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Party Primaries in Taiwan: Trends, Conditions, and Projections in Candidate Selection
Julian Baum and James A. Robinson

School of Law University of Maryland
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PARTY PRIMARIES IN TAIWAN: TRENDS, CONDITIONS, AND PROJECTIONS IN CANDIDATE SELECTION

Julian Baum and James A. Robinson

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** Julian Baum, a journalist, has headed the Taipei bureau of the Far Eastern Economic Review from 1990. James A. Robinson, a policy scientist, teaches at the University of West Florida.
I. INTRODUCTION

This account of political party nominating processes in the Republic of China on Taiwan supplements official and scholarly annals of methods for selecting candidates to contest elections in periods before, during, and after democratization of that island. It summarizes trends in the introduction and the diffusion of political party primary elections, or preliminary or nominating elections. It analyzes the conditions that restrict this innovation, especially by revival of former practices in one party and by limited or partial incorporation in another. On the basis of analysis of these trends and conditions, it projects probable future uses of primaries among established and emerging parties and appraises functions of such preliminary elections in contributing to and sustaining Taiwan’s democratization.

II. EMERGENCE OF PRIMARIES IN DEMOCRACIES

However they define representative democracy, almost all participants and observers regard periodic, contested elections among the prerequisites of democratic political institutions. Theorists study elections for their contributions to responsible conduct of officials, especially lawmakers. Secret ballots, universal suffrage, and plurality or majority rule are elemental practices of elections among opposing candidates, usually running under banners of political parties. Democratic theorists pay considerable attention to voter registration procedures, ballot form, equality among voters (one person, one vote), inclusiveness of the eligible electorate, and competitiveness between and among parties and candidates, but concentrate less on how candidates are nominated by parties. Yet observers of generic decision making emphasize that the processes of generating and screening alternatives (or candidates) may be as important as the processes of choice and decision among those alternatives.¹

¹. This proposition, that processes for producing alternatives are important as well as processes for selecting among them, likely will strike some readers as so bland or unproufand as to be undeserving of authoritative citation. What now seems a truism or theorem, however, until recently often was overlooked in decision making approaches to the study of political and other organizations. Scholars often attribute the idea to John Dewey’s conception of public problem solving. For contrasting but complementary contemporary emphases, see Richard C. Snyder, et al., Foreign Policy Decision Making, New York: Free Press, 1962; Herbert A. Simon, The New Science of Management Decision, rev. ed., Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1977, p. 40; and Harold D. Lasswell and Myres S. McDougal, Jurisprudence for a Free Society: Studies in Law,
Candidates for elective office may be decided by a few (an elite), by a representative body (a mideelite), or by nonmembers (non elites). In the United Kingdom, parliamentary nominees are designated by midelites in constituencies, nominally subject to review by elites in central headquarters. In the United States, legislative candidates and congressional and state assembly representatives typically are nominated in mass primary or preliminary elections by voters registered in the same parties. Between practices in Britain and America, political parties elsewhere adopt other means of designating candidates. Experience suggests uniformities in functions or effects, but variations in forms and practices. While elections among contending candidates invariably accompany a representative government, ways in which the elections are conducted may and do vary. Elections can occur rarely or frequently, at regularly scheduled intervals or subject to call by the ruling party or prime minister. Parties may be few or many in number, and votes single, plural, alternative, approval, block, cumulative, transferable, nontransferable, or proportional. Nominations of candidates also may and do vary. Candidates' names may or may not appear on ballots that voters mark at polling places on election days. Some jurisdictions permit voting for all of a party's nominees with a single mark, others require voting for each office separately.

In the United States, nominating practices have changed during the past two hundred years. Originally, congressional caucuses proposed presidential candidates, and later party conventions nominated them. Now both have given way to preconvention primary elections held in almost all of the fifty states during a period of several months. The states also use primaries to select candidates for most other offices, although for approximately a century, party conventions nominated candidates for state offices. Beyond the United States, primaries are not widely used or routinized. Political parties in Costa Rica, Paraguay, Venezuela, Columbia, Germany, Mongolia, Finland, Mexico, and Israel have had limited, episodic experience, but Taiwan's extensive applications of the method most resemble the American innovations.


III. EARLY ELECTIONS IN TAIWAN

As an émigré government determined not to repeat its disastrous mistakes on mainland China, the Nationalist Party or Kuomintang (KMT) initiated self-rule on Taiwan with elections for some local government posts in 1946, less than a year after Japan returned the island to Chinese jurisdiction. With the KMT's unchallenged dominance during most of the ensuing four decades, elections served to strengthen rather than to weaken the party's control through the recruitment of local elites, the manipulation of competing factions, and the creation of closer identification with many voters. In early years, the KMT effectively controlled the selection of local officials through a Leninist-like party structure, although sometimes independents were elected to prominent positions, notably the mayor of Taipei in the 1950s.

National level representatives, all but 80 some of whom were elected on the mainland of China in the 1940s, were retained in office far beyond their terms. These included members of the National Assembly, a periodic constitutional convention that also chose the president, and the Legislative Yuan, which had parliamentary and (for many years only nominal) budgetary functions and a (nominal) supervisory role over the Executive Yuan or cabinet. In 1968, under pressure from some Taiwanese members of the KMT, national elections for the assembly and the legislature began to fill "supplemental" seats from Taiwan. These supplemental elections coincided with a "Taiwanization" program that recruited large numbers of native Taiwanese into the party and who eventually dominated its membership rolls. Gradual expansion of Taiwanese representation in these bodies and judicially mandated retirement of the last of senior legislators in 1991, led to the first full national elections for the entire assembly in December that year and for the legislature in December 1992.

While elections at the local level have been routine since the 1950s, it was not until the early 1980s that opposition movements

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were strong enough to offer a substantial number of candidates for national office. Before legalization of new political parties, oppositionists were identified informally as independents who lacked a formal party affiliation and were known as tangwai, or outside the party (i.e., outside the KMT). After formation of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) in 1986 and its legalization six months before the 1989 elections, the KMT faced, for the first time on Taiwan, electoral contests in which formal opposition party actually challenged its rule.

IV. ORIGINS OF PRIMARIES, 1983-89

In November 1989, Dr. SHAW Yu-ming, then Director-General of the Government Information Office, briefed foreign journalists and scholars that he regarded KMT’s introduction of primaries as the most significant electoral event of that year. They seemed, then, to mark a decisive break with long standing practices by which echelons at one level designated candidates at the level just below. While in recent years local cadres had evaluated potential candidates and reported their appraisals, and a quasi-primary combining caucus discussions and balloting had been established as early as 1983, this island-wide use of primaries offered the first systematic solicitation of preferences from grassroots members.

The first and most prominent advocate of party primaries was Dr. John KUAN, who introduced early experiments with a modified primary system for the Taipei City Council while he served as KMT municipal chief for Taipei. Throughout his career as a KMT official, KUAN argued for more democratic practices within the party. In addition to advocating party primaries, he favored that delegates to party congresses and members of the Central Standing Committee (CSC) vote in secret rather than stand when consider-


5. Another precedent was the use of primaries to choose more than half the delegates to the 13th Party Congress in 1988. Theretofore, ex officio participants and their hand-picked overseas Chinese delegates, along with indirectly chosen local delegates, had dominated quadrennial congresses, in numbers as well as influences. Primaries broadened channels for selection, and if the freshly elected delegates lacked influence individually, they could join newly forming coalitions gathered around one or another major party figure, e.g., the president himself or then Secretary-General Lee Huan.
ing resolutions to select party leaders, including the chairman, and to adopt policies.\textsuperscript{6}

The introduction of primaries generated controversy for both the KMT and the opposition DPP, but especially within the KMT where these internal party elections partially diminished effects of traditional bargaining practices used to placate powerful patrons and factions. Although they were not binding for the KMT, they offered a convenient way to screen large numbers of office seekers in highly competitive constituencies, such as urban Taipei and Kaohsiung where factions have been less dominant than in most rural constituencies.

Taiwan’s experience with primaries for selecting candidates has been brief. But enough evidence has accumulated to describe and appraise trends in the forms and functions of party nominating elections on the island, to analyze the conditions underlying their performance, and to offer projections for their future use in sustaining democratic developments there.

