to (1) reeducate the Taiwanese to adhere to the spirit of Japan, and (2) to turn the Taiwanese into good Japanese citizens. The Taiwanese had to dress in Japanese attire, learn to speak Japanese, and also change their names into Japanese.

War II. Initially, the residents of Taiwan welcomed Chinese governance, and before the arrival of the Chinese personnel and military, the Taiwanese prepared banners and national flags and organized parades to welcome the new governor. One of the pioneers and the most prominent figure of the Taiwan independence movement, Professor Peng Mingin, wrote in his memoir, “One day I fell into conversation with two Americans in a jeep beside the road, and in passing, explained to them that I was not Japanese but a Chinese from Formosa. It was something of a shock to find myself for the first time openly and proudly making this distinction.”²³ Peng’s pride, like that of most Taiwanese, soon disintegrated as he noted in the subsequent chapter of his memoirs, describing what he saw at the welcoming ceremony when the KMT troops arrived on the island:

The ship docked, the gangways were lowered, and off came the troops of China, the victors. The first man to appear was a bedraggled fellow who looked and behaved more like a coolie than a soldier, walking off with a carrying pole across his shoulder, from which was suspended his umbrella, sleeping mat, cooking pot, and cup. Others like him followed, some with shoes, some without. Few had guns. With no attempt to maintain order or discipline, they pushed off the ship, glad to be on firm land, but hesitant to face the Japanese lined up and saluting smartly on both sides. My father wondered what the Japanese could possibly think. He has never felt so ashamed in his life. Using a Japanese expression, he said, “if there had been a hole nearby, I would have crawled in!”²⁴

The Japanese had also been promoting a strict set of values, manners, and behaviors in Taiwan. It was said that before the Japanese left Taiwan, residents were able to leave their bicycles unlocked and their chickens in cages outside of their houses, and sleep at night with their front doors wide open. A Chinese soldier described his first experience walking on the streets of Taipei:

²³ Mingin Peng, *A Taste of Freedom: Memoirs of a Formosan Independence Leader* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston Press, 1972), 45. This particular conversation occurred when Peng was a graduate student in Japan during the U.S. occupation of Japan.

²⁴ Peng, 1972, 51–52.

The Formosans were always smiling and bow while they greeted each other. The owner of stores would welcome his customers with cheerful Japanese. The people on the streets were wearing traditional Japanese clothing and slippers. Some of them wear linen shirts and they looked so comfortable, compared to those of us, who were wearing whatever clothing we had. Some of us were wearing winter coats and sweating like pigs, because that was the only clothing we could take with us.²⁵

Not only were there cultural differences, there were also communication issues upon the KMT's arrival. The Taiwanese communicated with their dialects and Japanese, while the mainlanders spoke languages from their provinces.

The happy welcome did not last long. Taiwan's new rulers were incompetent at best and inclined to abuse and criminal behavior, which alienated the Taiwanese population. Chang Chun-hung, the vice chairman of the Straits Exchange Foundation, recalls in an interview with Alan Wachman:

We all took up flags and went to welcome them . . . President Chiang has come to take over Taiwan! That was really how we felt—entering the embrace of our fatherland. But although we genuinely accepted the mainland takeover, we immediately began to sense the conflict of culture. Moreover, that conflict of culture was extremely intense. It was discovered that the Japanese culture . . . as compared to the culture of our fatherland, a strong culture, a superior culture. And the culture of the ruler is a worthless, inferior—an inferior kind of barbaric culture . . . that kind of conflict was extremely intense and transformed us from the heights of identification to the heights of hostility.²⁶

Similar to Chang, many Taiwanese recounted that, even though the Japanese colonial rule was suppressive, the “[Japanese] perfected a system of civil service, obedience to the law and administrative efficiency, [which] made the Japanese incomparable to the KMT's corrupt feudal regime.”²⁷ After the mainlanders' arrival in Taiwan, the crime rate increased drastically. Many Taiwanese reported theft, robbery, and cases of rape with the new administration turning a deaf ear.

²⁵ Shiao-Feng Lee, *View from China—Chinese Testimonies after the 228 Incident* (唐山看台灣-228事件前後中國知識分子的見證) (Taipei: Gi-Chuang Publication, 2006), 45.

²⁶ Wachman, 1994, 95.

²⁷ Wachman, 1994, 95.

More importantly, it was the KMT administration's attitude toward Taiwan and the Taiwanese that sparked tremendous resentment and finally came to a clash followed by mass killings of Taiwanese known as the 228 Massacre..

228, White Terror, and the Beginning of Ethnic Cleavage

Upon arrival, the KMT saw itself as the legitimate governor of China and viewed Taiwan as its temporary residence and resting place before it took back China by military force. The KMT appointed mainlanders to governing positions rather than Taiwanese. Preference for mainlanders over Taiwanese and corruption of these newly appointed government officials were blatant. According to Wachman, those who held positions of responsibility had a strong sense of entitlement about their role and probably gave little thought to the way their presence would be perceived by [the Taiwanese].²⁸ On February 27, 1947, an altercation between a female cigarette vendor and two mainlander police officers brought the discontent of the Taiwanese to the surface and erupted into an island-wide full-scale rebellion. Chiang Kai-Shek and then Governor Chen-Yi quickly sent in more troops to crack down on the insurgency. By the time the uprising was suppressed, 15,000 to 30,000 Taiwanese were reportedly killed. In the subsequent months from March to May, the local community leaders were systematically arrested, imprisoned, or executed. With the bloody introduction to the KMT after it arrived in Taiwan following its defeat on the mainland, the cleavage between the Taiwanese and mainlanders deepened and the indigenous population's animosity toward the KMT grew. Since liberalization, the 228 Massacre has been

²⁸ Wachman, 1994, 98.

one of the examples cited by the KMT's political opposition as evidence of the KMT's lack of compassion for the Taiwanese.

President Lee Teng-Hui, himself also a Taiwanese, in his attempt to defuse the accusations, made the first public apology to the Taiwanese population. It was the first time an official from the KMT had directly addressed the 228 Massacre and claimed responsibility for the subsequent killings. Since Lee's apology in 1995, the KMT chairpersons and presidents have consistently offered apologies on the anniversaries of 228 and other major uprisings in Taiwan.²⁹ An example of the ethnic cleavage between the Taiwanese and mainlanders can still be found in recent elections. During the 2008 presidential election, the KMT presidential candidate Ma Ying-Jeou was consistently attacked by his political opponent for being an untrustworthy mainlander. Ma's political opponent warned the constituents of the possibility that Ma would sell Taiwan to China, because Ma was born in China and often refers to himself as Chinese. Ma's subsequent China-friendly cross-strait policies as president, like the opening of seaports and airports to China and the attempt to draft the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement between China and Taiwan (CECA), received daily criticism from the DPP as sell-out policies and a disguised attempt to unify Taiwan with China. Ma's response to his critics was to claim that he was too young to be involved in any of the atrocities. Furthermore, Ma called for toleration and encouraged the population to forgive and forget, while admitting

²⁹ December 10 is also a day on which KMT officials have adopted the habit of making public apologies. In 1979, on December 10, International Human Rights Day, opposition forces staged a protest parade that ended in a brutal crackdown by the KMT, and eight leaders of the opposition, later referred to as the Formosa Eight, were tried and sentenced to life in prison.

that the KMT was indeed responsible. Ma made a public apology on February 28 of this year by stating, “[I] hope that all people in Taiwan will display mercy, humbleness, mutual tolerance and understanding to get over the sad historic event and continue moving forward.”³⁰

Taiwanese Identity as a KMT Creation

The initial harsh course taken by the KMT to institute its regime on Taiwan induced fear among the population and produced a lasting cleavage between the ethnic groups in Taiwan. The KMT’s subsequent attempt to solidify its political power by retaining the rights to resources and benefits exclusively for the mainlander group became the origin of the emergence of Taiwanese identity. The exclusionary and preferential policies based on ethnicity pushed the indigenous population toward categorizing the KMT as just another foreign ruler, not what the population had originally expected.

In the past four hundred years, Taiwan has always been under the governance of foreign powers. The colonizers included Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands, and Japan. Timothy Mitchell points out that “the panopticon, the model institution, whose geometric order and generalized surveillance serve as the motif for this kind of power, was a colonial invention.”³¹ The KMT adopted public policies similar to previous colonizers in order to establish total control over Taiwan for the purpose of establishing the island as the springboard for the

³⁰ “Tragedy like 228 will never occur again: Ma,” *China Post*, March 1, 2011, <http://www.chinapost.com.tw/taiwan/national/national-news/2011/03/01/292913/Tragedy-like.htm>.

³¹ Timothy Mitchell, *Colonizing Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 35.

party to retake China. In doing so, the KMT created the separation between the Chinese and the Taiwanese and the distinct sense of difference between the two groups.

The KMT had specific districts drawn for Taiwanese and Chinese residences. In addition, the KMT established the Garrison Command, which controlled the secret police, with offices embedded in every neighborhood to monitor the behavior of the population. Neighbors also were encouraged to inform and file complaints against neighbors for rewards from the KMT government. Mitchell states that “the method was no longer simply to take a share of what was produced and exchanged, but to enter into the process of production . . . [the] political power attempted to discipline, coordinate and increase what were now thought of as the ‘productive powers’ of the country.”³² The KMT government offered special social and political privileges to those it considered to be the productive powers of Taiwan, namely, the military, public servants, and educators. Most importantly, according to Mitchell, “These modern strategies of control were not to expand and dissipate as before, but to infiltrate, re-order and colonize.” The KMT government adopted intentional strategies of infiltration, reorganization, and their own variant of colonization of Taiwan; however, in doing so, the KMT also inadvertently generated the perception of differences amongst the ethnic groups, or the “us” verses the “outsiders” as

³² Mitchell, 1988, 35.

identified by Alan Wachman.³³ There were three major policies to “infiltrate, reorganize and colonize,” and they are discussed in the following sections.

