

**THE ORIGINS AND DECLINE OF DOMINANT PARTY SYSTEMS:
TAIWAN'S TRANSITION IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE**

by

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To my parents, and to Jess

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ABSTRACT

Dominant party systems are those in which a single party or coalition rules for an extraordinary period of time by regularly winning contested, multiparty elections. In this dissertation I consider two questions raised by these party systems. The first is about origins: what causes the emergence of ruling parties with systematic advantages over all their competitors in the party system? The second is about persistence: what affects the survival of such “advantaged” ruling parties?

To answer these questions, I collect data on the duration in office of ruling parties in all electorally-contested regimes (ECRs) in the world since 1950. On the first question, I find that most long-lived ruling parties began as “first-movers” in the party system: they were the first parties to take office in newly-founded ECRs. Because they played a central role in shaping the regime that they then competed in, long-lived ruling parties typically held a large partisan advantage over their competitors in the party system—what I term high party system *asymmetry*. Thus, the typical dominant party system occurs at the beginning of a contested regime, when party competition is highly asymmetric, and gradually breaks down into a more competitive party system over time

On the second question, I find the type of executive regime—presidential versus parliamentary—has an important effect on ruling party survival. Advantaged ruling parties are significantly more vulnerable to defeat in presidential than in parliamentary regimes, all else equal, and this effect is greatest in the most asymmetric party systems. I also find that economic growth and state repression improve ruling party survival rates, while the size of the state does not appear to have a meaningful effect on survival.

I demonstrate the utility of the theory in the case of Taiwan, where an advantaged ruling party, the Kuomintang or KMT, lost power only four years after the first presidential election. I explain this defeat as a consequence primarily of presidentialism: if the KMT had adopted a parliamentary regime, it almost certainly would not have lost.

CHAPTER 1

CONCEPTS, DEFINITIONS, AND QUESTIONS: DOMINANT PARTY SYSTEMS IN COMPARATIVE POLITICS

“Democracy is a system in which parties lose elections.”

--Adam Przeworski (1991: 10)

1.1. Introduction

March 18, 2000, was a watershed moment in Taiwan’s politics. On that day, Taiwanese voters went to the polls and for the first time in the island’s history peacefully voted an incumbent party out of office. The presidential election results delivered an ignominious end to the 50-year tenure of the ruling Kuomintang (KMT): its presidential candidate finished a distant third in the presidential race, winning only 25% of the popular vote. The victor with over 38% was the nominee of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), the main opposition party that had grown out of the island’s democracy movement. The election result jolted cross-Strait relations with the People’s Republic of China, capped Taiwan’s political evolution away from a highly autocratic regime, and emphatically established the island as one of the most open, vibrant, and contested democracies in all of Asia.

The magnitude of Taiwan's electoral earthquake¹ was equaled by developments half a world away the very next day. On March 19 voters in Senegal threw out the longtime ruling Socialist Party of Senegal and its president, Abdou Diouf. That election outcome, like Taiwan's, was remarkable for two reasons: it ended 40 continuous years of single-party rule in Senegal, and it marked one of the only times an African leader has ever left office quietly and peacefully after an electoral defeat.

Less than four months later, voters in Mexico completed the electoral trifecta. On July 2, the presidential candidate of the incumbent Institutional Party of the Revolution (PRI) went down in a resounding defeat at the ballot box. As in Taiwan and Senegal, the election results upset a long-established political order, ending seven decades of PRI rule and leading to the first peaceful transfer of presidential power from one party to another in Mexico's history.

The former ruling parties in Taiwan, Senegal, and Mexico anchored three of the most prominent examples of *dominant party systems*, in which a single party or coalition maintains a grip on power through repeated victories in contested elections for the highest offices of government. Dominant party systems are a widespread political phenomenon, occurring in all regions of the world and in both repressive autocracies and liberal democracies. They continue to be important in the contemporary world: a conservative estimate is that at least 40 have existed at points in time since the 1950s, ranging from extensively-studied examples in countries such as Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Italy, Israel, Sweden, South Africa, and India, to more obscure cases in Seychelles, Djibouti, Samoa, Liechtenstein, Botswana, and Namibia.

¹ The metaphor is Diamond's (2001).

This project is about the formation, evolution and breakdown of this special type of party system. It is centrally concerned with accounting for the feature of dominance that is so striking in the Taiwan, Senegal, and Mexico cases: the ruling party's extraordinary duration in elected office. As these cases and others demonstrate, some ruling parties endure in power under electorally competitive conditions for extremely long periods of time. Their existence raises two questions that I address in this study. The first is about the origins of dominant party systems: under what conditions do ruling parties acquire large electoral advantages over all competitors in the party system? The second is about the evolution of dominant party systems: what affects the rate at which these ruling party advantages decline relative to competitors, leading to their eventual defeat?

To answer these questions, I develop a new theoretical framework for understanding dominant party systems. The research has three parts. In the first, I investigate the *origins of dominant party systems*. I develop and defend a definition of dominant parties based on their extraordinary longevity in office, and I argue for the party system as the key level of analysis. Drawing from an original dataset covering nearly 700 ruling parties in electorally contested regimes between 1950 and 2006, I then identify a set of about 40 ruling parties that qualify as “dominant” under my definition. I show that most of these were the first parties to hold office in electorally-contested regimes—that is, dominant party systems tend to occur at the beginning of a period of electoral contestation and gradually evolve into something more competitive over time. Most dominant parties initially enjoy electoral advantages that originate in their role in creating the regime, giving them a “first-mover advantage” in the party system. The

question “why dominance?” is really about why some first incumbents enjoy these initial advantages while most do not.

Second, I develop a theory of *party system development in new electorally-contested regimes*. The initial conditions of these systems are much like formerly monopolized markets that have been newly-opened to competitors: electoral competition is often highly asymmetric at first, favoring the incumbent party to the disadvantage of new opposition parties. I discuss three mechanisms through which differences between the incumbent and the opposition lead to asymmetric competition: *partisanship* of voters, *spatial positioning* of parties, and *coordination* between voters and parties to convert votes into seats, and seats into executive control. I then highlight how institutional features of the political system can work to reduce or sustain party system asymmetry over time. I show that asymmetric competition matters more for ruling party duration under parliamentarism than presidentialism and is worse in unitary than federal regimes. I also demonstrate that electoral rules have countervailing effects on party system asymmetry, such that party system asymmetry is possible under a wide variety of electoral systems.

In the third part I test the theory. I employ my cross-national dataset to examine how differences in institutions affect predicted incumbent survival rates. I also examine the effects of the social cleavage structure, previous regime conditions, level of repression, economic performance, state share of the economy, and other possible explanatory variables. In addition, I demonstrate how my theory of party system development accounts for starkly divergent outcomes in the case of Taiwan. Drawing on a combination of fieldwork, archival research, and existing scholarship, I show that the

combination of a disadvantageous ethnic cleavage and a presidential system led to the defeat of the KMT, Taiwan's long-time ruling party, in the 2000 election, despite its sizeable advantage in the party system at the advent of the democratic era there.

1.2. The Dominant Party Puzzle

The central puzzle of dominant party systems is the extraordinary longevity of the ruling party in a regime with genuine electoral competition. Ruling party turnover does not occur even with generational change in the electorate, the rise of new political issues, or increasing dissatisfaction with the incumbent party's performance. For instance, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) was from 1955 until 2009 the party of government for all but 10 months and 20 days, surviving the end of the Cold War, the bursting of property and stock market bubbles, and an entire decade of zero economic growth (Scheiner 2006: 11-13). Similarly, since first presiding over the Federation of Malaya's (later Malaysia) independence in 1957, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) has survived serious ethnic riots, multiple leadership succession crises, and the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997; it remains the ruling party there today despite recent electoral setbacks (Singh 2009). In Mexico, the PRI in its various incarnations remained continuously in power at the federal level for 71 years, lasting through both rapid economic growth and devastating recessions, bloody student protests and peasant uprisings, wild fluctuations in world oil prices, and a five-fold rise in population, among other dramatic events (Eisenstadt 2004; Magaloni 2006; Greene 2007). In Italy, every

prime minister from 1946 to 1981—a total of 21 leaders—was a member of the Christian Democratic (DC) party.²

The persistence of these and other dominant party systems is of concern precisely because they combine genuine electoral competition with an absence of ruling party turnover. Their continued existence calls into question the most fundamental mechanism through which citizens hold governments accountable—elections that incumbents lose (Przeworski 1991: 10). The alternation of different parties in power is part of what we typically think of as the “normal” pattern of democratic politics. Incumbent parties that remain in power for decades defy this expectation, raising both normative and positive concerns.

On the normative side, the extraordinary longevity of ruling parties such as the People’s Action Party in Singapore (in power since 1959), the UMNO in Malaysia (in power since 1957), and the Botswana Democratic Party (in power since 1966) throws into doubt whether these systems are democratic. With no examples to point to, it is not clear whether the incumbent party would voluntarily and peacefully cede power were it to lose an election. Nor is there unequivocal proof that elections in these countries serve as mechanisms to keep leaders responsive and accountable to the people at whose pleasure they ostensibly serve. Leaders who do not fear defeat at the ballot box have little to prevent them from using public office for private benefit or to force them to respond to shifts in public opinion and the emergence of new public concerns. If we take the central features of democracy to be uncertainty at election time and the alternation of

² Some scholars (e.g. Boucek 1998: 112; Greene 2007: 285) date the end of DC dominance to June 1992, although its period of unbroken control of the prime minister’s office ended in June 1981. In the 1980s, two Italian PMs were from parties other than the DC.

rival parties in power, then dominant party systems fall short of full democracy (Przeworski et al. 2000: 23-28). As T.J. Pempel has memorably put the issue, “democracy predicated on the ability to ‘throw the rascals out’ is far less convincing when it exists only in the abstract than when it is backed up by periodic examples of rascals actually flying through the doors” (1990: 7). In dominant party systems, the same rascals keep winning.

The existence of long-lived ruling parties in electorally contested regimes raises positive questions as well. One-party dominance is puzzling in light of current theories of political parties, party systems, and voting behavior, which lead us to expect contested elections to produce regular rotation of parties in power (Pempel 1990: 5-6). The tough business of governing inevitably requires incumbents to make difficult tradeoffs that violate campaign promises and lead to the disillusionment of groups of erstwhile supporters (Mueller 1970). Thus, regardless of how popular and effective governments may be when they enter office, they all eventually face tough decisions that drain their popularity. The near-ubiquitous economic business cycles and political scandals that damage ruling party standing should also erode support and predispose a growing share of the electorate to consider voting for alternatives (Paldam 1986; Rose and Mackie 1983; Kramer 1971; [cited in Maeda 2009]). Ambition theory also leads us to expect constant efforts by opposition politicians to seek out and raise wedge issues capable of breaking apart a ruling party’s electoral coalition, attracting enough votes to deliver them into power (Schlesinger 1966, 1991; Prewitt 1970; Carmines and Stimson 1981, 1986, 1989; Schofield and Sened 2006; Hillygus and Shields 2008). And when demographic shifts and economic growth transform the shape of the electorate, we expect new political

cleavages to arise that disrupt and reshape the party system, as activists and political elites highlight new issues and advance new policy ideas and approaches (Sundquist 1973; Clubb et al. 1980; MacDonald and Rabinowitz 1987; Inglehart and Abramson 1994; Layman and Carmines 1997; Miller and Schofield 2003).

In short, the regular re-election of incumbent parties appears to be a perverse deviation from the natural pattern of competition for elected office. Thus, the continued electoral success of the LDP during economic slumps in the 1970s and 1990s has occasioned much head-scratching and been the subject of an extensive body of scholarship (e.g. Cox 1996; Christensen 2000; Johnson 2000; Eisenstadt 2004; Scheiner 2006; McElwain 2008). So, too, has the consistent leading role of the DC in Italian governments, through scandal, economic and international crises, and frequent cabinet reshufflings, from 1946 until its implosion in 1992, appeared to many political scientists as an “uncommon” phenomenon requiring additional explanation (Arian and Barnes 1974; Levite and Tarrow 1983; Pempel 1990).

Nor is the dominant party puzzle limited to those regimes which clearly meet all the procedural requirements of democracy: the defeat of ruling parties which began in highly authoritarian regimes such as those in Mexico and Taiwan has attracted significant scholarly interest precisely because they lasted so much longer than most autocracies (e.g. Diamond 2001; Solinger 2001; Eisenstadt 2004; Magaloni 2006; Greene 2007). The emergence since the end of the Cold War of “competitive” or “electoral” authoritarianism as a distinct, perhaps modal type of authoritarian regime also raises the question of why, rather than being “stalled” or “prolonged” transitions to democracy, many such regimes have endured in more authoritarian form despite a pattern of contested elections

(Carothers 2002; Levitsky and Way 2002, 2010; Schedler 2002, 2006; Hadenius and Teorell 2007; Teorell and Hadenius 2008; Slater 2010; cf. Howard and Roessler 2006).

Thus, in both democratic and authoritarian regimes, dominant party systems challenge our understanding of how politics should work: contrary to expectations, multiparty elections do not produce rotation in power in these cases.

1.3. Autocracies, Democracies, or Both?: Where Dominant Parties Occur

In this study I use the term *dominant party* to refer to a ruling party or coalition that wields continuous control over the national executive for an extraordinary period of time by regularly winning contested elections. This phenomenon has been called many names, including dominant party regime (Greene 2007) or dominant party system (Friedman and Wong 2008), hegemonic party regime (Magaloni 2006; Aldrich et al. n.d.), one-party or one-party-dominant regime (Solinger 2001; Gonzalez 2007) or system (Johnson 2000; Scheiner 2006), single-party regime (Geddes 1999, Smith 2005), and predominant party system (Sartori 1976, Ware 1996). Despite the varied terminology, all of these authors refer to the same general political phenomenon: the occurrence of long-lived ruling parties in regimes with contested elections.

The Dominant Party: An Ambiguous Concept

Dominant parties have attracted interest in political science for at least sixty years.³ As the literature has developed, however, the terms *dominance*, *dominant party*, *dominant party system*, and *dominant party regime* have taken on a variety of divergent and inconsistent meanings. Many scholars in recent years have employed the terms casually and without definition, as if the meaning were self-evident (e.g. Carty 2006; Friedman and Wong 2008; Anderson 2009). But a review of recent work on “dominant parties” indicates much disagreement about what, exactly, makes a party “dominant.” In particular, the term is used to describe two rather distinct sets of cases which differ based on whether or not a regime is democratic. “Dominance” in its earlier usage tended to refer exclusively to parties in systems that by and large met the procedural requirements of democracy, yet featured a single leading party in power indefinitely. Thus Duverger (1954 [1959]), in writing that “a party is dominant when it holds the majority over a long period of development,” tacitly limited the statement to regimes that allowed open political contestation (307-8). Arian and Barnes (1974) wrote that the dominant party system “permits more than one party to compete,” so “it is certainly democratic in the procedural sense. And since...it mobilized the modal citizens of a society, it can be said to be substantively democratic as well” (593). Pempel’s landmark volume on the subject

³ The question of what allows single party governments to endure goes back at least to V.O. Key’s *Southern Politics in State and Nation*, a study of the mostly one-party politics of states in the US south (Key 1949). The dominant party system also receives influential if brief mentions in classic works including Maurice Duverger’s *Political Parties* (1954), Samuel Huntington’s *Political Order in Changing Societies* (1968), Jean Blondel’s *Comparing Political Systems* (1972) and Giovanni Sartori’s *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis* (1976). Other prominent early work on the dominant party concept includes Coleman (1960), McDonald (1971), Arian and Barnes (1974), Levite and Tarrow (1983), and Pempel (1990).

is similarly limited to “the group of industrialized democracies,” which have “free electoral competition, relatively open information systems, respect for civil liberties, and the right of free political association” (1990: 1).

However, the term has also been commonly applied to ruling parties in authoritarian regimes that allow multi-party elections but restrict some elements of political contestation—the so-called “competitive authoritarian” or “hybrid” regimes (Levitsky and Way 2002; Karl 1995; Diamond 2002). One of the most influential uses of the term in this way is Giovanni Sartori’s (1976). He calls long-lived ruling parties in industrialized democracies “predominant parties,” reserving the terms “hegemonic party” and “single party” for those systems in which only one party is *de facto* (hegemonic) or *de jure* (single) able to contest elections and hold power, and leaving the term “dominant party” to refer, generally and vaguely, to “whatever major party outdistances the other parties in whichever type of party system” (230). For better or worse, most recent scholarship has not adopted Sartori’s term of “predominant” to distinguish democratic regimes from their more authoritarian counterparts and continues to use the “dominant party” moniker to refer to long-lived ruling parties in both highly repressive and liberal regimes (e.g. Bogaards 2004; Ishiyama and Quinn 2006; Friedman and Wong 2008; Reuter and Remington 2009; Reuter 2010a, b). Adding to the confusion, while some scholars have reserved the terms “single-party” and “one-party” for partisan regimes which ban multi-party contestation (Huntington 1968: 419; Ware 1996: 246), others have

called these parties “dominant” instead (Friedman and Wong 2008; Slater and Smith 2010; Reuter and Remington 2009; Reuter 2010a, b).⁴

To sum up, the concept of the “dominant party” as used in contemporary scholarship in political science contains at least two ambiguities. The first is about the kinds of regimes in which dominant parties occur: existing research covers a wide variety of regime types with starkly different means of winning power and enforcing authority, from long-established democracies such as Britain under the Conservative Party to unabashed autocracies such as China under the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). And among autocratic regimes, “dominant party” has described ruling parties in both single-party regimes which ban opposition contestation (e.g. contemporary China) and those in which oppositions regularly contest but never win (e.g. Mexico before 2000). The second is about the level of analysis: “dominant” has been used to describe a type of *regime*, a type of *party system*, and a type of *party*.

Dominance as a Party System Phenomenon

The absence of a common definition of dominance is problematic in a couple of ways. For one, it has hindered the development of general theories, as scholars purporting to study the same phenomenon have focused on very different sets of cases. A good illustration is the vast disparities between the countries included in two edited volumes on dominant party systems, *The Awkward Embrace: One-Party Domination and*

⁴ The converse is also true: in much writing on the subject, “single-party” or “one-party” regimes in practice include those in which opposition parties are allowed to form and run their own candidates for elected office (Coleman 1960: 295-302; McDonald 1971: 220; Blondel 1972: 99-100; Mainwaring and Scully 1995: 1; Schedler 1998: 99; Geddes 1999: 121; Diamond 2002: 32; Smith 2005: 424; Magaloni 2006: 36-37).

Democracy (edited by Hermann Giliomee and Charles Simpkins [1999]) and *Political Transitions in Dominant Party Systems: Learning to Lose* (edited by Edward Friedman and Joseph Wong [2008]). For Giliomee and Simpkins, dominant parties can only occur “within a framework in which at least some democratic rules or practices have to be observed” (xv). Their analysis consequently is focused on “four of the five most prominent dominant parties in the past four decades” in the industrializing world: South Africa, Taiwan, Malaysia, and Mexico.⁵ Friedman and Wong, by contrast, explicitly include ruling parties in regimes in which multi-party contestation is banned, calling them “a kind of dominant party system” (1). This broader conception leads them to discuss a very different group of parties, including the communist parties of eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, the CCP in China, and the conservative parties in South Korea, which for much of their tenure in power were the civilian face of a military regime (cf. Reuter and Remington 2009; Reuter 2010a, b; Slater and Smith 2010).

In addition to the problems it poses for comparison, the ambiguous meaning of “dominance” in political science has also led to very different ideas of what is puzzling about long-time ruling parties. Scholars who adopt a narrower definition of dominant parties are likely to explain away their existence in more autocratic settings by simply noting that elections there are neither free nor fair. It is hardly surprising, in this view, that the same party wins elections every time when it is the only party allowed to compete. The mystery of permanent one-party rule is limited to a single regime type: those in which incumbents regularly win despite meeting procedural requirements of democracy, including open competition for elected office, easy access to information,

⁵ The fifth in their view is India under the Congress Party.

respect for civil liberties, and freedom of political association (Pempel 1990: 5). In this view, the party system, rather than the regime, is the key level of analysis.

By contrast, scholars who adopt a broader definition of dominance tend to view its occurrence in light of questions about authoritarian breakdown and democratization, and therefore to focus on the regime level. This approach sees variation in incumbent leadership duration in authoritarian regimes as no less interesting or surprising than that in democratic ones. Friedman and Wong, for example, argue that authoritarian single-party states are no less “vulnerable to losing their hold on power, even if they are not subjected to regular elections,” and that “every party eventually suffers some political crisis during which its defeat appears imminent, be it peacefully or violently” (2008: 1). The motivating question for them is how dominant parties adapt to such crises, and what happens to the political systems they inhabit—questions not confined to ruling parties in democracies. Likewise, Geddes’s (1999) influential argument about authoritarian breakdown is motivated by the observation that single-party autocracies appear to be systematically more durable than personalist or military regimes—a fact that has no apparent relationship to how liberal the regime is. Nor can the huge variation in ruling party tenure that Smith (2005) finds in single-party autocracies be attributed to the restrictions they place on electoral contestation—some extremely durable ruling parties such as the PRI in Mexico have held regular, contested elections for decades, while others such as the CCP in China have done nothing of the sort. Similarly, Brownlee (2009) finds no systematic difference in the durability of exclusionary “single-party” regimes versus electoral “hegemonic party” ones.

Thus, viewed as a whole, studies of dominant parties tend to fall into one of two research traditions that pursue distinct sets of research questions at different levels of analysis. The first tradition is focused on the party system and examines what drives *the emergence and persistence of long-lived ruling parties in democracies*: if electoral competition is reasonably free and fair, why does the same party always win? The second tradition is aimed instead at the regime level and seeks to account for *the durability of authoritarian regimes*: why do autocrats supported by strong ruling parties appear to last longer than others, under what conditions do single-party regimes break down, and what are the consequences for the political system?

The questions I address in this study straddle these two research traditions. Like the first, my main focus is on the party system: I aim here to account for the longevity of ruling parties rather than the stability of the regimes in which they reside. But like the second, I am interested in the fates of ruling parties in autocracies as well as democracies: all ruling parties that face a risk, however slight, of losing power as the result of an election.

I reserve the term “regime” to describe a state’s system of de facto rules and resource allocations through which political actors are selected and exercise authority. In my usage, regimes are at a higher level of analysis than party systems: dominant parties, for instance, can occur only in regimes that hold contested, multi-party elections. The term “dominant party regime” blurs this crucial distinction between party system and regime, so I avoid it altogether.⁶ The central phenomenon of interest in this study is the combination of contested, multi-party elections with the continuous and extraordinary

⁶ I avoid using “hegemonic party regime” as well for the same reason.

duration in office of a single party or coalition, which I refer to as a *dominant party system*. As Figure 1.1 shows, the dominant party itself is in a subordinate position in this conceptual schema: when they occur, dominant parties are one of several *parties* that make up one type of party *system* that may occur in a given *regime*.

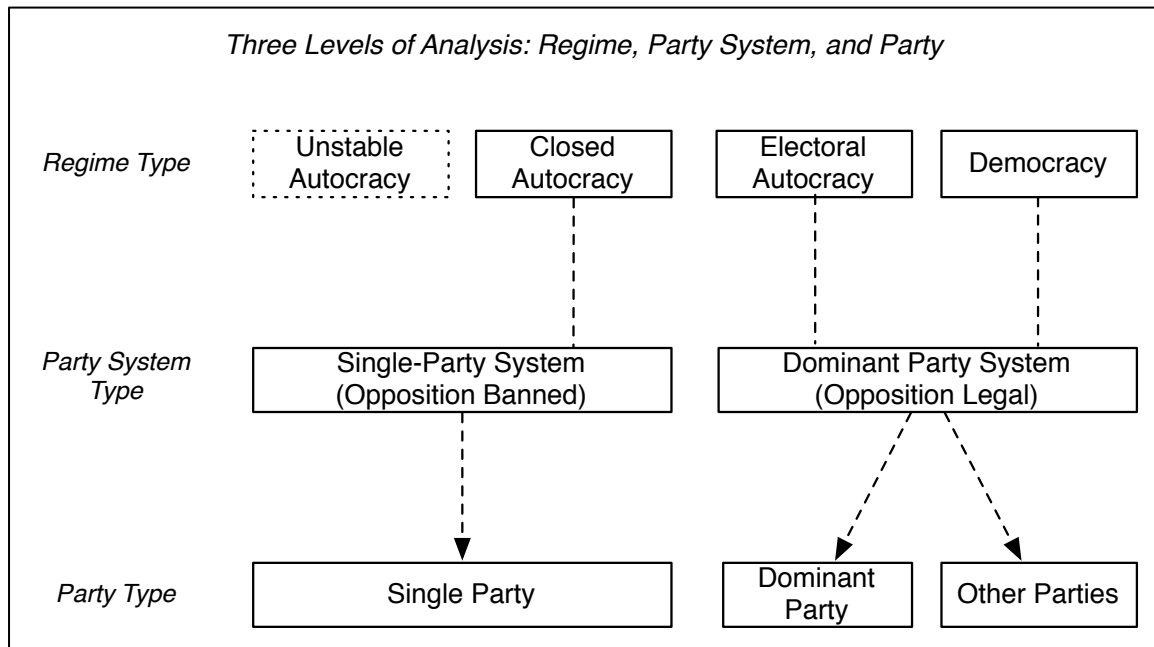


FIGURE 1.1. THREE LEVELS OF ANALYSIS: REGIME, PARTY SYSTEM, AND PARTY

As I employ the term, dominant parties can occur in two types of regimes: democracies and electoral autocracies. Thus, I intentionally include in the study ruling parties in both liberal and illiberal regimes, or in Sartori’s terms, dominant parties of both the “predominant” and “hegemonic” kind. Dominant parties as I define them do *not* occur in all types of autocracies, however. Autocracies in which all parties save the incumbent’s are banned from contesting elections, as in China, do not have dominant

party systems by my definition, but rather single party systems.⁷ Likewise, autocracies in which winning elections is not the main path to power, as in Iran or Myanmar, do not have dominant party systems, either; indeed, they often have no coherent party system at all. In this study, then, the key distinction among regime types is not the conventional one between democracies and non-democracies, but instead between electoral and non-electoral regimes—one broadly similar to the boundary that Levitsky and Way (2002; 2010) and Schedler (2002), among others, have attempted to draw to differentiate “competitive autocracies” from closed and unstable autocracies.