\textbf{V. INNOVATIONS WITH PRIMARIES, 1989-92}

John Kuan’s detailed proposals for nation-wide nominations by primaries were first formally considered at the weekly meeting of the KMT’s CSC on April 1, 1989. The original primary polling date was to be July 2, but that conflicted with high school and university examinations in schools, which often are used for polling places. The date was moved back to July 23. Prospective candidates were told to register from June 9 to 15, and the campaigns were allowed to run from June 25 to July 22. Dates for primary elections for functional groups (fishermen, laborers, farmers, businessmen, women, and aborigines) were left to the groups and their party committees to decide.\textsuperscript{7}

\textsuperscript{6} Kuan has published speeches and articles in English as well as Chinese. For a collection, see John Kuan, \textit{The Modernization of the Kuomintang: Observations and Expectations}, Taipei: Democracy Foundation, 1990. In 1992, he won the primary in Taipei North and was nominated and approved by the KMT, was elected and served one term. He did not seek reelection in 1995, after which he became a minister, then vice president of the Examination Yuan.

\textsuperscript{7} Chen I-Hsin and Wu Wen-cheng, \textit{July Primaries Are First Test of Democratization}, Taipei: Department of Cultural Affairs of Kuomintang, 1989, pp. 9. Also see Wu Wen-cheng and Chen I-Hsin, “Constructive Controversies,” \textit{Free China Review} (December 1989), pp. 38-42. Functional group representatives since have been abolished. Categories of national representatives and overseas Chinese or Taiwanese representatives were created.
The CSC approved an elaborate set of qualifications as well as procedures for participating in primary polls. A prospective nominee needed endorsements from party members, with the required number varying from 1.0 percent in local races to 0.2 percent for national legislative seats. Such threshold requirements are common in the United States where party primaries are widely used, although some states substitute filing fees. The purpose of these requirements for signatures and fees is to deter frivolous candidates. The same reasoning applied for the KMT, which organized and managed public appearances of candidates in primaries at party rallies; individual-sponsored rallies were not allowed at the primary stage.

On primary day in 1989, voters found a complicated ballot full of names and pictures of candidates for several offices. Depending on the jurisdiction, they could choose nominees for city, county, and legislative positions. Where the office was the mayor or the county magistrate, voters cast one vote for only one candidate. Where the offices were multi-member city council or legislative districts, voters could express preferences for as many as one-half the number of the seats contested.

Despite elaborate procedures, experimental trials in earlier elections, and notwithstanding heady talk of democratization in the party congress and elsewhere, the KMT’s rules regarded the primaries as advisory, not conclusive, in selecting candidates. Each district was required to post a minimum voter turnout of 50 percent for its results to be valid. Otherwise, an opinion poll was to be conducted in that area as a “supplementary reference.” As it happened, most primary winners were slated. While respecting the primaries’ returns in approximately 90 percent of cases, leaders nominally reserved (and preserved) their independence by substituting a few nominees they had reason to believe would be more popular or deserving candidates among the voting public.

The CSC approved the plan for primaries, but eight of 31 members expressed reservations. Incumbents especially objected to two elections, both to the cost and to the risk of rejection by grassroots members. Other critics worried about vote buying, intraparty factionalism, and the unrepresentativeness of party members among the total eligible electorate. These concerns notwithstanding, many party cadres proceeded proudly. Within ten days, their officials sent copies of the new primary procedures to leaders of other political parties and invited imitation.
The main expectation held and pronounced by those who advocated primaries was that they would help to democratize the KMT. Sentiments to democratize the polity were gaining momentum, and calls to extend democratic procedures to the party seemed consistent. Some who advocated primaries, however, in fact did not identify themselves closely with major national democratic tendencies. Primaries had the effect of favoring their candidates and thus sending to office a few more opponents of certain governmental reforms than otherwise would have been the outcome.

Members of the KMT (and later of the DPP) administered their own primaries, not officials from the central or provincial governments. No legislation applied to the conduct of the campaign or to voting qualifications and balloting procedures. The Civic Organization Law which authorized political parties, made no reference to the selection of candidates. Similarities between the two parties' procedures derive from emulation of regular elections, organized by the Central Election Commission (CEC), as well as from information on American primaries gathered by Taiwan residents who had studied in or visited the United States.

In 1992, the KMT held primaries in 11 of 25 election districts on the island in preparation of legislative elections, fewer than in the previous two national elections. For the third successive time, roughly 90 percent of candidates selected in primaries held by the KMT were accepted and endorsed by the party's seven member candidate screening committee headed by then Vice President LI Yuan-zu, which had final authority to recommend candidates for official endorsement by the CSC.

The DPP also held primaries in districts where there were more candidates than the party was willing to slate. In 1992, the opposition conducted primaries in a half dozen such constituencies. Unlike the KMT's procedure, however, the DPP rules regarded primaries as binding.

The first use of primaries for national office, in 1989, found both parties voting on the same day in July, five months before the December election. In 1991 and 1992, the parties resorted to different days, also in the summer. In 1991, the KMT used two Saturdays, one for members (including cadres, i.e., party workers, cell leaders, and officials) and another for cadres only (thus giving party activists two votes each). In 1992, the KMT separated the two classes of voters but confined balloting to the same polling places on the same Saturday, August 15. Beginning in 1991, the DPP scheduled primaries on Sundays, apparently hoping to increase the
size and rate of voter turnout. In 1992, the DPP elected district
nominees on July 5, and then called a late August primary to choose
its nominees for the thirty seats for the national representatives and
the six seats reserved for ROC citizens residing overseas. In 1991,
the DPP’s Party Congress had designated such candidates, but fol-
lowering allegations of bribery, the party chairman proposed transfer-
ing these selections from party midelites to party masses.

Polls opened at 8 a.m. for KMT and 9 a.m. for DPP and closed
at 4 p.m., similar to the CEC’s timetables for official elections. Ball-
loting occurred in schools (for which rent was paid), party offices,
bank lobbies, and other sites party managers thought convenient
for members. Party faithfully administered the primaries, compar-
ing membership cards with party lists, handing out the paper bal-
lots, monitoring three-sided booths in which voters marked ballots
with rubber stamps before depositing them in ballot boxes. The
KMT borrowed (without rent) its booths and boxes from the CEC;
the DPP constructed its own. While the CEC’s secretary-general
professed willingness to loan booths and boxes to the DPP also, this
detail indicated the then continuing intimate relationship between
the KMT and government offices, despite several years of effort to
reduce Leninist features of Taiwan’s polity.

Both parties used paper ballots, horizontally arranged, with the
picture and name of each candidate. In 1992, in Taipei City, both
North and South, 23 candidates appeared on each ballot, making
for a wide ballot awkward to handle at counting time. No boxes
were counted until the polling places closed, and then each box (in
the KMT’s case two boxes, one for members and one for cadres)
was opened, the ballots rapidly and distinctly read aloud by one
counter, double-checked by another (and shown to any candidate
observers present), and the preferences recorded in running tally on
large sheets of paper attached to a wall or bulletin board. Usually,
counting finished within an hour, observers telephoned their candi-
dates, workers posted formal summaries and swept the premises
while the results, the records, and the ballots (used and unused)
were bundled and sealed, and delivered by the chief election ad-
ministrator to party headquarters (if that was not also the voting
site). There, outcomes were posted precinct by precinct in the pres-
ence of candidates or their guests, party activists, journalists, and
other observers.

Voter turnout (percentage of those registered who participated
in the primaries) varied between the parties and between members
and cadres. The much smaller DPP reported that more than 70 per-
Table 1. Voter Turnout for KMT Primaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of eligible voters</th>
<th>Percent turnout of cadres</th>
<th>Percent turnout of membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>1,970,000</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>45.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>1,950,000</td>
<td>67.36</td>
<td>39.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>809,000</td>
<td>68.99</td>
<td>39.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department of Organization Affairs, Kuomintang.

percent of its eligible members participated in the districts holding primary elections. As Table 1 shows, the KMT could match this rate of turnout only among its cadres. Rank and file voters, during the three successive elections, reached a turnout level less than 30 percent, which when averaged with cadre participation resulted in turnout rates of 39 percent to 45 percent.

VI. EXPECTATIONS FROM THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

The American experiences with primaries, the only extensive and relevant precedents, hinted at their potential effects on Taiwan’s political development. Party primaries were invented before the Civil War, and by 1900, this new method of candidate selection was widely used in all states for determining who would be the

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party nominees to run for Congress, the state legislatures, governorships, and some judicial posts. By the late twentieth century, primaries also had become decisive in choosing the presidential candidates for both major political parties. The most important motivation for adopting the primaries was to reform the party leadership. Before the introduction of the primaries, candidates had been nominated in conventions dominated by elites of officials and advisers. The conventions themselves had replaced the unrepresentative, if not corrupt, caucuses, only to succumb to forms of broader participation.