Land Reform

Land reform policies were implemented in order to change the demographic composition of Taiwanese society. The KMT sought to separate communities of ethnic groups while implanting Chinese amongst the indigenous populations. The KMT regime launched a series of land reforms starting on April 14, 1949.³⁴ The KMT regime forcibly took away land owned by the Taiwanese and rewrote the deeds to the land. The KMT government then redistributed most of the land amongst the mainlanders. The KMT carved the large pieces of land into more than six million small individual areas and established a payment system to collect “rent” from the “tenants” every month to profit the state. The KMT government decreed a rent reduction for the tenants to a top limit of 37.5% of the crop.³⁵

In addition, the Chinese also received priority over the Taiwanese for the land. In short, the KMT government would rent to the Chinese first, then consider the Taiwanese as renters. The government also promoted the guaranteed security of the renters, which meant that the KMT government would invoke the local Garrison Command centers to prevent the Taiwanese from taking their land back. Furthermore, the KMT implemented a national rent price, which was significantly

³³ Wachman, 1994, 53–64.

³⁴ The KMT had just lost the civil war in China and was forced to retreat to Taiwan two months prior.

³⁵ Richard L Walker, *Taiwan's Development as Free China*. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 321: Contemporary China and the Chinese, January 1959, 129.

lower than what landowners were previously charging; instead of the landowner getting the profits, the state did. The KMT government also forced the landlords to rent their land to private citizens. In 1953, four years after the initial land reform, the KMT government went further by requiring landowners to sell to the tenants, most of them mainlanders, the land they had been renting.³⁶ The benefits gained by the KMT government from land reform were two-fold: first, the state ultimately made profits by charging the tenants rent and then from the selling of the land; and secondly, land reform also meant the relocation of the two million mainlanders to virtually all areas in Taiwan.

In addition to redistricting the land, Military Family Sections, some called Military Villages, were created by the government in order to house the families of Chinese soldiers. The KMT took over the most prosperous sections of major cities such as Taipei and Kaohsiung and established housing projects for Chinese military families. The projects were mostly demolished after Taiwan's democratization and the transfer of power to the new DPP administration; however, there are still numerous buildings and apartments left where the descendants of the Chinese soldiers still reside. The legacy of land reform has lingered until the present. In the most recent five-municipality election, the KMT candidate for mayor of Taipei, Hau Long-Bin, campaigned under the Equal Housing Platform. Hau, a second-generation mainlander and son of former premier and military general Hau Pei-Tsun, responded to criticism of being part

³⁶ Walker, 1959. 130

of the “high-class mainlanders” because he advocated flat-rate housing through Taipei for anyone who is in need of housing.³⁷

Education and Language

Education and language are very effective tools for an authoritarian power to secure control and to prevent future outbreaks of rebellion. Education can be seen as the extension of a government’s power over the person’s soul and psyche. Education can also be used to construct a new individual who is not contradictory to the newly established authoritarian regime. As political theorist Michel Foucault points out, once the sovereign has power over the individual’s body, it begins to extend its control over the human soul. Foucault contends in his book *Discipline and Punish* that the human soul opens up more possibilities for punishment and control.³⁸ Timothy Mitchell also uses the term “enframing” to describe what European colonialists did when they ordered and controlled the *reality* of others,³⁹ Part of enframing is to teach the colonized that the new order should be the better way, the way to operate one’s daily life. For example, in Egypt, enframing took the form of model villages that were “run like barracks . . . [people] would to be inspected, supervised and instructed.”⁴⁰ There was the

³⁷ The term “high-class mainlander (高級的外省人)” was coined by a Taiwanese diplomat to Canada. A mainlander, the diplomat, while stationed in Canada, blogged on the superiority of the mainlanders in comparison to the Taiwanese. The racist language of the blog ignited an uproar both in Taiwan and overseas. The diplomat was subsequently recalled and stripped of his post. However, the term lingered, and was often used by the KMT opposition in labeling the KMT officials. Hau won the mayorship by obtaining 55% of the vote.

³⁸ Foucault, 1977. 104–114.

³⁹ Mitchell, 1988, 34.

⁴⁰ Mitchell, 1988, 34.

creation of a disciplined army through the mobilization and regimentation of thousands of Egyptians, and the eventual establishment of prep schools.

In Taiwan, during the authoritarian era, mainlander teachers were assigned to the newly established public schools to teach the youngsters. School administrative officials were also replaced by mainlanders, with Taiwanese acting as secondary assistants. “The order and discipline of modern schooling were to be the hallmark and the method of a new form of political power.”⁴¹ In the 1957–1958 academic year, there were 1,471,407 students in elementary schools in Taiwan, 270,523 in secondary schools, and 21,259 in colleges and universities.⁴² The usual school curriculum included daily flag-raising ceremonies,⁴³ military training courses, and music lessons on military anthems. Children in the public school system from ages six to eighteen were taught military songs such as “Fight Our Way Back to the Mainland,” “I Am a Chinese,” “China Will Be Strong,” and “The Plum Blossom.”⁴⁴

Another important aspect of the KMT promotion of national education was the publication of new textbooks. Between 1949 and 1957, over nineteen thousand

⁴¹ Mitchell, 1988, 75.

⁴² Walker, 1959, 132.

⁴³ There was a deliberate campaign launched by the KMT to introduce the national flag of the Republic of China to the Taiwanese, who were used to the Japanese Rising Sun as their national flag.

⁴⁴ The plum blossom is the national flower of the Republic of China.

第十一課 先總統

蔣公小的時候

先總統蔣中正先生，小的時候就很喜歡做事。他在家裡，每天灑水掃地，有時候也幫著母親在園裡種菜。母親晚上織布，他就在旁邊讀書。



有一天，他到河邊去玩，看見河裡有許多小魚向上游。因為水太急，幾次都被水沖下來，但是小魚還是努力向上游。

先總統灑布因為勤練游泳，所以難如沖次為因

被游練精

蔣公看了，心裡想：「小魚都有這樣大的勇氣，我們做人，能不如小魚嗎？」蔣公從小就做事快，不怕難，又有勇氣，所以長大了，能為國家做許多事。



textbooks were published.⁴⁶ Many of the old texts in both Taiwanese and Japanese were confiscated and destroyed. Academia Sinica, a national academic research organization, was created by the KMT to take on the task of developing new textbooks.⁴⁷ The new textbooks were written with the central theme of promoting Chinese culture, hailing Chiang Kai-Shek as the savior of all Chinese, and the legacy of the Republic of China. During KMT education reform, Taiwanese literature, geography, and history were abandoned, while Chinese history, geography, and writings were glorified and promoted. In addition, the KMT utilized the printing press as another tool to exert Chinese dominance. In 1958, the KMT jump-started 28 newspapers and 498 journals and magazines⁴⁸—almost all of them propagandist in nature.

In addition to changing the subjects of the textbooks, schooling was also divided and ranked according to ethnicity. As Mitchell states, “By specifying the separate ranks of people eligible for each successive stage of schooling, a social order was represented in the exact form of a *pyramid* of social classes.”⁴⁹ Most Taiwanese were not encouraged to, and were even prevented from, studying social sciences such as political science, sociology, or law. In addition, the number of people admitted to law school was based on the number of provinces in China. The Republic of China had thirty-five provinces before the civil war. The KMT decided to admit individuals to law school according to their provincial

Chinese textbook. The text describes Chiang Kai-shek coming to the realization that an individual must always rely on himself in order to achieve greatness by looking at a school of trout swimming against the current.

⁴⁶ Walker, 1959. 132.

⁴⁷ Walker, 1959. 132–133.

⁴⁸ Walker, 1959, 132.

⁴⁹ Mitchell 1988, 77.

origin. For example, if thirty-five individuals were admitted to law school, thirty-four of them would be from provinces in China and only one person would be Taiwanese, because Taiwan was seen as just another province. The unfair practice was frustrating to the Taiwanese, who often excel in academia.

Another part of the education reform of the KMT was the mandatory learning of Mandarin Chinese. Before the KMT regime, under the colonial rule of Japan, most individuals in Taiwan were bilingual. The Taiwanese were able to converse in their ethnic dialect and in Japanese. Soon after the arrival of the KMT regime, Chiang Kai-Shek and his cohorts realized that language barriers were posing a serious problem for the reform programs. As a result, the KMT government required all Taiwanese to learn Mandarin Chinese and implemented coercive mechanisms within the public school systems to accelerate the language-learning process. For example, mainland school administrators served as “language police” in school yards. If the language police discovered an individual conversing in Taiwanese, the individual would be issued a citation and would have to pay a fine. In addition, teachers were instructed to make signs that displayed “I spoke Taiwanese” for students to wear around their necks after they were caught speaking Taiwanese. The signs and ticketing thus created the general attitude amongst the younger generation that speaking Taiwanese was shameful, ungraceful, and lower class. Even though there were attempts by Taiwanese intellectuals to resist the invasion of the Chinese language, the coercive mechanisms of the KMT were too powerful. Taiwanese thus became the language of the “lower class” and the unsophisticated. According to Mitchell, “Texts too

carried their own authority, an authority which mirrored that of politics in its tendency to degenerate over time and become corrupt.”⁵⁰ It was not until after the democratization of Taiwan that the Taiwanese language finally made a comeback and debates started to emerge amongst politicians and academics on whether the Taiwanese language should be taught as the national language in Taiwan.

Cultural Domination

In the years between the 1940s and 1960s, the KMT regime successfully reorganized and enframed Taiwan into different model villages, counties, and magistrates. At the same time, the KMT also exercised cultural imperialism through its control of the media to substitute a new sinocentric identity for the Taiwanese for the multicultural Taiwanese tradition.⁵¹ The KMT regime disallowed public performances of Taiwanese songs, music, and theater. The Taiwanese opera was an art form popular with the indigenous population. It was usually performed on an outside stage in the town square. The KMT banned the performance of Taiwanese opera and replaced it with the Peking opera, which was the favorite of Chiang Kai Shek. In addition, Taiwanese was only allowed to be spoken for thirty minutes per day on television. The Taiwanese actors were also forced to perform in Mandarin Chinese. The performances of Japanese songs, which were very popular amongst the senior generations, were eliminated altogether.

⁵⁰ Mitchell, 1988, 135.

⁵¹ Because of the various colonial legacies, the Taiwanese have adopted practices, rituals, and food from different cultures. In combination with the aboriginal population, Taiwan was always multicultural and multiethnic until the attempts of the KMT to assimilate the population to Chinese.