I elaborate on these distinctions between types of autocracy in more detail in the next chapter, where I describe how my data on ruling party duration were collected. For the moment, suffice it to say that there are at least two good reasons to combine both authoritarian and democratic regimes in a study of dominant parties. First, the difference between democratic and non-democratic dominant party systems is in practice difficult to draw in some cases, especially over the entire life of the ruling party. Dominant party systems exist uneasily within democracies, as book titles such as “The Awkward Embrace” and “Uncommon Democracies” suggest. The presence of a long-ruling incumbent raises hard questions about the regime’s democratic credentials even in countries that have few restrictions on civil liberties or opposition party campaign activities. For instance, in a highly influential study, Przeworski, Alvarez, Cheibub and Limongi (2000: 23-28) take turnover in government because of electoral defeat as the critical indicator of democracy, and are thus bedeviled by how to code dominant party

⁷ My definition of dominance is therefore narrower than that of Slater and Smith (2010) and Reuter (2010a, b), who explicitly call closed, one-party states that ban all opposition parties “dominant.”

systems, whose central feature is *the absence of turnover*. As they themselves note, this procedural definition of democracy makes it observationally impossible to distinguish between ruling parties that would leave office if defeated and those that would not, if neither has ever actually lost an election.

To take a concrete example, the difference between the ruling party in Botswana and that in Zimbabwe is easier to describe as a matter of degree rather than of kind. Both have held power continuously since independence, and both have regularly won contested elections. But one is hard-pressed to predict whether the Botswana Democratic Party would respond in the same way that Zimbabwe's ZANU-PF did when threatened with electoral defeat—that is, through brutal violence against opposition supporters and outright fraud at the ballot box—because it has never faced such an immediate electoral threat to its hold on power (cf. Pzeworski et al. 2000: 23-28). Nor can one say with much confidence when a formerly autocratic regime with a long-time ruling party becomes “democratic” if the incumbent has never lost: in both Taiwan and Mexico, for instance, a long period of gradual political liberalization preceded ruling party defeat, but it is hard to pinpoint exactly when an opposition victory moved from unthinkable to possible.

These examples suggest that the best practice at the outset may be to treat all dominant parties as instances of the same phenomenon, whether they occur in democracies or autocracies (cf. Magaloni 2006: 32-42; Greene 2007: 13-17). This is not to say that the regimes in which dominant parties exist do not vary in the degree to which they live up to democratic procedural norms: they do, and these differences are clearly important. Nevertheless, the approach I adopt in this project is to view variation in

restrictions on the opposition as a continuum, rather than as a dichotomy, and to treat this variation itself as something to be measured empirically rather than assumed a priori.⁸

The second reason to examine ruling party duration in both democracies and autocracies is that there are good reasons to believe some of the same causes of dominance should be present in both liberal and illiberal regimes. For instance, the ruling party's origins and its role in the establishment of the regime appear to differ more within democracies than between authoritarian and democratic regimes. As I show in Chapter 2, the fact that a ruling party founded the regime has important implications for subsequent electoral competition. Focusing exclusively on why incumbents in authoritarian regimes bother to engage in meaningful electoral competition without considering how that competition is likely to play out, or on why dominant parties remain in power in liberal regimes without considering how they came to dominate, can obscure an important set of processes that buttress or undercut ruling parties' grip on power.

To recap: the central object of interest in this study is the *party system*. Both the type of regime in which the party system occurs and the characteristics of the dominant party, while important as possible explanatory factors, are of secondary interest as outcomes to be explained. I am interested in accounting for the origins and duration of a specific kind of party system, the *dominant party system*, which can occur in two different kinds of regimes: electoral autocracies and democracies.

⁸ In other words, I will draw a difference of *kind* between regimes in which electoral outcomes decisively determine who holds power and regimes in which they do not, but drawing only a difference of *degree* between democracies and the rest of the regimes in this class. To incorporate all cases in which dominant party systems could possibly occur, I am in effect relaxing the conventional "hard" distinction between democracies and all other regime types and shifting it outward so that electoral autocracies are included as well.

In the next section, I take a closer look at a second conceptual question: what exactly makes a party “dominant”?

1.4. What is a Dominant Party System?: A Review of the Literature

As I showed in the previous section, the term “dominance” has quite an ambiguous meaning in political science: it is used to refer to parties, party systems, and regimes, to both single-party and multi-party autocracies, and even to ruling parties in democracies. Even in reference to the much more clearly bounded subject of a party system, however, there is still no universally accepted definition of what a “dominant party system” is. In practice, this term is used to describe a party system meeting any one or more of six distinct criteria:

1. Dominance through Numbers of Seats or Votes

Dominance is frequently construed as a single party winning a large percentage of seats and/or votes, although the threshold used to define dominance varies widely among scholars who include this criterion. At the low end, Duverger (1959 [1954]: 308) and Pempel (1990: 3) require only that a party win a plurality of seats. Others set the bar a little higher: a party is dominant if it “wins enough parliamentary seats to control government on its own”—that is, a majority (Ware 1996: 159; see also Blondel 1972: 99-103; Sartori 1976: 195; Reuter 2010a: 35). On the other end of the spectrum, some scholars imply that a party is dominant only if it controls a supermajority of the seats: 60 percent (McDonald 1971: 220; Van de Walle and Butler 1999: 25 fn. 34), 70 percent

(Coleman 1960: 295), or as high as the 75 percent threshold used by the Database of Political Institutions (Beck et al. 2001; Keefer 2007). At the high end, as noted, some scholars even refer to ruling parties which ban opposition party contestation, and therefore control 100 percent of the seats, as being “dominant” (e.g. Ishiyama and Quinn 2006; Friedman 2008).

The key feature of dominance conceived in this way is the ruling party’s virtually unchecked authority. Dominant parties control enough seats to unilaterally form a government, to pass legislation, to design and implement new policies, and to amend the constitution.⁹ In parliamentary regimes, dominant parties are those that enjoy single-party majorities, perhaps supermajorities. In presidential regimes, parties are dominant if they control both the presidency and majorities or supermajorities in the legislature. This criterion is also notable for making dominance a continuous measure: parties and party systems can be ordered according to “how dominant,” from controlling all the seats at the high end to controlling just a plurality at the low end of the scale (e.g. Boucek 1998).

2. Dominance through Duration in Power

The most common addition or alternative to the percentage of seats is the duration of the ruling party or coalition in power. The period of time used to identify parties that are not merely successful incumbents but “dominant” ones has varied: anywhere from as little as a single year (Reuter 2010a) to winning two (Przeworski et al. 2000: 27) or three (Sartori 1976: 199; Bogaards 2004: 175) consecutive elections, to 10 years (O’Leary

⁹ Indeed, Magaloni (2006) makes a ruling party’s ability to unilaterally amend the constitution the crucial distinction between “hegemonic parties” and those that are merely “predominant” (35-36).

1994: 4), 15-20 years (Marshall and Jagers 2009: 59, 80), 20 years (Blondel 1972: 99-103; Greene 2007: 12), or 30-50 years (Cox 1997: 238), to the vague “permanent or semi-permanent governance” (Pempel 1990: 15) or facing no “imminent threat of replacement” (Slater and Smith 2010: 5). Although the thresholds may differ, the central idea is nevertheless the same: in “normal” party systems, all incumbents sooner or later lose an election. At some point, a party’s ability to maintain unbroken control of government reflects something more systemic than just a lucky run of favorable electoral conditions or savvy leadership (cf. O’Leary 1994: 5; McGann 1999: 108-9). Exactly where that point occurs, however, has been in the eye of the beholder.

This conception of dominance contains a second ambiguity as well: some scholars take “in power” to mean complete control of the government and rule out coalitions in which one party is always in the lead (Ware 1996: 159) or divided presidential systems in which one party always controls the presidency but not necessarily the legislature (Sartori 1976: 195; Greene 2007: 12; Reuter 2010a: 37); others explicitly include parties in coalition governments and make these the main focus of their analysis (Arian and Barnes 1974; Levite and Tarrow 1983; Pempel 1990).

3. Dominance through Bargaining Position

A third distinct criterion appears in the work on government coalition formation, where “dominant party” commonly refers to the party that can form at least one alternative winning coalition to the present one (Van Deeman 1989; Van Roozendaal 1992, 1997; Abedi and Schneider 2006). Dominant parties are in a superior bargaining position either because of their spatial location or their size. In this criterion, dominant

parties do *not* have to control a majority of the seats to obtain cabinet positions—they need only be indispensable to the formation of any governing coalition (Boucek 1998: 107). Nor do they have to be the same party in each election cycle, although in practice a party that is in a pivotal, centrist position after one election is likely to repeat in that position in the future (Riker 1976: 104-5).

4. Dominance through Agenda-Setting Power

A related criterion is that dominance is indicated by a single party's consistent control of the public policy agenda, either because of its centrist position in a coalition or because of its control of the formal agenda-setting institutions of the regime. As Pempel describes it, “[b]ecause of its long-standing presence at the core of government, the dominant party carries out what many would call a historical project, a series of interrelated and mutually supportive public policies that give particular shape to the national political agenda” (4). In this view, a distinguishing feature of dominant party systems is the ruling party's regular and outsized influence in the policy-making process and its central role in the development and execution of a country's policies (cf. O'Leary 1994: 4).

5. Dominance through Party Identification with or Control of the State

A fifth distinct usage refers explicitly to parties that have strong ties to the state itself, often forged through revolutionary (or counterrevolutionary) struggle for independence or equality (Tucker 1961; Arian and Barnes 1974; Pempel 1990; Slater and Smith 2010). Duverger (1959 [1954]) argued that in order to be dominant a party had to

be “identified with an epoch, when its doctrines, ideas, methods, its style...coincide with those of the epoch” (308). Likewise, Giliomee and Simpkins (1999) find that all of their cases of one-party dominance came “out of a background of revolution...or counter-revolution...decolonization, and liberation” (2). The distinction between the party and government is blurred, and the party justifies its permanent control of the state by reference to its historical legacy and mission. The examples are many: the Indian National Congress Party in India, Mapai/Labor in Israel, PRI in Mexico, ANC in South Africa, KMT in Taiwan, KANU in Kenya, FRELIMO in Mozambique, SWAPO in Namibia, ZANU-PF in Zimbabwe, and CCP in China, among others.

Also falling under this criterion are conceptions of the dominant party as a coordination device for state elites. In this view, dominant parties are those that create and maintain a stable regime by using “privileged access to state resources or extra-constitutional means” to determine policy outcomes and distribute patronage (Reuter 2010a: 28; cf. Magaloni 2006; Grzymala-Busse 2008; Slater and Smith 2010; Levitsky and Way 2010). Scholars who focus on this criterion tend to be concerned with accounting for variation in the incumbent’s ability to institutionalize how offices and state resources are shared among ruling elites, in the ruling party’s ability to co-opt or “delegitimize” potential competitors for power, and in the enduring weakness of opposition parties and other organizations (e.g. Pempel 1975; Levite and Tarrow 1983; Slater 2010).

6. Dominance through a Divided Opposition

Finally, a number of scholars include the criterion that the opposition be divided among multiple parties, typically distributed across the ideological spectrum and to either side of the incumbent party. Like some of the others, this criterion is often phrased in ways that are transparently tailored to fit the country the researcher is focused on: for instance, in Canada, that the “main opposition party” wins less than 33% of the vote (Pinard 1967: 359 fn. 6) or that there are at least three parties and one “regularly” receives at least 40% of the vote (Jackson and Jackson 2009: 385). But considered from a comparative perspective, this criterion is essentially about the relative sizes and distributions of parties in the party system, and therefore has much in common with the first criterion, dominance through numbers. The dominant party wins a plurality of seats by a “large margin” over the next closest party—anywhere from 10 percent more to twice as much or more—and none of the multiple opposition parties has much prospect of becoming the largest party any time soon (Blondel 1972: 103; Sartori 1976: 193-4; Ware 1996: 159; Anckar 1997: 250; cf. Abedi and Schneider 2006: 3-4).

Conclusion

There are, then, at minimum six separate criteria that have been used to characterize a dominant party system, although to my knowledge no one has included all six in a single definition. More typically, scholars have in mind only two or three of these criteria—but they differ on which ones indicate dominance.

The lack of a consistent definition of “dominance” means that different studies have produced remarkably disparate candidates for dominant parties. For instance, as I

noted earlier, it is hard to think of two countries whose political institutions and traditions are more different than Britain and China, yet both have been said to have “dominant party systems” in separate studies in the last few years (for instance, compare Margetts and Smyth [1994] and Boucek [1998] to Friedman [2008]). Indeed, one wonders about the analytical utility of a term used to describe the party system in both one of the world’s oldest democracies and its most prominent single-party autocracy. If the concept is to be at all useful, then, it is imperative that a study of dominant party systems be precise, consistent, and transparent in specifying the measures used to identify cases.

1.5. Duration in Power: The Key Outcome of Interest

In this study, my response to this panoply of competing definitions has been to focus on what appears to be the central unexplained feature of dominant party systems: the extraordinary longevity of the incumbent. That is, of the six criteria listed above, only the second—*duration in power*—is uniquely puzzling given our current understanding of party organizations, party systems, and electoral competition. In isolation, none of the others focuses on a feature so at odds with the conventional wisdom that competitive elections should eventually result in the removal of incumbents from office.

Other criteria of dominance either describe features of the party system that are already well-understood or that appear less central to the conceptual puzzle. For instance, the questions surrounding “dominance through numbers” have actually received sustained attention from a broad array of comparative researchers since at least Duverger

(1959 [1954]; see also Rae 1967; Laakso and Taagepera 1979; Grofman and Lijphart 1986; Taagepera and Shugart 1989; Lijphart 1994, 1999; Cox 1997; Shugart and Wattenberg 2001). Thanks to this work, we now have a good understanding of how party systems are shaped by the electoral rules and social structure of different countries, so that there is nothing especially mysterious at this point about a party controlling a legislative supermajority in a place like Britain. We know, for example, that the percentage of the seats a given party wins is typically a function of three things: the number of seats up for election in each district, each party's percentage of the vote, and the more or less mechanical conversion of one into the other. Granted, the process through which votes are translated into seats can be complicated in many ways by a wide range of district magnitudes and the peculiarities of how they are drawn, electoral thresholds, different PR formulas, multiple electoral tiers, and other rules; and there remains an active research program in this area (e.g. Golder 2005; Ferrara and Herron 2005; Scheiner 2008; Umeda 2011). But overall, this literature provides a clear consensus that majoritarian electoral systems in which the vote-to-seat conversion tends to be highly disproportional, such as plurality rule in single-member districts, are the most likely to produce outsized majorities for a single party (Blais 2008). In short, by itself, there is nothing particularly odd about a party winning a large legislative majority in majoritarian systems. It is only when *the same party* wins such majorities, election after election, that we have a puzzle.

On a more critical note, unless it is combined with a measure of duration, the “dominance through numbers” criterion can be a misleading way to identify party systems in which one party always wins. As a practical illustration of this point, consider

a typical election outcome in Britain, which several scholars said had a dominant party system from 1979-1997 under the Conservatives (Margetts and Smyth 1994; O’Leary 1994; Boucek 1998) and after 1997 under Labour (Bogaards and Boucek 2010: 2). The fact that, for instance, Britain’s Labour Party won 63% of the seats (418 out of 659) in the 1997 House of Commons election despite winning only 43% of the popular vote is not particularly puzzling: it is a straightforward consequence of the use of plurality rule in single-member districts, many three-way races, and a surge in support for Labour. It does not make much sense in my view to call the party system in Britain a dominant party system after 1997, as a strict numbers criterion requires, when the “dominant” Labour Party had not managed to win power once in the previous four elections.

An even more extreme example is in Jamaica, another country employing first-past-the-post rules to elect its parliament. In 1976, the Jamaican Labour Party (JLP) won only 13 out of 60 seats (22%) with 41% of the vote, while the People’s National Party (PNP) won 47 seats (78%) with 57% of the vote. Four years later, the vote and seat shares were nearly reversed: the JLP won 51 seats with 59% of the vote, while the PNP won nine seats with 41%. A measure of dominance based only on seat share would indicate dominance by the JLP in one term, followed by dominance by the PNP in the next—yet there is still regular party alternation in power. The fact that in this instance one “dominant” party willingly stepped down after losing to the soon-to-be “dominant” opposition party, and that such alternation has occurred regularly throughout Jamaican electoral history, undercuts much of the rationale for calling this party system “dominant” at all (cf. Przeworski et al. 2000: 24).

For two reasons, then, I focus in this study on duration of control of the executive rather than seat or vote share as the key outcome of interest. First, there is a huge literature on the determinants of seat share in a wide array of political systems, and it has clearly advanced our understanding of how some parties win outsized majorities in a given election. By contrast, the most striking feature of dominant parties—their long tenure in power—has been much less studied in the broader literature on party systems. Second, even in the work on dominant party systems, there is a common mismatch between the conceptualization of a dominant party as one that “rules for a long time” and its operationalization as one that “controls most of the seats” (e.g. Sartori 1976; Anckar 1997; Boucek 1998; Giliomee and Simkins 1999; Bogaards 2004; Abedi and Schneider 2006; Caulier and Dumont 2010). Measuring duration explicitly and making it the focus of analysis will go a long way toward addressing this problem.

For similar reasons, I do not include measures of dominance that focus on a party’s bargaining position in coalition formation or on a party’s ability to set the policy agenda. By itself, the fact that one party is essential to any coalition is not particularly distinctive or puzzling—such parties exist in many party systems and are simply a normal part of coalition politics (Laver and Schofield 1990; Laver and Shepsle 1996; Laver 1998). It is only when we observe *the same party* occupying the essential bargaining position term after term that something unusual appears to be going on. Likewise, there has been a great deal of research in recent years on variation across regimes in agenda-setting powers (e.g. Shugart and Carey 1992; Carey and Shugart 1998; Tsebelis 2002; Cox and McCubbins 2005). In both presidential and parliamentary regimes, executives differ a great deal in their power to introduce legislation they favor and exclude legislation they

do not, to alter or veto bills sent to them, to offer amendments or make laws by decree, and so forth. The question of how one party enjoys outsized agenda-setting authority is not much of a mystery unless *the same party* consistently wields that authority—only then do we have a puzzle.

Conversely, the requirement that dominant parties be closely identified with the state and its founding is too limiting if what we really care about is longevity in elected office. For one, there are a number of counterexamples of parties that had no grand “historical mission” and no role in the country’s founding or “period of crisis” but nevertheless controlled the institutions of government for decades. It is a stretch, for instance, to claim that long-lived ruling parties in Canada (Liberals, 1935-1957), Sweden (Social Democrats, 1936-76), Australia (Liberal-Country Party coalition, 1949-1972) and Luxembourg (Christian Socialists, 1979-present) were in power so long because of their close identification with the state. To the extent this criterion is relevant, it is mostly because many dominant parties began as nationalist movements that led the country to independence and left them in a leading position despite the presence of opposition parties and contested elections—a kind of “first-mover advantage” that should eventually fade away as new competitors enter the political market (cf. Tucker 1961; Levite and Tarrow 1983). Moreover, the “state party” criterion appears to conflate descriptive measures with causal variables: are “strong state-party linkages” the explanandum or the explanation? Some authors make arguments that are in effect tautological, as for instance when Pempel defines dominant parties as long-lived ruling parties closely identified with the state, and then explains that dominant parties last so long in power—because of their tight control over the state! (1990: 3-4, 341-344).

The final criterion, divided opposition, is neither necessary nor sufficient for long-term one-party rule. Empirically, it is true that most long-lived ruling parties do compete against more than one opposition party. But this need not be the case. In Botswana, for instance, the ruling Botswana Democratic Party has remained continuously in power since independence, and over most of that period only a single opposition party, the Botswana National Front, has won seats in the parliament. The opposition in parliament was similarly united in a single party during long periods of one-party rule in Trinidad and Tobago (PNM, 1962-1986) and Australia (Liberals, 1949-1972). At the other extreme, a divided opposition is certainly not sufficient for dominance, either—most ruling parties that face multiple opposition parties nevertheless do not endure in power for decades. And finally, once again, opposition divisions are not particularly puzzling without also considering duration. It is not odd for the political parties that lose an election and are shut out of power to be severely divided. What *is* odd is if for decades the same political parties remain divided and in opposition, and the same ruling party benefits.

In conclusion, the definition of dominance that I employ in this study is a “thin” one—it is operationalized simply as time in control of the executive. This approach admittedly simplifies what is a rich and multi-dimensional concept into a single measure, time in power, and captures only part of what is interesting about dominant party systems. However, as I have argued at length above, the term “dominant party” is itself so fluid a concept as to raise fundamentally different questions for different researchers—from why ruling parties are created (Geddes 2007), to why some succeed in institutionalizing spoils sharing (Reuter 2010a) and become especially durable (Magaloni

2006; Slater and Smith 2010), to why some parties win supermajorities in a given election (Boucek 2001), to why opposition parties in such systems are extremist (Greene 2007). Given this, some kind of simplification is necessary in any comparative study of dominance—one simply cannot expect to account for every possible thing that sets dominant party systems apart. Operationalizing dominance as time in power allows me to focus on a feature of ruling parties that has not been systematically explored in the literature, and one that is suitable for quantitative analysis.

1.6. The Dominant Party System: A Working Definition

The level of analysis in this study is the party system. I define a dominant party system as follows:

Dominant party systems are those in which a single party or coalition controls the national executive for an extraordinarily long period of time by regularly winning contested elections.

As noted earlier, I explicitly include ruling parties in both liberal and illiberal regimes—my definition is not limited to contexts with a high degree of political freedom or level of development (cf. Pempel 1990; Gilomee and Simpkins 1999; Magaloni 2006). The following four features distinguish dominant party systems from other party systems.

First, there must be a *political party* that both selects or endorses the regime leader and exists independently of him.¹⁰ It makes little sense to speak of a dominant party system when no ruling party exists. Thus, the leader's authority must depend to a significant degree on the support of other key figures within the party; the party may be firmly under his control, but it serves as an autonomous organization independent from the formal institutions of state. Similarly, the party continues to exist as a functioning organization if the leader dies, retires, or is otherwise deposed.

Second, the incumbent party's control over the offices of state is due in large part to *repeated victories in contested elections*. Coercive or underhanded tactics, of course, are often used to supplement the incumbent party's legal electoral activities and to improve its chances of winning. But at a minimum, the regime's leadership is elected rather than appointed, and it is the officials who hold elected office rather than military, religious, or dynastic figures who wield ultimate power. The level of coercion also cannot be so great as to eliminate even the appearance of a choice for voters. Thus, elections are usually held at regularly scheduled intervals or are called in accordance with legal requirements, opposition parties and candidates are not banned, multiple-candidate contestation is allowed and does occur, and opposition candidates do win some races—but the incumbent party nevertheless routinely wins either majorities or enough seats to remain the leading party in government.

Third, the incumbent party *wields national executive authority*. At a minimum, a member of the dominant party always occupies the prime minister's office in

¹⁰ I use the masculine pronoun because dominant party leaders are almost always male—out of several dozen parties and many more leaders, the only exceptions I have come across are Indira Gandhi, who led the Congress Party in India beginning in 1967, and Golda Meir, who led the Israeli Labor Party in the early 1970s.

parliamentary regimes and the presidency in presidential ones. These offices give their occupants principal authority over the most powerful institutions of the state, including the military, the security services, and much if not all of the national bureaucracy. A party cannot be dominant if it does not control these institutions. Nor is it necessarily checked if it does not control a legislative majority; in parliamentary regimes, the executive may be controlled by the largest party in a coalition, while in presidential regimes, the executive may still wield broad authority without a majority in Congress. For a party's tenure in power to end, it must relinquish executive and not just legislative control.

Finally, the incumbent party rules for an *extraordinary period of time*. For present, descriptive purposes, I define a dominant party as one that controls the executive for at least 20 consecutive years. This threshold, although admittedly arbitrary, has a couple advantages to recommend it. First, it is a conventional one: in their recent work on dominant party systems, both Magaloni (2006: 37) and Greene (2007: 16) adopt this same cutoff for identifying dominant parties. Greene justifies this threshold as an approximation of “one generation” in politics, arguing that it best “capture[s] the notion that a dominant party system is a stable pattern of inter-party competition (i.e. a dominant party equilibrium), but [is] not so restrictive that it makes the category disappear” (16). It also has the advantage of approximating four consecutive terms in the typical Westminster parliamentary system (at five years for a full term) and five terms (at four years a term) in the US and many Latin American presidential systems—thus 20 years is a natural “break point” at which we expect many incumbents in both presidential and parliamentary systems to have to face the electorate. More convincing, perhaps, is the

empirical finding I report in Chapter 2: that across all electorally contested regimes, 20 years is close to the 90th percentile for ruling party duration in power—that is, only about ten percent of all ruling parties last longer. Thus, 20 years does seem to be a substantively meaningful threshold beyond which ruling party durability appears increasingly extraordinary. Finally, it is worth reiterating that I use this cutoff mainly for descriptive purposes, to identify the party systems with the longest-lived incumbent parties. In contrast, for *tests* of the explanations that I develop in this study, I dispense with a threshold approach altogether and employ a continuous measure of duration.

1.6. The Questions of Dominance

Existing Causal Models of Dominant Party Systems

Existing work on dominant party systems asks three distinct questions. The first is about dominant party *origins*: under what conditions do dominant party systems emerge? (e.g. Tucker 1961; Huntington 1968: 420-433; Reuter 2010a; Slater and Smith 2010). The second is about dominant party *persistence*: how is the dominant party system maintained once established? (e.g. Arian and Barnes 1974; Pempel 1975; Magaloni 2006; Scheiner 2006; Greene 2007). The third is about dominant party *defeat*: what leads to the breakdown of the dominant party system? (e.g. Levite and Tarrow 1983; Solinger 2001; Greene 2007; Aldrich et al. n.d.).