Primary elections became universal in the United States except where nonpartisan local elections prevailed. Everywhere that primaries are held, the outcomes are binding rather than advisory. Indeed, primaries are so accepted in some states, especially in the southern states, that second or runoff primaries sometimes are scheduled when no candidate wins a majority in the first balloting. Parties also have lost control of administering their own candidate selection methods. Once regarded by their members and others as voluntary, "civic order," or "civil society" groups and organizations, the parties came to be perceived as "public order" or effectively decisive entities. State governments have conducted the primaries for the parties since courts ruled that primaries are invested heavily with public interest.9 Some states have required the parties to open their primaries to any registered voter regardless of party affiliation. Although primaries in Taiwan now are administered as the private activities of individual political parties, they might be regulated by the central government to increase impartiality. If the primaries become more frequent, consistent, and decisive contests in determining who is elected on Taiwan, demands that they be regulated by law would be expected to rise.

Still another relevant feature from the American experience is that the percentage of eligible voters participating in preliminary elections declined as the novelty of primaries declined. Except in one-party states, voter turnout in the primaries consistently has

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9. United States v. Classic, 313 U.S. 299 (1941), and Smith v. Allwright, 321 U.S. 649 (1944). The relationship between and among voluntary associations in the early stages of experience with primaries found vivid illustration during our observations of a DPP nominating election in Sanchung City, July 31, 1994. We were impressed with the effectiveness of the polling station administrator, so much so that at the end of the day when we interviewed him, we asked how he acquired his training. We rather expected that he previously had worked county or provincial elections, but in fact he said that he learned to administer voting by his membership in the Junior Chamber of Commerce.
been less than for the general or deciding elections. One important consequence is that party activists, cadres, and members with strong or extreme preferences tend to dominate voting for and selecting among candidates.

Low voter turnout in KMT primaries in 1992 confirmed this trend in Taiwan as well, despite attempts by the party several years earlier to correct it by requiring additional opinion surveys should participation fall below 50 percent. Even though the KMT purged its roster of inactive or delinquent members before the 1992 primaries, turnout remained less than 30 percent. This led to unrepresentative minorities taking advantage of the new candidate selection method. In turn, the KMT was forced to tolerate other candidates, who were more characteristic of party membership and the voting public, to run on the party ticket without formal endorsement.

Among other relevant consequences of the American primaries is that legislators so nominated in mass primaries usually behave more independently than those chosen by midelites in conventions, or elites in caucuses or committees. While the behavior of elected lawmakers on Taiwan has become more independent of the KMT leadership in recent years, the explanations cannot be traced to the primaries exclusively. Such autonomy would be expected to increase as the candidates rely more heavily on their own efforts rather than on the KMT’s diminishing ability to mobilize voters on their behalf.

Primaries in single party polities also may delay the emergence of competitive second parties, one objective of Taiwan’s democratization movement. Many people in the United States pride themselves on their two-party competition, but in fact some states are dominated by one party or the other rather than balanced between the two. In states in which one party has overwhelming influence, opposition-minded voters tend to enroll in the majority party to participate in its important primaries where the contest is more genuine than in the final election. As deserters leave a weak party, the party is weakened even further. The provisional effect may be to democratize the party and leave the public election uncontested and national politics less democratic.

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Finally, the American experience suggested another power effect for Taiwan. We observed in an earlier paper that "once primaries are adopted, they become more widespread, if not universal, and cannot be abolished easily... no serious [American] politician today could safely advocate negating them. Power once surrendered is not easily recalled and will likely spread to all levels of elected offices." As subsequent accounting and analysis reveal, we were off the mark in Taiwan: KMT strategists revived the former method of central selection of candidates and within two elections had terminated primaries; DPP strategists avoided them when they could and later restricted their use while retaining their form by diluting their effects through supplementary methods. Contrary to our assertion, power surrendered can be recalled, as by those party elites in Taiwan who believed they would be better off by reviving older methods and who possessed the votes and/or other resources to achieve their goal.

It is risky anticipating effects of transferring an electoral practice from one polity to another. Vast political differences distinguish the United States and Taiwan, particularly in the role the KMT has played in Taiwan's politics compared with the non-Leninist organizations of the two major American parties. Nevertheless, the devolution of power within the KMT during the 1980s and 1990s introduced institutions and practices that both converge with and diverge from experiences elsewhere. As in the United States, introduction of primaries constituted a reformist measure to enfranchise party members and extend their influence over elite decision makers. In Taiwan's case, similar outcomes were achieved but were countered by elite restrictions that effectively diminished the significance of the innovation.

VII. OUTCOMES OF THE KMT PRIMARIES, 1989-92

The introduction of primaries in 1989 divided ruling party politicians and set the KMT reformers against each other over effects of the candidate selection process on the distribution of power within the party. After the initial experience, the critics of primaries began to view them as benefitting the so-called nonmainstream of the party, especially in Taipei where a large number of mainlanders won places on the KMT ticket. The nonmainstream typically were identified with the minority Chinese mainlanders who were closer

to then Premier HAU Pei-tsun’s wing of the party than to President LEE Teng-hui’s supporters who were labeled as the mainstream and who were predominantly native born but by no means exclusively Taiwanese. Distinctions between the two groups included policy differences as well as differences in ways in which they identified with the “nation.” The mainstream focused less on China as a whole than on the more than 21 million people on Taiwan, prompting doubts from the nonmainstream about their loyalties to the Republic of China. Personal conflicts sometimes heightened differences. For instance, Dr. KUAN lost his job as chief of the KMT’s organizational affairs department, following the party’s poor showing in the 1989 elections, in an uncensored personal rift with the party secretary-general, Dr. James SOONG, also a mainland but then closer to President LEE.¹²

During LEE’S presidency, the KMT’s mainstream urged limited constitutional reform and more Taiwanization of party and government. This included the expansion of presidential powers under the constitution and support for direct presidential elections rather than the indirect elections by the National Assembly. The nonmainstream endorsed some reforms, but opposed any fundamental changes to the basic structure of government outlined in the 1947 Constitution, including the direct popular election of the president. Once native-born Taiwanese attained ascendancy in the KMT, they inherited party authoritarian traditions that made it difficult for a minority to be heard. Under these circumstances, KUAN advocated secret ballots and primary elections. Secret ballots would shield the central committee members from confronting their leaders with conflicting choices, incidentally making it easier for the new minority to dissent from the new majority. Primaries would promote easier minority access to nominations in selected districts.

Primaries on Taiwan reflect distortions in voting common to primaries elsewhere. If the KMT’s general strategy devolved participation from an old elite to a new one, the direct primaries offered an outlet to express counter devolutionary demands. The exercise favored those candidates with strong backing from KMT party cells in the military and central government where cadres and ordinary members could be mobilized effectively to support partic-

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### Table 2. Party Candidates for Legislative Yuan, 1992

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>Total number of candidates</th>
<th>Candidates officially endorsed</th>
<th>Candidates elected by primary</th>
<th>Percent of Taiwanese candidates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>KMT</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan (total)</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taipei (2 districts)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taipei County</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaohsiung (2 districts)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaohsiung County</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DPP</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan (total)</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled by authors from contemporary press accounts.

ular nominees. The low level of voter turnout for primaries and the ease with which mainland members could be encouraged to go to the polls gave the nonmainstream an advantage in Taipei. As Table 2 reveals, the percentage of Taiwanese candidates in Taipei was atypically low and out of proportion to the population.

Disproportional weighting of the votes between cadres and rank and file members added another bias. Votes by cadres and votes by ordinary members were counted separately and weighed equally, although the cadres in 1992 accounted for only 10 percent of the party’s total membership.13

In the KMT’s August 15, 1992 primaries for the legislative ticket, only 30 percent of party members voted compared with 69 percent of cadres. The party’s selection committee implicitly acknowledged effects of the primary in replacing a handful of those who were successful in the primaries with candidates who had wider popular appeal among the electorate. Since, as we have noted, the KMT treated primaries as advisory and not binding, their adoption left the seven party leaders sitting on the candidate screening committee some discretion. The marginal numbers of leading candidates that were not selected after the primaries may have had some

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13. The KMT’s formula for combining members’ and cadres’ votes worked like this. A point score was assigned to each candidate and keyed to the front runner, as in this example: in Taipei northern district, John Kuan received 7,932 votes from rank and file members. The second place winner received 2,914. So Kuan’s points were calculated as his total votes divided by his own total votes as front runner, times 50, for a point ranking of 50. The runnerup’s points would be 2,914 divided by 7,932 times 50, which equals 18.37.
slight taming effect on those nominees who passed the primary test.\textsuperscript{14}

\textbf{VIII. APPRAISALS, TERMINATIONS, AND REVISIONS, 1993-96}

Outcomes of Taiwan's first use of the primaries at the national level resembled those of primary elections elsewhere, especially in the United States. Instead of unifying the party and guaranteeing selection of loyal candidates, the primaries tended to produce candidates who gave greater attention to their personal or factional success than to party effectiveness. Consequently, party managers and election specialists began to plan for discontinuing the use of mass primaries and for returning to organization or elite dominated methods of nomination. By 1995, candidates for KMT endorsement in the Legislative Yuan elections again were recommended to the Central Standing Committee and the party congress by the seven-member committee chaired by then Vice President LI. This important committee had existed in previous elections, but this time it reached its conclusions without reference to primary elections among either members or cadres. As in the past, its meetings were closed to the public.