The KMT's cultural imperialism, its reformation of the education system and language, had been in practice for almost fifty years before the first Taiwanese president took office. The segregation of ethnic groups and the assignment of benefits to only the mainlanders not only frustrated the Taiwanese majority, it also reinforced the sense that Taiwanese are indeed different than Chinese. This was a reaction to the efforts of the KMT to impose the Chinese identity on the Taiwanese by belittling indigenous languages, cultural practices, songs, and folkways. During and after the liberalization and democratization of Taiwan, the Kuomintang began to find itself a casualty of its own creation. Acknowledging the Taiwanese as the ethnic majority, the DPP called for a Republic of Taiwan (ROT) and a new Taiwan constitution.

Even though the DPP would later split into factions representing those who advocated for aggressively pushing for Taiwan independence and those who were more moderate, in 1991, the DPP party headquarters and the candidates all campaigned under the platform of Taiwan independence and called for the voters to drive foreign authoritarianism out of Taiwanese politics. The DPP's political platform culminated in the DPP's passing the Taiwan Independence Clause to add to the Party Charter. The clause states:

The DPP's position on Taiwan's future is the "people's self-determination," and it maintains that all inhabitants should jointly determine their common destiny. As Taiwan's largest opposition party, the DPP has the responsibility to reflect the aspirations of the masses of society, to vigorously try to obtain accelerated implementation of constitutional government reform, and to avoid Taiwan's losing its way in the abyss of unification.⁵²

⁵² Resolution of the DPP National Party Congress, October 7, 1990.

The DPP party headquarters then released a television ad with the on-screen slogan “Let us establish a sovereign, independent Republic of Taiwan.”⁵³ Many of the DPP candidates assigned their individual campaigns similar titles. For example, Lin Cho-Shui (林濁水), one of the senior DPP legislators, ran under the campaign slogan, “ROT defeats ROC” in 1991.⁵⁴ Wu Ming-Yang (吳銘洋) called for the voters to write ROT on their international mail to show the world that the Taiwanese deserved a republic of their own instead of the defeated residue of the Republic of China.⁵⁵ The DPP also attacked the KMT’s unification policy with China by claiming that unifying with poor and backward China could only hurt Taiwan.

Recasting the Identity Issue, Becoming Taiwanese

With its fifty-year authoritarian legacy and inequitable social policies, one might think undertaking the issue of identity would be a daunting task for the KMT. The KMT dealt with the harsh attack by the opposition by leaping to the offensive with several bold moves. First, the KMT did not formally sever itself from the original ideology of reuniting all China and establishing a Chinese Republic, but President Lee Teng-hui issued a statement stating that due to changes to the international environment, the growing strength of the PRC, and the increase of cross-strait interaction, there came a need for creating an institution to handle “mainland affairs.” Lee requested a presidential advisory

⁵³ Under the old Central Election Committee rule on television ads, the characters for “Taiwan” were blacked out of the DPP ad, so the ad broadcast on television only showed the characters for “Let us establish a sovereign, independent republic.”

⁵⁴ “ROT defeats ROC” (台灣共合國大勝中華民國), *Liberty Times*, December, 14th, 1991, 1.

⁵⁵ *Liberty Times*, December 11, 1991, 1.

council to convene to discuss the establishment of such a ministry. The Executive Yuan would direct such an endeavor and the Legislative Yuan would pass the legislation and budget for such a ministry. A few months later, in January of 1991, the Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) was established with the cooperation of both yuans. In March 1991, the Executive Yuan approved the council's National Unification Guidelines. The guidelines established three preconditions for unification: democracy, liberty, and equal prosperity on both sides of the Taiwan Strait.

The establishment of the MAC and the passage of the National Unification Guidelines were implemented in order to send a direct message to the voters that the leaders of the KMT were dedicated to promoting and maintaining democracy and liberty. In addition, Lee argued that the establishment of the MAC was a clear indication that Taiwan, although under the official name of the Republic of China, was already an independent country run by a Taiwanese president.⁵⁶ Lee further called for tolerance, encouraged the population to move on from the past, and emphasized the democratic ideological basis of the KMT. Lee stated, "We have just begun to practice democratic government . . . we must admit that different opinions exist in this society, which affect the formation of a symbiotic community. This goal can only be achieved through our mutual understanding, cooperation, wisdom and tolerance and brotherly love."⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Lee Teng-hui was the first president who was ethnically Taiwanese.

⁵⁷ Teng-Hui Lee, *The Road to Democracy: Taiwan's Pursuit of Identity* (Tokyo: PHP Institute, 1999), 60–61.

The 1991 National Assembly election was especially contentious because the election was set to replace what the opposition dubbed as the “old thieves.” The National Assembly members were allowed to retain their elected seats and collect their stipend indefinitely, and most of them remained in office until their deaths. The ailing National Assembly members were all Chinese, and the Kuomintang translated the National Assembly to Taiwan with its members still representing the thirty-five provinces of the Republic of China. According to one of the DPP founders, Chou Ching-Yu, “I was not trying to embarrass these old timers, but whenever I got the chance, I would ask them questions regarding contemporary Taiwan to show the public that these old men were totally stuck in time and place. Some of them are totally senile. The KMT owned and managed the National Assembly and did not have the democratic ethic nor the ethnic foundation to be our representatives let alone receiving salaries that came out of the Taiwanese people’s pockets. I called them ‘ten-thousand year Assembly’ and those members ‘old thieves.’”⁵⁸



⁵⁸ Ching-Yu Chou, interviewed by author on June 13, 2007.

Members of the National Assembly dozing off during an assembly session⁵⁹

Chou further elaborates, “When one of these old guys died, a new face would mysteriously appear to replace the old guy, and these new faces were almost always mainlander faces.”⁶⁰



Rally for the Forced Retirement of National Assembly members by the DPP.⁶¹

To defuse the relentless attack from Chou and the DPP, the Kuomintang further distanced itself from the authoritarian past by officially ending the Temporary Provisions Effective during the Period of Communist Rebellion and restored the constitution. The KMT’s reinvention of itself as the leader of democratization and the defender of political and civil rights happened with the close collaboration of the President’s Office, the Executive Yuan, and the

⁵⁹ Photograph contributed to author by Professor Hsiao-Feng Lee, Professor of Postwar Taiwan History at National Taipei University of Education, June 25, 2007.

⁶⁰ Ching-Yu Chou, interviewed by author on June 13, 2007.

⁶¹ Photograph contributed to author by Ms. Ching-Yu Chou, former Changhua County magistrate, and national policy advisor to President Chen Shui-Bian, interviewed on June 13, 2007. The sign Ms. Chou (middle) was holding said “Old Reps Get Lost” and her shirt said “Reelection.”

Legislative Yuan. The KMT also carefully utilized the media to further deliver the regime's message to the general public.

The party headquarters promoted the 1991 Legislative Yuan's campaign under the banner of "reform, stability and prosperity." The KMT also claimed credit for Taiwan's economic prosperity and democratization to date. The television campaign ad portrayed the KMT as an "experienced, responsible political party with enough flexibility for reform." It also advocated the idea that the constituents should view the KMT as a "faithful old friend." "The protective and nurturing role of the KMT was illustrated with the image of a naked infant boy lying on the rich blue expanse of the KMT party flag."⁶² In other words, the television ads depicted the KMT as the devoted guardian of Taiwan that would do whatever it took to protect Taiwan from external threats or from its own population, such as the advocates of independence.⁶³ More importantly, recognizing the emergence of a Taiwanese identity, the KMT also adopted the DPP's strategy by capitalizing on the population's close attachment to Taiwan's first native-born president. Another featured KMT slogan for the 1991 campaign stated, "To support Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui, please vote for the KMT."⁶⁴

⁶² Wachman, 1994, 208

⁶³ Former President Lee elaborated in an article in the *Free China Journal*, "I am the president of the Republic of China. Faced with a small group of people advocating secessionism, I am naturally concerned. I will do my best to dispel the doubts of these people and help them believe in the government's determination to promote democracy, and have faith that all actions taken by the government will respect the rights of the people in Taiwan." Teng-Hui Lee, *Free China Journal*, July 5¹, 1991: 7.

⁶⁴ Political campaign pamphlet supplied by the KMT Party Archive, accessed on July 7, 2007.

The 1991 National Assembly election was an electoral victory for the KMT. The KMT captured 179 out of the 225 available seats with 71.2% of the overall 8.93 million votes cast. The DPP won 40 seats with 23.9% of the votes. The DPP was able to appoint 20 at-large delegates and 5 overseas representative seats. The election results demonstrated that the KMT had deflected yet another challenge posed by its opposition and the new democratic political environment.

1992 Legislative Yuan Election

The 1992 Legislative Yuan election brought the issue of identity front and center. This election was the first democratic election of the Legislative Yuan since 1947. The election campaign had once again developed into a contest between Chinese and Taiwanese identity while the KMT was undergoing a major transition with its leadership and foreign policy positions. The factional division within the KMT was due to many hard-core members, mainly mainlander party members, who were dissatisfied with the pace of democratization and the ideological shift adopted by Lee and his supporters within the party.