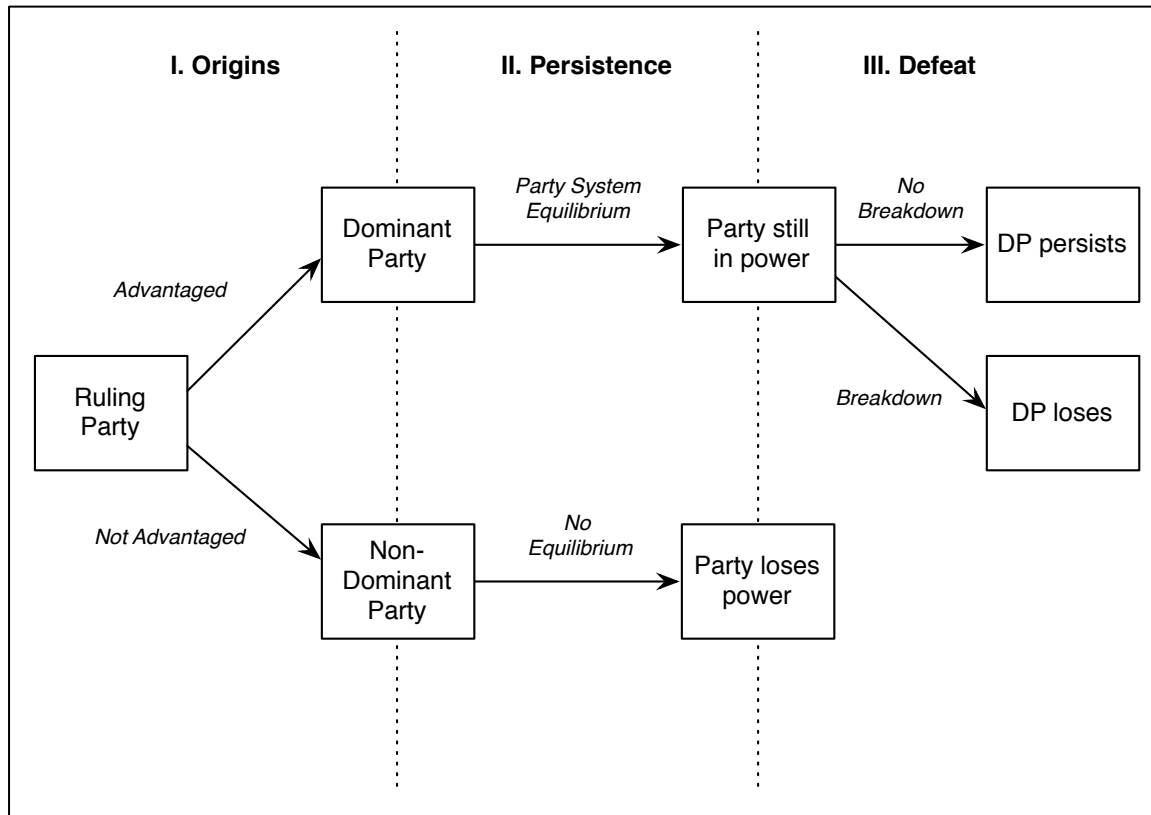


FIGURE 1.2. THE CONVENTIONAL CAUSAL MODEL OF DOMINANCE

Most of this scholarship treats these as questions with discrete answers: the mechanisms through which dominance is produced should not necessarily (or even likely) be the same as those through which dominance is *reproduced*, and the factors leading to dominant party defeat should be distinct from those that initially sustain the party in power (cf. Greene 2007: 10). The causal process of interest is then modeled as shown in Figure 1.2. Some ruling parties possess a set of characteristics that make them “advantaged” in electoral competition, and they in turn acquire a leading position in the party system; other ruling parties are less advantaged and hold power in a more competitive party system (I). The advantaged parties remain indefinitely in power in dominant party systems, while the non-advantaged parties are defeated after a shorter,

“normal” period, allowing us to distinguish between the two party system types (II). Finally, after a much longer period of time, a new causal factor arises to disrupt the equilibrium in some of the dominant party systems, leading to dominant party defeat in these cases (III).

Researchers who have this model in mind make several implicit assumptions about the nature of dominant party systems. The first is that, once established, dominant party systems will persist indefinitely in a kind of competitive equilibrium, until and unless there is some kind of external shock. The intellectual task should then be one of identifying the relevant actors in each party, estimating their preferences and capabilities, and demonstrating how these lead to behavior that sustains an equilibrium in the party system. Second, researchers who adopt this model tend to assume that the dominant party system exists in a discrete “state of the world,” and that it can be clearly distinguished from preceding and subsequent states in which competition for power plays out in fundamentally different ways. Thus, most previous work looks for explanations for transitions between these states: dominant party defeat indicates a breakdown of the preexisting equilibrium, and the causal process that leads to defeat should therefore be distinct from that which drives the creation of the equilibrium and that which maintains it. Finally, this model requires that researchers be able to distinguish *ex ante* between party systems that are in a dominant party equilibrium and those that are not. In practice, most have used some sort of longevity threshold to differentiate truly “dominant” ruling parties from others.

Problems with the Conventional Model

I do not adopt this causal model for this project. I avoid it for several reasons. First and foremost, it is not self-evident that all dominant party systems exist for a time in a state of competitive equilibrium. Indeed, evidence I present in Chapter 2 shows that this assumption is *not* realistic for many party systems with a long-lived ruling party: most of the parties that scholars call dominant actually helped found or presided over a transition to an electorally contested regime, and therefore were the first parties to hold power in the new regime. As a consequence, the typical party system at the beginning of these regimes was in a state of considerable flux, as parties could organize and compete openly in elections for the first time. Rather than being in equilibrium, most of these party systems began with a profound shock: the introduction of multi-party contested elections. A better analogy for a dominant party system is to that of a formerly monopolized market newly-opened to competition, where the outcome of interest is the rate at which competitors gain market share.

A second problem with the equilibrium model arises when we try to identify dominant party systems. How are we to distinguish between cases in which there is a “true” dominant party system in stable equilibrium from those in which one party has just “gotten lucky” in several consecutive elections? The most straightforward way is to adopt a longevity threshold, such as Greene (2007: 15-16) and Magaloni’s (2006: 36-37) 20 years: ruling parties lasting in office beyond this threshold are “dominant” and therefore exist in a party system equilibrium, while those leaving power earlier were never in an equilibrium. This distinction is crucial to draw, because the equilibrium approach effectively requires the outcome of interest to be dichotomous: either a country

has a dominant party system, or it does not. Thus, the validity of empirical tests of these theories rests heavily on the decision rule used to identify party systems in equilibrium.

To see the problems this identification procedure may cause for statistical inference, consider an example. The threshold approach means that we have to assume that when Congress in India held power for 30 consecutive years (1947-1977), the party system was in a period of equilibrium, but when the Conservative Party in Britain did so for 18 years (1979-1997) it was not. A glance at changes in seat share over time, however, suggests precisely the opposite conclusion: after a high-water mark in 1957, the Congress Party lost seats to splinter parties throughout its time in office, while the Conservative Party in Britain held nearly as many seats after its last electoral win (336 in 1992) as it did in its first (339 in 1979). If we had to pick the party system that was more likely to be in equilibrium, Britain's looks like the stronger candidate.

As this example suggests, relying only on a longevity threshold will almost certainly lead us to classify some party systems incorrectly as being in or out of equilibrium. If we want to draw valid statistical inferences about the causes of dominant party defeat, then, we must be prepared to deal with both false positives—ruling parties we call “dominant” even though the seat shares of parties are in flux—and false negatives—ruling parties we exclude even though their seat shares are stable. The false negatives are likely to bias results against tests of significance—some dominant party systems will be incorrectly coded as non-dominant, making the two sets of cases appear more similar than they actually are. The false positives, however, are more worrisome: if many parties in power more than 20 years are not in a competitive equilibrium, then we

may improperly attribute dominant party defeat to factors that in actuality have nothing to do with equilibrium breakdown.

The third reason to avoid the previous model of causality is that the key unresolved puzzle is about *duration in power*. The concept of dominance invites the use of duration analysis: it is important to understand “not only *if* something happens, but also *when* something happens” (Box-Steffensmeier and Jones 2004: 1). That is, rather than trying to identify, measure, and account for movement between discrete states of the world, a more natural way to model the underlying data-generating process is as the accumulation of hazards over time. The operative research question then becomes: *what factors affect the rate at which ruling parties lose power?* And the causes of dominance that we should seek to identify are those that systematically lower ruling party hazard rates and lengthen expected duration in power.

My Causal Model

For these reasons I adopt an alternative causal model in this study, shown in Figure 1.3. In this model, there are only two distinct causal processes that need to be explained. Ruling parties begin their time in power (I) either with many electoral advantages over their competitors—a highly *asymmetric* electoral environment—or with few—a more *symmetric* environment. Once in power, ruling parties suffer from the decay of these advantages over time (II), raising the likelihood that the party will lose.

Framed this way, dominant parties raise only two distinct research questions:

1. *How do dominant parties originate?* In other words, what produces the large electoral advantages that these parties enjoy over others in the party system?
2. *What determines the rate at which ruling party advantages decline?* That is, most dominant parties begin with massive electoral advantages over their competitors in the party system. The natural end-point of the party system's evolution is for these advantages to disappear, and for the ruling party to be defeated. Thus, why does this development occur more slowly in some party systems than in others?

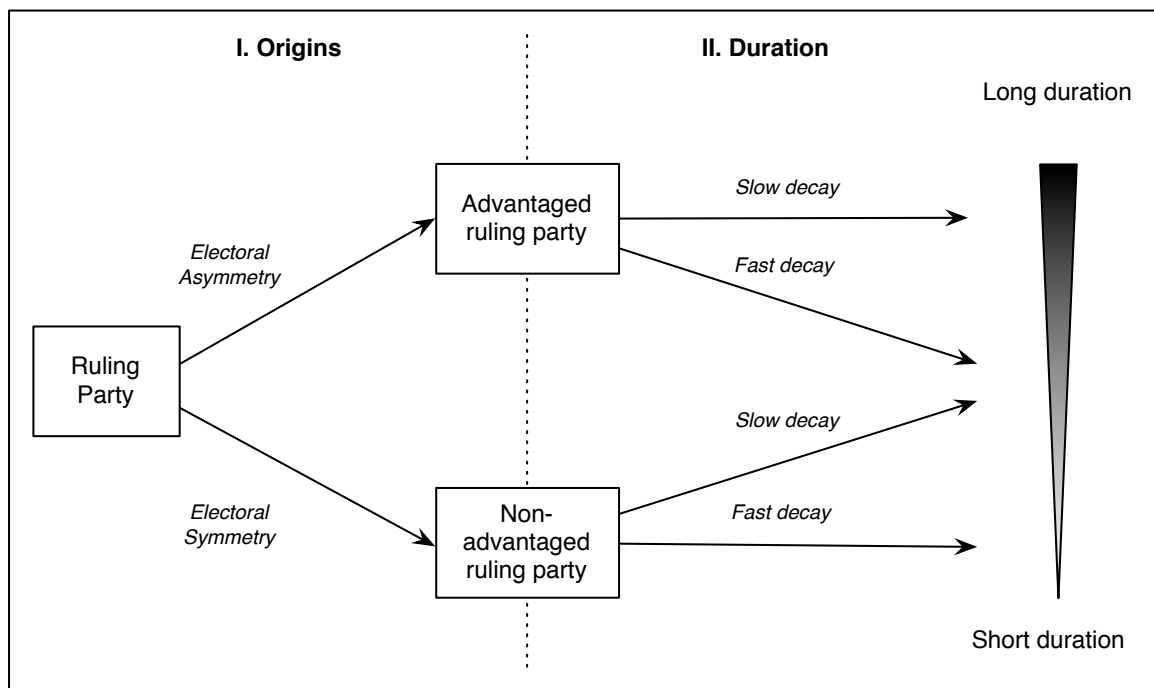


FIGURE 1.3. MY CAUSAL MODEL OF DOMINANCE

Note that this model eliminates the additional question in the previous approach: once initial advantages fade, the ruling party is *expected* to lose. Dominant party defeat

in itself does not need to be explained—instead what needs to be accounted for is variation in the time elapsed beforehand. Thus, since duration is the central feature of my conception of dominance, *the main dependent variable in this study is the amount of time a party remains in office.*

Duration Analysis: The Requirements for Valid Inference

Adopting duration as the main dependent variable raises a distinct set of methodological concerns that have not received much attention in previous work on dominant party systems.¹¹ First, a study of ruling party duration needs to *avoid selection on the dependent variable*. Previous studies have tended to compare only long-lived ruling parties to one another (e.g. Pempel 1990; Giliomee and Simpkins 1999; Magaloni 2006; Greene 2007, 2010). But including only cases of “successful”—i.e. long-lived—ruling parties in the analysis eliminates much of the available information about ruling party duration and precludes the testing of rival explanations of ruling party persistence (King et al. 1994: 128-139; Geddes 2003: 89-130). In other words, if we want to know why dominant parties occur in some times and places and not others, then we also need to look at the instances in which dominance *does not occur* as well as the instances in which it does (cf. Reuter 2010a).

Second, a study of ruling party duration requires careful consideration of *how to define the universe of cases* under study. Under what conditions is it hypothetically

¹¹ The most relevant study employing duration analysis that I have come across is by Maeda and Nishikawa (2006), who look at ruling party duration in 65 democracies. The phrase “dominant party” appears nowhere in their article, however. My dataset also covers a much larger set of regimes, including semi-presidential democracies and competitive authoritarian regimes that were excluded from their analysis.

possible to observe dominant parties emerge? I have defined dominant parties as occurring in democracies and electoral autocracies, but not closed autocracies or unstable regimes where opposition parties do not have opportunities to take power by winning elections. In order to draw valid inferences about what leads to long-lived ruling parties, then, we need to identify *all ruling parties* that held power in democracies and electoral autocracies, whether or not they became dominant! The distinction between electoral and closed autocracies is a particularly important one, as it separates those regimes in which dominant parties are possible from those in which they are not. And because this distinction is not commonly made in existing quantitative research, it is one that we need to be especially careful about delineating.

Third, claims about the determinants of ruling party longevity should more properly be phrased and tested as *probabilistic hypotheses rather than deterministic ones*. Previous work has often tended to treat a single disconfirming case as sufficient evidence that a hypothesized causal relationship does not exist. For instance, consider the question of whether dominant party systems are more likely to occur in some types of electoral systems than in others. One of the generalizations Pempel drew from the case studies in *Uncommon Democracies* was that a multi-party system fostered by proportional representation (PR) was a necessary condition for the existence of dominant party systems (1990: 338-9). As a deterministic statement, this claim is clearly false. By his own definition, Pempel overlooked a number of “dominant” parties that existed in majoritarian electoral systems even at the time he wrote, including those in India, Trinidad and Tobago, the Bahamas, and Canada. And several dominant parties have existed with only a single major party in opposition, including Botswana, Trinidad and

Tobago, the Bahamas, and Australia. For this reason, Greene (2007: 23-24, 257) among other authors has rejected electoralist arguments to explain dominant party longevity.

However, Pempel's argument is not so easily dismissed if it is stated in probabilistic terms—and there is no good reason not to do so (cf. Sekhon 2004). A more reasonable test of this proposition would compare ruling party duration in PR systems to that of non-PR systems and see if there is a statistically significant and substantively meaningful difference. Finding a single instance of dominance in a non-PR regime does not by itself falsify the proposition that dominant parties occur more frequently under PR electoral rules. And our empirical strategy for testing causal claims needs to allow for this possibility.

To sum up, my research approach differs in at least three ways from previous work on dominant party systems. First, I am concerned chiefly with accounting for duration in power: questions about ruling party seat share, bargaining position, agenda-setting power, ties to the state, integration of elites into the ruling party, and divisions among the opposition are all of interest only insofar as they shed some light on ruling party longevity. Second, I focus on two causal processes: the creation of ruling parties with massive electoral advantages, and the decline of these advantages over time. That a ruling party has lost does not in itself require explanation; the time it lasted before it lost does. Third, I pursue a new empirical strategy for testing my arguments about ruling party longevity: I gather data on all ruling parties in democracies and electoral autocracies, and I examine how the posited causes of dominant party system change affect ruling party hazard rates over time.

1.7. Overview of the Remaining Chapters

In this chapter I reviewed the literature on dominant parties and dominant party systems. I found much of the existing scholarship to be focused on one or a handful of cases; the comparative work that does exist is not very systematic. In particular, *dominance* turns out to be a very fuzzy concept: there is little agreement about whether “dominance” should refer to the regime, the party system, or the ruling party; be limited to democracies, autocracies, or both; and refer to total control of the political system, large seat and/or vote shares, extraordinary longevity in office, or something else. In response, I argued that (1) dominance is best conceptualized as a *party system* phenomenon rather than a regime or party-level one; (2) dominant party systems occur in both *democracies and electoral autocracies*, but not closed autocracies; and (3) the outstanding puzzle of dominance is one of *duration in executive office*: why do some ruling parties endure in power for decades despite facing regular, contested, multi-party elections in which they could lose? This question will motivate the rest of the study.

Chapter 2 addresses the question of how dominant party systems originate. One of the persistent problems in existing work on this topic is selection on the dependent variable: most comparative research compares dominant party systems to each other rather than to cases of non-dominance. In contrast, I collect observations on all ruling parties holding office in electorally-contested regimes (democracies and electoral autocracies) between 1950 and 2006. Using this data, I find that the longest-lived 10 percent of all ruling parties lasted at least 20 consecutive years in office. Using this cutoff, I identify about 40 dominant party systems in the postwar era. I also find that most of these dominant parties were “first-movers” in the party system: they were the

first ruling parties to hold office at the beginning of the regime. Thus, the modal pattern of “dominance” is for one party to start in office with an advantage over all its competitors, and for the party system gradually to become more competitive over time.

Chapter 3 responds to these findings by presenting a simple theory of party system development in new electorally-contested regimes. I introduce the concept of party system asymmetry and discuss how it relates to expected ruling party duration in power. I then discuss three mechanisms through which asymmetry is produced: differences between parties in *mass partisanship*, *spatial positioning*, and *electoral coordination*. The typical pattern in new regimes is for party system asymmetry to decline gradually, as opposition parties develop their own partisans, become more ideologically flexible, and get better at strategic coordination in elections. This process can be retarded or hastened by other features of the regime, including a ruling party resource advantage, the use of state repression against the opposition, and the underlying social cleavage structure.

Chapter 4 considers how formal institutions modify the effect of each mechanism on party system asymmetry. I consider three institutional features: the *electoral system*, the *type of executive*, and the *degree of centralization*. The electoral system turns out to produce countervailing effects on party system asymmetry: the same electoral rules that make the effect of coordination asymmetry larger also make the effect of spatial positioning smaller, and vice versa. Thus, dominant party systems can occur under a wide array of electoral rules. By contrast, the type of executive matters a great deal for ruling party survival: party system asymmetry matters much more in competing for parliamentary executives than presidential ones. As a consequence, I predict that long-

lived one-party rule is much less likely in presidential than parliamentary regimes. I make a similar prediction for the degree of political centralization: dominant parties are most likely in highly centralized parliamentary regimes, while they are least likely in decentralized presidential ones.

Chapter 5 exploits the dataset on ruling party duration to provide more sophisticated tests of the argument in previous chapters. I estimate a fully parameterized model of ruling party hazard rates and find strong support for several of the predictions of the theory. Most significantly, hazard rates in presidential and parliamentary regimes have substantially different shapes over time: while parliamentary executives are initially at greater risk of defeat than presidential ones, this risk declines over time while rising for presidential incumbents. Thus, long-lived ruling parties are indeed more likely in parliamentary than presidential regimes. The model estimates also support the claim that repression lowers hazard rates, and that ruling parties which begin with a large first-mover advantage also last longer in office, all else equal.

Chapter 6 illustrates the theory in action in the case of Taiwan, where the ruling KMT initially benefited from a highly asymmetric party system in the first multi-party elections. However, two features of Taiwan's political system worked to reduce this advantage. First, Taiwan's ethnic cleavage structure placed the KMT at a disadvantage relative to the opposition Democratic Progressive Party: while the KMT had to maintain the support of both mainlanders and "native" Taiwanese, the DPP could focus its appeals exclusively on the majority of the electorate that spoke Taiwanese. The emergence of Taiwan's future vis-à-vis mainland China as the central cleavage in Taiwanese politics contributed to a serious split in the KMT's base at the same time that it aided the growth

of partisan support for the DPP. Second, the use of presidentialism made competition for the executive more candidate-centric and reduced the importance of the KMT's partisan, positioning, and coordination advantages.

CHAPTER 2

PATTERNS OF DOMINANCE: INCUMBENT DURATION IN ELECTORALLY-CONTESTED REGIMES, 1950-2006

“It is a capital mistake to theorize before one has data. Insensibly one begins to twist facts to suit theories, instead of theories to suit facts.”

--Sherlock Holmes, “A Scandal in Bohemia”

2.1. Introduction

The least-well understood feature of dominant party systems is the ruling party’s extraordinary longevity in elected office. Part of the task of improving our understanding is in proposing better explanations; another part is in adjudicating between competing explanations. But as the epigraph suggests, before theorizing or testing, we first need a good sense of the facts: what actually needs to be explained? In this chapter, I present those facts. Drawing on an original dataset of ruling party turnover in all sovereign, multi-party electorally-contested regimes in the world between 1950 and 2006, I describe the frequency and patterns of ruling party duration and show how dominant parties compare to their shorter-lived counterparts. These data serve to motivate the theory developed in Part II of the dissertation. I also venture an explanation for the origins of long-lived ruling parties: ruling party advantages over competitors in the party system are usually a consequence of having founded the regime in which they are competing.

The chapter is organized as follows. I first detail how I deal with several important case selection and measurement concerns in constructing my sample of ruling parties. The second section presents a first cut of the data, describing the patterns of incumbent duration and situating dominant parties within the larger set of ruling parties in democracies and electoral autocracies—what I term “electorally contested regimes” (ECRs). In the third section, I show that most dominant parties began as the first incumbents in such regimes, and that these lasted longer on average than did subsequent ruling parties. In the fourth section I discuss the concept of *first-mover advantage* in party systems, arguing that advantages in (1) partisan support, (2) party organization, and (3) control over the formation of the regime produce clear electoral victories for some first incumbents, giving them a leading position in the party system at the beginning of the contested period. In the fifth section, I introduce a simple measure of first-mover advantage and use it to identify “advantaged” first incumbents. These incumbents, I argue, are the ones best positioned to endure for an extraordinary period of time in power. Section six concludes.

2.2. Identifying the Universe of Cases: Sample Selection and Coding Issues

To identify the universe of cases in which dominant party systems could have occurred, we first need to decide on the set of countries that featured contested, multi-party elections as the primary path to power and the time periods in each for which this was true. To make this determination, I examined the procedures for selecting the de facto executive power-holders in all independent states that existed between January

1950 and December 2006.¹² My objective was to identify the time periods in each regime during which (1) incumbent executives were at a non-zero risk of losing power as the result of an election outcome, and (2) election winners controlled executive power. A simple typology of regimes can help clarify how I made these decisions.

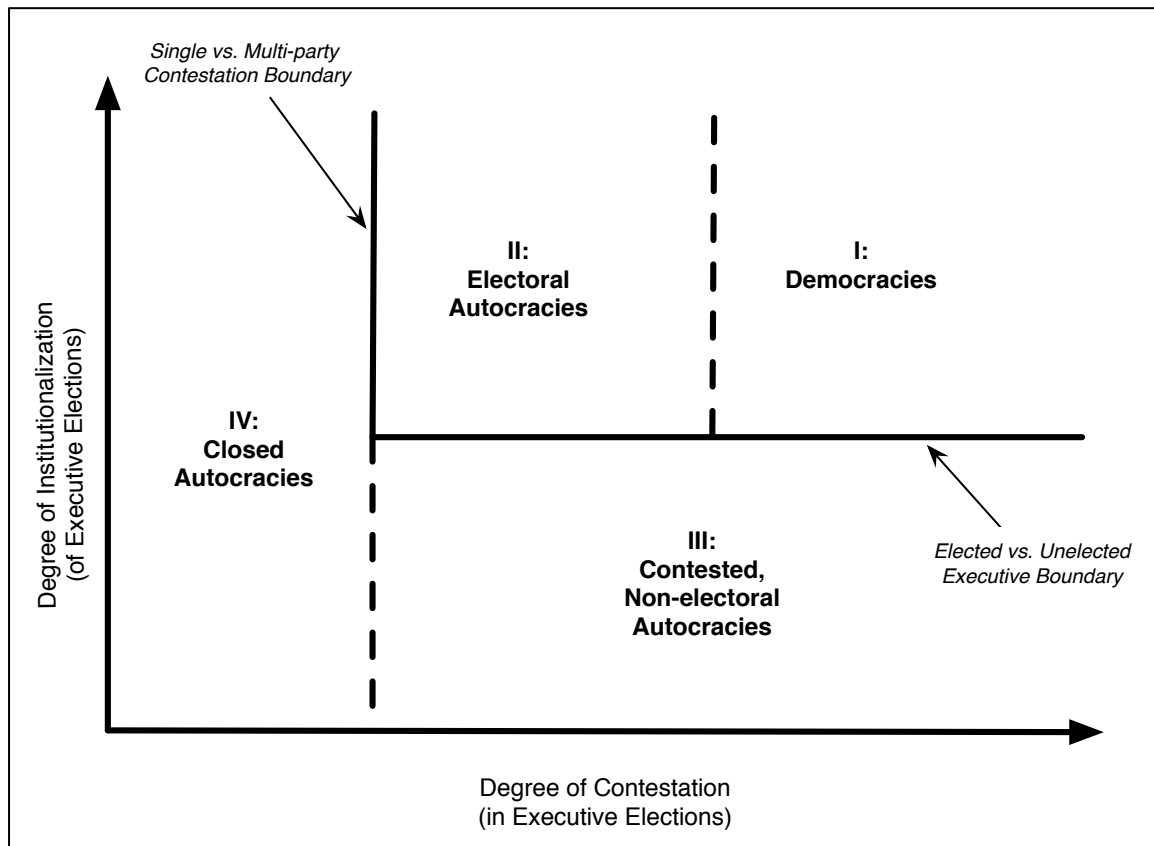


FIGURE 2.1. REGIME TYPES USED TO DEFINE THE UNIVERSE OF RULING PARTY CASES

¹² The reasons for these start and end dates are largely practical. Available data on the dependent variable—ruling party duration—are much less complete before the end of World War II, as are data on economic performance, electoral system features, and many other possible explanatory variables. (See, for instance, the range of data in the Penn World Tables.) It is also considerably more difficult in earlier periods to identify the procedures through which executives were selected and to assess whether winning an election was the main route to power.

Figure 2.1 shows four regime types in a two-dimensional space organized from most contested executive election to least, and from most institutionalized executive election to least. By *contestation*, I mean the degree to which competition for executive office is open to multiple candidates and parties, and to which non-incumbents are able to make appeals for votes. The key boundary to establish is between regimes in which the formation of new political parties for the purpose of contesting elections is both legal and possible in practice and those in which it is not, represented by the solid vertical line dividing Regions II and IV in the figure.

A couple of examples will illustrate how contestation was coded in cases close to this boundary. Consider first the New Order era of Suharto (1965-1998) in Indonesia. This regime featured three legal parties—the ruling party GOLKAR, the secular and Christian PDI, and the Islamic PPP—but the latter two were organized by and firmly under the grip of the ruling party, and all other opposition parties were banned. Thus, Indonesia from 1965 until 1998 clearly falls to the left of the single/multi-party contestation boundary. By contrast, over the past two decades in Turkey (1987-present), two separate incarnations of the major Islamist party in the country have been banned by court order: the Welfare Party and its successor the Virtue Party. Nevertheless, because these were not blanket bans against all opposition parties, and because the membership of these parties was able to reconstitute itself into the current Welfare and Justice Party (AKP) and win power, Turkey falls to the right of the single/multi-party contestation boundary beginning in 1987. (The detailed coding rules are described in the appendix to this chapter.)