Both the KMT and the DPP reassessed experience with primaries and amended candidate selection procedures for 1994 elections for the governor and the assembly of Taiwan Province and the mayors and the member of the city councils of Taipei and Kaohsiung.

\textbf{IX. KMT: CAUCUSES RETREAT TO COMMITTEES, 1993-95}

Before the 1994 elections, the KMT selected nominees in secret ballots cast by approximately 3,000 leader cadres on Sunday, August 14, between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. at offices in Taipei, Taichung, and Kaohsiung. Later party officials designated another set of candidates for 79 seats in the Taiwan Provincial Assembly, 52 seats in the Taipei City Council, and 44 in the Kaohsiung City Council. In these instances of consultation among KMT party officials, the method of candidate selection frequently was referred to as a pri-

\textsuperscript{14} Among influential party leaders who opposed the primary system was then Speaker of the Legislative Yuan Liu Sung-pan. Liu saw incumbent lawmakers aligned with him denied selection in the 1992 primaries in favor of candidates who had the backing of minority groups among active party members but little political experience and uncertain popular support at the national polls.
Party Primaries in Taiwan

mary, either by some party officials or local media. It is not, of course, what political scientists mean by a primary, but rather resembles a caucus. The DPP completed its primary election on July 31 when members voted for gubernatorial candidates. Two weeks earlier, Taipei and Kaohsiung members had balloted for mayoral nominations. Many assembly candidates were selected by party leaders without competition or primaries among members.\textsuperscript{15} The New Party, less than a year in operation, designated its candidates by agreement among its leaders.

Candidates for lower level local elections in the fall of 1993 and the winter and summer of 1994 were selected without primaries by their party committees. Avoiding primaries in these elections was aided by several factors. One is that they receive much less scrutiny by media and professional groups than is given to national offices. All are outside Taipei, the media center. After 23 county magistrates and large city mayoral candidates are selected, the remaining hundreds of small town, city, and village council members and chiefs are so relatively remote as to command decreasing attention. Counts of column inches in newspapers, both Chinese and English, as well as of time on radio and television, would reveal how little attention media give to these offices and the campaigns for them. Another factor working against the use of the primaries at the local level was opposition from local cadres, many of whom prefer traditional negotiations among the county factions and officials at the party's offices.

Such was the situation as the 1994 elections approached for Taipei City mayor, Kaohsiung City mayor, and Taiwan provincial governor, as well as for both city councils and Provincial Assembly.

\textsuperscript{15} DPP officials and members voted for council and assembly candidates according to a complicated calendar. Officials or cadres (i.e., members of Standing, Review, and Central Executive Committees and elected representatives) expressed their preferences among Taipei and Kaohsiung city council candidates and Taiwan Provincial Assembly candidates on July 17 when they went to Taipei to vote for three major offices, Taipei mayor, Kaohsiung mayor, and Taiwan governor. On the same Saturday, Taipei and Kaohsiung members also voted for council candidates in their respective cities, but not assembly candidates, who represent differently drawn constituencies. On July 31, party members in Taiwan Province voted for governor, and when contests occurred, in county and city jurisdictions for provincial assembly. Contested nominations occurred in half of 16 counties — Taoyuan, Hsinchu, Taichung, Yulin, Chiayi, Tainan, Kaohsiung, and Pingtung — and in four of five cities — Hsinchu City, Taichung City, Chiayi City, and Tainan City. In other words, the DPP's assembly nominations were less contested then the party's nominations in Taipei and Kaohsiung city councils for which all candidates were subject to primaries.
For the first time in thirty years, Taipei voters would elect their mayor rather than have one appointed by the central government. For the first time since Kaohsiung achieved metropolitan status in 1979, its mayor would be elected rather than appointed. And for the first and only time ever, the post of provincial governor would be submitted to the electorate. In 1998, when the provincial government was reorganized and many of its functions transferred to the county and/or the central governments, the governorship reverted to appointive status by the premier.

Party leaders anticipated great public interest in these contests and also demands for participation in selecting candidates. To respond to these interests and demands, the KMT's central headquarters proposed that nominees be selected by the delegates of the 14th Party Congress, which had met in August 1993, together with members of the central committees at metropolitan and regional levels. The latter could vote only for the office to which each committee was attached. This method made approximately 3,000 party members eligible to vote for governor and 900 for Taipei mayor and 500 for Kaohsiung mayor.

Candidates registered and campaigned for approximately two weeks, including joint appearances at party-sponsored rallies and a television debate between the gubernatorial contenders. As expected, incumbents won renomination, including Mayor WU Den-yih in Kaohsiung, Mayor HUANG Ta-chou in Taipei, and Governor James SOONG in Taiwan Province. Mayor WU faced no primary party opposition, and both HUANG and SOONG easily defeated their rivals.

X. DPP: FACTIONS CHALLENGE FORMULAE, 1993-95

The DPP's reappraisal and subsequent revision of primaries followed its unexpectedly poor performance in the November 1993 elections of the county magistrates and city mayors. The party had aimed to increase the number of these offices won in 1989 from seven to a majority of 11 in Taiwan Province in 1993. In fact, it lost two counties previously held while winning one from KMT's control.

As many in the KMT blamed its 1992 disappointing showing on divisive candidate selection procedures, including the primaries, the DPP participants identified unrepresentative features of their primary. Particular concern was directed at the relation between membership recruitment and candidate selection. In several geographical areas, new members had been recruited by a small
number of persons, who jointly endorsed applications of new members and, allegedly, paid their party dues and perhaps even a bounty. These new members then were enlisted to vote for the recruiters turned candidates in primaries. Although this practice apparently was confined to a few localities, internal critics regarded it as an example of the need for reform of party procedures and as too similar to the widespread allegations of corruption in Taiwan politics generally. It was said to be undesirable emulation of tactics in the KMT. Reappraisal led to finding a way to restrict primaries in the DPP, not to terminate them, as in the KMT.

The countervailing proposal adopted took the form of two ballots, one among the members as before, supplemented by another among the DPP magistrates, mayors, legislators, and national assemblymen. Also included were the party-elected members from Taipei and Kaohsiung city councils and the Taiwan Provincial Assembly. The total number of elected officials eligible to participate was 158.

Separate votes were cast for mayoral candidates in each of the metropolitan areas and for provincial governor. Cadres consisting of the party officers and elected officials voted in Taipei between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. on Sunday, July 17, the day 60 percent of about 18,000 party members in Taipei and Kaohsiung voted for mayoral and city council nominees. On July 31, each of 16 county and five city headquarters in the province held a primary at which members cast ballots for gubernatorial candidates and for provincial assembly candidates for which nominations were contested. The DPP turnout for the gubernatorial nomination was about 54 percent of eligible party members.

In Taipei, legislator CHEN Shui-bian won a majority of both cadres (barely) and members (substantially) over his colleague in the Legislative Yuan, Frank HSIEH (HSIEH Chang-ting). Because Hsieh’s percentages of the two sets of ballots when averaged fell within five points of CHEN’S, he had the opportunity to continue the campaign in the new and controversial feature previously agreed to by the DPP. That feature was a second primary among the non-DDP voters eligible to vote in the December 3 election, which had been created to assure that the DPP would consider a candidate’s appeal to all kinds of voters, not only to the committed party members. HSIEH, however, promptly declined to continue the campaign, and this second round of voting was canceled.

Two legislators registered for the DPP’s primary nomination for Kaohsiung mayor. CHANG Chun-hsiung and CHU Hsing-yu
conducted a rancorous contest that threatened divisive postprimary consequences for the winner. To avert such effects, then Party Chairman SHIH Ming-teh went to Kaohsiung on primary day and negotiated CHU'S withdrawal. Ballots were sealed uncounted, to the complaints of some local adherents and the Central Standing Committee, and the scheduled vote among nonparty members was canceled.