This ideological shift was often referred to as the KMT's "Taiwanization." The process of incorporating native Taiwanese and identifying with the indigenous culture and identity actually began in the 1970s with President Chiang Ching-Kuo.⁶⁵ The exclusiveness of Sartori's authoritarian party began to be dismantled with Chiang's attempt to "Taiwanize" the party. Many KMT candidates started to openly support the de facto independence of the Taiwanese

⁶⁵ Scholars such as Peter Moody, 1992, and Hung-Mao Tien, 1992

government. The supporters of Taiwan's de facto status formed the Wisdom Coalition (Chi-Si Hui 集思會). Almost all members of the Wisdom Coalition were Taiwanese and were actively making efforts to gain votes from proindependence voters. As party chairman, Lee did not restrict or prevent KMT legislative candidates who had chosen to campaign under the de facto independence slogan. For example, Lin Yu-Siang (林鈺祥), a former member of the Taipei City Council, ran under the campaign slogan inspired by an old Taiwanese song, "Mother, please take good care of yourself" (媽媽請你也保重), during his bid for a seat in the Legislative Yuan. At the center of Lin's campaign pamphlet was the map of Taiwan. China was nowhere to be seen. On the map of Taiwan were pictures of Lin's parents and grandparents. Lin's pamphlet listed his past accomplishments as a legislator; on the other hand, the pamphlet also had large characters for the central theme of the Wisdom Coalition's campaign slogan, "Taiwan First" (台灣優先), printed on every page.⁶⁶ Lin's campaign truck blasted his theme song as it circled around his district and responsibility zones. The candidates' ability to play Taiwanese music loudly in public was also a first for national campaigns. As stated in the previous section, the KMT suppressed things that were culturally indigenous to Taiwan, such as banning Taiwanese songs from television, replacing Taiwanese serial dramas with Peking opera, and allowing Taiwanese variety shows to be shown only one hour per day. The elaborate focus on Lin's Taiwanese heritage as the central theme of his campaign was a clear demonstration of the KMT's party apparatus supporting campaign

⁶⁶ Campaign pamphlet supplied to author by Lin Yu-Siang.

strategies that targeted the Taiwanese identity specifically, and this would ultimately help the party in garnering votes during the crucial time of a national election.

1993 Municipal Council, Township Council, and Township/Village Executive Elections

The KMT government under Lee's leadership opened up even more elections of government officials to direct popular vote, and the regime continued taking credit as the leader of the democratization of Taiwan. The municipal executive election of 1993 did not center on the issue of Taiwan independence or the theme "Taiwanese should vote for Taiwanese," but the KMT was faced with another challenge. Members from the New KMT Alliance accused Lee and those at party headquarters of "secret independence" and the members of the Wisdom Coalition for "public independence." Disillusioned and dissatisfied, the members of the New KMT Alliance resigned their party membership and formed the Chinese New Party (NP) in August, 1993. The NP publicly accused Lee and the KMT of forgetting the party's founding principles and Lee's "Taiwan First" strategy. The NP argued that ideological stretching would only create chaos and alienate the People's Republic of China and prevent China from being united once again. Fortunately for the KMT, the formation of the NP only reduced the KMT's legislative majority by six seats since not all New KMT Alliance members from the Nonmainstream Faction defected from the KMT.⁶⁷ On the other hand, the

⁶⁷ One of the major reasons for other nonmainstream factions not defecting from the KMT was the party's tremendous wealth and election support through local grassroots advocates, *tiao-a-kas*.

NP's core constituents were the Deep-Blue mainlanders who supported the Nonmainstream Faction and the hard-core politicians in the KMT.

It was during this election that the KMT accelerated its move toward the center in order to capture votes from voters who identified with their Taiwanese heritage and identity but were still undecided on lending electoral support to the DPP. It did so by hijacking the DPP platform to pursue a seat in the United Nations.

Two foreign policy setbacks in 1992 prompted opposition politicians to initiate a campaign for the bid for a seat in the United Nations. In the summer of 1992, South Korea severed diplomatic ties with Taiwan and normalized relations with the PRC. In addition, GATT decided to admit Taiwan but only assigned it the same status as Hong Kong and Macau. The DPP contended that in order for Taiwan to function effectively as a legitimate nation for its people, Taiwan must have representation in the United Nations. “[The DPP’s] UN bid was an immediate hit with the public, and it was a very successful issue for DPP candidates in the 1992 Legislative Yuan race.”⁶⁸ Even though embracing the UN bid might undercut the party ideology that the ROC was the one and only legal authority for all China and the Chinese state, Lee and the Mainstream Faction made the decision to free the party from its original rigidity and had the Ministry of Foreign Affairs initiate Taiwan’s bid to the United Nations, making one of the

The KMT was said to be the one of the richest political parties in the world, with assets ranging from newspaper companies and radio/television stations to real estate ownership and land. The party’s net worth at the time of democratization was approximately 10 billion USA, and the KMT’s party assets have been an issue in opposition attacks in almost all elections.

⁶⁸ Rigger, 2000, 38.

most successful DPP campaign proposals in 1992 into a reality in 1993. As a result, the KMT captured 67% of the council seats and 82% of the executive posts while the DPP captured only 7% of the council seats and 11% of the executive posts.⁶⁹

1994 Governor Election and Mayor's Election

During the 1994 provincial governor's election, the KMT's strategy was to continue taking the political space in the center while absorbing the vote share from the Chinese New Party and the DPP, except that the KMT had two fights on its hands. While the DPP took a position similar to its position in 1992 and campaigned under the slogan "Taiwan's only path is to refuse unification," the NP attacked Lee and the KMT with the accusation that they were secretly pushing and desiring independence for Taiwan. The KMT, with assaults from both fronts, went on the offensive, utilizing the welfare of the Taiwanese people as the reason not to vote for its political adversaries. The KMT portrayed its political adversaries as highly ideological political parties that only cared about reaching the parties' ideological goals instead of taking care of the common people. The KMT attacked the NP with messages like "The NP advocates seek both sides of the Strait to accept a confederate system and rapid unification."⁷⁰ In newspaper and television ads, the NP was portrayed as an ally of the Chinese Communist Party and China with messages such as "the NP shouts loudly, 'protect the ROC,' and actually it is forcing Taiwan to be annexed by the CCP." The KMT

⁶⁹ Election results from the Election Study Center of National Chengchi University.

⁷⁰ *United Daily News*, November 28, 1995, 5.

capitalized on the cleavage between mainlanders and Taiwanese, which originated from the policies implemented by the KMT when it first arrived in Taiwan in order to establish itself as the sole governing power. Since the members of the NP were predominantly mainlanders, and some were even born in China, the KMT's strategy seemed to be working. On the other hand, the KMT also accused the DPP of not making the welfare and safety of the Taiwanese people its priority. The KMT produced a spinoff from the DPP slogan "Give Taiwan a Chance." The KMT ad stated, "Giving DPP a chance is giving Taiwan independence a chance, moreover, it is also giving China a chance to militarily attack Taiwan."⁷¹ The ad ended with the question, "Are you willing to take that chance?" and the KMT promise of "reform, stability and progress."⁷² The KMT candidate, James Soong, a mainlander, also claimed that he had visited all the townships in Taiwan more than three times, and during those visits Soong promised material and political assistance to township leaders and residents. The DPP candidate Chen Ting-Nan resorted to attacking Soong's ethnicity as a mainlander as the reason to not trust him. With the KMT's promise for political stability and economic prosperity, the DPP strategy did not resonate with the electorate. Soong won the election by capturing 56% of the vote.⁷³ The 1995 gubernatorial election demonstrated that the KMT's flexible ideological strategy was extremely effective in the political environment where an increasing number of voters identified themselves as Taiwanese and would support political candidates who offered the most economic, social, and political benefit to them. While offering the township voters financial

⁷¹ Lin Yu-Siang, interviewed by author in Taipei, July 15, 2007.

⁷² Lin Yu-Siang, interviewed by author in Taipei, July 15, 2007.

⁷³ Election results from the Election Study Center of National Chengchi University.

and social assistance, James Soong was also successful in demonstrating to the electorate that the KMT was the most “pro-Taiwan” and the political party that could guarantee political stability and the safety of all Taiwanese by not aggressively pushing for unification or independence. The result of the election also confirmed that a negative attack on one candidate’s ethnicity as a mainlanders was not enough for a candidate to win an election. In other words, the simplistic slogan “Taiwanese vote for Taiwanese” proved to be a strategic failure.

The First Democratic Direct Presidential Election, 1996

The 1990s was the decade of democratization and direct elections in Taiwan. The series of elections allowed the KMT to claim credit and reclaim the party’s original ideology as a party supportive of democracy; on the other hand, the elections also posed new challenges that the KMT had never experienced before. The 1996 presidential election marked a turning point in the political history of Taiwan and a major step toward Taiwan’s democratization. As Shelley Rigger describes,

Friday, 22 March 1996 was a night of celebration in Taipei, Taiwan. Thousands jammed parks and public squares for huge rallies, then spilled into the streets for impromptu midnight marches. The warm, humid night had carnival feeling . . . 76 percent of Taiwan’s eligible voters exercised their right to select their country’s head of state. Fifty-four percent cast their votes for President Lee . . . for many observers, the presidential election completed Taiwan’s democratization.⁷⁴

The election of 1996 began with the PRC’s missile testing off the Taiwan coasts warning Taiwanese voters not to elect a candidate who was unacceptable to the PRC. As a result, in the 1996 election, identity and cross-issues became the center foci of the presidential candidates’ campaigns. The KMT again took the centrist

⁷⁴ Rigger, 2000, 1–2.

position, while the DPP candidate Peng Ming-Min campaigned under the same platform of Taiwan independence and the creation of a Republic of Taiwan for Taiwanese. Lee, on the other hand, developed an interesting rhetoric on Taiwanese identity that still resonates with KMT candidates and their campaigns today. In one of his interviews, Lee stated, “It is impossible to form a political culture that embodies Taiwan’s identity without an intense love for Taiwan itself. I say this all the time, but the person who will lead Taiwan in the future must be a real fighter, someone who loves Taiwan deeply and will shed blood, sweat and tears for Taiwan.”⁷⁵ Lee also offered his interpretation of Taiwan identity to the voters. He elaborated:

What is Taiwan identity? Some might answer right off, “an independent Taiwan.” I, for one, do not believe that independence is the only option available to make Taiwan’s position in international society completely clear. It is more important for us to establish ourselves as the Republic of China on Taiwan. In my recommendation for political reform, I cited “Republic of China on Taiwan” as the phrase that best represents the position we are establishing. Under that term, our jurisdiction covers Taiwan, the Pescadores, Quemoy, and Matsu, but not mainland China. As soon as I stated that policy, there was a critical reaction that I was not interested in carrying on a relationship with the Chinese mainland. I believe that before we do anything else, Taiwan has to get its own house firmly in order. If Taiwan’s identity is not complete clear to its people, how can we deal with mainland China?⁷⁶

In addition to Lee publicly addressing the issue of identity, the KMT Secretary General Hsu Shui-Teh recalled that during the 1996 election, the KMT dropped the mentioning of unification altogether, even though the party officially maintains its legitimacy as the sole governing entity of all China and the legitimacy of the Republic of China as the real China in previous years.⁷⁷

According to Hsu and many others, the KMT was a very different party from

⁷⁵ From the Office of the President, Republic of China, “Founding Fathers and Former Presidents.”