By *institutionalization*, I mean the degree to which the struggle for power is resolved through regularly scheduled elections that effectively determine who controls the formal executive offices of the state. The key boundary here demarcates regimes in which electoral results determined control of the executive from those in which they did not, represented by the solid horizontal line dividing Region III from Regions I and II. A good example of a regime that falls below this boundary is contemporary Iran (1979-present). Iran in the last decade has held regularly scheduled, hotly-contested, multi-candidate presidential elections. However, the president of Iran is not the most powerful executive figure in the Islamic Republic of Iran; the Ayatollah Khamenei is, and his position is not subject to popular election.¹³ Therefore, Iran clearly falls below the elected/unelected executive boundary. The same is true for many other Middle Eastern regimes: in Syria, Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Oman, and the UAE, among others, executive authority is primarily in the hands of unelected officials, despite the existence in some cases of competitive races for legislative offices. By contrast, in most of the constitutional monarchies of western Europe, such as the Netherlands, real executive authority is vested in the office of the prime minister and her cabinet rather than the monarch, and the procedures that determine who controls the prime ministership are well-established and clearly linked to electoral outcomes. Therefore, the Netherlands falls above the elected/unelected executive boundary, as do Norway, Sweden, Luxembourg, Liechtenstein, Britain, Spain, and Belgium.

¹³ For instance, see Neil MacFarquar, "A Divine Wind Blows Against Iran's President," *The New York Times*, Thursday, June 23, 2011, p. A4+.

With these differences spelled out, we can now identify the regions in Figure 2.1 in which dominant party systems can occur. Regimes in Region I are *democracies*. Power-holders are not only chosen through regular, contested elections, but these are largely free and fair as well: there are few or no restrictions on opposition candidacies, dissemination of information, freedom of association, or citizen participation.

Regimes in Region II are *electoral autocracies*. They also feature regular, contested elections, but these generally violate one or more of the requirements for democracy. They nevertheless do not experience military intervention in politics or other non-institutionalized means of leader turnover (Schedler 2002; Levitsky and Way 2002, 2010). Prominent contemporary examples include Belarus, Kenya, Malaysia, Russia, Tanzania, Venezuela, and Singapore.

Regimes in Region III are contested but *non-electoral autocracies*. They may also feature formal electoral means for the allocation of power, but these rules do not generally govern how leadership turnover occurs. Regimes may fall into this category for a wide variety of reasons: losing candidates do not respect the outcome of elections and refuse to relinquish power or commit blatant fraud; leadership contests are typically resolved through non-electoral means (coups, rebellions, popular protests, etc.) rather than at the ballot box; formal leaders are elected, but unelected officials retain significant executive power and the ability to override decisions of elected officials; the country is not fully sovereign or is governed by foreign powers; or there is no effective central state at all to control. Contemporary examples of non-electoral autocracies include countries as different as Ivory Coast and Equatorial Guinea, Kyrgyzstan and Thailand, Jordan and Iran, Bosnia-Herzegovina and East Timor, and Somalia and Libya.

In the final category, Region IV, fall *closed autocracies*. These are regimes that do not even make a pretense of choosing their leadership through contested multi-party elections. Included here are single-party states that ban all opposition parties, military dictatorships, theocracies, and absolute monarchies. Contemporary examples include China, North Korea, Myanmar, Saudi Arabia, and Brunei.

Together, Regions I and II contain all regimes where winning contested, multi-party elections is widely accepted as the primary route to power. In the interest of brevity, I will call the union of these two regime types *electorally-contested regimes*, or ECRs. Dominant party systems as I have defined them can occur only in ECRs, and the relevant comparison cases where dominant party systems are not present are also to be found only in these regimes.

In constructing the sample of ruling parties, then, the first challenge is to differentiate between cases in ECRs—Regions I and II—to be included in the dataset, and those in Regions III or IV to be excluded. This distinction is best drawn at the regime rather than the country level: many countries do not fit cleanly on either side of this division, most often because at different points in their history the regime changes. Thus, this determination also requires specifying the period the country-regime remained in Regions I or II. For instance, the regime in Kenya first became an electoral autocracy (moving from Region IV to Region II) in December 1992, when the first multi-party election for president was held; prior to that time, opposition candidates were not allowed to contest the presidency, so the regime was a single-party autocracy. Observations of ruling party duration in power for Kenya thus begin with December 1992.

With the set of ECRs identified, we can then turn to measuring ruling party duration in power. Each ruling party constitutes a case, and the outcome of interest is the ruling party's total time in power measured in months. That is, the dependent variable is the length of every unique period of partisan control of the executive in all democracies and electoral autocracies.

To make the determinations about regime type and to identify ruling parties and their duration in power, I drew from a variety of sources. No single existing dataset was sufficient by itself for this classification task.¹⁴ In response, I developed my own set of decision rules and used these to code ruling party duration in electorally-contested regimes. To ensure that the cases were coded as uniformly and consistently as possible, I examined the actual political and electoral histories of each country over the last 60 years. My main sources in this endeavor were the series of elections handbooks edited by Dieter Nohlen (Nohlen et al. 1999; Nohlen et al. 2001; Nohlen 2005; Nohlen 2010) and various encyclopedias of political parties of the world (Ameringer 1992; Delury 1999; Sagar 2009). When these sources were unclear about the stability of the regime, the process of executive selection, or the quality of elections, I cross-checked these against coding from Polity IV, the Database of Political Indicators (DPI), the Center for Systemic Peace (CSP) database of Coup d'Etat Events, and in some cases with country-specific

¹⁴ For instance, the Executive Contestation variable (*eiec*) in the Database of Political Institutions (DPI) comes close to capturing the single-party/multi-party distinction, but the DPI data only extend back to 1975. I also came across several cases that appeared to be coded inconsistently on this variable (e.g. Kenya vs. Egypt). The Polity IV dataset did not contain a single measure of either contestation or institutionalization that adequately captured these dimensions, although several variables (e.g. *parcomp*, *xrreg*, *xrcomp*) proved useful in cross-checking my initial assessments from the case histories. Most other datasets that code between regime types have been focused on the difference between democracies and everything else, rather than ECRs and everything else (e.g. Maeda and Nishikawa 2006, Przeworski et al.'s ACLP). Levitsky and Way (2010) attempt something along these lines, but their analysis is limited to post-Cold-War regimes and does not systematically record dates when regimes or ruling parties changed.

sources. Data on leadership and ruling party turnover were obtained from the Zarate's Political Collections (ZPC) website.

The individual coding rules along with the list of included regimes and their start and end months have been consigned to the appendix. There are four elements of the coding process worth highlighting here, however: how I deal with regime changes in a country; how I measure executive control; my criteria for *partisan* (as opposed to non-partisan or personalist) incumbents; and my focus on the national (as opposed to provincial or local) level.

Adjusting for Regime Changes

Counting the beginning and end of each ruling party's duration in power is non-trivial. One challenge is in deciding how to treat ruling parties that endured through a regime change—that is, that began in closed autocracies (Region IV) which later moved into the electoral autocracy or democracy category (Regions II or I). To address this challenge, I recorded both the time at which the party initially came to power (the ruling party “birth”) and the time at which it first faced contested multi-party elections (the beginning of the “at risk” period in the new ECR). Duration in power can then be measured in two ways: by total time in power or by total time “at risk” of an election loss. For parties that came to power in regimes that were already electoral autocracies or democracies, these values are the same.

In this study, *tenure at risk of electoral defeat* rather than total time in power is the primary dependent variable. One reason is that the causal questions raised by dominant parties are really about duration in ECRs, where winning contested, multi-party

elections is the main path to power. It is only after ruling parties move into the multi-party period that we have a reason to wonder why they have not lost—it is hard indeed to lose an election when there is no opponent! In contrast, most work on leadership duration in autocratic regimes has tended to take as the dependent variable leader turnover *under any conditions and for whatever reason*, including defeat in an election but also intra-party leadership struggles, coups, putsches, invasions, deaths from natural causes or assassinations, civil wars, and popular uprisings (e.g. Bienen and van de Walle 1991; Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2004; Gandhi and Pzeworski 2007; Cox 2009)—or, alternatively, the breakdown of the regime itself (e.g. Geddes 1999; Smith 2005; Brownlee 2007). My focus on the subset of ruling parties at risk of electoral defeat complements this previous work but allows for a consideration of the wide variation *within* electorally-contested regimes.

The second challenge presented by regime change is how to count ruling party duration when the movement is in the opposite direction, from Regions I or II into Regions III or IV. This change could occur, for instance, as the result of a military coup, a civil war or foreign invasion, a popular uprising that deposes the incumbent, or the declaration of a state of emergency that results in the banning of opposition parties. When these types of regime changes occur, they raise suspicions about whether the previous regime in fact met the criteria for contestation and institutionalization. I treat these events in one of two ways. If the previous period of contested elections was long enough to suggest a settled pattern (at a minimum, five years and two consecutive elections), then the change signals the “death” of the entire regime, and the observation of incumbent party duration is right-censored. If the previous period was not long enough

to suggest a settled pattern, however, then the regime is treated as having been in Region III or IV for the entire period, and the observation of the ruling party's duration is excluded entirely from the sample.

Executive Control

Measuring executive control also raises a set of special challenges. Because my main interest is in explaining the “death,” or lack thereof, of ruling parties, I use a generous definition of what constitutes ruling party “control.” I require only that a party control the main executive office—prime minister in a parliamentary regime, and president in a presidential one—to be considered “in power.” This coding follows from my definition of dominant party system: only when a former ruling party is unambiguously driven into opposition does true turnover of power occur. An incumbent party forced to govern in coalition with others still maintains the leading role as long as it controls the prime minister's office. In similar fashion, an incumbent president lacking a majority of his own party in the national assembly is still the leading executive officer and head of government, so I record the end of an incumbent party's duration in power only when it relinquishes the presidency.

This approach makes coding partisan turnover in presidential and parliamentary regimes straightforward. However, the issue of who is the principal executive in so-called semi-presidential regimes—those that have both a president and premier who exercise some formal control over the executive branch—is trickier. The key challenge in such regimes is determining whether the president or the assembly is the ultimate principal to which the cabinet is responsible. For my purposes, this question is relevant

when government is divided; that is, when the assembly is controlled by a party or coalition opposing the president. The key to ascertaining which is the “opposition” and which is the “ruling party” in this instance is to look at the party of the prime minister. If the prime minister always or almost always is an ally of the president in this circumstance, the regime is fundamentally more like a presidential than a parliamentary one: the president, rather than the assembly, is the ultimate principal who exerts control over the makeup of the cabinet. In contrast, if the prime minister is always or almost always from the leading party in the assembly, then the president along with the minority in the assembly is the opposition, and the majority party or coalition is the ultimate principal to which the cabinet is accountable. Looking at the partisanship of the prime minister in most circumstances indicates which type of executive a particular country-regime has.

To take a concrete example, under divided government in the French Fifth Republic (i.e. “cohabitation”), the prime minister is from the leading party in the Assembly and is typically an adversary of the president. Thus, France functions much like a parliamentary system under these circumstances. I code a turnover of ruling party in France, then, whenever the party the prime minister belongs to changes, but *not* when a member of an opposition party in the assembly is elected president.¹⁵

¹⁵ Of course, in France a newly elected president can call Assembly elections in hopes of securing a friendly majority, and therefore a fellow partisan as prime minister. So turnover of the party controlling the prime minister’s office in practice usually occurs within a couple months after an opposition party’s candidate has won the presidency.

Parties, Not Leaders

The requirement that an incumbent leader be supported and constrained by a durable ruling party also presents some difficulty in coding. In a number of cases, a ruling party exists, but as barely more than a name and a collection of titles—real authority is exercised through the leader’s personal network of informal ties. To the extent we want to identify dominant *parties*, and not merely long-lived leaders, this poses a problem. To account for this possibility, I require that an incumbent experience at least one change of leader during the party’s tenure in power to be considered a dominant party. Ruling parties in which there was no change of leader but which met the other criteria are included in the list of long-lived parties under a separate category, *personalist incumbents*. I also include in the dataset a dummy variable recording whether the ruling party experienced leader turnover during its time in office, and another recording whether the incumbent executive had no apparent partisan affiliation; in the statistical analysis, these variables allow me to control for the possibility that some long-lived “dominant parties” may in fact simply be long-lived leaders.

In addition, many ruling parties on occasion are reorganized or renamed, absorb or merge with opposition parties, or experience sizeable defections or splits. I code such changes as a continuation in power if the same leader remained in charge of the new ruling party, or if the personnel, leadership, and support patterns of the old party were largely the same as the new; otherwise, the new party’s assumption of power is coded as a change in ruling party. For instance, in Malawi, the current president Bingu wa Mutharika was nominated by and began his tenure in office as a member of the incumbent party, the UDF. Within a year of taking office, however, he broke with UDF

and founded his own party, the DPP, subsequently winning re-election. Because he remains in control of the executive, the DPP is coded as a continuation of the previous incumbent: no ruling party turnover has occurred in Malawi since the UDF came to power in April 1994.

Central, Not Provincial Offices

Finally, while the dataset contains observations for all electorally contested sovereign states from 1950-2006, the focus of this study is limited to the *central government*; I make no systematic attempt to identify or explain instances of long-term one-party rule at the provincial/state or local levels. This is most certainly not to assert that one-party dominance is purely a central government phenomenon—as I have defined them, dominant party systems clearly have existed at the state and local level in a wide range of political contexts. I am aware of a number of instances, including in the states of the Democratic “Solid South” in the U.S., Alberta and Saskatchewan in Canada, Bavaria in Germany, several *Land* in Austria, and West Bengal in India, although I have not attempted a comprehensive review of provincial/state governments and thus have no way to know how common such occurrences are.¹⁶ I also make no attempt to account for the persistence of “authoritarian enclaves” within democratic regimes, although some of the explanations I develop in this study may be relevant there as well (cf. Fox 1994; Lawson 2000; Snyder and Samuels 2001; Gibson 2005; Gervasoni 2010; Mickey 2011).

¹⁶ The most expansive survey I am aware of is Abedi and Schneider (2006; see also 2010), who identify dominant parties at the state/provincial level in Canada, Australia, Germany, and Austria.

I leave out provincial and state dominant parties for several reasons. In addition to the practical difficulty of gathering comparative data on partisan turnover in local offices, one should be careful not to assume that local dominance is driven by the same forces that give rise to dominant parties at the central level. For one, national parties can transfer resources to party branches that are weak in certain localities—a source of aid not available to parties in opposition at the national level (Greene 2007: 17 fn. 23). In addition, a party system that is competitive but highly nationalized is likely to feature many pockets of partisan strength and weakness across the country, and this partisanship should affect voting behavior in local elections as well. To give a concrete example, the demographics of Utah—mostly white, majority Mormon, and predominantly rural or suburban—mean that on the federal level it is a safe Republican state. Democrats running for federal office there start out at a tremendous generic disadvantage. One should not be surprised, then, if the state’s electorate also consistently favors Republican candidates at the state level. In nationalized party systems, where the same parties compete in all regions and at all levels, localized one-party dominance is not only not uncommon, it should be expected (cf. Abeidi and Schneider 2010).

2.3. Ruling Party Duration in Electorally Contested Regimes, 1950-2006

Following the coding rules described in the last section, I identified a comprehensive set of electorally contested regimes (ECRs) that existed at some time between 1950 and 2006, and I recorded the start and end dates and total duration in

months of all ruling parties to hold power in each regime.¹⁷ Table 2.1 summarizes the key descriptive statistics. In total the dataset contains observations on 692 separate ruling parties that held power in 159 regimes in 142 different states. Of those parties, 535 (77.3%) exited the dataset with their defeat, leaving 158 right-censored observations—parties that exited without being defeated in elections. Among these censored observations, 25 (15.8%) ended with a regime change (coup, suspension of elections, or other disruption¹⁸), while the remaining 133 (84.2%) were still in power at the end of the observation period. In other words, only 3.6 percent (25 of 692) of the ruling parties in the dataset had their reign ended by a change in regime, which should bolster confidence that the regimes included in the analysis are in fact stable and extra-constitutional turnover is rare. Ruling party observations were most likely to be censored because of regime change in sub-Saharan Africa (12.3%), East Asia (11.1%) and Southeast Asia (13.6%).

¹⁷ The list of regimes with start and end months is in Appendix B.

¹⁸ Two regimes ended with a substantial change in the constitutional order, although the subsequent regime was also an ECR. In France, the semi-presidential Fifth Republic replaced the parliamentary Fourth Republic in January 1959. In South Africa, the apartheid system ended and a government elected from a single national electorate was seated in May 1994. The ruling party duration is right-censored in these cases.

Table 2.1. Ruling Party Duration: Observations by Region

<i>Region</i>	<i>Number of parties</i>	<i>% of total</i>	<i>Median Duration¹</i>	<i>Right-censored</i>	<i>% censored</i>
Sub-Saharan Africa	57	8.25%	171	36	63.16%
South Asia	32	4.63%	56	6	18.75%
East Asia	18	2.60%	72	6	33.33%
Southeast Asia	22	3.18%	72	8	36.36%
Pacific Islands / Oceania	99	14.33%	37	14	14.14%
Middle East / North Africa	27	3.91%	52	7	25.93%
Latin America	89	12.88%	60	21	23.60%
Caribbean and non-Iberic America	66	9.55%	104	17	25.76%
Eastern Europe	73	10.56%	34	13	17.81%
Western Europe	190	27.50%	47	22	11.58%
Post-Soviet	18	2.60%	126	8	44.44%
Total	691	100.00%	57	115	16.64%

¹Calculated from the Kaplan-Meier estimate of the survival function, which accounts for censored data.

The estimated median duration across all regions was 57 months, although there appear to be meaningful differences between regions: the median ruling party in Africa lasted 171 months in power, or more than 14 years at risk of electoral defeat, while that in Eastern Europe lasted only 34 months, or less than three years, even though most ECRs in both regions were established in the early 1990s as part of the Third Wave of democratization. A plurality (27%) of all ruling parties in the dataset were in Western Europe, reflecting the long democratic history and regular partisan rotation of most countries in this region. The longest-lived ruling party in the sample was the PRI in

Mexico, which endured a total of 653 months at risk¹⁹, followed by the National Party in apartheid-era South Africa at 551 months; at the minimum, 10 ruling parties lasted only a single month in office. Notably, the longest-lived ruling parties appear widely distributed around the world; of the top ten, four are in Western Europe, one is in Latin America, two are in sub-Saharan Africa, one is in East Asia, and two are in Southeast Asia. Long-lived one-party rule is clearly a global phenomenon by this measure.

These statistics are interesting in their own right, but for present purposes the data are most helpful for systematically identifying the subset of ruling parties that meet my criteria for dominance. In the previous chapter, I defined dominant party systems as those in which a single party or coalition controls the national executive for an extraordinary period of time by regularly winning contested elections. The key word here is “extraordinary”—how should we differentiate those ruling parties that are well and truly exceptionally long-lived from those that are merely ordinary? The term requires that we choose some kind of threshold to make this determination, with all the requisite problems for causal analysis that I noted in Chapter 1. However, as a purely *descriptive* exercise, employing a threshold can at least give us a good sense of what the longest-lived parties look like and where they occur.

The data I have collected allow us to make this determination more objectively than choosing a cutoff that just feels “about right.” In Figure 2.2 I have plotted the

¹⁹ Dating the election which ushers in a period of truly meaningful multi-party competition in an autocratic state can be a difficult task when the incumbent retains power. The transition from closed to competitive autocracy in Mexico, for instance, has no obvious break point; one could make a reasonable case for an election as early as 1946, when the incumbent party first won less than 90% of the vote for president, or as late as 1988, when its vote share fell below 70% for the first time. I use a 90% vote threshold, so include Mexico beginning in 1946. See rule 2 of the Competition Criterion in the coding rules listed in Appendix A.

Kaplan-Meier estimate of the survival function, which predicts the percentage of all ruling parties expected to remain in office through any given number of months. As the figure indicates, this function estimates that the longest-lived five percent of all parties in the dataset last at least 349 months, or just over 29 years, and the top 10 percent lasted at least 219 months, or 18 ¼ years. The definition I have offered—20 years in power—falls between these two, at just under the 91st percentile. That is, about 10 percent of all ruling parties in the dataset lasted more than 20 consecutive years in office. If we were to award Latin honors to ruling parties, then lasting at least 20 years in office is something like earning *magna cum laude*. In this sense, then, using a 20-year threshold appears to be a reasonable method of identifying the “extraordinary” cases in the dataset.

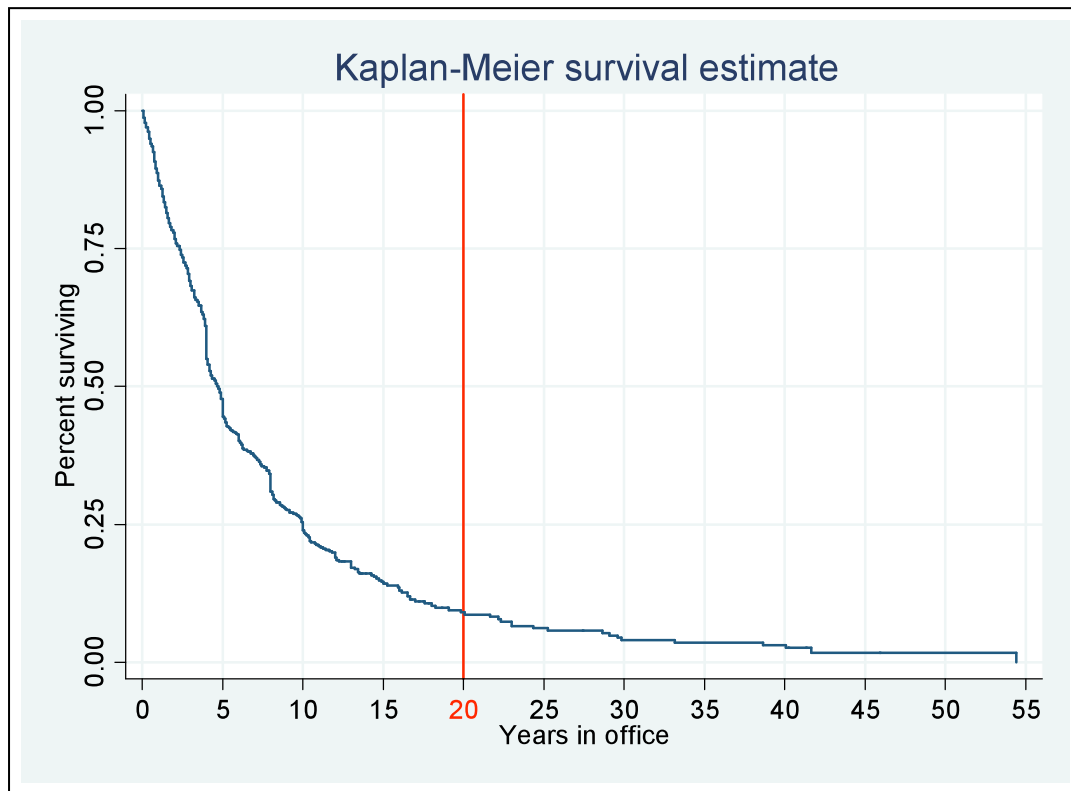


FIGURE 2.2. KAPLAN-MEIER PLOT OF THE RULING PARTY SURVIVOR FUNCTION

It is worth reiterating here that in practical terms, the choice of threshold matters mostly at the idea-generating stage—it allows us to identify a concrete set of the longest-lived parties and examine how they compare to the rest. At the testing stage, the use of duration in power as the dependent variable, rather than the persistence or breakdown of a party system equilibrium, frees us from having to rely on this or other cutoffs. All ruling parties in the sample will eventually provide some information about what affects ruling party survival—not just those that survive 20 years.

Dominant Parties: A Closer Look

Having established a universe of cases and selected a longevity threshold, we can now identify the longest-lived ruling parties in electorally-contested regimes. Table 2.2 lists the 24 ruling parties that lasted at least 20 consecutive years in office in an ECR between 1950 and 2006. Among these are incumbent parties in a number of the most prominent electoral authoritarian regimes of the last two decades, including those in Mexico, Malaysia, Singapore, Botswana, and Senegal. They also include long-lived ruling parties in several developed democracies, including Austria, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, West Germany, and Sweden. Given how commonly these party systems have been called “dominant,” their appearance here is expected.

Table 2.2. Ruling Parties Lasting > 20 yrs in Electorally-Contested Regimes, 1950-2006

<i>Country</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Start Month</i>	<i>End Month</i>	<i>Tenure (Months)</i>
Antigua and Barbuda	LP	Nov-81	Mar-04	268
Austria	SPO	Apr-70	Feb-00	358
Australia	LP+CP	Dec-49	Dec-72	276
Belgium	CVP	Apr-74	Jul-99	303
Botswana	BDP	Sep-66	-	483*
Canada	LP	Oct-35	Jun-57	260
Gambia	PPP	Feb-65	Jul-94	353
Germany, West ¹	CDU+CSU	Sep-49	Oct-69	241
India	INC	Aug-47	Mar-77	355
Israel	Mapai/Labor	May-48	Jun-77	349
Italy ¹	DC	Apr-48	Jun-81	426
Japan	LP/LDP	Dec-54	Aug-93	464
Liechtenstein (I)	FBP	Jul-28	Mar-70	500
Liechtenstein (II)	VU	Apr-78	Apr-01	276
Luxembourg (I) ¹	CSV	Oct-45	Jun-74	344
Luxembourg (II)	CSV	Jul-79	-	329*
Malaysia	UMNO/BN	Aug-65	-	496*
Mexico	PRI	Jul-46	Dec-00	653
Senegal	PS	Feb-78	Apr-00	266
Singapore	PAP	Aug-65	-	496*
South Africa	NP	Jun-48	May-94	551
Sweden	SAP	Sep-36	Oct-76	481
Trinidad and Tobago	PNM	Aug-62	Dec-86	292
Zimbabwe ²	ZANU-PF	Apr-80	-	320*

* Incumbent still in power; tenure calculated through December 2006

¹Count begins with first election after WWII

²Personalist incumbent: Robert Mugabe the sole leader of ZANU-PF since independence

There are also a few surprises, however. In western Europe, continuous one-party control of the prime minister's office lasted for over 20 years in Belgium and Liechtenstein (twice)—cases which have received less attention in the literature. Ruling parties in Luxembourg (1945-1974), West Germany (1949-1969) and Austria (1970-2000) also qualify under my definition; these cases are sometimes excluded because the major opposition parties were included in the ruling coalition for part of those periods

(e.g. Di Palma 1990: 162-63). A bit further afield, long periods of one-party rule occurred in Australia, Canada, Antigua and Barbuda, and Trinidad and Tobago—countries that have not figured heavily in the rather Eurocentric literature on dominant party systems in democracies.

The list of parties in Table 2.2 is just as notable for who is not included as who is. A number of prominent “dominant” parties do not make the cut, including the CPP in Cambodia, United Russia in Russia, FRELIMO in Mozambique, ANC in South Africa, CCM in Tanzania, and KMT in Taiwan. Some of these cases do not appear here because, while they endured in power for more than 20 years, they were actually *at risk of electoral defeat* for much less than that. One can see this difference clearly in Table 2.3, which lists the set of all autocratic parties that managed to retain power for at least 20 years and *most recently did so* by winning multi-party elections.