Two weeks after metropolitan members voted for mayoral candidates, provincial members chose between CHANG Chun-hong and CHEN Ting-nan for governor. CHANG and CHEN were both incumbent legislators, but their previous party experience differed. A veteran party leader, CHANG had been among the founders of DPP and an early secretary-general. CHEN served two terms as independent magistrate of Ilan County before joining the DPP and being elected to the Legislative Yuan.

CHANG won 55 percent of the 151 party and elected officials who voted, but CHEN was the overwhelming (57-42 percent) preference of nearly 14,000 members who cast ballots. When percentage distributions of both sets of votes were averaged, which gave greater weight to the smaller set, CHEN held a lead of only one percent. After a night’s reflection, CHANG followed the example set by Frank HSIEH and announced his withdrawal from further consideration for governor. The nonmember primary again was canceled.\(^{16}\)

**XI. PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATIONS, 1995-96**

In approaching the December 2, 1995 elections for Legislative Yuan and March 23, 1996 voting for the National Assembly and the president and vice president, Taiwan’s political parties continued as

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\(^{16}\) The untried nonmember or second stage primary remained a party rule, subject to further review and revisions by party congresses. On July 10, 1994, a special session of the DPP congress convened to consider several amendments to candidate selection procedures approved earlier in the year. The party's newsletter, "Democracy and Progress," Vol. 3, Num. 9, Week: 17 July to 30 July, 1994, p. 5, described "the most significant" proposed change as an attempt to overturn the provision for a two stage primary in selecting mayoral and gubernatorial candidates. "After several hours of heated debate a compromise was reached that kept the two stage process for the Taipei and Kaohsiung mayoral positions as well as the Taiwan gubernatorial position, but abolished it for county and Provincial Assembly positions." Party officials were aware that the second stage would open nominations to influence by opposition members, as had happened in "open" primaries in the United States. Nevertheless, they allowed the provision to stand, for the time being believing that it remained potentially a useful test of candidate's electability.
expected to modify their practices for selecting and nominating candidates. The KMT completed selecting nominees first, with the DPP scheduled to finish its nominations soon thereafter. The much smaller and still more informal New Party resolved its presidential commitment for the first time by mutual agreements of half a dozen or so leaders. Independent presidential candidates and their quasi party organizations were left to contend with the intricacies of the new and unprecedented Presidential and Vice Presidential Election and Recall Law enacted by the Legislative Yuan on July 20, 1995.

The KMT: For the KMT, the presidential nomination was only slightly more open than the selection process for legislative candidates who were chosen by committee. The presence of a popular incumbent, President LEE Teng-hui, discouraged other leaders from actively seeking nomination, although potential opponents, such as LIN Yang-kang, urged that all party members be eligible to vote in a first election to choose among alternative persons to run for president. LIN and his sympathizers, including former Premier HAU Pei-tsun, revived the argument that had been used when the primaries were introduced in the 1980s. They said that if the KMT were to succeed in democratizing Taiwan, it should first complete democratization of the party. This can be an appealing proposition and has been used effectively in the United States. It, however, fell on deaf ears within the KMT, which after 1993, at least, was dominated by the supporters of President LEE. The party’s decision to choose its presidential candidate by the vote of approximately 1,900 delegates to its party congress rather than by all its members turned not on any thorough consideration of the merits of primaries or of congressional nominations. It turned on which candidates had control of the party. As an editorial in the China Times noted on August 23, 1995, "The contending sides have advocated different nomination procedures merely in order to win the contest for their favorite candidate."

However appealing the arguments for internal party democracy are (they usually appeal more to nonparty members or losing party members than to anyone else), they are, ironically, antidemocratic in practice. If this seems contradictory, theory and experience elsewhere show how the extension of democracy to internal party organization may undermine a party’s effectiveness as an instrument of democracy in government. The theory is that democracy in large polities, such as the more than 20 million people of Taiwan, requires that voters choose among alternative candidates (and through them alternative policies). Because the number of
potential candidates is large (and the range of complex policy alternatives broad), voters in turn require practical and effective ways of sorting out and evaluating candidates. Political parties provide such ways and means. Voters may not be able to learn about all the candidates for so many offices—city council and mayor, provincial assembly and governor, county council and magistrate, National Assembly and the Legislative Yuan. But voters may be expected to learn about the parties and the differences among them. Thus, information about the parties becomes a substitute for information about the individual candidates. The one is easier to acquire than the other. Party government has another feature: if voters do not like the decisions and policies of the government, they can vote for the opposition party in future elections and displace the party in power.

This theory works in practice only if parties subordinate individual candidates to party leadership. If the leaders cannot expect to compel compliance with party policy positions, the voters have difficulty in rewarding those who serve them and in punishing those who neglect them. Hence, theory holds that democratic government be party government and that effective parties be undemocratic. This is not a conclusion that party leaders like to acknowledge. It seems elitist, as well as counter intuitive, and its frank discussion may puzzle voters who have heard officials extol democracy for more than a decade now in Taiwan’s case.

Nevertheless, the KMT leaders surely exaggerated as they concluded nominations. President LEE, in his capacity as chairman of the party, introduced more than 80 candidates for the Legislative Yuan to the party’s congress in August 1995. He declared that each had been selected by democratic procedures. To the contrary, each was chosen by nondemocratic methods in the interest of democratic government. Likewise, Secretary-General HSU Shui-teh announced, after 90 percent of the congress delegates had renominated President LEE, “The primary is significant because it shows the practices of democracy within the Kuominatang.” In fact, however, no primary was held among all eligible party members (the exact number of which is uncertain). Instead, the vote occurred in six cities exclusively among the party delegates chosen two years before to form the 14th Party Congress. Not a primary but a convention renominated the president.\footnote{17. Spokespersons for the KMT continued to refer to voting among party congress delegates as a “primary” election as late as summer 1999. Such loose use of the term...}
Following public disagreement between the followers of President LEE and those of his rivals for the presidency over the nomination method, LEE'S preferences easily won out. The candidate was chosen by the party's midelite congress and not by the party's mass membership as a whole, a method advocated by rival presidential hopeful LIN Yang-kang, among others. LIN then withdrew from the intraparty contest and LEE'S name was the only one on the nominating ballot. To be sure, the 1,900 congress delegates were a considerably larger body than the 300 member Central Committee that formerly picked or ratified presidential candidates in the days before direct election. The selection of Premier LIEN Chan as the party's candidate for vice president also depended not at all on a broad democratic process. President LEE personally decided on Premier LIEN and, however many others he may have consulted privately, announced his preference to the 31 members of the Central Standing Committee for concurrence without so much as a debate or a secret ballot.

Party spokesmen could call the process by which these nominations were made by such labels as primary and democratic, but in doing so they followed textbook theories about the relationship between party government and democratic government, namely that in so far as possible elites try to formulate rules that will facilitate their control. Forthcoming elections, first in December, then in March, would evidence how workable were the party's theories and those of their adversaries. Winners would find vindication, losers would be prepared to amend procedures. The political process would provide no final certainties, either about procedures or policies, only shifting constellations among factors of frequently changing weight and intensity.

The DPP: The Democratic Progressive Party, although not the first party in Taiwan to use the primary elections for purpose of

primary is not uncommon among political parties and their members when their objectives include masking undemocratic practices with democratic symbols. For a similar example in Hong Kong's first elections after resumption of Chinese sovereignty, see Deborah A. Brown and James A. Robinson, "Hong Kong's 1998 Legislative Council Elections: Appraising Steps in Democratization," American Asian Review, Vol. XVIII (Summer 1999), p. 38. Reports of party membership vary, owing to ambiguity or differences in criteria of membership and in currency of rosters. Agence France Presse reported typical estimates: KMT, 1.85 million (down from 2.35 million two years earlier); DPP, 55,000; New Party, 20,000. Straits Times, May 15, 1995, p. 13. Compare with figures for the KMT in Table I, which the authors obtained from party organization officials in 1992.
nominating candidates, had implemented this method more faithfully than the KMT or any other political party anywhere outside the United States. Almost from the beginning of its history, in 1986, the DPP leaders and members began considering primary elections to choose among potential candidates for a variety of offices, the Legislative Yuan and the National Assembly, provincial assembly and governor, and eventually for president (but not for vice president). Only when too few candidates had advanced themselves to make nominations contestable, as in some legislative races and quite a number of city and county assembly districts, had party officials ignored the primaries and relied on the Central Standing Committee to ratify nominations.