⁷⁶ Teng-Hui Lee, 1999, 52.

⁷⁷ Fell, 2007, 104–105

what it had been ten years earlier. Lee Teng-hui also explained, “Though the official name was the ROC, later I began to use the term the ROC on Taiwan and later it became Taiwan ROC, to give it more local flavor. There is no meaning in talking of Taiwan independence. There is no need. We have already established something new here.”⁷⁸ While the KMT engaged in direct outreach to the electorate with its interpretation of Taiwanese identity and the meaning of the ROC on Taiwan, the KMT also issued attacks on its political opponent, Lin Yang-Kang and Hau Pei-Tsun of the NP and Peng Ming-Min and Frank Hsieh from the DPP. The KMT labeled its defectors as mouthpieces for the PRC and spokespersons for the CPP. For example, the Lin-Hau team campaigned under the slogan “New Order, New Hope.” The KMT’s attack ads stated that the new order promised by the NP meant order imposed by the PLA and the new hope meant the NP’s hope to be unified with China.⁷⁹ This was the first time the KMT’s ads portrayed unification in a negative light. The 1996 presidential election was also the first time the KMT candidate addressed the PRC as China and Taiwan as Taiwan, instead of using the term *mainland*. This particular usage of terms was first used by the DPP.

“The people who supported Taiwan independence started to support Lee Teng-hui,” said Nora Tsay, former president of the North American Taiwanese Women’s Association, “because he spoke openly about his belief that the Taiwan-China relationship is a two-states relationship and that Taiwan is Taiwan, China is China, so people who are supportive of Taiwan independence began to support

⁷⁸ Fell, 2007, 105.

⁷⁹ Siao Yu-Ming, interviewed by author in Taipei, June 22, 2007.

Lee and his party, which was the KMT.”⁸⁰ According to the research conducted by the Election Study Center of National Chengchi University, in 1996, 72% of those surveyed considered themselves Taiwanese, while 32.2% of the voters wished to keep the status quo between Taiwan and China and decide the future of Taiwan, whether it was independence or unification, later. The percentage of the voters who desired keeping the status quo indefinitely was 16.3%, while 5.1% of the electorate wanted immediate independence and 3.3% of the voters desired immediate unification.⁸¹ The survey results provided a clear explanation for the KMT’s electoral success. While most voters in Taiwan did identify themselves as Taiwanese, their desire on the cross-strait policy was moderate. Most were satisfied with keeping the status quo and did not want immediate unification or declaration of independence. By avoiding discussions and debates on unification and independence altogether while emphasizing the importance of Taiwan’s de facto status as an already existing state, Lee’s campaign successfully redirected the aversion most of the electorate had toward China and unification onto the NP and also shifted the burden of putting the electorate’s lives in danger to the DPP. Once again, the KMT was successful in demonstrating to the voters that it was still the political party most capable of securing the welfare and safety of the general population while respecting the Taiwanese’s sense of identity.

2008 Presidential Election

⁸⁰ NoraTsay, interviewed by author in Dallas, November 18, 2007.

⁸¹ “Changes in Unification-Independence Stance of Taiwanese as Tracked in Surveys (1994-2009),” Election Study Center, National Chengchui University.

The electoral victory of Ma Ying-Jeou as Taiwan's fourth directly elected president was referred to as a landslide. The percentage of eligible voters who cast their ballots was 76%, and out of the thirteen million total votes, Ma received 58% of the overall votes, defeating his opponent, Frank Hsieh, by two million votes.⁸² Ma's presidential victory had been preceded by another landslide victory of the Legislative Yuan, the legislative body of the Taiwanese government, in January 2008. The Kuomintang won 81 out of the overall 113 seats in the newly structured Legislative Yuan, which constituted about 75% of the overall legislative seats. This was one of the largest electoral victories of the KMT since democratization. Even though the party had almost always been able to maintain legislative majority through coalition or on its own, compared to the 49.86% of the seats the Kuomintang and the Pan-Blue coalition retained four years previously, the Kuomintang had now solidified its political dominance.⁸³

The causal factors for the KMT's defeat in the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections were the party's exhibition of ideological rigidity and popular James Soong's split from the KMT. On the other hand, the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections were two of the most contested and closely fought elections in Taiwan's history. Chen Shui-Bian of the DPP won the presidency. This was the first time an opposition candidate had won the country's highest executive office; however, Chen did not win the majority of votes. While Chen won with 39.3% of the overall vote, James Soong, the former governor of Taiwan and the rogue candidate who split from the KMT, managed to capture 37.46% of the overall

⁸² Central Election Commission of the Republic of China (Taiwan). "Results of Elections in Taiwan" 2008. <http://vote.nccu.edu.tw/engceec/vote4.asp> (Accessed July 25th, 2008).

⁸³ The KMT lost legislative majority in 2001.

vote while the KMT candidate, Lien Chan, received 23.1%. Needless to say, if James Soong hadn't split from the KMT, a joint ticket with Lien-Soong would have won the presidency. In addition, the KMT still held a strong majority in the Legislative Yuan. In the 1998 Legislative Yuan election, the KMT retained 123 seats while the DPP received 70 seats. Even though the KMT lost its single party majority in the 2001 Legislative Yuan election with winning 68 seats, James Soong's splinter party, the People First Party, was able to capture 46 seats. The KMT and the PFP were able to bridge their minor differences and form the Pan-Blue Coalition with 114 seats in the Legislative Yuan, which outnumbered the DPP by 87 seats.

Learning from its first major electoral defeat in the 2000 presidential election and the 2001 Legislative Yuan election, the KMT sought to redeem itself in the 2008 presidential election. The KMT negotiated to absorb the PFP back into the KMT. Candidates who were originally registered under the PFP's banner promoted the KMT's platform, and once elected, the candidate then relinquished his/her party membership in the PFP and rejoined the KMT. After obtaining 75% of the seats in the Legislative Yuan, the KMT's next step was to win the presidency back from the DPP.

The party nominated Ma Ying-Jeou, the mayor of Taipei, a Harvard-educated lawyer and a charismatic character to the voters, especially the female constituents. Knowing that the DPP and its candidate, Frank Hsieh, would again turn to the usual attack on Ma's ethnicity as a mainlander, the KMT used Ma's age and historical circumstances as a defense. Even though Ma's birthplace was

still contested, the KMT explained the confusion by arguing that Ma, who was born in 1950, was born somewhere between China and Hong Kong due to the chaos toward the end of the Chinese Civil War and Chiang Kai-Shek's relocation to Taiwan with two million mainlanders.⁸⁴ The DPP use Ma's birthplace as evidence of his dishonesty to the Taiwanese people. Frank Hsieh said, "If Ma Ying-Jeou can't even be honest to the voters on where he was actually born, how can we expect him to be honest with anything else?" The confusion over Ma's birthplace did little to damage his political stamina. The public opinion poll conducted by TVBS on February 24, 2008, showed that the Ma-Siew ticket received 49% of the support from those who were polled, and the DPP Hsieh-Su ticket received only 29%.⁸⁵ Ma answered his critics with the proclamation that he was only one year old when he relocated to Taiwan and emphasized the fact that he, like most of the Taiwanese, grew up eating Taiwan's rice and drinking Taiwan's water; therefore, if he was to "burn to ashes, he would still be a Taiwanese."⁸⁶ Ma further stated that his "Grandmother, Grandfather, Father, Uncle and In-laws were all buried in Taiwan. If they saw Taiwan as their final resting place, then Taiwan is also my home and will be my resting place."⁸⁷

In addition to Ma's direct response to those who were questioning his sense of identity, the KMT also released a series of television commercials

⁸⁴ The confusion rose from the different locations on Ma's birth certificate and the birthplace Ma filled out on his daughter's birth certificate. On his own birth certificate, Ma's birthplace was listed as Hong Kong; however, on his daughter's birth certificate issued in the United States, the father's birthplace was filled in as Shenzhen, China. Furthermore, Ma also said in one of his autobiographies that his birthplace was Guangdong Province, China.

⁸⁵ TVBS Public Opinion Poll, March 12, 2008,

<http://www.kmt.org.tw/english/page.aspx?type=article&mnum=114&anum=4222>.

⁸⁶ Ma's answer to Frank Hsieh's accusation that he was not being loyal to Taiwan during the first televised presidential election on February 23, 2008

⁸⁷ First televised presidential debate, February 23, 2008.

depicting the KMT as an inclusive, indigenous political party. The television ad, titled, “Our Taiwan, our home,” featured people from all ethnic groups with background music, titled “The Harmony Song,” sung by one of Taiwan’s most popular pop stars. The commercial only used indigenous languages and no Mandarin Chinese.⁸⁸ Another television commercial titled “Sky Light” was shot with the backdrop of Taiwan’s traditional festival, the lighting of sky lights. The mechanics of sky lights are similar to hot air balloons, except the sky lights are made out of paper and bamboo. Traditionally, villagers send the sky lights up to the sky with messages and wishes written in calligraphy. In the KMT “Sky Light” ad, wishes such as “Economic Prosperity for Taiwan,” “Working Hard, Only for Taiwan,” “For Taiwan, 6% Economic Growth,” “For Our Children, 3% Unemployment Rate,” and “For the People, Gross National Income Per Capita 30,000 USD” were written on the sky lights and sent toward the sky. The ad also featured individuals from different indigenous ethnic groups to create the impression of the KMT as a party of all people in Taiwan.⁸⁹ Furthermore, the theme of Ma’s campaign was the slogan “Taiwan moving ahead, Taiwan will always win!”⁹⁰ One thing worth noting was that “Republic of China” simply vanished from the 2008 presidential campaign for the KMT. Ma’s campaign focused on everything Taiwan. With the number of constituents identifying themselves as Taiwanese at record high, the KMT was not going to jeopardize the

⁸⁸ The “Our Taiwan, Our Home” commercial is uploaded to and can be access at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PUaxrnNMS3k>.