For instance, Cameroon’s CPDM has held office since January 1960, but it only faced an opposition challenger for the first time in the October 1992 presidential election. Thus, while the CPDM may be a dominant party under some definitions (e.g. Bogaard 2004: 182; Ishiyama and Quinn 2006: 326; Lindberg and Jones 2010: 204), it has been even theoretically at risk of losing the presidency in an election for only 18 of the 50 years it has been in power as of this writing. For the same reason, long-time ruling parties in Djibouti, Kenya, Mongolia, Mozambique, Paraguay, Seychelles, Taiwan, Tanzania, and Turkey are not included in the list of dominant parties in Table 2.2: they did not survive (or had not as of December 2006) at least 20 years at risk of electoral defeat.

**Table 2.3. Autocratic Incumbents Lasting > 20 yrs:
Tenure in Power vs. Duration at Electoral Risk**

<i>Country</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Start Month</i>	<i>End Month</i>	<i>Month</i>	<i>Tenure (Months)</i>	<i>At Risk (Months)⁺</i>
				<i>Exec at Risk⁺</i>		
Burkina Faso ¹	Compaore/CDP	Oct-87	-	Dec-91	230*	180*
Cameroon	CPDM	Jan-60	-	Oct-92	563*	170*
Djibouti	RPP	Jun-77	-	May-93	354*	163*
Gabon ¹	Bongo/PDG	Mar-68	-	Dec-93	465*	156*
Gambia	PPP	Feb-65	Jul-94	Feb-65	353	353
Ivory Coast	PDCI	Aug-60	Dec-99	Oct-90	472	110
Kenya	KANU	Dec-63	Dec-02	Dec-92	468	120
Malaysia	UMNO/BN	Aug-57	-	Aug-57	592*	592*
Singapore	PAP	Aug-65	-	Aug-65	496*	496*
Mexico	PRI	Dec-24	Dec-00	Jul-46	847	653
Mongolia	MPRP	Sep-21	Jul-96	Jul-90	898	72
Mozambique	FRELIMO	Sep-74	-	Oct-94	387*	146*
Paraguay	PC	Aug-48	Aug-08	May-93	720	183
Senegal	PS	Aug-60	Apr-00	Feb-78	476	266
Seychelles	SPPF	Jun-77	-	Jul-93	354*	161*
Taiwan	KMT	Dec-49	May-00	Mar-96	605	50
Tanzania	CCM	Apr-64	-	Oct-95	512*	134*
Turkey	RPP	Oct-23	May-50	Jul-46	319	46
Zimbabwe ¹	Mugabe/ZANU-PF	Apr-80	-	Apr-80	320*	320*

⁺Counted in formerly closed autocracies from month multi-party election held for the executive

* Incumbent still in power; tenure calculated through December 2006

¹Personalist incumbent: no leader turnover

Some of the inconsistency in the literature about which countries have dominant party systems stems from a failure to distinguish between these two ways of counting ruling party duration. A good illustration is in the case of Taiwan. Taiwan's KMT is often called a dominant party²⁰ because it combined long duration in power (50 years) with wins in regular, contested elections for local offices. Crucially, however, these elections were only held for *offices below the central government level*; until 1992, the large majority of members in the national legislature were effectively lifetime appointees,

²⁰ E.g. Giliomee and Simpkins (1999); Magaloni (2006); Greene (2007); Friedman and Wong (2008).

and the president was popularly elected for the first time only in 1996. Indeed, as we will see shortly, compared to other first incumbents in ECRs, the KMT is most remarkable for how *short* its time in power was: it lost the presidency a mere four years after the first direct election for that office. Viewed this way, what needs to be explained in Taiwan is not why the ruling party lasted so long but why it lost so quickly! Similarly, ruling parties in Kenya, Paraguay, Mongolia, and Turkey lasted decades in power, but did so for most of that time by forbidding meaningful opposition contestation rather than by stringing together regular victories in contested elections. As the ruling parties in closed autocracies, they were impressively long-lived. But as ruling parties in new ECRs, they managed to squander a formidable set of electoral advantages in a relatively short period of time.

In addition, some parties are excluded from Table 2.2 because of right-censoring of the data: in December 2006 they had not crossed the 20-year threshold for time in office at risk of electoral defeat. As of June 2011 a number of these parties remain in power and have either surpassed or look set to cross this threshold in the not-too-distant future. To account for these cases, I have identified all current ruling parties that have as of this writing lasted at least 15 consecutive years in power at risk of electoral defeat. These include several of the autocratic parties that survived a transition into an ECR and have not yet been defeated, as well as several others in more democratic regimes that appear well-positioned to survive past 20 years in office, if they have not already. Table 2.4 shows these with the duration count updated through June 2011.

Table 2.4. Other Current Ruling Parties Lasting >15 Years at Risk of Electoral Defeat, June 2011

<i>Country</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Start Month</i>	<i>End Month</i>	<i>Tenure At Risk (Months)</i>
Belarus	Lukashenko	Jul-94	-	203*
Cameroon	CPDM	Oct-92	-	224*
Djibouti	RPP	May-93	-	217*
Ethiopia	EPRDF	May-95	-	193*
Gabon	PDG	Dec-93	-	210*
Guyana	PPP/Civic	Oct-92	-	224*
Lesotho	LCD	Sep-94	-	201*
Malawi	UDF/DPP	May-94	-	205*
Mozambique	FRELIMO	Oct-94	-	200*
Namibia	SWAPO	Mar-90	-	255*
Russia	Yeltsin/UR	Dec-91	-	234*
St. Kitts and Nevis	SKNLP	Jul-95	-	191*
Samoa	HRPP	Apr-88	-	278*
Seychelles	SPPF	Jul-93	-	215*
South Africa (II)	ANC	May-94	-	205*
Tanzania	CCM	Oct-95	-	188*
Zambia	MMD	Nov-91	-	235*

* Incumbent still in power, so tenure calculated through June 2011; 20 years = 240 months

If we add these 17 “dominant parties-to-be” to the 24 unambiguous cases in Table 2.2, there are 41 unique dominant party systems in the dataset. In all of these cases, the ruling party controlled the chief executive office of the regime, or appears likely to, for at least 20 consecutive years while at risk of defeat in a contested, multi-party election. Identifying this set of cases gives a fuller picture of the phenomenon of dominance: for instance, it is now clear that long-lived ruling parties occur both in ECRs that are clearly democratic—e.g. Canada, Luxembourg, and Sweden—and autocratic—e.g. Malaysia, Russia, and Singapore. This collection of cases is especially useful for generating ideas about the possible causes of ruling party dominance, a task I turn to next.

2.4. The Origins of Dominant Parties

In Chapter 1, I raised two questions for research: (1) where do “advantaged” ruling parties come from, and (2) what affects the rate at which these ruling party advantages decline over time? The second of these is a rich topic in its own right and will be tackled beginning in Chapter 3. Here, I will bring the data in the previous section to bear on the first question, on the origins of advantaged ruling parties.

To get a sense of how dominant parties are most likely to originate, I have combined the lists of dominant parties in Tables 2.2 and 2.4 and organized them by the type of regime in which they initially took power. As Table 2.5 shows, these ruling parties began in one of three ways. Parties in the first group (13 cases in total) came to power in ECRs that already had established regular, contested, multi-party elections for office (Regions I or II in Fig. 2.1). Ruling parties in Austria²¹, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Japan, Liechtenstein (twice), Luxembourg, Sweden, and South Africa were previously in opposition before taking power and stringing together several consecutive electoral victories. All of these regimes except South Africa were consolidated democracies: during these ruling parties’ tenure, the likelihood of restrictions on press freedoms or campaigning, politically-motivated arrests of opposition candidates, or the suspension of elections appeared quite remote.

Parties in the second group (19 cases) came to power at the same time that the regime began, and in most cases played a crucial role in creating the regime as well. In

²¹ The SPO in Austria is a partial exception, as it was the junior partner in a “grand coalition” with the ruling OVP for the entire postwar period until 1966. This period of OVP control of the chancellor’s office also exceeds 20 years in office (Nov. 1945-Apr. 1970). However, Austrian sovereignty was not formally restored until July 1955; because it does not last 20 years in an independent regime, the OVP is not included among the list of dominant parties in Tables 2.2 and 2.5.

Antigua and Barbuda, Botswana, Gambia, India, Israel, Trinidad and Tobago, and Zimbabwe, the first incumbent parties led the push for independence, then won the first post-independence elections and retained power for at least 20 years; SWAPO in Namibia and the ANC in South Africa have followed this pattern as well and also look set to pass 20 years in office. In Malaysia, UNMO oversaw the merger of Sabah, Sarawak and Singapore with Malaya to create the Malaysian Federation, and in Singapore the PAP presided over that city's subsequent establishment as an independent state. In Luxembourg, West Germany and Italy, the ruling parties were the first to assume office when full sovereignty was restored to those countries after World War II. In Russia, an unbroken line of executive control stretches from United Russia back to the tenure of Boris Yeltsin, who oversaw the creation of the Russian Federation and was its first president. And in Guyana, Lesotho, Malawi, and Zambia, opposition coalitions won the first elections in new ECRs, defeating autocrats who were attempting to retain power.

Table 2.5. Dominant Party Origins by Regime Type, 1950-2006

<i>Country</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Start Month</i>	<i>End Month</i>	<i>Tenure At Risk (Months)</i>
<i>Pre-Existing Electorally-Contested Regime</i>				
Austria	SPO	Apr-70	Feb-00	358
Australia	LP+CP	Dec-49	Dec-72	276
Belgium	CVP	Apr-74	Jul-99	303
Canada	LP	Oct-35	Jun-57	260
Japan	LP/LDP	Dec-54	Aug-93	464
Liechtenstein (I)	FBP	Jul-28	Mar-70	500
Liechtenstein (II)	VU	Apr-78	Apr-01	276
Luxembourg (II)	CSV	Jul-79	-	329*
St. Kitts and Nevis	SKNLP	Jul-95	-	137*
Samoa	HRPP	Apr-88	-	224*
South Africa (I)	NP	Jun-48	May-94	551
Sweden	SAP	Sep-36	Oct-76	481

<i>New Electorally-Contested Regime</i>				
Antigua and Barbuda	LP	Nov-81	Mar-04	268
Belarus ¹	n/p	Jul-94	-	149*
Botswana	BDP	Sep-66	-	483*
Gambia	PPP	Feb-65	Jul-94	353
Germany, West	CDU+CSU	Sep-49	Oct-69	241
Guyana	PPP/Civic	Oct-92	-	170*
India	INC	Aug-47	Mar-77	355
Israel	ILP	May-48	Jun-77	349
Italy	DC	Apr-48	Jun-81	398
Lesotho	LDC	Apr-93	-	164*
Luxembourg (I)	CSV	Oct-45	Jun-74	344
Malawi	UDF/DPP	Apr-94	-	152*
Malaysia	UMNO/BN	Aug-65	-	496*
Namibia	SWAPO	Mar-90	-	201*
Russia	Yeltsin/UR	Dec-91	-	180*
Trinidad and Tobago	PNM	Aug-62	Dec-86	292
Singapore	PAP	Aug-65	-	496*
South Africa (II)	ANC	May-94	-	151*
Zambia	MMD	Nov-91	-	181*
Zimbabwe ¹	ZANU-PF	Apr-80	-	320*

<i>Incumbents in Previous Closed Autocracy</i>				
Cameroon	CPDM	Oct-92	-	170*
Djibouti	RPP	May-93	-	163*
Ethiopia	EPRDF	May-95	-	139*
Gabon ¹	PDG	Dec-93	-	156*
Mexico	PRI	Jul-46	Dec-00	653
Mozambique	FRELIMO	Oct-94	-	146*
Senegal	PS	Feb-78	Apr-00	266
Seychelles	SPPF	Jul-93	-	161*
Tanzania	CCM	Oct-95	-	134*

* Incumbent still in power; tenure calculated through December 2006

¹Personalist incumbent; no leader turnover

Parties in the third group (9 cases) began as the incumbent parties in closed autocracies, introduced multi-party elections on their own watch, and then competed in and won those elections. In Cameroon, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Seychelles, and Tanzania, the incumbent autocratic parties presided over a successful (from their perspective) transition from closed to electoral authoritarianism and look likely to pass

the 20-year threshold. Ruling parties in Mexico and Senegal also survived a transition to contested elections and lasted more than 20 years in electoral autocracies, although both have now been defeated.

The different paths these parties took to end up as dominant in their respective party systems suggests an important difference between the first group and the others. The first set of parties, which we might call “emergent” dominant parties, by and large clawed their way toward the top of an established party system, dislodging rivals and incumbents, then strung together an impressive series of electoral victories to remain there. In contrast, the other parties, which we might call “first mover” dominant parties, all began the multi-party era at the apex of the party system—indeed, in many cases, as the only party on the scene—then retained enough electoral support to prevent any upstart competitor from displacing them in power.

Note that this distinction between dominant parties is not the one usually drawn between those in authoritarian versus democratic regimes, or between parties in the industrialized West versus the developing world. Rather, the key distinction is *whether the party was in power when the regime began*. There is good reason to expect the processes that produce dominant party systems to be fundamentally different for the two sets of cases: emergent dominant parties begin in opposition and gradually build lasting advantages over competitors in the party system, whereas first-mover dominant parties begin the electorally-contested period in power and retain pre-existing advantages.

What is particularly striking about the list of parties in Table 2.5 is the number that can fairly be characterized as first movers. Over 70 percent (29 of 41) of dominant parties either presided over a transition to multi-party elections or took office in those

first elections. In other words, *most dominant parties begin as the first incumbents in new electorally-contested regimes.*

This pattern suggests that first movers may do systematically better than others at retaining power for a long time in ECRs: being first appears to be a significant advantage. To know for sure, however, we need to compare the estimated survival function of the full set of first movers to that of the non-first movers in the dataset, shown in Figure 2.3. The data confirm this hunch: as expected, among all 692 ruling party cases, the first movers have better survival rates. The median first mover lasted an estimated 118 months in office, while the median non-first mover lasted only 48, or less than half as long, and this difference existed at every point in time, from the first month onward. Moreover, almost a quarter of first movers lasted more than 20 years in office, while only about five percent of non-first movers did. Clearly, holding office at the beginning of the regime sharply boosts expected incumbent survival times. Thus, the answer to when dominant party systems are most likely to occur is: at the beginning of new regimes. Put simply, the data here show that ruling parties have a better survival rate if they are the first to take power.

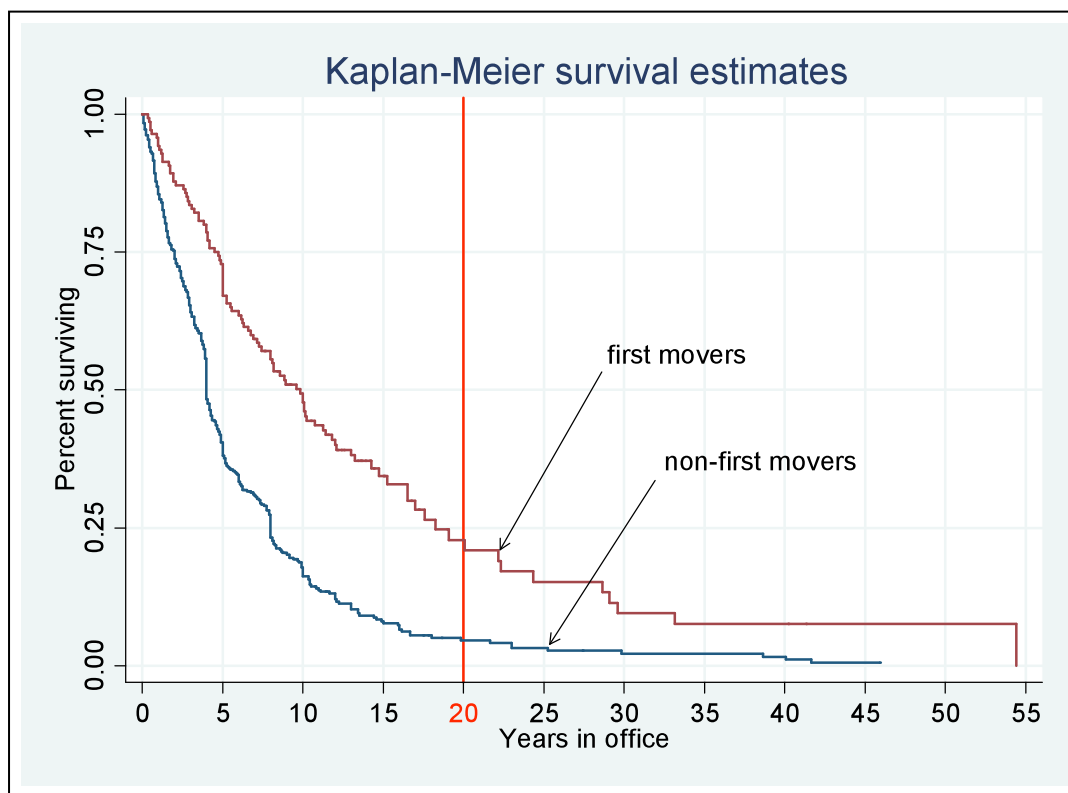


FIGURE 2.3. FIRST INCUMBENT VS. NON-FIRST INCUMBENT SURVIVOR FUNCTIONS

The argument that long-lived ruling parties originate in tandem with the regime in which they hold power is not new. Huntington effectively argued as much over 40 years ago, asserting that “one-party systems are always the product of nationalist or revolutionary movements from below which had to fight for power” (1968: 418). Slater and Smith (2010) have recently challenged this claim by arguing that *counter-revolutionary* rather than revolutionary or nationalist movements are the most likely to produce long-lived ruling parties, but even they link dominant party origins to those of the regime itself. Similar arguments have been made about the origins of dominant parties in the developed world. Pempel, for instance, asserted that dominant parties there all began in a “mobilizational crisis, that is, a major reorientation of the political dispositions of key economic groups,” driven by war, the formation of a new state, or

economic turmoil (1990: 341), and DiPalma viewed one-party dominance as one of several possible outcomes of a transition to democracy, albeit a rare one (1990: 162-64). To my knowledge, however, no one has previously estimated the frequency with which dominant parties emerge at the beginning of regimes, or how much more likely they are to appear in new versus pre-existing regimes.²² For that reason alone, then, these data considerably improve our understanding of dominant party system origins.

Nevertheless, the finding that dominant parties are most likely in newly-founded regimes leaves us with two outstanding questions. First, *why* are dominant party systems most likely to emerge at the beginning of regimes, rather than at other times? And second, *which* first movers are most likely to become dominant parties? After all, a full three-quarters of first movers do *not* manage to endure past 20 years in office, so even within this group, dominant parties are somewhat unusual. In the next section, I will argue that part of the answer to both questions has to do with the variation in the *first-mover advantage* enjoyed by these first incumbents.

2.5. First Mover Advantage: How Dominant Party Systems Begin

A useful analogy for thinking about party system origins and change is that of a consumer market. Consider some contrasting examples of how competition in new consumer markets can begin. The market for a drug protected by a patent is one:

²² Reuter (2010a: 337-371) does estimate the frequency with which dominant parties are formed, but for a fundamentally different set of cases: he includes ruling parties formed in single-party regimes as well as multi-party ones, and he excludes all democracies. His working definition of “dominant party” is also quite different from mine. He requires only that the ruling party control the executive and a majority of seats in a given year, without specifying a longevity threshold. Ruling parties can thus be “dominant” under his definition even if they hold power for only a single year.

prohibitions on new entry into the market monopolized by a single firm are removed all at once, competition floods in, and the former monopolist tries to hang on to as much market share as it can. Another is when a monopoly ends through the break-up of the firm. The telecommunications market in the United States in the 1980s is a good example of this pattern—a court order led the monopolist AT&T to be split into several regional companies, the so-called “Baby Bells.” A third pattern is when a firm develops products for a completely new market, as Microsoft did with its Windows operating system in the 1980s, building an effective monopoly and then retaining most of its market share in the face of later entry by competitors. The rise and fall of Eastman Kodak’s control of the market for film shows a similar history. A fourth pattern is when there are several firms that together form an oligopoly; deregulation or cartel-busting then leads to new firm entry and mergers, as in the U.S. airline industry after 1978.

These examples suggest a possible explanation for how markets with no legal restrictions on entry can nevertheless remain dominated by a single firm. More than in the other cases, the Microsofts and Kodaks of the world enjoyed a *first-mover advantage*—a long-lasting lead in market share gained by being the first firm to enter (Lieberman and Montgomery 1988; Mueller 1997). This initial lead over competitors can endure as a consequence both of demand-side and supply-side factors.

On the demand side, firms may benefit from being first to the market when there exist high uncertainties about the quality of new products, as for instance with automobiles, so that later entries are viewed by consumers as much riskier than earlier, more proven entries. First-mover advantages also tend to persist for goods that have strong buyer inertia due to habit formation, in which the customer learns about the

product by consuming it rather than by receiving information from experts or impartial observers. Colgate, for example, was the first company to sell toothpaste in squeezable tubes over a century ago, and has been a leading toothpaste brand in the United States ever since.

On the supply side, first-mover advantages are likely to accrue in industries in which there are high set-up and sunk costs; large economies of scale, which if they take time to capture, give the initial entrant more time to expand and benefit from these economies while later entrants start up; and large learning-by-doing benefits, in which the process of creating the new product is complicated and initial entrants gain large advantages by being further up the learning curve than later entrants (Mueller 1997). An industry that satisfies all three requirements is commercial airliner production, where the huge capital investments and complicated development of new models of jets have limited their production in the United States to a single company, Boeing.

First Mover Advantage in Party Systems

Although the analogy is not perfect, the first-mover advantage concept ports well to the political context, and it provides a useful way to think about why some, but not all, first incumbents begin with a leading position in the party system. We can think of vote share as roughly equivalent to market share: as firms seek to sell their products to more consumers than their competitors, so political parties seek to win more votes than theirs. Thus, the central outcome affected by first-mover advantage in party systems is *electoral performance in the first election*. Parties with a large first-mover advantage win seat

shares that dwarf those of any one competitor in the first elections in the new ECR, and thereby secure political power.

As the previous section showed, the majority of dominant parties that have existed over the last 60 years were first movers: they took power in regimes that were newly established. Thus, one answer to the question “why dominance?” is simply that dominant parties enjoyed an especially strong first-mover advantage over their competitors at the beginning of their tenure, and it took decades for this advantage to decay.

This answer is hardly satisfying, however, because it simply pushes the question one step further back in the causal chain: we still want to know *why* those ruling parties which endured a long time enjoyed a large first-mover advantage. That is, to say something more profound about the causes of dominance, we need not only to observe that first-mover advantage exists, but also to explain where it comes from. And to develop such an explanation, we need a sense of what drives variation *within* the full set of first incumbents, both long- and short-lived.

To answer this question, I undertook a qualitative examination of all 140 first incumbents in the sample. Drawing on the same sources I consulted to construct the dataset²³, I looked at the patterns of electoral competition in the first elections after the regime was founded and compared first incumbents that endured past 20 years in office with the rest. The key characteristics I focused on in this endeavor included:

- whether there was an incumbent running in the first election, and whether the incumbent won or lost;

²³ See Section 2.1, especially fn. 3 and the subsequent discussion in the main text.

- the vote share of the winning party or candidate relative to its (his/her) competitors;
- the vote share of parties in elections to other offices held around the same time;
- the electoral bases of party support, as described in the case materials;
- the origins, organization and previous history, if any, of the winning candidate's party;
- the conditions under which the election was held, including signs of fraud, intimidation, vote-buying, restrictions on the press, harassment of opposition campaigns and organizations, etc.;
- the main issues that appeared to drive voting behavior in the first elections.

As expected, I found that the longest-lived first incumbents tended to start out in a stronger electoral position than the others. This electoral advantage appeared to derive from three sources: those parties that ended up dominant tended to begin with (1) a strong *party brand* that ensured a large group of loyal partisans in the electorate, (2) an institutionalized *party organization* that enabled the party to maximize its candidates' chances of winning elections, and (3) *control over the formation of the new regime* which shaped and constrained subsequent partisan competition for power. These three factors in turn affected the size of the first incumbent's victory, measured both in terms of vote and seat shares, in the first elections of the new regime. I elaborate on each of these below.

Advantage 1: Party Brand

The first, “demand-side” advantage was at the level of mass politics and typically occurred as a result of the expansion of the electorate. Some first incumbents enjoyed a strong party brand that made them favored over other opponents at the advent of multi-party competition. Parties that led their countries to independence or otherwise played a central role in establishing the new regime, in particular, often benefitted from a tremendous amount of popularity and goodwill among the electorate—what we might term a “halo effect” (Pempel 1990: 344). A good example is the support enjoyed by African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa at the end of apartheid: the party had a terrifically positive image among black voters, such that voting for the ANC in effect meant voting not merely for a new leader but for black self-determination. As a consequence, the ANC won 62.6 percent of the popular vote in the April 1994 election in South Africa, the first after the end of apartheid; the nearest competitor, the incumbent National Party, won only 20.4 percent. Such overwhelming support for the founding party was also apparent at the advent of the regime in many of the other dominant party cases, including the BDP in Botswana, the PPP in Gambia, UMNO in Malaysia, SWAPO in Namibia, PAP in Singapore, and ZANU (later ZANU-PF) in Zimbabwe.

Such popularity obviously made it difficult for other parties to win the first elections in the new regime—as Pempel puts it, “[a] party perceived as a national savior is hard to oppose” (1990: 344). But it also may have served to convert initial ruling party support into advantages that endured for a generation or more, long after the initial halo effect had faded. For one, in many post-colonial states, there was little or no previous tradition of mass electoral politics, meaning that most voters had weak or nonexistent

partisan ties. As a large literature has demonstrated, partisanship at the individual level tends to be quite robust over time once established, and it strongly influences vote choice (e.g. Campbell et al. 1960; Richardson 1991; Holmberg 1994; Schickler and Green 1997; Toka 1998; Weisberg and Greene 2003; Dalton and Weldon 2007; Mainwaring and Zoco 2007). Thus, by being the first ruling party on the scene and playing a central role in creating the new regime, the first incumbents in some of these cases effectively “locked in” a large chunk of the electorate as loyal partisan supporters for decades afterwards.

In addition, in subsequent elections the first incumbent’s partisan label could serve as a coordination device for both candidates and voters: potential candidates knew that the party’s endorsement could deliver a large bloc of votes and wanted to run under its label, and voters knew that the party’s candidates would be viable contestants for office, so its nominees became the beneficiaries of strategic voting (Aldrich 1995: 48-50). This electoral advantage tended to endure as long as there was no opposition party brand that was equally effective at signaling viability to both candidates and voters—in some cases for decades after the regime was founded.