Hence, it was taken for granted that the DPP would select its presidential candidate for the historic 1996 direct election through a primary contest. The method used was the same that the party had employed in nominating its 1994 candidates for Taipei and Kaohsiung mayors and for governor of Taiwan Province. We refer to the method as a two-tiered procedure. One tier of participants consisted of registered party members. The other tier of participants included only those party members who had been elected to office. Votes for candidates were weighted and combined between the two tiers to determine primary winners. This method, similar to one once employed by the KMT, also obviously invited controversy. The number of participants in the DPP’s second tier was much smaller in 1995 (about 190) than in the first (roughly 50,000 or so). So a vote in the second tier would be worth more arithmetically than a vote in the first tier.18 Despite criticism that this method weighted votes of party elected officials more than rank and file members, the DPP’s experience by and large had resulted in initially favorable acceptance of the procedure. With a modification here and there, it survived several instances of trial and error for several different kinds of offices. First signs of renewed criticism to alter primary methods appeared, however, between the legislative elections of December 1995 and the National Assembly elections of

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18. The two-tier, two-stage, vote procedure has been adapted to elections other than party primaries, notably to filling at least one public university presidency, National Sun Yat-sen University, Kaohsiung. See Sandra Lu, “Two contenders left in NSYS presidential race,” China Post International Air-mail Edition, May 10, 1996, p. 1. One candidate won more than half the ballots of full-time staff and professors, the others won a majority among a 19 member committee. The first vote was weighted at 60 percent, the second at 40 percent, which together, in this instance, yielded a difference of .3 percent. Subsequently the Ministry of Education designated the close runnerup to fill the presidency.
March 1996 and then grew more pronounced as the party prepared for its June congress.\(^9\)

In addition to the two-tier primary, the DPP rules provided for a second stage primary or runoff election if the leading candidate’s combined and weighted margin did not exceed the runner-up’s by five percent in the two tiers. As we have noted, such a majority had failed to be obtained in 1994 for Taipei mayor and provincial governor candidates, but the prompt withdrawal of the second place runner-up, eliminated the need for the second primaries. In 1996, however, none of the DPP’s four presidential candidates claimed a majority across the two tiers. Neither of the two leaders, PENG Ming-min in tier one, and HSU Hsin-liang in tier two, would withdraw in favor of the other.\(^{20}\) Hence, the DPP’s primary nomination process entered an unprecedented second stage.

Not only did the rules provide for a second stage or runoff to settle selection between two candidates, but, unlike the rules in the first primary, procedures provided that any registered voter in Taiwan would be eligible to participate. This was (and is) an innovation untried elsewhere. The nearest precedent for it is found in those American states that hold open as opposed to closed primaries. That is, participation is available to any eligible voter regardless of party membership status. Currently, more than half the states have come to provide some form of open primary, at least for nominating delegates pledged to candidates for president.\(^{21}\)

As in America, analysts contemplated the possibility that opposition party members might enter the DPP primary to vote for a candidate whom adversaries assumed would be easier to defeat in the final round of inter-party competition. Despite such concerns about possible insincere vote casting by outsiders, the DPP leaders and strategists had weighed hypothetical advantages from the ap-


\(^{20}\) The total number of voters tier one was 33,761. Peng won 32.6 percent (11,006). Hsu won 27 percent (9,138). The other two candidates, Magistrate YOU CHING of Taipei County and Legislator LIN Hsiung of Ilan County, divided the remainder (25.5 percent for 8,600 and 13.4 percent for 4,521), except for 296 spoiled ballots. In tier two, Hsu won 31.2 percent (59), Lin 27 percent (51), You 21.2 percent (40), and Peng 20.6 percent (39).

pearance of openness and competition and were prepared to put
the runoff stage to its first test. So, when PENG and HSU reached a
standoff on June 11, plans for the second stage were completed.
One of the principal justifications for this elaborate and risky election
was its novel contrast with the likely methods of the other parties. The KMT did not expect to continue to rely on its nonbinding
primaries after its bitter experience in 1992 when popular candidates ran despite not having been participants in primary contests.
And the New Party, still small, seemed certain to endorse a pre-
sidential candidate by a small committee of leaders. Thus, some DPP
tacticians hoped to symbolize broader participation through the
open runoff election. They also thought that keeping the nomination unresolved through the summer would increase attention to
their candidate, whomever that might be, and begin to overcome
some of the advantage of the better known incumbent expected to be renominated by the KMT, namely LEE Teng-hui.

To enhance publicity, the DPP scheduled fifty forums, or de-
bates, throughout Taiwan, beginning in July and ending on Sep-
tember 24. All were held except for one near the end that was canceled
in prospect of Typhoon Ryan. Candidates PENG and HSU ap-
ppeared at each of these and spoke in their own behalf in the most
exhaustive and exhausting nomination process in the island's political history. Voters then cast ballots that were counted and local
results promptly announced. The first several forums received ex-
pected attention, and subsequent ones also drew considerable no-
tice when PENG overtook HSU who had taken an early lead. As
PENG's lead widened, however, interest in voting seemed to level
off or decline. Party officials had predicted that 500,000 people
would vote in the runoff; turnout eventually was considerably less,
just more than 307,000. PENG won 58 percent (177,477) and HSU
42 percent (129,816). PENG then designated, without recourse to
broad participation, Frank HSIEH, lawyer, member of the Legisla-
tive Yuan, and the 1993 runnerup for the party's mayoral nomination
in Taipei City, as his running mate for the vice presidency.

Other factors worked against the goal of keeping a high profile
for the DPP's contest. Propaganda and missile campaigns from the
People's Republic of China against President LEE and Taiwan's
pragmatic diplomacy made cross-Strait relations the hottest topic of
the summer months. For the first time in a decade, democratization
took a back seat to other themes. PENG and HSU, who had partic-
ipated in three television debates sponsored by China Times in the
first primary, agreed to debate three times again in the second or
Party Primaries in Taiwan

runoff primary. The more frequently they debated, the less interest they seemed to generate. And, as has been widely and frequently remarked, electronic journalism in Taiwan is less diverse in partisan coverage than print journalism, so much so that the PENG-HSU contest went lightly reported or unreported by the three government and party controlled television stations. Moreover, the early start made by all parties and potential independents risked premature peaking of attention and interest among voters. Presidential election day was March 23, 1996, but the campaign effectively began a year beforehand. That is a long period to sustain public interest in one event, even the first presidential election.

**The New Party:** Taiwan's newest major party was so new, the number of members so uncertain and leaders so few, that in 1995 and 1996 despite any differences among themselves they privately reached public agreement on nominees for Legislative Yuan, National Assembly, and president. In fact, the party's leaders ultimately withdrew their presidential nominee, WANG Chien-hsien, in favor of LIN Yang-kang, an independent candidate.

**XII. REAPPRAISALS, 1997-99**

With completion of nominations for the December 1995 and March 1996 elections, most party leaders and strategists postponed appraisals of their nominating procedures. Post-election analysis would be soon enough to reassess the functions of primaries in affecting their success or failure in winning seats in the legislature and assembly and in selecting the president. If previous experience was any indication, adjustments would be proposed to compensate for weaknesses attributed presumably to the candidate selection procedures, and the first signs both of weaknesses and tentative proposals to change procedures surfaced soon after winners and losers were known.

**The KMT:** Within the KMT, few voices called for a restoration of primaries, although an unnamed candidate for Taipei's

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mayor in 1994 suggested reviving primaries for that office in 1998, when, presumably, he might have run again. He justified his proposal as desirable for the party, of course, whatever its consequences for him. If an individual candidate's self interest recommends primaries, so might the interests of the party's leadership, for example, under certain circumstances of party realignment and coalition building. If the KMT, sometime desperate to regain an effective and working parliamentary majority, should promote alliance with elements in one or both of the other main parties, the price conceivably might include nominations by primaries. Other contingencies that diminish the salience of mainstream-nonmainstream and native-mainlander differences within the ruling party might open the door to reconsidering broader participation of members in selecting candidates than so far has been practiced.

For the time being, however, KMT leaders reverted to practices familiar before experience with primaries and never fully abandoned during the few years' use of the innovation imported from the United States. Party leaders, local as well as central, continued to bargain largely among themselves, although with traditional cadre sensitivity to electability. Once freed of significant demands to rely on the primaries, they designated candidates for 21 of the 23 county magistrates and city mayors to be chosen in the November 29, 1997 elections. In Taichung County and Tainan City, the CSC formally endorsed not one of the five party aspirants, some of whom were incumbents from other offices now eliminated by controversial constitutional amendments. The names of selected

23. See the proposal of Legislator Ting Shou-chung, prospective candidate for Taipei city mayor in 1998, in "Run-off suggested for KMT mayoral nomination," China Post International Air-mail Edition, June 10, 1996, p. 4. Dr. Ting, as it happened, did not enter the race for mayor but deferred to and endorsed Dr. Ma Ying-jeou, former justice minister and long-time party rising star. Ma's belated willingness to run obviated a contest for the nomination and rendered moot any possibility of a primary.