⁸⁹ The “Sky Light” commercial is uploaded to and can be accessed at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CuEeBDWKnLY>.

⁹⁰ Ma’s campaign slogan: Taiwan moving ahead, Taiwan always wins! (台灣向前行，台灣一定贏)

party and Ma's popularity by reminding the voters of the party's Chinese origin and ideology.

If one compares Frank Hsieh's presidential commercial, which featured Taiwan as a multicultural island nation with many ethnic heritages, and Ma Ying-jeou's "Our Taiwan, Our Home" commercial, it would be extremely difficult to tell the ads apart. In fact, some of the parties' ads were so similar, it was difficult to differentiate them until the end of the commercial when the candidates' names appeared. On the other hand, if one examines the DPP's television ads in the 2000, 2004, and 2008 elections, one discovers that the commercials looked similar with similar themes and familiar faces, such the Formosan Eight, indigenous populations, street protests challenging the KMT, and Taiwanese songs as background music. However, when one examines KMT's television commercials in the last three presidential elections, one sees that the commercials in 2000 and 2004 featured former president Chiang Ching-Kuo, seas of ROC national flags at political rallies, and traditional Chinese philosophical figures. On the other hand, in the 2008 commercials, the previously featured former leaders of the KMT were not featured, even when the party claimed them as initiators of the liberalization and democratization process. "This is it for us," said Tu Chien-Te, the Director of Mobilization and Development,

"I have worked grassroots mobilization for more than three decades, and I understand there are still a lot of people who consider Chiang Ching-Kuo as brutal as his father, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek, so we couldn't take any chances. We cannot let the public think that we are still the old Kuomintang, authoritarian, rigid, and Chinese. As

you can see, all of us who worked in this office are Taiwanese. I'm Taiwanese. We represent the party, and our campaign should also reflect that.”⁹¹

Tu planned two trips around the island of Taiwan for Ma. On the two trips, Ma visited all the townships as James Soong did and stayed in average citizens' homes.⁹² The KMT also offered a counterreferendum for the UN application under “any practical and honorable name” regardless of the ROC or Taiwan to combat the DPP's version of the UN referendum, which sought membership in the United Nations for Taiwan. Ma called his position to retain the status quo the best way to ensure the safety of all Taiwanese, and the de facto sovereignty of Taiwan, “practical independence.” Even though Ma generated some criticisms from hard-line supporters of the KMT for stating that both unification and independence are possible ways to resolve Taiwan's future, the gamble seemed to echo well with most of the electorate. A few days before the general election, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao offered to begin dialogs with Taiwan under the One China guideline while stating that “all the Chinese people, including our Taiwan compatriots should decide Taiwan's future.” Ma responded by stating that “the future of Taiwan should be decided by Taiwan's 23 million people, and no intervention by the PRC is to be tolerated. What Premier Wen said was not only rude, irrational, arrogant and absurd, but also self-righteous. It ignored the mainstream opinion of Taiwan's 23 million people.”⁹³

The election result was sweeping. On Election Day, Ma swept to a 58.5% to 41.4% victory with 762 million votes, carrying twenty of the twenty-five

⁹¹ Interviewed by author in Taipei, June 14, 2007.

⁹² Tu Chien-Te, interviewed by author in Taipei, June 21, 2008.

⁹³ David B. Kopel, “Taiwan's 2008 Presidential Elections: An Analysis of what happened, and what may happen next,” Independent Institute, April 3, 2008.

counties. In every county, the KMT gained 7%to 10% over its 2004 showing. In Ma's victory speech, he continued with his campaign theme of "Taiwan Moving Forward, Taiwan Always Wins" by mentioning Taiwan more than thirty times. As one can see, the KMT's identity platform has been systematic, consistent, and well-executed. The party's fluidity and flexibility should be credited to the KMT's established habit of obeying the policies advocated by party headquarters. The KMT has received the majority of the votes in every national election.

According to Kirchheimer, "Deideologization [of catch-all parties] in the political field involves the transfer of ideology from partnership in a clearly visible political goal structure into one of many sufficient but by no means necessary motivational forces operative in the voters' choice . . . ideology was from the outset only a general background atmosphere, both all-embracing and conveniently vague enough to allow recruiting."⁹⁴ In other words, broad ideological goals allow parties that are aspiring to become catch-all to appeal to voters across the population. The reconciliation of the KMT and its authoritarian past, and the unintended consequences of Taiwanese identity, enabled the KMT to transform itself into the party for all Taiwanese, or the catch-all party of Taiwan. The KMT has relinquished its hold on the special loyalty of a group of clientele and expanded its constituent base to cover all Taiwanese. In addition, the Kuomintang's synchronized campaign efforts, and the party apparatus's encouragement of its Taiwanese candidates to campaign under the Taiwanese

⁹⁴ Kirchheimer, 1991, 55

identity platform, gave the KMT the opportunity to turn Taiwanese identity from a challenge into an asset.

CHAPTER FIVE CONCLUSION

ARE YOU PREPARED? – 你準備好了嗎?¹ The KMT Solidification of Power

Today we are here not to celebrate the victory of a particular party or individual, but to witness Taiwan pass a historic milestone. . . . Above all, the people have rediscovered Taiwan's traditional core values of benevolence, righteousness, diligence, honesty, generosity and industriousness. This remarkable experience has let Taiwan become “a beacon of democracy” to Asia and the world. We, the people of Taiwan, should be proud of ourselves. The Republic of China is now a democracy respected by the international community. – Ma Ying Jeou, Inauguration Speech, May 20, 2008

We accept defeat. It's my own defeat. It's not the defeat of the Taiwanese people. Please don't cry for me. . . . Although we lost the election, we have a more important mission. The torch of democracy should not be extinguished. - Hsieh Chang-Ting, DPP Presidential Candidate Concession Speech, March 22, 2008.

The political resilience of the Kuomintang is not a coincidence. As this dissertation has demonstrated, the Kuomintang is not the lingering pest Pan-Green supporters make it out to be. The hierarchical structure of the Kuomintang is a tightly run, self-sustaining, and highly disciplined political machine that has tentacles extended to all parts of Taiwanese society. The Republic of China constitution, which the Kuomintang has fiercely upheld and safeguarded since its arrival in Taiwan, established institutions that are essential to the party's survival. The institutions are the mutually engaged and interactive five branches of government, the electoral system, the local institutions, and the clientele culture it has facilitated. Therefore, the institutional design of the Republic of China, and

¹ “Are you prepared/ready?” is one of KMT's principle campaign slogan. The Party promised to bring change and prosperity to Taiwan. In the last campaign commercial aired a week before election day, the television ad showed all the KMT elected local officials making statement such as “Taipei is ready (for change)”, “Taichung is ready”, and “Hsinchu is ready” with Presidential candidate Ma Ying-Jeou asking the question to the voter, “Are you prepared for change?” at the end of the commercial.

the organization of the party itself, helped sustain the Kuomintang for more than a century. As President Ma Ying-Jeou proclaimed proudly as the Republic of China celebrated its centennial,

In ROC year 35 in Nanjing, our elected representative ratified the most innovative Constitution in Asia. In the past sixty years, we have implemented public policies such as the land reform, ten infrastructures, 9-year national education system, laborer social security, national health insurance, citizen's annual security and encouraged local self-governance. All made the Republic of China on Taiwan a respectable member of the international community and this experience is now the collective memory for all of us. We are all witnesses to Taiwan's transformation and growth.²

The purpose of this dissertation is to elucidate the political longevity of the Kuomintang and the author hopes this study of the world's second-longest ruling political party can contribute to the study of democratization and political party competition. In addition, the study of the Kuomintang and its political resilience demonstrates the necessity for constitutional reform in Taiwan. With the existing institutional design, it is extremely difficult for political power to be fully transferred. This difficulty also directly affects the quality of democracy in Taiwan. It is the hope of this author to conduct subsequent projects on the quality of Taiwan's democracy in such areas as the necessity of judicial transparency and reform, electoral fairness, accountability of government branches to constituents, and so forth. Moreover, the author feels that it is through close examination of the Kuomintang and the variables in its political resilience that one can obtain the necessary knowledge to meliorate the democracy in Taiwan.

² Press release from the Presidential Office; transcript of President Ma Ying-Jeou's New Year's day address, <http://www.president.gov.tw/Default.aspx?tabid=131&itemid=23185&rmid=514>.

The year 2008 was known as the year of blue in Taiwan.³ On January 12, the Kuomintang captured 85 seats out of the possible 113 seats in the first legislative election after electoral reform in 2005. The Democratic Progressive Party captured the remaining 27 seats. Subsequently, the KMT presidential candidate Ma Ying-Jeou obtained electoral victory by capturing 58% of the overall vote and also became the presidential candidate who received the most electoral votes compared to all candidates to date. In the evening of March 22, 2008, in front of the Kuomintang headquarters, President-elect Ma Ying-Jeou declared his landslide victory in front of a jubilant crowd of thousands. “Citizens of Taiwan,” Ma stated, “I am here to report, according to the latest report from the Central Election Committee, Mr. Siew and myself are now the new President and Vice President of Taiwan! . . . This election result is not a personal victory, or a victory for the KMT, it is a victory for all Taiwanese people.”⁴

On the other side of town, one could hear gasps from DPP supporters accompanied by exclamations such as, “How can this be? (那ㄟ按呢?)” and “That’s troublesome! (害啊啦!)” as the vote count widened between Ma Ying-Jeou and the DPP presidential candidate, Hsieh Chang-Ting. Hsieh Chang-Ting emerged from campaign headquarters and headed toward the previously erected platform. Some DPP supporters were chanting “Reverse, and Win! (逆轉勝!)”⁵

³ Blue is the official color of the KMT.

⁴ Ying-Jeou Ma, “Victory Speech” (KMT Headquarters, Ba-De Road, Taipei, Taiwan, March 22, 2008).