Advantage 2: Party Organization and Resources

The second, “supply-side” advantage was at the level of political elites and occurred as a consequence of the need to compete for and win votes in elections for the first time. Parties improved their candidates’ chances of winning office in two critical ways: by exploiting economies of scale in electoral campaigns, and by controlling nominations.

On the first, parties that were effectively able to increase the value of their brand above and beyond the personal appeal of their nominees had a leg up in electoral competition as well. The party's pre-existing network of supporters and members could be mobilized to work on behalf of all its candidates. Furthermore, many pre-existing incumbents enjoyed large resource advantages over their competitors: money, media access, and experienced personnel all increased the party's chances of winning races.

On the second, party nominations were scarce: there were more potential candidates than there were nominations to go around. The party most consistently able to resolve this competition efficiently—that is, selecting the most appealing candidate while still keeping those passed over from defecting and running renegade campaigns—was at an advantage over others in elections. These decisions were usually contentious: after all, they were the critical step in determining which aspiring politicians actually obtained office and the power and perks that came with it. Having an established set of procedures for choosing nominees that was respected and obeyed by the losers was of significant electoral benefit to a party. And parties that had already been in existence for a while were more likely to have these procedures worked out than were those formed for the express purpose of contesting the first election.

The organizational and resource advantages enjoyed by the incumbent party were readily apparent at the beginning of most of the dominant party systems. For instance, the Indian National Congress was by far the largest mass political organization in the country at independence, and it had party branches in almost every parliamentary constituency, making it the only party that could effectively conduct a national campaign

for office. It also had a pre-existing leadership with clearly-defined mechanisms for nominating candidates and solving intra-party disputes (Morris-Jones 1967).

The dominant parties that emerged out of closed autocracies also possessed large organizational and resource advantages at the beginning of the contested regime. In the first elections, these parties could draw on the allegiance of most of the country's political and economic elites, pre-established organizational networks for turning out and rewarding supporters and punishing opponents, and privileged access to the patronage and coercive capacity of the state to deliver votes for their candidates. Parties that fit this characterization include the CPDM in Cameroon, RPP in Djibouti, EPRDF in Ethiopia, PRI in Mexico, FRELIMO in Mozambique, PS in Senegal, SPPF in Seychelles, and CCM in Tanzania.

Advantage 3: Control over Formation of the New Regime

A third advantage enjoyed by most of the first incumbents that became dominant parties was the ability to shape the institutions of the new regime to their benefit. In the typical new ECR, the practices under which the first elections were held were potentially quite malleable: in many cases there were no binding precedents for the kind of electoral system in use, the access of all parties to the media, the role of money in campaigns, the types of issues that were and were not allowed to be discussed, and so forth. The first incumbents that oversaw the establishment of the regime usually influenced the design of rules under which they then competed—in some cases, even, shaped them with a free hand. Furthermore, these rules were often enforced by state personnel chosen by the incumbent party itself, and who as a consequence were likely to enforce them selectively

in ways that most benefitted the incumbent. In many cases the judiciary systematically ruled in favor of incumbent party candidates and against opposition ones, and the legal system selectively prosecuted opposition figures for violating campaign laws while ignoring infractions by incumbent party candidates. The military and security services also tended to be especially pro-incumbent, and so the coercive capacity of the state could often be mobilized for partisan ends as well. In addition, members of the civil service in many cases disproportionately owed their employment to the first incumbent party. And workers at state-owned enterprises were frequently pressured to support the incumbent because their employment credibly depended on remaining loyal to the ruling party.

A good example of a first incumbent using its preeminent position in the regime to shape competition to its own advantage is in Mexico. The PRI used electoral reform to hamper coordination among opposition parties in legislative races and to ensure that it always had a working majority in Congress (Diaz-Cayeros and Magaloni 2001). The party's influence over public-sector employment allowed it to condition state jobs on continued support at the ballot box for a large fraction of the electorate, and its extensive party organization and enormous membership provided it with a way to deliver state-supplied material benefits to supporters and deny them to opponents (Magaloni 2006; Greene 2007). In addition, the PRI's effective control over the electoral commission allowed the party to engage in fraud when necessary, and prevent judicial decisions that harmed party interests (Domingo 2000; Eisenstadt 2004; Magaloni 2006). Similar advantages appear to have been enjoyed by virtually all of the other ruling parties in closed autocracies that initially survived the transition to electoral contestation, including

in Cameroon, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Senegal, Seychelles, Taiwan, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe.

2.6. Measuring First-Mover Advantage

To recap, I have argued that the size of first-mover advantage in the first elections is a consequence of three factors: (1) a lead in partisan affiliation in the electorate, (2) a superior party organization and access to resources, and (3) a prominent role in the creation of the regime. Ruling parties which enjoy all three advantages are most likely to win full control of the political system in the first elections in a new regime.

In an ideal world, we would test this claim directly by comparing measures of partisanship, organizational strength, and regime control to party performance in the first elections. Unfortunately, these data simply do not exist for most of the ruling parties in the dataset. For instance, there is nothing like the American National Election Survey (ANES) in times and places such as Botswana in 1966 or Luxembourg in 1945. It might be possible to use proxy measures for some of these variables, but even so, the available data are insufficient to test the effects of these advantages for most parties in the sample.

For the current project, this lack of data on the potential *causes* of first-mover advantage is not prohibitive. Since my concern is with explaining duration in power, rather than margins of victory in the first elections, measures of initial partisanship and the like are not a central component of the study. The core of the theory developed in the following chapters is about what happens *after* the first election, rather than conditions

preceding it. Thus, I save a more systematic analysis of the determinants of first-mover advantage for future work.

Nevertheless, for present purposes we still need some measure of “advantaged” first-movers that can be used to control for the wide variation in the starting points of different party systems. In other words, we need to differentiate between those parties which get a “head start” in the party system, and therefore should on average last longer in power, from those which do not. In searching for such a measure, there is a natural temptation here to assume the consequent: that the longest-lived ruling parties must have had the greatest first-mover advantage. Lest we succumb to this temptation, we need to be able to measure first-mover advantage *independent of duration*—to allow for the possibility that the mechanisms that initially produce ruling party electoral advantages are not the same as those that sustain these advantages over time.

To address this need, I have created a simple dichotomous measure of first-mover advantage based on whether the first ruling party wins full control of the institutions of state in the first elections. First-movers who are truly “advantaged” should win majorities that allow them to govern without coalition partners. In parliamentary regimes, this means winning a majority of seats (and in both houses of parliament if bicameral). In presidential regimes, it means winning both the presidency and a majority in the legislature (and in both houses if bicameral). In semi-presidential regimes, where the president is directly elected but the prime minister is accountable primarily to the legislature, the first incumbent must win both the presidency and a majority in the legislature to be “advantaged.” This measure is an admittedly simple one, but it has the virtues of consistency and generality while still capturing the central idea behind the

concept: that large advantages at the beginning of the regime should lead to full political control after the first elections. It also sets a high bar for identifying first-mover advantage—I am more likely to exclude parties that in fact do have an advantage than to include those that do not.

Following this simple rule, I examined the electoral performance of all 140 first incumbents in the sample and coded each as either “advantaged” or “non-advantaged” first movers. Using these criteria, I identified 80 “advantaged” first-mover parties out of a total of 140 first incumbents (57.1%). These are listed in Table 2.6.

Country	Party	Start Month	End Month	Tenure of Risk (Months)
Macedonia				86
Malaysia ²	UMNO	Aug-65	-	496*
<i>Malta</i>	<i>PN</i>	<i>Sep-64</i>	<i>Jun-71</i>	<i>81</i>
Mauritius ²	MPLA	Mar-68	Apr-82	173
Mexico & Barbuda	PRP	Nov-46	Dec-04	268
Mozambique	MRRP	Dec-83	Jul-86	77
Mozambique	FRENMO	Oct-94	Feb-98	146*
Myanmar (Burma)	AFFFL	Jan-48	Oct-58	98
Namibia	SWAPO	Mar-79	Aug-92	209*
Nauru	DNC	May-86	Nov-94	148
Nicaragua ¹	UNR	Apr-90	Nov-94	187
Niger	BDP	May-69	=	416*
Nigeria	ASP	Mar-95	Aug-98	269
Niger Republic	ODP/MT	Nov-88	Jul-85	90*
Philippines (I)	CPP	Jul-46	Dec-53	189*
Portugal	NSE/PSDN	Mar-90	Dec-86	171
Chad	SMLS	Oct-76	Jul-84	136*
St. Vincent & Grenadines	Concertacion	Mar-90	-	201*
Sao Tome & Principe	PLC	Feb-74	May-82	95
Senegal	CP	Feb-78	Apr-90	266
Cook Islands	CP	Aug-63	Aug-78	266
Seychelles	SPPF	Jul-33	May-62	161*
Costa Rica	PUN	Jul-65	Jan-00	496*
Singapore	HDZ	Aug-65	Jan-00	496*
Croatia	SDP	Jul-93	Oct-69	163*
Somalia	SYL	May-94	Aug-78	145*
South Africa	ANC	Apr-66	Aug-78	145*
Dominican Republic	PR	Feb-74	Aug-84	108
Sri Lanka (I) ^{2,3}	UNP	Mar-86	May-00	139*
El Salvador	PDC	Mar-86	May-00	139*
Taiwan	KMT	Mar-86	May-00	139*
Ethiopia	EPRDF	Oct-96	Apr-87	134*
Tanzania	CCM	Oct-76	Dec-86	292*
Fiji	FAP	Dec-63	Dec-86	156*
Trinidad & Tobago	BNM	Dec-63	Dec-86	156*
Gabon	PDG	Dec-63	Dec-86	156*
Turkey (I) ³	BBP	Feb-46	May-82	207
Turkey (II) ^{1,3}	ANAP	Oct-82	Nov-94	146
Gambia (I) ^{1,3}	PPP	May-82	Nov-94	146
Vanuatu	VP	Jul-86	Dec-91	123*
Gambia (II)	APRC	Jul-86	Dec-91	123*
Venezuela	AD	Feb-92	Mar-69	98
Ghana	PNDC	Nov-92	Jan-01	98
Zambia	MMD	Nov-94	Oct-81	181*
Greece	ND	Nov-94	Oct-81	181*
Zimbabwe (I) ³	ZANU-PF	Apr-84	Dec-97	83
Grenada	NNP	Dec-84	Mar-97	83
Zimbabwe (II) ³	ZANU-PF	Dec-87	Jan-91	228*
Guatemala	DCG	Jan-88	Jan-91	228*
Guinea	PUP	Dec-93	-	156*
Guyana (I) ¹	PNC	May-66	Oct-80	173
Guyana (II)	Civic/PPP	Oct-92	-	170*
Honduras	PL	Jan-82	Jan-90	96
India ²	INC	Aug-47	Mar-77	355
Italy	DC	Apr-48	Jun-81	398
Ivory Coast ¹	PDCI	Oct-90	Dec-99	110
Jamaica	JLP	Aug-62	Mar-72	115
Japan	LP	Apr-52	Dec-54	32
Kenya	KANU	Dec-92	Dec-02	120
Korea, South (II)	DRP	Oct-63	Oct-72	132
Korea, South (III)	DJP	Feb-81	Feb-98	204
Lesotho	BCP	Apr-93	-	164*

Non-Advantaged First-Movers

Andorra	NLP	Jan-82	May-84	28
Austria	OVP	Jul-55	Apr-70	177
Bangladesh	BNP	Mar-91	Jun-96	63
Belarus	n/p	Jul-94	-	149*
Belize	PUP	Sep-81	Dec-84	39
Benin (II)	PRB	Apr-91	Apr-96	60
Bolivia (II)	MNR	Aug-85	Aug-89	48
Brazil (I)	PTB	Jan-51	Nov-55	58
Brazil (II)	PMDB	Mar-85	Mar-90	60
Cameroon	CPDM	Oct-92	-	170*
Comoros	n/p	Apr-02	May-06	49
Cyprus (I) ¹	n/p	Aug-60	Jul-74	167
Cyprus (II)	n/p	Dec-74	Sep-77	33
Czech Republic	ODS	Jan-93	Dec-97	59
Dominica	DFP	Nov-78	Jul-80	20
Ecuador (I)	MCDP	Sep-48	Sep-52	48
Ecuador (II)	CFP	Aug-79	May-81	21
Estonia	FPE	Sep-91	Jan-92	4
France	UNR/UDR	Jan-59	Aug-76	211
Georgia	CUG	Oct-92	Jan-04	135
Germany, West	CDU	Sep-49	Oct-69	242
Hungary	HDF	May-90	Jul-94	50
Indonesia	PKB	Oct-99	Jul-01	21
Israel	MP/LP	May-48	Jun-77	349
Kiribati	n/p	Jul-79	Oct-94	183
Korea, South (I)	LP	Aug-48	Aug-60	144
Kyrgyzstan	n/p	Dec-91	Mar-05	159
Latvia	LTF	Sep-91	Aug-93	23
Lithuania	Sajudis	Sep-91	Dec-92	15
Luxembourg	CSV	Oct-45	Jun-74	344
Madagascar	UNDD	Mar-93	Sep-96	42
Malawi	UDF	May-94	-	151*
Marshall Islands	n/p	Oct-86	Jan-97	123
Micronesia, F.S.	n/p	Nov-86	Nov-87	12
Moldova	DAPM/APM	Dec-91	Jul-92	7
Nauru	n/p	Jan-68	Dec-76	107
Niger	MNSD	Dec-99	-	84*
Pakistan	PPP	Dec-88	Nov-90	23
Palau	n/p	Oct-94	Jan-01	75
Panama	PLA	Sep-94	Sep-99	60
Papua New Guinea	PNGUP	Sep-75	Mar-80	54
Paraguay	PC	May-93	-	163*
Philippines (II)	UNIDO	Feb-86	Jun-92	76
Poland	Solidarity/KLD	Dec-91	Jun-92	6

Portugal	PS	Jul-76	Aug-78	25
Russia	Yeltsin/UR	Dec-91	-	180*
Samoa	n/p	Jan-62	Feb-70	97
Slovakia	HZDS	Jan-93	Mar-94	14
Slovenia	LDS	Jun-91	May-92	11
Solomon Islands	SIUPA	Jul-78	Aug-81	37
Spain	UCD	Jun-77	Dec-82	66
St. Kitts & Nevis	PAM	Sep-83	Jul-95	142
St. Lucia	SLP	Feb-79	Jul-79	5
Sri Lanka (I)	UNP	Feb-48	Apr-56	98
Suriname	NF	Sep-91	Sep-96	60
Thailand	DP	Sep-92	Jul-95	34
Turkish Cyprus	NUP	Nov-83	Jan-94	122
Tuvalu	n/p	Oct-78	Sep-81	35
Ukraine	n/p	Dec-91	Jul-94	31
Uruguay	PC	Mar-85	Mar-90	60

* Incumbent still in power; tenure through December 2006

¹Ruling party removed by coup or suspended elections

²Ruling party unilaterally extended term

³Ruling party presided over change from parliamentary to presidential regime

Note that the first-mover advantage I have posited for these cases will not necessarily show up as a strong effect in the survival estimates of first incumbents: duration is a consequence as well of the causal processes that unfold *after* competition begins, and I have not yet specified what I think those processes are or how they will play out. (I develop that argument beginning in Chapter 3). In fact, some of the long-lived parties began with a surprisingly weak electoral performance given their subsequent lifespan in office. For instance, one might expect Mapai in Israel to have won a majority in the first Israel elections, since it controlled the prime minister's office for the first 30 years of the regime; yet it held only 46 of 120 seats (38.3%) in the first Knesset. The CDU/CSU in Germany barely held a plurality (34.6%) of seats in the first term of the Bundestag in 1949, yet controlled the chancellor's office for the next 20 years. And the RDPC (later CPDM) in Cameroon fell two seats short of a majority in the 1992 elections

and had to take on a coalition partner; its presidential candidate squeaked out reelection with a 40 percent plurality when the opposition split the vote between at least three other candidates.

Despite these examples, however, we should still expect those ruling parties that win a majority in the first elections to last longer on average than those which do not. There should still be *some* discernable effect on overall patterns of survival, even if it is weakened by subsequent developments in the political system that I have not yet modeled. And in fact, this is what we find, as Figure 2.4 shows: advantaged first-movers do indeed survive longer on average than their non-advantaged counterparts.

The most surprising finding in Figure 2.4 is that almost all of the higher survival rate of first movers seems to be due to the “advantaged” parties: when we break this group out separately, the survival function for the other first movers looks remarkably similar to that of the non-first movers. Thus, even this simple dichotomous measure of first-mover advantage appears to capture an important initial difference between ruling parties that has long-lasting implications for their survival. Moreover, the data indicate that it is not merely the act of being first that is correlated with survival, but one’s performance in the first election: win big, and chances are you will be in power a long time. But come to power without majority backing, and your survival prospects are no greater than any generic ruling party in an established regime.

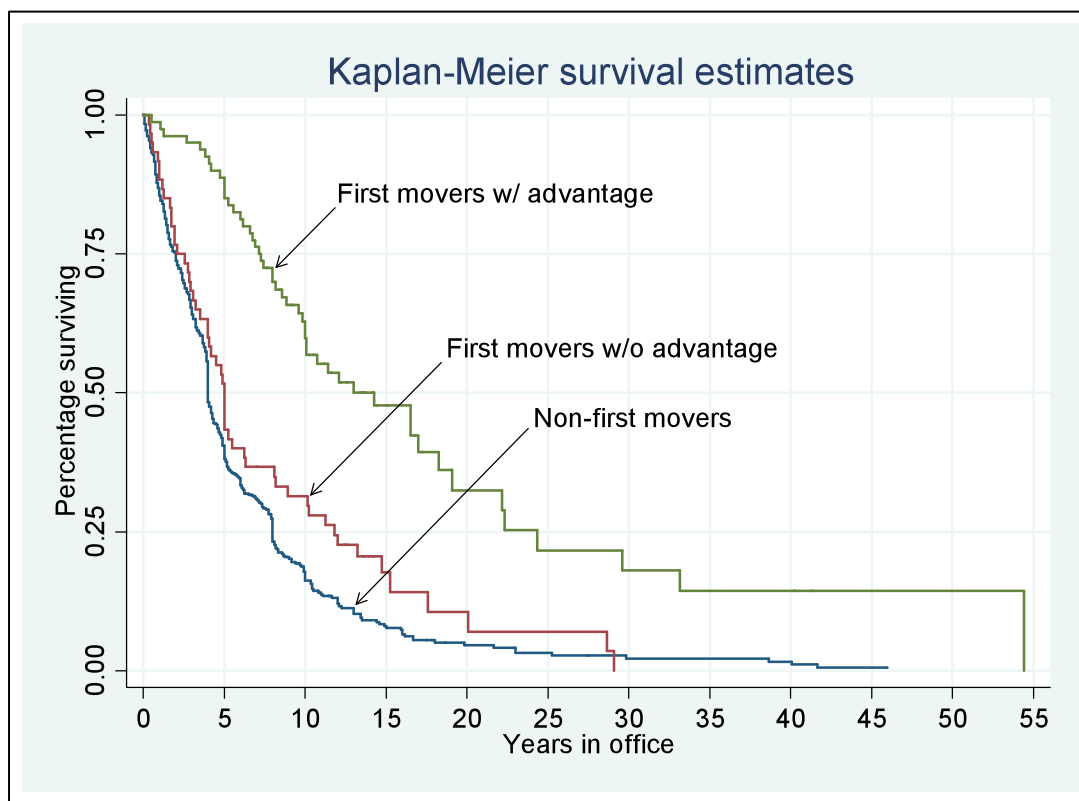


FIGURE 2.4. ADVANTAGED FIRST MOVER PARTIES HAVE BETTER SURVIVAL RATES

Implications of Findings

This conclusion might seem patently obvious in hindsight: parties that do well in the first elections are more likely to do well in subsequent ones. But it is not self-evidently true that the advantages that produce the initial victory should endure for a generation or more. In fact, one can make a reasonable argument for the converse: the downside of majority control is that you have no one to blame when things go awry. Moreover, there are good reasons to think voter expectations will be unreasonably high at the beginning of most regimes, with the consequence that the first incumbents inevitably get blamed when the idealism of opposition meets the reality of governing. One need

only look at Eastern Europe to see this effect in action: the initial euphoria over the end of communism quickly faded as the transition to market-based economies and democratic politics proved anything but smooth. Expecting a rapid convergence to western European standards of living, voters instead got shock therapy, economic slumps, and massive unemployment (Kolodko 2000). The anti-communist leaders who took power in most of these regimes got blamed, fairly or not, for much of the severe economic and social dislocation that occurred during the early stages of the transition, and in many cases were enthusiastically booted out of office as soon as they had to face the voters again (Grzymala-Busse 2002). The circumstances may be less extreme in most of the other first-mover cases, but the same dynamic is at play: winning everything in a new regime is a double-edged sword, and it is not obvious why the benefits of being the first in power should in general outweigh the costs.

In sum, there is clear evidence that parties which win the first elections outright last longer. But it is much less clear why the advantages these ruling parties initially enjoy should continue to sustain them in power for a generation or more. The answer to that question is the subject of the next part of the dissertation.

2.7. Conclusion

The goal of this chapter was to describe the patterns of ruling party duration, identifying the longest-lived ruling parties and establishing a comparison group from which we could begin to explore the possible causes of dominant party systems. The universe of cases from which dominant parties emerged, I argued, was all ruling parties

in *electorally-contested regimes*, or ECRs. To this end, I identified 692 parties that held power in 159 regimes in 142 different states between 1950 and 2006. Using a 20-year threshold to code “extraordinary” longevity, I identified 24 ruling parties that qualified as dominant within the time frame of the sample, and another 17 that crossed the threshold after the end of the observation period, or appeared likely to.

I drew three conclusions from this set of dominant parties. First, there was a key difference between total ruling party time in power and time at risk of electoral defeat—the longevity of several “dominant” parties, including the KMT in Taiwan, looks much less impressive once we consider that they were not at risk of losing an election for most of their time in power. Second, most dominant parties began as the first incumbents in newly-established ECRs—what I termed *first-mover parties*. An examination of the full sample of ruling party cases showed that this pattern was robust: the median first-mover party survived twice as long, on average, as did the median non-first-mover. Third, I found that most of this boost in expected survival time accrued only to parties that won a majority in the first elections—what I termed *advantaged first movers*. A qualitative review of the cases indicated that this performance was a result of three advantages these parties held over their opponents: (1) more partisan supporters in the electorate, (2) a superior party organization and resources, and (3) initial control over the institutions of the regime. These findings indicate that the most common path to dominance is for a ruling party to take power at the beginning of a new regime, possess advantages that initially place them at the apex of the party system, and then retain these advantages over their opponents for a generation or more. First-mover advantage explains a great deal about the origins of dominant parties.

If the findings of this chapter answered the question of how dominant party advantages are *produced*, however, they leave open the question of how they are *reproduced*. It is not obvious why winning a majority in the first election should increase expected ruling party survival time. This question serves to motivate the next part of the dissertation, which lays out a theory of party system development when the first incumbent enjoys a first-mover advantage. Chapter 3 describes the mechanisms through which ruling party advantages are reproduced over time, and Chapter 4 adds an institutional context to this story.

CHAPTER 3

THEORY I: THE MECHANISMS OF PARTY SYSTEM ASYMMETRY

“The dominant party wears itself out in office, it loses its vigor, its arteries harden...every domination bears within itself the seeds of its own destruction.”

-- Maurice Duverger (1959 [1954]: 312).

In Chapter 2, I found that the longest-lived ruling parties began as the first incumbents in a new electorally-contested regime (ECR). Ruling parties were much less likely to endure at least 20 years in power if they took office in an ECR that had already experienced at least one partisan turnover than if they were the first incumbent in the regime. I termed this a *first-mover advantage*: parties that win or retain full control over the regime at the beginning of the contested period tend to do well in subsequent elections, too.

This is a surprising finding, given that expectations in the electorate tend to be unreasonably high at the beginning of new regimes, and holding full control means that the first incumbent has no one else to blame when it inevitably fails to meet them. On the contrary, we might reasonably expect a *first-mover disadvantage*: parties that start out in opposition are better positioned to benefit in the long term when the incumbent fails to meet popular expectations. Indeed, this pattern is what many view as the normal pattern of democratic politics: at some point, incumbents inevitably wear out their welcome, and once they do, voters turn to the opposition waiting in the wings (cf. Przeworski 1991).

The fundamental question that advantaged first-mover party systems pose is why this pattern takes so much longer to become established, if it does at all.

The explanation I offer in this chapter is that incumbent defeat requires the presence of a credible alternative. And unlike in established regimes, in new ones there is no opposition party with previous experience in government. Voters may have no practical way to sanction the incumbent for poor performance if no opposition party appears capable of doing a better job. Thus, long periods of one-party rule are at their root due to opposition dysfunction, rather than incumbent party organization and skill. And opposition parties are most likely to be unacceptable to the median voter in the electorate when both they and the regime in which they have to compete are entirely new than when they have a previous track record as a governing party. Thus, Duverger's evocative metaphor of dominant parties containing within themselves "the seeds of their own destruction" is only half-right: dominant party decline is inevitable. But the timing of dominant party defeat is determined not by the progression of their own sclerosis but the rate of development of their competitors.

The argument proceeds as follows. The first section introduces the concept of *party system asymmetry* and describes how high asymmetry increases expected ruling party survival rates. The remaining sections each cover a different mechanism through which party system asymmetry is sustained. The second section describes how differences in *mass partisanship* can produce asymmetry, as one party benefits from more loyal partisan supporters than others. The third section addresses *spatial positioning*, detailing how some parties can be less able than others to reposition themselves in ideological space to win more votes. The fourth section discusses how

differences in *coordination* lead to party system asymmetry: one party may be inherently better at converting votes into seats, and seats into a role in government. The fifth section considers how these three mechanisms may work in concert over time, and derives hypotheses about when party system might remain high for a prolonged period of time.

3.1. Theoretical Foundations

Party System Asymmetry

The theory presented here attempts to account for *party system asymmetry*. A party system is asymmetric when one party consistently has the highest probability of controlling the chief executive's office over several election cycles. This greater probability is due to structural, systematic factors that are relatively stable over time, in contrast to the random elements that also influence any given election outcome such as economic shocks or international conflicts. In a perfectly symmetric party system, structural advantages for one party over all others do not exist: the election outcome is decided as the joint outcome of many random events. That is, in a two-party system, both the ruling and opposition parties go into the election cycle with an equal chance of winning. In a multi-party system, at least one opposition party has a probability of winning equal to that of the incumbent.

In a highly asymmetric party system, by contrast, the incumbent party has a large and systematic advantage over all other parties in the system. As a result, it is far and away the most likely of all the parties contesting the elections to control the chief executive's office. In an asymmetric party system with only two parties, one goes into

every election with a much higher probability than the other of winning; in a multi-party system, one party is the clear favorite over all others.