25. If the KMT's (and the DPP's) leaders avoid conflictual choices by endorsing not one of their affiliated candidates, but will not resort to primaries, it is worth noting that to lose a nomination in current Taiwan culture often is serious. After a 1995 primary
candidates appeared more or less sequentially on the agenda of the Central Standing Committee during the spring months, but extended into the summer owing to the party elites' diversion of attention to the National Assembly. There, nearly a dozen articles of amendment were being incorporated into the constitution, including one or more that divided senior party officials against each other.

The seniors most responsible for vetting nominees were chaired, as in the past, by LI Yuan-zu, former vice president and still a vice chairman of the party. In previous years, LI had six colleagues, but in deference to shifting fortunes within the party, that number rose to eight in 1997. The others were Vice President and (then) Premier LIEN Chan, also a party vice chairman; CHIU Chuang-huan and YU Kuoh-hwa, both party vice chairmen; the party's secretary-general, WU Poh-hsiung, and the president's secretary-general, HUANG Kun-huei; Examination Yuan president HSU Shui-teh; former Interior Minster LIN Fong-cheng; and Governor James SOONG, at odds with most of the rest over constitutional amendments.

**The DPP:** Meanwhile, the two-tiered primary, which the KMT had abandoned several years ago, drew criticism in DPP circles during and after the 1995 and 1996 elections for Legislative Yuan and the National Assembly. The principal complaint turned on fairness, or lack of it, in the weight given to the votes of approximately 190 elected officials.26 By the time of the DPP's 7th Party Congress, in the middle of June 1996, an overwhelming majority (252 of 276) of defeat, a failed candidate for National Assembly from southern Taiwan sent a group of thugs to Taipei in mini-buses (about three dozen people in all) to force themselves into the DPP headquarters and demand that their man be nominated. They tore the doors off the entrance to the conference room before they could be manhandled back into the elevators, in full view of journalists waiting for a routine briefing. They failed to get what they wanted. Also, in 1997, DPP legislator Peng Bai-hsien from Nantou was so upset not to be nominated as the DPP's candidate for county magistrate that he quit the party to run (and win) on his own as an independent against KMT and DPP candidates. A related problem with the primary method for the DPP is "pocket members"—i.e., those party members who have been recruited by a local faction or an individual who pays their dues. These people are active in party affairs only when it is necessary to mobilise to support their patron (as in primaries). Shih Ming-teh waged a campaign against such people, when he was party chairman, which purged the lists of suspected "pocket members." But the practice continued, said DPP officials.

Table 3. DPP’s Eligible Primary Participants
(as of December 1996)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 1</th>
<th>Stage 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995 First Tier (50%): Any party member</td>
<td>Single Tier: Any registered voter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Tier (50%): Party’s elected officials (mayors, magistrates, city and county council members, provincial assembly persons, Legislative Yuan and National Assembly members)</td>
<td>First Tier (50%): Any party member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After June 1996 Single Tier: Any party member</td>
<td>Second Tier (50%): Any other registered voter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After Dec. 1996 Single Tier: Any party member</td>
<td>First Tier (50%): Any party member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Second Tier (50%): Public opinion survey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled by authors from party publications

party delegates voted to abolish this tier.27 At the same time, run-off procedures were amended to give the votes of party members 50 percent weight and the votes of nonparty participants 50 percent. In continuing to open its run-off or second stage to all Taiwan voters regardless of party, the DPP had modified slightly its counting formula. The open run-off also was extended to nominations other than those for the governor and the president and made effective with the November 1997 election of city mayors and county magistrates. (See Table 3 for an outline of former and revised procedures.) Within a few months, however, the party’s congress convened a plenary session in Kaohsiung and approved yet another revision of the two-vote procedure. The amendment replaced the second vote with party conducted public opinion survey.28

This continuing fine tuning or tinkering with the rules was more than an exercise in applying or experimenting with fair arithmetical formulae or ballot arrangements. It reflected competition among party factions (e.g., Formosa, New Tide, Justice, Welfare) and disappointments among delegates that the DPP remained a minority in the legislature after ten years. That factions and not arithmetical fairness should have dominated rule making came as no

surprise, but in practice little public attention was given to the effects of the two-tiered formula.

The DPP held primaries in 16 of the 29 constituencies that elected members to the Legislative Yuan in 1995, and in 36 of the 58 that elected National Assembly members in 1996. The 16 legislative primaries produced nine instances in which the tier of elected officials differed from the tier of party members. In the 36 assembly primaries, producing a much larger number of candidates than the legislative primaries, 17 districts yielded differences between the two classes of voters. In seven of these, the party members' plurality was so large and/or the elected officials' margin so small, that the nominee preferred by party members won over the one preferred by officials. In ten others, however, the smaller tier of elected officials made the difference between winning and losing.

Experience from the 1995 and 1996 DPP primaries indicated that popular preferences sometimes were overruled by the cadres or elected officials. Other influences from such officials cannot be ruled out, either in setting expectations that affected who became candidates and who did not or in encouraging financial contributions to some primary and subsequent campaigns, and especially in the large number of uncontested districts. As no voting formula is likely to guarantee fairness, none surely is likely to eliminate differences among elected officials or their influence on candidate selection, a point made unavailingly in the party's congress debate preceding the June 1996 change in procedure. Inspection of the primary votes, district by district, constituency by constituency, evidenced considerable variation in the size of pluralities among elected officials' votes. Still, outcomes differed from popular preferences in half the contested areas owing to the extra weight given the party's elected officials.

Whatever the merits or effects of the two tiers, the delegates overwhelmingly jettisoned them in preparation for 1997 elections. Such revisions were not likely to be final but subject to revision in the future. If primaries seemed partially incorporated in the DPP, the details of the primary method remained in flux and would re-

29. In other local areas, where no contest occurred or contests could be settled by preprimary negotiations, the Central Standing Committee officially designated 32 nominees or 45 percent of all the party's candidates for the legislature, and 30 nominees, or 38 percent of its candidates for the assembly.

30. A notable case was in Tainan City where then party chairman Shih Ming-teh would not have been renominated but for the weighted voting formula and the advantages it gave elected officials over party members.
main so until the membership felt more secure about the party's competitiveness island wide. For 1997 nominations, the DPP relied on a combination of public opinion polls of party members and of other voters, with some rejected nominees complaining this procedure was unfair. The DPP's leadership continued the pretense of using primaries, although they preferred to avoid them when possible. Only ten of the 23 candidates for magistrates and mayors earned nomination through use of the nominating elections, and even these were tinged with newly introduced surveys of public opinion in their counties and cities. When possible, party officials brokered nominations in the hope of finding "centrist" type candidates who could appeal to a broad swath of voters.

Consequently, 1997 practice within the DPP marked a clear break with previous election experience. Theretofore, party members and officials had pledged themselves to rely on primaries. As the party with "democratic" in its title, its adherents had emphasized breath of participation in selecting candidates. Despite that emphasis, however, it became more rhetoric than reality. Ironically, the "democratic" and "progressive" party had restricted primary participation to dues paying members, thus diminishing the pool of potential primary voters and leaving the nominees at the mercy of an increasingly narrow band of opinion.

Following the retreat from primaries, the selections of nominations fell to a still smaller number of officials, 12 or 20, but who professed to take a broad view of public interests to which party nominees might appeal for electoral votes.

The New Party: As for the New Party, enlargement of adherents might admit possibilities of broader participation in major nominations, certainly including more participants than apparently decided matters in 1995 and 1996, perhaps even including primaries. If the New Party should emerge as more than a mainlander-oriented organization, conditions also would seem more favorable for relying on primaries to resolve contested nominations. By 1997, New Party leaders entertained rules for using primaries in areas with more than 10,000 members, effectively restricting applications to Taipei. Such rules remind one of the DPP's combination of publicizing primaries as symbols of democracy while in practice restricting their use as much as possible. The KMT's spokesperson

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straddled a similar apparent inconsistency by once again calling its procedures by the name of primary when in fact the procedures had become convention, caucus, or committee nominations.

Thus, by 1997 both major parties, and the minor New Party also, quietly but effectively retreated from extending democracy to internal party affairs. By 1998, this strategic withdrawal seemed more or less established, subject to occasional demands “to democratize the parties” for short-term advantages. Such expectations were borne out in the major parties’ presidential nominations undertaken in 1999 for the March 18, 2000 election.