⁵ “Reverse and Win! 逆轉勝!” was the slogan used by the DPP after their detrimental defeat in the Legislative Yuan election in January, 2008. A song of the same name was also used by the DPP during the last two months of the election to motivate younger voters to show off their pride as Taiwanese.

and Stand up, Taiwan! (台灣挺起來!),” while some supporters embraced each other, patted each other on their backs, some with tears running down their cheeks. “Dear compatriots,” Hsieh began to speak, ”The People of Taiwan have spoken. We have to accept defeat. Let us congratulate Mr. Ma and Mr. Siew.”⁶ With three-fourths of the legislative seats and the presidency, the Kuomintang became the most powerful political party in Taiwan once again, but this time, it was through democratic means.

Although the Democratic Progressive Party’s crushing defeat in the legislative and the presidential election of 2008 can partly be attributed to corruption scandals involving former DPP President Chen Shui-Bian, his wife, son, daughter-in-law, and son-in-law, the Kuomintang also engaged in structurally organized, well-executed, and synchronized campaigns that exemplified the institutional vigor of the Kuomintang. As one examines the Kuomintang’s political strength and electoral success, the opposition’s ability to consolidate their political power is also called into question. Aside from the institutional design that has handicapped the opposition from the outset, organization impediments such as lack of control over party discipline, factionalism, and the inability to propose and carry out solid domestic policy and foreign policy platforms, also contributed to the Democratic Progressive Party’s incapability of becoming politically successful. The following section provides a brief discussion on the deficiencies of the Democratic Progressive Party.

⁶ Chang-Ting Hsieh, “Concession Speech” (Wei-Shin Building, Chang-An East Road, Taipei, Taiwan, March 22, 2008).

Barrier to Power for the DPP

The Democratic Progressive Party's capture of the presidency in 2000 and 2004 was accompanied by great frustration. The presidency of Chen Shui-Bian was marred from the outset. The Kuomintang and its coalition still retained a 50% legislative majority, with the DPP capturing 38%. Without a legislative majority, Chen faced tremendous difficulty and inability in pushing through his policy objectives for most of his presidency. According to the Chengchi University follow-up survey after the Chen presidency, almost 70% of those surveyed were unsatisfied with Chen's performance as president, 22% of whom thought Chen's economic policies were a failure, whereas 30% of the respondents said Chen failed at every policy.⁷ In addition, 38% of the respondents deemed citizens' welfare the most important issue and most respondents thought the KMT was the party that was more capable of dealing with the most important issues.⁸ Furthermore, according to a tracking survey conducted by TVBS, the respondents who thought the KMT was more responsive to constituents' needs have always been between 45% and 55%.⁹ More importantly, the survey demonstrated that prior to the DPP's taking office, 44% of the respondents felt that the KMT was responsive to constituents' needs, and the responsiveness percentage began to increase. One year after Chen took office as president for the second term, 51% of

⁷ Taiwan Election and Democratization Study Center, Postpresidential election survey, 2008.

⁸ TVBS Poll Center (October 10–3, 2007) on voters twenty and older. The percentage of the respondents who deemed the KMT more capable to deal with economic and daily issues of the citizens than the DPP was 46%. Taiwan Election and Democratization Study Center, Postpresidential election survey, 2008.

⁹ TVBS Poll Center (October 1–3, 2007).

the survey respondents thought the KMT was more responsible to constituents, while only 26% thought the DPP was more responsible.

The Democratic Progressive Party, twenty-five years after its founding, has always fallen short of capturing a 50% vote share in both national and local elections. Furthermore, most of the DPP victories in national elections were the result of a KMT split. Chen Shui-Bian was elected as mayor of Taipei when KMT candidate Huang Ta-Chao and New Party candidate Chao Shao-Kang divided the Pan-Blue voters. Again in 2000, KMT presidential candidate Lien Chan and People First Party candidate James Soong divided the blue votes. As one will see, institutional factors are the roadblocks to the DPP's political success in contrast to the KMT.

Party Origin and Organization

The origins of the DPP can be traced back to the Dangwai Movement. Dangwai literally translates into "outside of the party," in this case, the Kuomintang. The Dangwai movement was then transformed into the Democratic Progressive Party when martial law was lifted in 1986. Since the party's establishment, there have been ideological differences among DPP members. According to former DPP Party Chairman and former Minister of Examination Yuan, Yao Chia-Wen, "DPP is not a party. It's just a collection of people who are against the KMT from all aspects of their lives."¹⁰ Yao's observation explicated what has been plaguing the Democratic Progressive Party from the beginning:

¹⁰ Interviewed by Author, June 14, 2008, in Taipei, Taiwan.

factionalism and the party structure. The founding differences of opinion regarding the issue of independence split the party into at least four distinct camps: the Formosa Faction, the New Tide Faction, the Justice Alliance and Welfare State Alliance, the Taiwan Independence Alliance, the Mainstream Alliance, and The Kang Faction.¹¹

The Formosa Faction was founded by staff members of the *Formosa Magazine*. The *Formosa Magazine* was what sparked the Formosa Incident of 1979. The Kuomintang government's attempt to shut down the magazine ignited a public protest on International Human Rights day in Kaohsiung, which ended with the arrest of the Formosa Eight and a very public trial. The Formosa Faction favors public demonstrations and a direct challenge of the KMT to achieve political reform. The New Tide Faction was founded by student activists. It is the most intellectual branch of the DPP factions. This faction is highly idealistic and more rigid in its desire to collaborate with other factions and especially the Kuomintang. It is the major internal competitor of the Formosa Faction. The New Tide Faction became extremely critical of President Chen Shui-Bian during his corruption scandal and his inability to declare Taiwan independence.

The Kang Faction and the Justice Alliance and Welfare State Alliance are no longer in existence. The Kang Faction was founded by Kang Ning-Hsiang, one of the Dangwai movement founders. The Kang Faction was pragmatic and was willing to work within the system and with the Kuomintang to achieve policy goals. The Justice Alliance was formed by the defense lawyers of the Formosa

¹¹ Rigger, 2001, 73–89

Eight. The Taiwan Independence Alliance was founded by Taiwanese expatriates in exile, many of whom were blacklisted by the Kuomintang regime and were unable to return to Taiwan for decades. The overseas expatriate group supporting the TIA is the World United Formosans for Independence (WUFI). The WUFI and the TIA are hard-core supporters of the Taiwan independence movement and advocated the declaration of independence as soon as the DPP assumed administrative power. The members of the WUFI and the TIA accused Chen of being too soft in his proindependence stance and for referencing himself as the president of the ROC. The Mainstream Alliance emerged after Chen Shui-Bian took office in 2000. The members consisted of Chen's core advisors and supporters. There were subsequent factions, such as the New Era Faction, the Progressive Alliance, The Hsieh Faction, and the Centrist Faction, which emerged after the founding of the DPP. In all, the factions, while all supporting the independence of Taiwan, differed in their methods to achieve such independence, and they also disagreed on the prioritization of policies, such as the expansion of the welfare state or the antinuclear power campaign and clean energy platform.

More importantly, aside from the number of factions distinctively different from the Kuomintang, the Democratic Progressive Party was not founded as a revolutionary vanguard party for the purpose of establishing democracy in a feudal nation. The Democratic Progressive Party was founded during a strategic meeting of Dangwai members on methods to capture seats in an upcoming supplementary election sanctioned by the Kuomintang. The decision was made to mimic the Leninist organizational style of the KMT, in which the party

chairperson and the central committee bear the most power within the party and possess strict control and oversight of policy platforms. The decision to adopt a party organization similar to the Kuomintang has proven to be a terminal fault of the DPP, due to factionalism and the lack of ideological and policy consensus, which divided the party from the beginning.

The Kuomintang adopted the Leninist model due to the party's history with the Communist Party in the former Soviet Union and the Chinese Communist Party; however, the Democratic Progressive Party had no relations with the Leninist parties nor advisors from the former Soviet Union to aid its establishment, so the DPP's decision to mimic the internal structure of the KMT was a peculiar move. While the nature of the KMT is strict and top-down, the culture of the DPP is extremely democratic. The Leninist party structure establishes a strong party chair, a central standing committee, and a central committee. While the party chair in the KMT almost always is the president, who possesses the power to make authoritative policy decisions and delegate resources, the DPP chairperson and standing committee has few resources to delegate or offer to the aspiring politicians and members. The lack of sources also directly affects the party's ability to establish local interpersonal relationships with grassroots organization members, the tiao-a-kas and local faction leaders. Moreover, the burden of finding campaign resources falls on the shoulders of the candidates themselves. According to Professor Liu I-Chiou, one DPP legislator from Chiayi once admitted that he had to sell his house and his parents' house in

order to finance his own campaign.¹² This internal structure weakens the DPP's effectiveness in directing its members and synchronizing policy platforms.

Electoral System

As illustrated in the previous chapter, the electoral system in Taiwan is designed to favor the Kuomintang. In the SVMM system, a political candidate did not have to capture the majority of votes to win. The candidate only had to make sure the votes he received put him near the top in the overall vote share. In other words, if a political party possessed the resources and organization to nominate as many candidates as possible, then it put the political party at an advantage of having more candidates elected. This, of course, was favorable to the Kuomintang. In addition, to garner enough votes to put the candidate above the others, a close relationship with the grassroots organization and local faction leaders was required, and the patron-client relationship was also highly valued. The Democratic Progressive Party was unable to reward the tiao-a-kas and local faction leaders with material gain. The party was also unable to reward the tiao-a-kas and local faction leaders with social and political status. While the DPP posed no real challenges to the KMT, KMT candidates were able to practice the habit of cooperation in order to win, which was deemed to be extremely useful in the new electoral system as well.

After the electoral reform of 2005, the Pan-Blue-dominated Legislative Yuan passed a reform measure still favoring the Kuomintang. The new Single-

¹² Interviewed by author, June 12, 2007, in Taipei, Taiwan.