Following this definition, the link between party system asymmetry and ruling party survival is straightforward. Perfectly symmetric party systems should generate frequent ruling party turnover: the likelihood of a ruling party surviving a given number of years is a function of the number of elections it has had to face.²⁴ In the simplest case of a symmetric two-party system with fixed terms, for instance, both parties face a 0.5 probability of winning each election. The expected probability of one party controlling the executive for two consecutive election cycles is then $(0.5)^2 = 0.25$; for three, $(0.5)^3 = 0.125$; for four, $(0.5)^4 = 0.0625$, and so on. In an asymmetric party system, by contrast, something highly unusual has to occur for the leading party to lose control of the executive, which increases the expected incumbent survival time. If the party system is so asymmetric that one party wins each election with a 0.9 probability, then the probability that it survives any given number of election cycles is much higher as well: for two, $(0.9)^2 = 0.81$; for three, $(0.9)^3 = 0.729$; for four, $(0.9)^4 = 0.6561$, and so forth. In other words, the key to explaining why long periods of one-party rule occur is to understand the causes of party system asymmetry: ruling party turnover occurs rarely in asymmetric party systems while it occurs frequently in symmetric ones.

²⁴ Or months in office, if the ruling party can lose control of the executive without an election.

Mechanisms of Party System Asymmetry

As we saw in Chapter 2, party system asymmetry was high at the beginning of many electorally-contested regimes. It is not surprising that new ECRs often begin with a clear leading party: entry into the party system has been previously forbidden, and it takes time for new entrants to develop the capability to challenge the first incumbent in office. What is not obvious, however, is why this initial asymmetry should *persist* over many election cycles in some cases (e.g. India, Tanzania), and not in others (e.g. Sri Lanka, Taiwan). The wide variation in survival times within the set of advantaged first-mover parties indicates that what *produces* party system asymmetry at the beginning of the regime does not necessarily *reproduce* it over time. In other words, we need a theory that is dynamic: one that can account for the persistence or decline of party system asymmetry after the founding election of the regime.

Accordingly, I identify three *causal mechanisms* through which party system asymmetry is sustained. By causal mechanism, I mean a series of events governed by lawlike regularities that lead from the explanans—the causal factors—to the explanandum—the outcome to be explained (Little 1991: 15). These law-like regularities in turn are grounded in a generalized understanding of individual behavior that informs each link in the causal chain. That is, to explain why party system asymmetry occurs, it is not enough simply to show a positive association between a causal factor (e.g. material resources, ruling party age) and asymmetry; we must also detail how the causal factor leads to different behavior of individuals across the parties and how this behavior in turn leads to different party probabilities of winning elections.

Focusing on causal mechanisms allows us to specify how this process or the magnitude of its effect might change as time passes. For instance, one important mechanism of asymmetry is individual partisanship, which develops in part through regular participation in the electoral process and thus should strengthen as the regime ages. In attributing the persistence of party system asymmetry to one party's larger number of partisans, then, we need to specify not only how this advantage came about but also the reason *new* partisans develop at different rates for different parties—otherwise, the leading party should gradually sink into parity with at least one other party in the system. The discussion of partisanship therefore is focused on what is required for new parties to develop a partisan following in the electorate and the conditions under which this varies.

The Causes of Party System Asymmetry: Three Research Traditions

What causes party system asymmetry? There are at least three distinct research traditions in political science that speak to this question. The first is the behavioral tradition, sometimes called the “Michigan school,” whose seminal work is *The American Voter* (Campbell et al. 1960). This tradition is characterized by a focus on mass rather than elite behavior, draws heavily on political psychology, and explains vote choice as a consequence primarily of partisanship—an individual-level tie to or identification with a political party that is independent of the issues or candidates involved in any single election. The literature on clientelism, exemplified by Herbert Kitschelt's work (e.g. 2000), is arguably a close enough intellectual cousin to be grouped with the Michigan school, as well: at the least, it shares a similar focus on patterns of mass voting behavior

and particularly the development of long-lasting voter ties to a particular party. The second tradition can be found in the spatial modeling literature beginning with Anthony Downs (1957), sometimes called the “Rochester school” for the department from which many of its early contributors came (cf. Amadae and Bueno de Mesquita 1999). This tradition is characterized by a greater concern with accounting for elite behavior in elections, draws heavily on the methods and assumptions of economics, and typically explains vote choice as a consequence of the policy positions candidates or parties take, followed by a rational calculation of self-interest by the voter. The third is the institutionalist tradition, most prominently represented in research by Gary Cox (1997) and Matthew Shugart (Taagepera and Shugart 1989; Shugart and Carey 1992) but building on earlier work by Arend Lijphart (e.g. Lijphart 1984)—what, to parallel the other two, we might call the “San Diego school.” This tradition focuses on the way formal rules structure partisan competition for office, and it emphasizes variation across institutional settings in how popular support is converted into votes, votes into seats, and seats into political power.

Each of these schools has valuable insights to contribute to a theory of party system asymmetry, and each has been referenced in existing work on dominant party systems. But as these research traditions have developed at some distance from one another, so the various theories of dominant party systems have continued to draw mainly from one tradition to the neglect of the others. For instance, among the recent scholarship on dominant parties, the explanations offered by Beatriz Magaloni (2006) and Ethan Scheiner (2006) argue for clientelism as the key mechanism sustaining one-party dominance: the ruling party’s privileged access to state resources and its superior

organization allow it to cement voter loyalty by delivering benefits to its supporters and denying them to its opponents. Explanations offered by Anthony McGann (1999) and Ken Greene (2007), by contrast, emphasize the importance of spatial positioning: dominant parties persist in office mainly because they occupy the critical centrist position in the party system, with opposition parties arrayed toward the extremes. For McGann, this advantage occurs because the distribution of voters is skewed toward one end of the ideological spectrum, while for Greene it is because opposition parties are composed of ideological extremists who refuse to reposition closer to the median voter. But for both, the central mechanism at work is the political parties' ideological distance from one another and the median voter—a fundamentally Downsian conception of political competition. Work by Cox (Cox and Niou 1994; Cox 1996; Cox 1997), and Lin (1996; 2006) highlights a third mechanism, that of elite and voter coordination, to account for party system asymmetry. In these explanations, the dominant party's superior party organization and resources, among other factors, allow it to nominate the ideal number of candidates and distribute voter support more frequently and effectively than the opposition. Thus, the party's greater efficiency at converting votes into seats, and seats into political power, gives it a competitive advantage over the opposition.

In some cases, these competing explanations do predict different outcomes under the same initial conditions. For example, theories of coordination imply that ruling parties should be more likely to lose when the opposition camp has a more disciplined organization that is better able to solve coordination problems. Theories of partisanship and spatial positioning, by contrast, predict that opposition party organization per se should have no effect on the risk of ruling party defeat.

In other cases, different mechanisms are invoked to explain the same effect on the party system. For instance, theories in all three traditions predict that a large incumbent party resource advantage will sustain party system asymmetry, but they specify different ways in which this advantage should be manifested: the incumbent could remain favored to retain control of the executive (a) because it enjoys the support of a large bloc of loyal partisan voters cemented through clientelist ties, (b) because it holds a centrist position in policy space against extremist opposition parties, or (c) because unlike the opposition it can run candidates in every district and more efficiently convert votes into executive control.

Previous research has typically emphasized the explanatory power of one favored mechanism to the exclusion of others. But there is no good reason to believe that only one of these mechanisms is operating; indeed, the safer assumption going forward is that *all three* are relevant. Rather than attempting to demonstrate that one of these traditions “has it right,” I think we are better served by considering the *net effects* of these different mechanisms in combination on party system asymmetry. To this end, I proceed by describing each mechanism in more detail. I then consider the factors that are likely to drive changes in asymmetry over time, focusing in particular on how one mechanism might trigger, reinforce or undercut others. In this way, my theory of party system development incorporates insights from all three research traditions. The resulting explanation provides a more nuanced understanding of party system asymmetry without sacrificing a great deal in parsimony and generality.

3.2. Mechanism 1: Partisanship

The first way party system asymmetry can be sustained is through the mechanism of *mass partisanship*. Partisanship is the psychological bond between an individual and a political party.²⁵ An individual's partisanship colors how she views the political world: it affects everything from the interpretation of new information to the decision to support specific government policies to the intensity and frequency of political participation (Campbell et al. 1960).

Its relevance to party system asymmetry, however, is most obviously through its effect on individual vote choice. Partisanship remains the single best predictor of how an individual will vote in any given election (Dalton and Weldon 2007). The consequence for electoral competition is straightforward: if a large fraction of the electorate identifies with one party, it holds a systematic advantage over all other parties in the competition for votes. That is, the electorate as a whole is biased toward one party; all else equal, the party with the most partisans has the greatest likelihood of winning control of the executive in the election.

Sources of Mass Partisanship at the Beginning of Electorally Contested Regimes

I found in Chapter 2 that there appeared to be wide variation in the fraction of partisans in the electorate at the beginning of electorally-contested regimes. The way in which the ECR was established mattered a great deal for the initial distribution of

²⁵ The meaning of the terms "partisanship," "party identification," "party affect," and "ties to a party" overlap, and they are often used interchangeably in practice. I use "partisanship" to refer to the underlying concept of an identification with a political party.

partisans in the electorate. If the previous ruling authority effectively disintegrated, as in the Baltic states, or removed itself entirely from politics, as in the transitions from military dictatorships in Spain and Portugal, then there tended to be few partisans of any stripe in the first elections, and the party system was akin to a blank slate. That is, none of the new parties that sprouted up to contest the elections initially held a clear partisan advantage over the others. If after leaving office the previous incumbent remained part of the political scene, however, it often retained some partisan supporters, and the initial party system then looked more asymmetric. The majority of voters may have despised the party of the *ancien regime* but had no ties to any of the alternatives, either—only as these developed over time was the former incumbent’s partisan advantage reduced. For instance, in Russia and Ukraine, the Communist Party retained considerable residual partisan support after the breakup of the Soviet Union (Miller and Klobucar 2000; Brader and Tucker 2001; cf. Grzymala-Busse 2002).

If the previous incumbent remained in power through the transition to contested elections, it was even more likely to begin with more partisans than any other parties. Again, there often existed many voters who were openly hostile to the incumbent, but they did not initially have strong partisan attachments to any opposition party. For example, the KMT in Taiwan participated in elections for local offices since the 1950s and the legislature beginning in 1969, while opposition parties were officially banned until 1987. As a result, when the national executive was finally opened to direct election in 1996, it had by far the largest percentage of partisans in the electorate; shortly before the presidential election that year, 32.1 percent of all respondents identified with the KMT while only 12.8 percent identified with the strongest opposition party, the DPP

(Tsai 2003; Tsai and Chao 2008). This pattern was also prevalent in Africa; few African states had any significant history of multi-party elections before they transitioned to ECRs in the early 1990s. Opposition parties thus had to develop a partisan following in the electorate from scratch—they had no previous partisan reference points that they could tap into (Lindberg 2006; cf. Ishiyama and Quinn 2006).

In contrast, there was less partisan asymmetry in states that had a previous history of multi-party competition. If the new regime marked the resumption of electoral contestation, rather than introducing it for the first time, there were often pre-existing party identities that were available for the new contestants to tap into. For instance, most of the Latin American states had long histories of multi-party competition in elections that were interrupted by military dictatorships, most recently in the 1970s and 1980s. When ECRs were eventually reestablished in these states and regular elections returned, many voters already had some previous experience of siding with one party or another. As a consequence, the new party system often reflected this historical legacy, with a similar constellation of parties and patterns of voter support emerging in short order (Geddes 1995; Lupu and Stokes 2010; cf. Wittenberg 2006 on Hungary; Kreuzer 2009 on post-war Germany).

The greatest initial partisan asymmetry tended to occur in regimes featuring a mass-mobilizing “founder party”—one that led the country to independence and played the central role in creating the regime, such as the ANC in South African and the INC in India. In these cases, the initial incumbent enjoyed broad support and voter sympathy: indeed, it was more exceptional for a voter *not* to be a partisan supporter of the founder party, at least initially. In South Africa, for instance, 58 percent of voters “strongly

identified” with the ANC in 1994—well over half the electorate (Habib and Taylor 1999).

Thus, we see a wide range of patterns of mass partisanship at the beginning of ECRs, from cases in which the party system was effectively a blank slate with no partisan ties whatsoever, such as the Baltics, to those in which there remained some partisan holdovers from the old regime or from a previous history of multi-party elections (E. Europe, Latin America), to those in which the incumbent remained in office and had strong partisan ties to a sizeable minority of voters (Mozambique, Tanzania, Taiwan), to those in which a large majority of the electorate felt some partisan attachment to the founder party (South Africa, India).

Change in Partisanship Asymmetry over Time

Now, given an initial incumbent advantage in mass partisanship, how might this change over time? The definitive statement on how partisan attachments develop in new regimes remains Converse (1969; see also Dalton and Weldon 2007). Converse proposes that partisanship is formed through a combination of two processes: (1) family socialization, and (2) voting participation. As adolescents, citizens are “socialized” by those around them, especially their immediate family, to identify with one particular party. Once they come of age and enter the electorate, this initial predisposition toward one party is strengthened as individuals vote in elections. These dual factors of socialization and participation generate an age effect: the older the voter, the more likely she is to strongly identify with a party, and the less likely she is to change her partisan identity.

The major modification to this model since Converse has been to include some form of “cognitive updating” whereby voters can shift their identity in response to consistent conflicts between their personal political views and the positions and performance of “their” party (e.g. Fiorina 1981). When enough new information conflicts with the voter’s partisan identity, partisanship can change (Groenendyk 2009).

The key implication of these models of partisanship formation is that a highly asymmetric distribution of partisans will change only slowly, as generational replacement occurs and incumbent party performance consistently disappoints some former partisans. Thus, the initial ruling party advantage can be perpetuated for decades through many voters’ stable psychological ties to the incumbent.

The second way asymmetry of partisanship can occur is through the ruling party’s use of *clientelism* to cement voter loyalty. Clientelism refers to the direct exchange between elected officials and their constituents of votes for material benefits, including patronage, pork, and rents. The key feature of clientelism that reinforces partisanship is the contingent nature of the exchange: elected officials can to a greater or lesser degree target these benefits at their supporters and withhold them from their opponents. As a consequence, some share of the electorate becomes directly and materially dependent on the reelection of the incumbent party, or at least a subset of its elected members (Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007). Thus, another reason an initial partisan asymmetry might occur is the opposition’s lack of resources. Because opposition parties are not in government and have no previous history of catering to certain segments of the electorate, new opposition parties cannot typically rely on pork, patronage, or vote-buying to build partisan support, while the incumbent is able regularly to reinforce its

partisan ties to voters. Moreover, this imbalance is not likely to fade until the opposition actually wins an election or the incumbent's resources run out.

Both of these models of the sources of partisanship suggest that, to have a realistic chance of winning elections, opposition parties must manage the difficult task of building a party brand—that is, a recognized party name and appealing image that will “cue an established reputation” within the electorate. Much as travelers know that McDonald's provides a certain product with standards for cleanliness and service, the party brand can convey a great deal of information to voters about what a typical candidate of the political party is like (Aldrich 1995: 49). The more voters the party's endorsement alone can deliver for its candidates at election time, the more competitive the party will be in elections against the incumbent.

Thus, asymmetry of partisanship can also decline as one or more opposition parties develops an organization disciplined enough and appealing enough to monopolize a segment of opinion in the electorate. Unfortunately for oppositions, however, the parties best able to maintain consistency of appeals to voters are also less able to reposition themselves closer to the median voter. This in turn leads to a second kind of asymmetry, that of spatial positioning.

3.3. Mechanism 2: Spatial Positioning

Spatial positioning asymmetry arises when one party is systematically more flexible in the ideological range of positions that it can take in the political arena. Such flexibility gives the party an advantage in electoral competition to the extent that voters

choose a party based on how close its stated policy positions are to their own. The more ideologically flexible party is more likely to end up espousing positions that appeal to the median voter on the most salient policy issues of the election, and as a consequence has the highest probability of winning executive control. The key question here is how these differences in ideological flexibility between the parties come about.

The answer for new party systems with an advantaged incumbent has to do with different strategies of *recruitment* across the parties. In order to win elections, both the incumbent party leaders and those of the opposition need to attract new members. Parties need people to do everything from running as candidates and writing election manifestoes to knocking on doors, answering phones, and putting out press releases. The crucial asymmetry between parties begins with differences in their ability to recruit: incumbents have access to the resources, offices, and powers of the state, and can therefore provide more attractive terms of employment for potential members than can opposition parties. New opposition parties cannot usually match these financial incentives, nor can they credibly promise to share the spoils of office, because they have never held power before. As a consequence, the types of candidates and workers the party is able to attract are qualitatively different from those who join the incumbent: they are both more ideologically motivated than incumbent party members, and far more extreme than the median voter in the electorate.

Recruitment Option 1: Paying Party Workers

To see why this is, consider first the simplest way to attract party workers: to offer material rewards. Paying workers is a straightforward way to get them to work for the

party, but it is also a strategy unavailable to those parties without a consistent source of funding—and the opposition parties in this scenario are likely to be at a great disadvantage in fundraising. For one, an important source of party funding is donations from business. Businesses, however, tend to donate to influence decisions on laws and regulations that affect them, and they have a clear incentive to direct most donations to the party in power unless there is a strong prospect that the incumbent is likely to go down to defeat soon. And even with an unpopular incumbent, rare indeed is the brand-new party that, lacking in candidates, members, and recognition among the public, can still credibly claim to be on the cusp of power.

Opposition parties may alternatively rely on a wealthy benefactor or two to pay the bills, but these are hardly a panacea—major donors are undoubtedly going to want a major say as well in shaping the party’s political agenda and probably also in its organization and tactics. Thus, attracting large donors requires finding some that passionately support the party’s cause. Relying on small donors can be problematic, too—the party cannot promise anything material in return to most of those donors, so they must find a cause that both appeals to large number of individuals and about which they are passionate enough to donate.

Alternative sources of funding are sometimes available to new parties, of course. Some oppositions are supported by funds from abroad; the United States and European Union have provided financial support to opposition parties in Nicaragua, Serbia, and Slovakia, for example (Levitsky and Way 2010: 48-49). Opposition parties sometimes can even receive funding from public sources within the country; in Taiwan, for instance, all parties winning seats in the legislature now become eligible for public funds in

proportion to their seat share. To the extent these alternative sources of funding are available, they should improve new parties' prospects of success. But these options are rarely available; much more commonly, opposition parties will be chronically short of money to run their operations and pay their workers.

Recruitment Option 2: Attracting Volunteers

As a consequence of their financial woes, most newly-formed opposition parties facing an advantaged incumbent will be forced to rely heavily on volunteers to work for the party, or in Kaare Strom's term, to become "labor intensive" (1990: 576). By donating a great deal of time and energy to party activities without receiving financial compensation, volunteers allow parties to overcome the financial hurdles that would otherwise make competing impossible. But a reliance on volunteers has one major drawback: it is likely to saddle the party with suboptimal policy positions on which it is highly inflexible.

To see this, consider how parties typically recruit volunteers. One way to appeal to potential members is by offering a material payoff "down the road," holding out the promise of the benefits of power and office once the party wins an election. However, much like the problem with soliciting donations from business, this pitch becomes less attractive the more remote the party's prospects of gaining power appear.

That leaves resource-poor parties with poor short-term electoral prospects to use a second type of appeal: promoting a cause that attracts passionate supporters. Most minor parties in the United States follow this model. The Libertarian Party, for instance, attracts members by advocating a life philosophy—self-reliance, individual responsibility, and a

belief in the efficiency of free markets—as much as a set of public policies. Those who participate in the party’s activities, whether as candidates or organizers, generally do so not out of a belief that they will soon be in power but out of a desire to disseminate their views more widely in society. A similar dedication to “The Cause” before winning office characterizes the membership of other minor parties such as the Socialist Party, the Green Party, and the Constitution Party (Hazlett 1992).

Such causes can attract many new members in a short time to an upstart political party, many of whom are willing to donate a tremendous amount of time, energy, and their own material resources to further the party’s activities. The catch is that the members of these labor-intensive parties look quite different from the electorate at large. First, they are motivated by ideology much more than material rewards; otherwise, why would they join an opposition party without resources to pay them? Second, they hold quite extreme views relative to the median voter in the electorate; otherwise, they should not be willing to devote so much time and energy to advocate a cause that is so radically different from the status quo (Green 2007).

Commitment Problems in Parties with Ideologically-Motivated Activists

In turn, having an ideologically-motivated membership can lead to a serious intra-party commitment problem once the party begins to participate in the electoral arena. This problem is that the leadership often has an incentive to renege on policy promises to its rank-and-file membership, either to position the party to win more votes, or to cut deals with the incumbent to obtain government portfolios or advance a particular policy objective (Strom 1990: 575-6). Would-be party activists will recognize that leadership

promises are not credible, and party activism will therefore be undersupplied—fewer people will join the party, and those that do will be less willing to work, and less enthusiastically, for the party than if the party leadership’s stated policy preferences were completely credible to its rank-and-file membership.

There are at least three ways parties may overcome this commitment problem, each with its own drawbacks (Strom 1990). First, parties can decentralize intra-party policy decisions—moving them from a select group of core leaders to an open vote of the full party membership, for example. This strategy, however, contributes to suboptimal policy positions: the preferences of the median voter in the party membership are much more extreme than those of the median voter in the electorate. Opposition candidates will therefore be at a systematic competitive disadvantage relative to the incumbent party’s candidates, and would be unable to reposition themselves more moderately even if they wanted to.

Thus, a party composed of ideologically-motivated activists and instrumentally-motivated leaders and candidates is likely to experience persistent disagreements over the party’s stated policy positions and its allocation of endorsements and resources (Aldrich 1995: 50). Greater intra-party democracy increases the motivation of party activists but prevents the party’s candidates from adopting policy positions that maximize their expected vote share. Such restrictions in turn can prove debilitating to the party leaders’ efforts to compete in elections. One good illustration of this problem is in the struggles of the British Labour Party to delete a commitment to large-scale nationalization of British enterprise from the party’s charter. Both Neil Kinnock and John Smith failed to abolish this clause, and only when Tony Blair succeeded did the Labour Party again defeat the

Conservatives (Strom and Muller 1999: 10).

A second possibility is for leaders to make themselves directly accountable to the party membership, through short terms and direct elections. This strategy makes leaders more responsive to party opinion, but also more vulnerable to intra-party defeat, and thus to discount future benefits in favor of short-term gains. And opposition leaders who are motivated by the benefits of office and who highly discount the future will be easier (i.e. cheaper) for the incumbent to woo away.

The demise of the Japanese Socialist Party illustrates how this can damage an opposition party's long-term prospects. After several decades in opposition, the JSP finally joined the longtime incumbent Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in a coalition government in 1994. The move led to the first Socialist prime minister in over 40 years, but also required that the party abandon a number of its long-held policy differences with the LDP. As a consequence, the party's activist members rebelled or resigned, its traditional supporters abandoned it in droves in the next election, and it all but ceased to be a viable party (Scheiner 2006: 41-42). The LDP subsequently returned to the prime minister's office for the next 15 years.

To prevent the possibility of this kind of destructive leadership defection, parties can also restrict nominations to elected offices to existing activists—that is, party nominees may all be required to have spent time, say, doing constituent service and organizing in local neighborhoods. The problem with this strategy is that it leads to lackluster candidates: the skills that make a good local canvasser and party hack are not necessarily (or likely) to be the same as those which make a good candidate for elected office. And once again, it saddles the party with positions that are far from the median

voter: by ensuring that party nominees faithfully espouse the policy positions of the median party member, the party also guarantees that its platform will be outside the mainstream of public opinion.

The end consequence of these different recruitment strategies is that opposition party leaders in general will be more limited in their autonomy in choosing a party platform than the incumbent party, and that party candidates will be less attractive than the incumbent party's. Thus, new parties will tend to emerge as "niche" parties, able to recruit a core membership that favors relatively extreme positions, but as a consequence are less able than existing parties to reposition themselves to win votes (Greene 2007). In this way, the initial difference in the recruitment strategies of an advantaged incumbent and new opposition parties is converted into positioning asymmetry: incumbents tend to end up centrist and ideologically adaptable, while opposition parties end up forming at either extreme and remain committed to sub-optimal policies even when it is obvious that these will lose them votes. Thus, an advantaged incumbent can continue in office even when most voters disapprove of its performance, because its opponents are too extreme and divided by ideological differences to form a credible alternative.

Ideology and Voter Distribution

Even if parties in the system have about the same ideological flexibility, however, there is one final way that ideology can sustain party system asymmetry: through the distribution of voters across the ideological spectrum. Anthony McGann (1999; 2002) has shown that one party can enjoy a positioning advantage over all others merely because the distribution of voters in policy space is skewed to one side or the other. For

instance, if the preferred policy positions of most right-wing voters cluster tightly around a peak to the right of the median voter, while left-wing voters favor positions spread more evenly through policy space to the left, then the parties of the left have to appeal to a greater net range of opinion than do the parties of the right. The party located at the modal voter on the right will then win the largest share of the vote, even when there are several parties and all take strictly vote-maximizing positions. As a consequence, a party centered on an ideologically compact minority may consistently win executive control in competition against parties appealing to a majority dispersed over a broad ideological space. McGann uses this finding to account for long periods of one-party rule in several European democracies, including the CDU in West Germany, the SAP in Sweden, and the rightist parties in the French Fifth Republic (1999: 105-160). Implicit in this explanation is that ideologically dispersed majorities generate a third kind of problem, that of coordination.

3.4. Mechanism 3: Coordination

The third way party system asymmetry may be sustained is through the mechanism of *coordination*. Coordination among voters and political elites is a central part of the process of converting citizen preferences into votes for specific candidates and parties. In parliamentary regimes, it also is required for converting seats into executive control. Indeed, Gary Cox has gone so far as to place coordination at the heart of “modern representative democracy,” which “presents at its core a *series* of coordination problems that arise as natural consequences of electoral competition for governmental

offices” (1997: 5; italics in original).

The fundamental problem of electoral coordination is that, in Cox’s words, “[a] group with enough votes to elect some number of candidates in a given (legislative or executive) race will in fact elect that number only if it can make its votes count by concentrating them appropriately” (*ibid.*). Under different patterns of coordination, the same underlying voter preferences across all parties in the system can result in very different winners. For instance, if elites on the political left agree to nominate a single slate of candidates, and leftist voters duly support that slate, while voters on the right split their votes between several rightist parties, then it is more likely a leftist party will win the chief executive’s office than a rightist party. This outcome is independent of the underlying distribution of preferences for leftist versus rightist policies in the electorate as a whole: the new chief executive, in fact, could be significantly to the left of the median voter. When coordination works consistently to the advantage of one party or coalition, then party system asymmetry is the result: one party’s expected share of political power is higher than all others for a given level of political support.