**The DPP:** The DPP was the first to nominate its candidate, and not only did it select CHEN Shui-bian in May, almost a year before the election, but it waived party rules with respect to primaries and also to eligibility. (CHEN, having contested office within a proscribed period, otherwise would have been barred from candidacy in 2000.) Few were the voices demanding a primary.

**The KMT:** The KMT followed three months later, in August, by endorsing Vice President LIEN Chan at a plenum of its party congress. The procedure applied in LEE Teng-hui’s renomination in 1995 for the 1996 election effectively was retained for 1999 and 2000. Rare were the demands for a primary among party members to designate LIEN. Even his one possible intraparty opponent, James SOONG, only casually proposed a primary a few days before he declared his candidacy as an independent.

**The New Party:** If the DPP made excuses for avoiding a presidential primary in 1999, and if the KMT maintained its pretense of calling its convention or congressional process a “primary,” the New Party offered neither an excuse nor a pretense to mask old fashioned, top down, nonconsultative, inside, closed politics in finding and selecting a presidential candidate. On August 18, 1999, the New Party’s National Campaign and Development Committee unexpectedly announced it had recruited LI Ao, 64, a writer, as the

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party's standard bearer in the presidential election of 2000. In making this announcement, LEE Ching-hua, a New Party legislator and leader, emphasized not process but the substance of LI Ao's views: opposition to Taiwan independence and money politics, and support of peaceful coexistence across the Taiwan Strait and on behalf of underprivileged people. LI Ao accepted nomination but refused to join the party, urged members to vote for James SOONG, and committed himself to abolishing the National Assembly, contrary to the party's platform. His designation subsequently was confirmed by a meeting of the New Party's national congress.34

In all the parties, the selection of vice presidential candidates similarly occurred without primaries. Indeed, the use of primaries to choose alternative running mates seems never to have been broached seriously in Taiwan since the introduction of direct presidential elections. (Nor has it been considered in American politics, the fountainhead of primary contests.) As in 1995, when LEE Teng-hui designated Premier LIEN Chan as the vice presidential nominee of the KMT, so in 1999, LIEN picked his teammate, Premier Vincent SIEW, with formal approval of the same committees and congress that had vetted his nomination, which is to say routinely and as a matter of course. In the wake of the September 21 earthquake, CHEN Shui-bian deferred identifying the DPP's Candidate for the second office until nearer the election campaign period proper. The New Party treated the matter as an afterthought requiring little consultation. The independent candidate James SOONG, evidenced no formal selection process, much less a primary election, in finding a supporting colleague.

After 1999-2000, if previous experience is any guide, adjustments will continue to be made to compensate for weaknesses attributed to selection procedures in each party. Voters could expect regular cycles for electing county magistrates and councils and city mayors and councils, mayors and councils in metropolitan Kaoshiung and Taipei, and members of the Legislative Yuan for the whole republic, as well as for the National Assembly and president. Taken

34. Events related to the selection of the 2000 year candidates were reported regularly in local papers, both Chinese and English. Accessible sources are China News (renamed Taiwan News, May 13, 1999); China Post and China Post International Airmail Edition; and Taipei Times (which began publication, June 15, 1999). Also, consult Far Eastern Economic Review during the same period, May-August, 1999.
together, thirteen thousand elective offices would yield many occasions to experiment with different means for selecting candidates.\textsuperscript{35}

Taiwan’s experience with primaries persuaded party elites that they are divisive and counter productive for party government in a newly democratizing polity. Both the KMT and the DPP leaders discovered what American party leaders learned generations earlier, but, unlike the Americans, the Taiwanese politicians were able to halt the trend in diffusion of primaries before that method of candidate selection became institutionalized. In both the KMT and the DPP, despite or because of frequent elections and other abundant evidence of democratic practices, leaders were able to reacquire control of candidate selections that they had begun to devolve to party members.

A hundred years ago, European sociologists puzzled over the apparent inconsistency in certain democratic parties: their doctrines to democratize their polities did not extend to democratizing their internal party affairs.\textsuperscript{36} Taiwan’s experience in first introducing and then largely withdrawing primaries illustrates again that parties that effectively espouse democratic doctrines for their republic need not govern themselves democratically.


XIII. CONDITIONS AND PROJECTIONS

One of our tasks is to understand conditions under which primaries appear and then survive or die. If they survive, by what processes of diffusion do they continue? If they die, what conditions failed through presence or absence to prevent extinction? A first approximation, the sort a political journalist or a political scientist might be expected to make, turns on perspectives (including identifications, demands, and expectations) of participants, especially elites, in a political process. Thus, we initially focused on the rejection of primaries within the KMT as an outcome of the struggles between the mainstream and the nomainstream competitors. This plausible explanation loses its apparent validity when applied to the decline and fall in the use of primaries within the DPP.

Hence, we turn elsewhere, even to what at first blush may seem an unlikely explanation. Consider that a political party primary is a practice or procedure specialized to shaping and sharing power. It is indeed a set of operations or acts, but more generally it also involves perspectives that participants attach to the operations. Primaries are “ideas” or “ideals” that take hold in some places, notably the United States, but rarely elsewhere. And even where they have taken hold, so to speak, as in Taiwan or a handful of other sites, the idea soon has lost “its grip.” By what processes do attempts at emulation succeed in some places but not in others?

Rather than look first at the places and hypothesize how differences among sites might produce variations in the success or failure of the primaries to become routinized, we propose to begin with generic processes in the diffusion of imitations. Fortunately, an emerging theory is at hand, inspired among its creators by their acquaintances with theories of evolutionary gene or genetic processes. We refer to evolutionary theories of meme or memetic processes. Memes resemble genes in that they replicate, some more successfully than others. Some ideas (memes), whether about power, or wealth, or art, or science, or religion, or any other human value, are more successful than others, that is they survive and endure. Success means more than survival; it also means diffusion, that is, imitation.

Richard Dawkins, among the creative contributors to evolutionary theorizing about memes (and the originator of the label if not the concept), identifies several features of successful natural selection by and among memes. They bear the names longevity, fecundity, copy fidelity, and complexity. Longevity depends not on the endurance of any single appearance of ideas such as primaries but on the keeping alive of the idea, as through histories, encyclopedias, and other written sources. This feature easily is obtained in modern global and literate societies. Fecundity can be observed by rates of adoption; as we have seen, few polities have adopted primaries and fewer still have retained them for long. But fecundity, like longevity, depends on other factors, and copying fidelity and meme complexity appear to underly successful adaptation of innovations such as primaries. Copy fidelity suggests that accurate reproduction of an innovation encourages its success, but ironically, less than perfect copies may survive longer; hence closed primaries that become open primaries, and the primaries combined with party caucuses or conventions, may keep the “idea” alive against resistance from critics and opponents.

Successful ideas, practices, or memes dominate the attention of human beings at the expense of rival memes or traditions and others with short term counter advantages. Dawkins conjectures that a fourth condition may promote meme adoption and emulation, namely that a meme be a member of a meme-complex, that is, one of a constellation of related ideas or practices. These similar memes coalesce, as it were, to share attention, in the case of primaries, through billboards, slogans, and campaign propaganda, and reinforce each other.

Now, the contrast between American experience and Taiwanese experience emerges more emphatically. Party primaries entered American politics during “the Progressive era,” a complex of ideas in politics and other cultural sectors.\(^\text{38}\) In politics, party primaries were companions of initiative and referenda and recall elections. In economics, governmental regulations of business increasingly were demanded and presented. In journalism, muckraking was a familiar motif; and in education, “progressive schooling;” in art, “realism” and “naturalism;” in religion, the “social gospel.”

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These various subcultural ideas and activities complemented each other in America from the 1890s onward.

In Taiwan, by contrast, when primaries were introduced, initiative and referenda were not available and recall elections were discouraged; economic regulations underwent reduction not expansion as part of the globalization of world competition; in journalism, issues differed in Taiwan, with concentration on diminishing the KMT's monopoly of television; and in education, Confucian traditions prevailed over any progressive alternatives. In short, Taiwan's experience with primaries lacked reinforcement from a complex of related ideas that were current simultaneously.

Given these conditions, the trend of innovation followed by restriction and then termination may be projected to continue. Taiwan parties will experience occasional demands, among their members, and now and then from ambitious leaders or potential leaders, for reviving primaries. But the prospects for their routinization seem unlikely. As a method for selecting nominees for elective offices, we project that political party primaries or nominating contests bid fair to be a footnote rather than a text among Taiwan's variety of democratic practices and experiences.
**Glossary**

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