Member District System allows at least one seat per district. The institutional advantages of the new electoral system give small electoral districts that are traditionally Pan-Blue, Kinmen, Matsu, and Taitung, each one seat. The new electoral system also reserves six seats for the aboriginals, which are also traditionally supportive of the Kuomintang because of the Kuomintang's proaboriginal welfare policies. The seats of the Legislative Yuan were reduced from 225 to 113. Because of the lack of party discipline in the DPP and the KMT's norm of cooperating to win, many DPP legislators, who were not nominated by the party, defected from the party and ran as independents. In contrast, legislators like Feng Ding-Guo, a member of the KMT, decided to withdraw his legislative bid for, according to Feng, "the harmony of the blue-camp, because the DPP always wins when the blue votes are divided."¹³

Another feature of the electoral system in Taiwan is the cultivation of patron-client voting relationships. According to Shelley Rigger, there are both cultural and institutional explanations for electoral habits. Culturally, the Taiwanese value interpersonal relationships, and the electoral rules play a critical role in reinforcing this inclination.¹⁴ One of the institutional explanations for the voters voting for candidates instead of basing their decisions on parties is that the SVMM system required the voters to choose amongst candidates from the same political party, diluting the importance of party identification. In addition, martial law provisions prevented the development of party identification. The Taiwanese

¹³ "Collaboration of the Blues, Feng Ding-Guo, Lie-Chien Backs out," *Liberty Times*, November 20, 2007,

<http://www.libertytimes.com.tw/2007/new/nov/20/today-p1-2.htm>.

¹⁴ Rigger, 2001, 45.

voters have formed a habit of voting amongst candidates from the same political party and have been choosing the candidate who can propose the most beneficial policy for them, instead of voting for a specific political party.

The lack of critical features of the institution and poor party discipline prevented the Democratic Progressive Party from becoming a formidable challenger to the Kuomintang. In addition, the DPP's inability to carry out its policy proposals due to the party's minority status in the Legislative Yuan, even when the party had captured the presidency, also prevented the DPP from fulfilling the party's campaign promises and fell into the KMT's categorization of the DPP as incompetent policy makers.

The Issue of Corruption

The issue of corruption was one of the most potent weapons the Democratic Progressive Party had against the Kuomintang; however, the embezzlement scandals of former President Chen and his family, coupled with the Kuomintang's institutional strength within the judiciary, enabled the Kuomintang to turn the tables on the DPP and neutralize the allegations against the party for vote buying, party assets, and corruption. According to Dafydd Fell, "KMT corruption was a central Taiwanese grievance leading up to the 1947, February 28th Incident. According to Shelley Rigger, "Vote buying is an open secret [with the KMT]," especially prior to democratization. Both scholars admit that surveys on corruption and vote buying are not very useful for estimating the extent of this practice. According to Yung-Mao Chao, 70% of the electorate has heard about

vote buying and at least 30% of the potential voters admit that they have been offered money at one point in time.¹⁵

The issue of corruption had been the focus of the DPP's attack on the Kuomintang in the DPP's attempt to create a more level playing field amidst the institutional advantages, such as the tremendous party assets the KMT dedicated to cultivating local institutions and vote buying. According to a tracking survey by the *United News Daily*, as Taiwan began to democratize, there were increasing numbers of constituents seeing the KMT as corrupt. However, after democratization, there were a series of corruption allegations filed against the DPP president. In 2005, the charges of corruption began to surface, and the chief prosecutors and judges began to act. While the DPP and Chen Shui-Bian accused the prosecutors and the judges of political persecution, Chen and his party could provide little evidence to support their claim. On the other hand, all prosecutors and judges were required to pass the qualifying exam designed and administered by the Examination Yuan and closely monitored by the Control Yuan for proper conduct.

One of the corruption charges was the allegation that Chen's wife had wired \$21 million in campaign funds to accounts in Singapore, the Cayman Islands, and Switzerland, which Chen later admitted in 2008. Chen was later charged with embezzling \$3.15 million during his 2000–2008 presidencies from a special presidential fund, receiving bribes for at least \$9 million in connection

¹⁵ Yung-Mao Chao, "Local Politics on Taiwan—Continuity and Change," in *Taiwan—Beyond the Economic Miracle*, eds. Denis Fred Simon and Michael Y.M. Kao. (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1992), 51.

with government land deals and money laundering. Chen was subsequently arrested, tried, and sentenced to life in prison. The Kuomintang jumped at the chance to redirect the public’s distain for corrupted officials to the DPP. The KMT’s 2008 presidential candidate, Ma Ying-Jeou, had a pristine image. He was nicknamed “Teflon” for his lack of political scandals. As former Minister of Justice, Ma resigned his post citing that his anticorruption efforts were being jeopardized by other Kuomintang officials, which helped generated Ma’s “fighter of corruption” image. As the charts demonstrate below, the public perception of the DPP as the “clean party” of Taiwan began to dwindle. Before the 2008 presidential election, the public perception of corruption was that the KMT was now cleaner than the DPP.

Table 5.1

Year/Party	KMT is clean	DPP is clean
1992	37	26
1993	32	41
1994	31	39
1995	23	41
1996	25	41
1997	21	47

Party Year/Month	KMT is clean	DPP is clean
1999	21	47
2001	22	41
2002	27	48
2004	31	38
2005	29	17
2006	40	14
2007	29	21

17

The Politics of Adaptation and the KMT Solidification of Power

This dissertation aims to be a starting point for theorizing the domestic politics of Taiwan, rather than focusing on Taiwan's international status and independence/unification issues. The political resilience of the Kuomintang can also be a reference for political party adaptation. It can serve as a comparison and/or contrast to the study of the political resilience of the ruling parties of

¹⁶ Christian Schafferer, "The 1997 City and County Magistrate Elections in Taiwan," <http://www2.uni-linz.ac.at/fak.SoWi/gespot/DOWNLOAD/electact.doc>.

¹⁷ TVBS Poll Center on (October 1–3, 2007). The year 2005 was when Chen was first accused of embezzlement. In 2006, the Legislative Yuan threatened to impeach Chen, which sparked a massive protest in front of the Presidential Office with protesters wearing red shirts for more than a month.

former authoritarian regimes in other regions of the world. The case of the Kuomintang is an interesting one. Unlike some other former authoritarian parties in postcommunist Europe and South Korea, the Kuomintang has never changed its official name nor completely severed itself from its authoritarian past. The Kuomintang also has successfully transferred its power of governance from one country to another. While initially the Kuomintang solidified its power by the implementation of authoritarianism, the party also took the leading role in the liberalization and democratization of Taiwan.

The contribution of this dissertation is to provide a theoretical explanation to the Kuomintang's political resilience that goes beyond the vast descriptive literature on Taiwan's domestic political development and democratization. Explanations such as "superb elite decision making" or "excellent communication between the ruling elite and the political opposition" fall short in identifying the extent to which these decisions were implemented and delivered as campaign promises and rewards to constituents for their support. Moreover, the Kuomintang never had to communicate with the opposition or form a coalition to govern.

The political opposition to the Kuomintang has never been able to retain more than 50% of electoral support. The functionalist explanation falls into a tautological trap. It states that the Kuomintang had no choice but to adopt public policies favorable to the voters, because the voters would only support the KMT if it offered beneficial public policies. Essentialism relied on the automatic transformation of ethnic and social identity to political identity, which would lead to the support of the Democratic Progressive Party instead of the Kuomintang.

Even when the Kuomintang had successfully Taiwanized, the votes would then have been a possible split, instead of overwhelmingly in favor of the Kuomintang. In addition, the cultural explanation is deficient for it refers to the prodemocratic nature of the Kuomintang, but it does not offer a direct causal link between the prodemocratic Chinese culture that is the basis of the Kuomintang culture and the Kuomintang political resilience compared to the DPP's lack of resilience. More importantly, the cultural explanation is used explain and interpret both the absence of democratic behavior of the ruler, as well as the presence of democracy and the executive's decision to honor the preferences of the people.

The democratization of Taiwan might not have been the intended goal of the Chiang Ching-Kuo regime; however, once the liberalization process was engaged, the Kuomintang systematically utilized the tools provided by the constitution originally designed to favor the party to first maintain the party's political presence and neutralize the backlash caused by its decades of authoritarianism. The KMT employed established electoral routines, habits, and interpersonal relationships, coupled with mutually sustaining national institutions, to create policies that retained mainlander supporters of the party while incorporating the majority of the population into the political process by offering policies favored by the Taiwanese majority. With the double security provided by national and local institutions, the Kuomintang thus was able to push through its policy objectives, and through the bridges of communication and mobilization facilitated by local institutions like the tiao-a-kas and local faction leaders, the

party was then able to estimate the possible votes and mobilize to capture the maximum number of them.

The future of the Kuomintang seems promising. The party has once again captured the presidential seat and 75% of the legislature. With the safety valve provided by the institutions, the Kuomintang appears to be unchallengeable. On the other hand, recent polls have shown that popular support for the Kuomintang is dwindling again due the global economic crisis and the party's inability to provide the speedy economic recovery Ma promised during the presidential election. With President Ma Ying-jeou's popularity reduced to the low 30 percent range, the upcoming legislative and presidential elections seem to be a perfect time for the Democratic Progressive Party to attempt to capture a legislative majority and the presidency. What the Democratic Progressive Party needs is the ability to obtain the funds to provide the incentives the Kuomintang has been able to offer the tiao-a-kas, e.g. activity fees, neighborhood conflict resolution sessions, having elected officials visit local tiao-a-ka offices to listen to the neighborhood grievances.

The Democratic Progressive Party also needs a chairperson who is able to reach cross faction lines and unify the party. It seems the Democratic Progressive Party has found her. The new chairwoman of the Democratic Progressive Party, Tsai Ing-wen, is a London School of Economics educated professor, who has more than fifteen years of government experience, ranging from trade negotiation to national security and has also served as Vice Premier under the previous DPP administration. Tsai was not affiliated with any DPP faction. She took over the

party chairperson position after the disastrous elections in 2007 and 2008 for the DPP. So far, under Tsai's leadership, the DPP seems to have come together with comparatively much less bickering amongst its elites. The grassroots leaders have also seemed to take to the soft-spoken economics professor, who does not resemble the typical smooth, fast-talking politician. Financially, the DPP is no match for the KMT. However, Chairwoman Tsai advocated small-amount donations from the constituents, which has proven to be a very successful way to raise funds - as demonstrated by President Barack Obama during the 2008 presidential election in the United States. If the DPP can transcend itself to match the KMT in these ways as the legislative election looms at the end of 2011, followed by the presidential election in 2012, then it might have a chance to garner legislative majority and the presidency and once again, remove the Kuomintang from power. Until this happens, the Kuomintang remains one of the most powerful political parties in Asia and possibly the world.

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