Although it combines elements of both partisanship and spatial positioning, coordination is best thought of as a separate mechanism through which party system asymmetry can be generated. The coordination mechanism is distinct in two ways. First, *public expectations* play a central role—electoral outcomes depend crucially on what everyone expects everyone else to do in the election. In other words, coordination is inherently strategic. Second, the patterns of coordination can change greatly depending on the *institutions* that structure electoral competition. In particular, electoral systems can generate very different incentives for both intra- and inter-party coordination in

elections, and these in turn can affect fundamental features of the party system including the number of parties to win seats and the ideological range between them.

The key task for us here is to specify the conditions at the beginning of an ECR under which coordination will be unequal between parties, and to specify how and when this leads to a systematic advantage for one party in the competition for executive power. For the moment, I will take up this task without reference to electoral institutions or the method of executive selection. (I consider the effects of institutions on asymmetry in Chapter 4.) Consistent with our interest in the party system at the beginning of an ECR, I will also focus on the problems of the opposition as a whole relative to the incumbent party.

Requirements for Opposition Coordination in New Regimes

In ECRs in which the incumbent party is expected to win the majority of seats and offices up for election, the coordination problem facing the opposition camp is simple: it needs to ensure that votes for opposition candidates are concentrated as efficiently as possible, and not split between two or more candidates or parties. If the overriding goal is to defeat the incumbent, the ideal pattern of coordination is to have only a single candidate or slate of candidates which captures the votes of all opponents of the ruling party. The more candidates who run for a given office, and the more opposition parties which contest a particular election, the more difficult it will be for voters who support the opposition to coordinate their votes in a way that maximizes the chance that incumbent party candidates will be defeated.

In the “mature” party system of a long-lived ECR, endorsements from opposition

parties with an established “reputation for viability” provide a ready solution to this coordination problem for both voters and elites (Cox 1997: 159). Such party endorsements then provide two valuable pieces of information: (1) the endorsed candidates will further the goals of the opposition if elected, and (2) past experience indicates that most other opposition supporters are also likely to vote for the same candidate(s), making them obvious coordination points. The role of the party nomination and endorsement process is key: without party endorsements, “groups of like-minded voters might end up splitting their votes sub-optimally among a superabundance of similar candidates” (*ibid.*). For the same reasons that endorsements are valuable to opposition supporters, they will also be desirable for aspirants to elected office: “to the extent that the endorsement holds sway as a focal coordination device among some set of voters, it insulates endorsees from strategic desertion, and, indeed, operates to make them a net beneficiary of strategic voting” (160).

Cox argues that such reputations require a party to establish “a monopoly on endorsing within a given segment of opinion, having beaten out or co-opted all other would-be coordination devices” (160). Thus, the ideal scenario in a newly-established ECR is for all the opposition to coalesce around a single party which (1) monopolizes, or very nearly so, the entire anti-incumbent vote, and thereby (2) determines the viability of candidates through its endorsement procedures—those who win the party’s endorsements receive the votes of all opposition supporters. If one party in the opposition manages to capture all of the anti-opposition vote, then the asymmetry of the party system due to coordination problems should be markedly reduced: if neither the partisanship nor the spatial positioning mechanisms contribute much to asymmetry, then the opposition

should have nearly as good a shot at winning the next election as the incumbent.

In new ECRs, however, there are rarely opposition parties with “reputations for viability” on which to coordinate. Those in the opposition have typically never before contested an election, let alone won seats. The opposition party scene at the beginning of the regime may be completely in flux: dozens, even hundreds of new parties may register to compete in the run-up to the first election, and none have any previous track record that might indicate their viability. Thus, the expectations about which party is the best alternative to the incumbent are likely to be greatly affected by the first election, once the election results make clear which opposition parties have attracted the greatest support.

Once the first election has been held, we should expect a rapid improvement in opposition coordination, all else equal. For one, everyone has the results of the last election to guide their adjustment of expectations and strategies. Thus, the number of “wasted” votes should decline over the next couple of election cycles, as opposition supporters get better at concentrating their votes on the candidate or slate of candidates that have a realistic shot at winning seats. As both elites and voters learn through electoral experience which parties are most viable, one expects an increase in the information needed to form competitive pre-electoral coalitions.

But in fact, we do *not* always see this consolidation despite having good information from the previous election about which parties and candidates are most viable. A review of the cases highlights two reasons. One is that ideological differences may divide the opposition camp, for reasons we saw in the previous section: opposition parties may end up taking non-centrist positions, while the incumbent is free to claim the center. Thus, there may be good coordination on the left and the right of the political

spectrum, but getting both sides to cooperate to defeat the incumbent is impossible. I discuss when this ends-against-the-center problem might be especially problematic in more detail in the next section. The second reason is the role of electoral institutions in raising or lowering the difficulty of coordination—a topic I take up in earnest in Chapter 4.

3.5. Combining the Effects: What Sustains Party System Asymmetry?

The “Natural” Decline of Party System Asymmetry

Having discussed how each causal mechanism works in isolation, let us now consider how they might work in concert to sustain party system asymmetry over time. The discussion above points to what we can characterize as a “natural evolution” of the party system toward greater electoral symmetry as the regime ages, the ruling party inevitably disillusions some supporters, and business cycles take their toll on the party’s popularity. This decline of ruling party advantages should occur through a combination of all three mechanisms, as partisan change in turn leads to shifts in opposition party recruitment and position-taking, and better anti-incumbent coordination among elites and voters.

First, we should expect opposition partisanship to develop gradually among voters who consistently favor opposition parties, reducing the gap in partisanship between the opposition camp and the incumbent. Both the Converse socialization model and the cognitive updating model predict that voters who dislike the incumbent will eventually

develop attachments to one of the alternatives; or if they do not, then their children will. Thus, over a generation (20 years) or more, the opposition camp as a whole should start to enjoy a level of partisan attachment that approaches that of the first incumbent.

In turn, the rise of opposition partisans, combined with the inevitable decline of incumbent party popularity, should make opposition parties more attractive to instrumentally-motivated candidates and other party elites, rather than just ideologically-motivated ones, as the opposition's prospects of winning office start to improve. As the initial founders of the party age and depart, these new, more pragmatic individuals will be motivated to increase the flexibility of the party's position-taking, reducing the spatial positioning advantage of the incumbent and further improving the party's chances of winning office.

Finally, the relative decline in importance of ideological goals among opposition parties should lead to improved coordination, as well, as the expected payoff of cooperation in elections increases. As a consequence, we have good reason to expect the initial party system dominated by an advantaged first-mover party to evolve gradually into something more symmetric. Over a generation or more, the rise of partisanship, the increasing number and influence of instrumentally-oriented party elites, and the stronger incentives and ability of opposition party leaders and supporters to coordinate with one another should together create the rise of a credible alternative to the incumbent.

It is in this way that Duverger, writing more than half a century ago, got the central pattern right: the dominant party "bears within itself the seeds of its own destruction" ([1954] 1959: 312). The typical dominant party system is not in permanent equilibrium but in a transitional period toward a fully competitive party system.

Duverger's focus on the sclerosis of incumbency to account for dominant party demise was misplaced, however. It is instead the growth of opposition parties that leads ultimately to the defeat of advantaged incumbents. The fundamental question that dominant parties pose, then, is not *why* they lose, but *how long* they last.

Factors That Retard or Accelerate The Decline of Asymmetry

This framing of the question focuses our attention on factors that may retard or accelerate the development of ruling party competitors in new party systems. There are two in particular that are frequently emphasized in the literature, and that appear systematically to slow down opposition party growth and therefore increase the expected survival rate of advantaged ruling parties. These are (1) the ruling party's resource advantage, and (2) its capacity and willingness to employ repression to prevent oppositions from becoming more competitive. Each of these generates a clear empirical prediction about the survival of dominant parties: when these factors are large, ruling parties should survive longer in power.

On the first, full control of the state gives the ruling party control over money, jobs, and pork that can sustain asymmetry in a couple of ways. Most obviously, resources can be used to buttress partisan loyalties through clientelist ties with key voting blocs. The direct exchange of material benefits for votes makes it much harder for the opposition to win over voters who might otherwise be predisposed to support them (Magaloni 2006). But resource advantages work equally to inhibit opposition party development as well through both the positioning and coordination mechanisms: the opposition parties remain both more extreme and less able to coordinate when they are

starved for resources (Greene 2007; Cox 1997). Thus, we have a clear empirical prediction from this literature: the greater a ruling party's resource advantage, the more asymmetric the party system will continue to be. A decline in resource advantages, on the other hand, should greatly improve opposition party prospects.

Second, the incumbent may resort to naked force to maintain its grip on power. It may still hold contested elections, but it employs the coercive apparatus of the state to harass and intimidate voters and candidates. This, too, works through multiple mechanisms to retard the growth of opposition parties. Coercion can reduce opposition vote totals by preventing voters from exercising a free choice in the elections in many districts, as, for instance, when ruling party thugs stuff ballot boxes, beat up people on the streets in opposition strongholds, or round up uncommitted voters and physically escort them to the polling station. Threats against and intimidation of opposition candidates also keep opposition parties more extreme than they otherwise would be, through the recruitment mechanism—they greatly raise the cost of joining, so that only the most obstinate individuals remain committed to participating in elections.

Thus, both large resource advantages and high levels of repression can produce the same result in the party system: weak, divided, and extremist opposition parties competing against a centrist, pragmatic incumbent. Expected incumbent survival under these circumstances is extremely high, and this is not likely to change as long as the incumbent's resource advantages and its willingness and capacity to use repression remain high.

In addition to the effects of resources and repression, there is a third factor that appears to be important in several cases of dominant party persistence: group identities.

Divisions over national or ethnic group claims on the state have worked in several cases to reinforce opposition coordination problems. For instance, in Malaysia, the opposition to the incumbent UMNO has long been divided along ethnic and religious lines. On one side of the divide are the DAP and Keadilan, parties that appeal mainly to ethnic Chinese and Indians and secular elites, and which generally oppose special considerations for the country's ethnic Malay majority. On the other side is the pro-Islamic PAS, which advocates for a greater Islamization of public life and the preservation or strengthening of affirmative action programs for Malays. Given these diametrically opposed views on key issues in Malaysian political life, it is not hard to see why the opposition has consistently struggled to present a united front against UMNO. A similar effect seems to be at work in South Africa, where the opposition parties running against the ANC have had to try to bridge the racial divide in that country; the ANC, by contrast, needs no support from whites to retain office. Ethnic differences appear to have played a role as well in sustaining party system asymmetry in Guyana and possibly Belgium.

The effect of identity can also work in the opposite direction, depending on the relationship of the incumbent party to the primary identity cleavage in society. In Sri Lanka, for example, the leading party at independence, the United National Party, appeared well-situated to remain the governing party after the first elections there. But the multi-ethnic coalition that supported it dissolved within five years of independence when Sinhalese nationalists defected and founded the Sri Lanka Freedom Party in 1951. By appealing to, and stoking, Sinhalese nationalism, the SLFP was able to weaken the UNP's base and win the 1956 elections. Thus, by becoming the leading party of the ethnic majority group in Sri Lanka, the SLFP rapidly realigned the party system in its

favor. A similar pattern occurred in Taiwan, where the KMT faced the challenge of maintaining support from the majority of “native” Taiwanese in the face of an opposition party making appeals to Taiwanese nationalism—a development I explore at length in the case study in Chapter 6.

Conclusion

To sum up, there are three factors that appear systematically to sustain party system asymmetry: resources, repression, and in certain situations the underlying social cleavage structure. The first two of these, at least, can be tested with the data I have available, and I will do so in Chapter 5. Before we move to empirical tests, however, there is another factor that deserves extended treatment in its own right: the effect different political institutions have on ruling party survival. It is to this topic that I turn in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

THEORY II: HOW INSTITUTIONS CONDITION RULING PARTY SURVIVAL

“In every pure parliamentary system a vote for any particular legislator—or for the party’s list—is indirectly a vote for that party’s leader as candidate for prime minister. In a sense, a ‘perfect correlation’ exists between that party’s votes for executive and legislative candidates.

“Yet in systems with popularly elected presidents, parties cannot take for granted the automatic alignment of the electoral bases of their executive and legislative ‘branches.’ Indeed, the notion of presidential coattails...suggests that in such systems parties *expect* variation between their executive and legislative vote totals. When voters have two ballots, parties must hope that their presidential candidates encourage voters to *also* cast votes for their candidates in the legislative race.”

--Samuels and Shugart (2011: 1)

In Chapter 3, I presented a theory of opposition party development in newly-founded electorally contested regimes (ECRs). The central argument was that the first incumbents in the regime often benefitted from large inter-party *asymmetry* in electoral competition: they were systematically more effective than opposition parties at converting popular support into executive control. This asymmetry between the incumbent and opposition challengers was produced through three mechanisms: those of (1) mass partisanship, (2) spatial positioning, and (3) coordination.

In this chapter I consider how formal institutions affect this asymmetry of electoral competition. I will show that institutions have a *modifying* effect on

competition—they work to exacerbate or mitigate pre-existing inequalities between the incumbent and the opposition. In particular, they change the magnitude of the effect on ruling party survival of both mass partisanship and spatial positioning asymmetry. For instance, in highly-centralized parliamentary regimes, the benefit of being centrist is large—a centrist incumbent’s chances of renewing its control of the executive are quite high. In decentralized presidential regimes, this benefit is much smaller—in the more personalized, candidate-centric setting of a presidential race, opposition party candidates are less constrained by extreme positions that their nominating parties may hold, and as a consequence the ruling party’s grip on the executive is more tenuous.

Put differently, institutions are intervening variables in my model of ruling party duration: inter-party asymmetry’s effect on ruling party survival interacts with that of the institutions of the regime. I expect this interactive effect to be strongest where the formal rules of competition are respected by all participants: coercion, vote-buying and electoral fraud are limited, opposition parties are allowed to form and contest, and there are few formal barriers to campaigning. It is under these circumstances that long periods of one-party rule are most puzzling, and that institutional explanations are most relevant.

By *institutions*, I mean at minimum variation in three features of the formal rules that govern the selection of regime leaders and the authority they hold. The first is the *electoral system*: how are the members of the executive and legislature selected? The second is *executive selection*: is the system presidential, parliamentary, or some combination of the two? The third is *administrative centralization*—how much authority is vested in local offices, rather than central government bureaucrats, and are local officials elected or appointed?

I will show how these formal institutional features systematically alter the expected ruling party survival rate for a given level of asymmetry in the party system. It turns out that the most complex effect is generated by the electoral system: in general, it is not possible a priori to predict which electoral systems are most likely to sustain dominant parties. By contrast, we can derive unambiguous predictions about the effects of executive selection and administrative centralization: all else equal, party system asymmetry has the strongest effect on ruling party survival in centralized parliamentary regimes, while it has the weakest effect on survival in decentralized presidential regimes.

4.1. The Electoral System: Why Dominant Parties are Equally Likely under Different Electoral Rules

Electoral system effects are frequently invoked as part of explanations of dominant party persistence in individual countries. But there is little agreement in the literature about what types of electoral systems are most likely to lead to dominant party systems, let alone any commonly accepted explanation for why. In leading studies on the topic, different scholars have asserted or implied that dominant party systems are more likely to occur under Proportional Representation (Pempel 1990: 336-339), Single Non-Transferable Vote (Cox and Niou 1994; Cox 1997: 238-250; Lin 2006: 119-120; Lin 2011: 367-370), plurality rule in single member districts (Greene 2007: 61-62), Mixed-Member Majoritarian (Diaz-Cayeros and Magaloni 2001: 274) and Party Bloc Vote (Mauzy 2002: 248-249). Viewed collectively, this is a remarkably tangled and contradictory set of claims. They are necessarily at odds with one another: to say that PR

makes dominant parties more likely is to assert as well that other non-PR systems make dominance *less* likely.

In this section, I will resolve these claims by showing that they are derived from different mechanisms through which electoral rules should affect the asymmetry of competition for office. One set invokes *positioning asymmetry* as the source of opposition disadvantages in dominant party systems, while the other focuses exclusively on *coordination asymmetry*.²⁶ Electoral system effects tend to modify these two mechanisms in opposite directions: rules that increase the effect of positioning asymmetry in general lower the effect of coordination asymmetry, and vice versa. Thus, the reason for the contradictory predictions above is that they tend to focus on one mechanism to the exclusion of the other.

How the Electoral System Affects Positioning Asymmetry

Let us begin by examining the effects of electoral rules in the simplest case. First, consider a pure unicameral *parliamentary system*, where winning seats is what matters for control of the executive. (I will consider how presidentialism differs in section 4.2.) Second, assume that there is a significant *partisan* advantage for the incumbent, whether through a “halo effect” or through a resource advantage that supports ties between the electorate and the ruling party. As I argued in Chapter 2, this is true at the beginning of most dominant party systems.

²⁶ I will not attempt to derive any predictions about how the third mechanism, mass partisanship, is affected by regime institutions. Given the large variation in partisanship across parties even in the *same* party system, it appears likely that the formation of partisan loyalties is only modestly influenced, if at all, by the formal institutions in a way that is generalizable.

Under these conditions, incumbents can hold a systematic advantage over the opposition through their greater flexibility in taking positions in the policy space—what in Chapter 3 I termed *positioning asymmetry*. Because they have more ideologically-motivated members, new opposition parties tend to be more constrained in their ability to move toward vote-maximizing positions than is the incumbent party. As a consequence, electoral campaigns in incumbent-advantaged party systems tend to fall into a pattern of ends-against-the-center competition: the ruling party is positioned at the center of the policy space, closest to the median voter, while oppositions are arrayed at more extreme positions to either side.

The electoral system conditions this incumbent positioning advantage by affecting the importance of being moderate to winning seats. In single member districts with plurality rule, the winning party tends to take moderate positions, because it usually has to win the support of the median voters in a majority of districts to get elected. Parties less able to position themselves close to the median voter are at a large disadvantage to those that have high ideological flexibility and seek only to maximize their vote share. By contrast, in high-magnitude districts—those with many seats awarded, not just one—being centrist is less of an advantage in elections.²⁷ Opposition parties which are well to the left or right of the median voter can still win seats, so their greater policy rigidity is less of a liability in electoral competition. Thus, opposition parties who have less flexibility in positioning should be at a greater electoral disadvantage in single-member districts (SMDs), where they must obtain a plurality of the vote to win a seat, than in

²⁷ Indeed, the vote-maximizing strategy for a party in high-magnitude districts may be to move further away from the median voter—what Cox (1990) calls a “centrifugal incentive” generated by the electoral system.

multi-member districts where they can win seats while taking relatively extreme positions.

To state the claim more precisely, in the competition for seats, the *threshold of exclusion*—the highest percentage of the vote a party can win in a district and still be denied a seat, or T_E —conditions the effect of positioning asymmetry between parties on the incumbent’s predicted likelihood of survival.²⁸ The higher the threshold of exclusion, the higher the percentage of the vote an opposition party must win in order to be guaranteed a seat, and the more the incumbent party’s positioning advantage improves its re-election chances. Another way to express this idea is in terms of how *disproportional* the conversion of vote into seat shares is in a given electoral system. A centrist party will tend to enjoy the greatest seat bonus—that is, winning a share of seats larger than its share of votes—when T_E is high. But as the conversion of votes into seats becomes more proportional, the asymmetry of positioning has less benefit for the centrist, and is less detrimental to the electoral prospects of non-centrist parties. Thus, T_E should condition the electoral effect of positioning asymmetry: a higher T_E increases the effect, while a lower T_E decreases it.²⁹

²⁸ The threshold of exclusion is the highest fraction of the vote that a party (or candidate, or slate of candidates) can win and still not be awarded a seat in a district under a given set of electoral rules. Under SMDs, the threshold of exclusion is 0.5—two parties can both win exactly half the votes, and one loses in a coin flip. In multi-member districts, the threshold is a direct expression of the district magnitude. A district with 9 seats awarded under SNTV rules has a threshold of exclusion of $1/(9 + 1) = 1/10$, or 10 percent of all votes cast. The general formula is given by $T_E = v/(M+v) * 100\%$, where M is the district magnitude and v is the number of votes each voter can cast (Lijphart and Grofman 1986: 157).

²⁹ I use the threshold of exclusion here because it can be calculated solely as a property of the electoral system, independent of the number of parties receiving votes. Note that the threshold of inclusion, T_I , is not satisfactory for this reason: $T_I = 100\%/(M + n_p - 1)$, where n_p is the number of parties competing. Among other things, we want to explain how the incentives for opposition parties to form a unified electoral coalition vary as a consequence of the electoral system: that is, how n_p varies across systems. Using T_I would require us to assume a value for n_p a priori (cf. Taagepera 1998).

To give a concrete example, consider the difference between a T_E of 0.1, as would occur under SNTV rules in a district with a magnitude of 9, and a T_E of 0.5, as occurs in SMDs. It is much easier for a right- or left-wing opposition party to win a seat in the first case than the second: at maximum, it needs only 10 percent of the total district vote versus 50 percent in an SMD. Thus, switching from SMD-P to SNTV mitigates the positioning problem for that opposition party in the election. By this same logic, switching from SNTV to SMD-P puts right- and left-wing parties at a greater disadvantage in electoral competition, and consequently increases the electoral advantage of centrist parties.

This argument about the effect of the threshold of exclusion applies regardless of whether the electoral system includes some form of vote-pooling across candidates, such as in Alternative Vote (AV), Single Transferable Vote (STV), or Proportional Representation (PR). The main feature that matters for positioning, again, is T_E . In AV, STV, and medium-magnitude PR systems, this is a function of the district magnitude: $T_E = 1/(M+1)$, while in high-magnitude PR systems a higher threshold is often legally imposed. The expected effect is the same: as T_E declines, the spatial positioning of the parties has less effect on how votes are converted into seats. In comparative terms, this means that the magnitude of positioning problems decline as one switches from SMD-P or AV (where $T_E = 0.5$) to SNTV or STV (where, typically, $0.1 < T_E < 0.5$) to PR (where, typically, $T_E < 0.1$). Thus, at the election stage³⁰, positioning asymmetry should be much less of an obstacle for opposition parties in high-magnitude PR systems than in majoritarian ones: as long as they capture enough votes to cross the threshold of

³⁰ The government formation stage is a different story, as we will see in a moment.

exclusion, opposition parties can guarantee seats in the legislature roughly in proportion to their overall share of the vote.

Ken Greene (2007: 61), among others, has invoked this mechanism to argue that dominant party resource advantages are most effectively converted into electoral advantages in high-threshold systems such as SMD-P. In SNTV and PR systems, by contrast, resource advantages are less consequential to opposition party chances. For Greene, this modifying effect is a key part of why a relatively modest resource decline in Taiwan led to ruling party defeat there: Taiwan's SNTV electoral system³¹ meant that opposition parties could win seats without having to take centrist positions in electoral campaigns, while candidate defection from the ruling party was more costly and difficult for the incumbent to prevent (266).

To sum up, we have the following prediction: *as the threshold of exclusion rises, so does the effect of positioning asymmetry on the incumbent's likelihood of survival.*

The predicted relationship is shown graphically in Figure 4.1.

³¹ One problem with this argument is that Taiwan was a presidential regime, so winning legislative races was not directly relevant to retaining control of the executive. I elaborate on this difference in the next section.

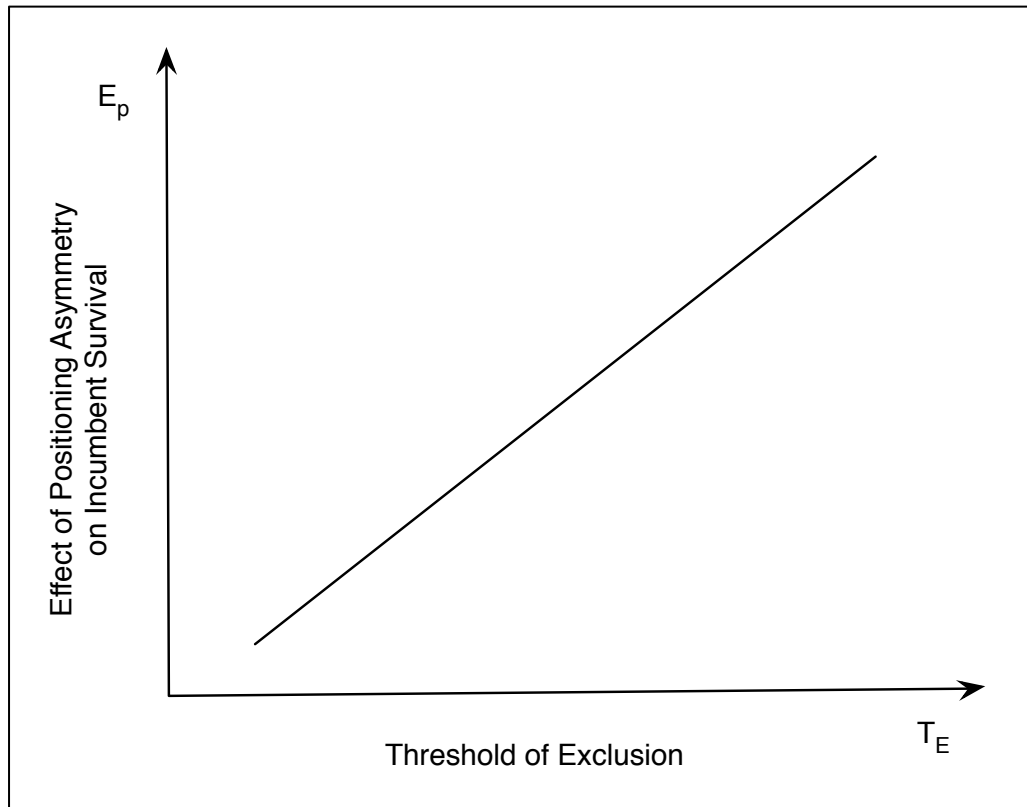


FIGURE 4.1. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE THRESHOLD OF EXCLUSION (T_E) AND THE EFFECT OF POSITIONING ASYMMETRY (E_p) ACROSS PARTIES IN ELECTIONS

This prediction is directly relevant to the dominant party cases in the sample. It suggests that in countries which employed low-threshold PR to elect the legislature at the beginning of the regime, such as Italy and Israel, new opposition parties should have faced relatively mild positioning problems in elections. By contrast, in countries that employed high district thresholds, such as Malaysia and Botswana, new opposition parties should have been greatly disadvantaged by positioning problems. And in fact, in both those countries, the SMD-plurality electoral systems often produced highly

disproportionate conversions of votes into party seats in parliament, consistently to the incumbent party's benefit (du Toit 1999; Case 2005; Mauzy 2008).³²

How the Electoral System Affects Coordination Asymmetry in Elections

In addition to positioning asymmetry, the electoral system also affects the likelihood of incumbent survival through a second mechanism, that of coordination. Winning the executive requires coordination at two separate stages: (1) in elections, and (2) in government formation. Let us consider each in turn.

First, at the election stage, electoral rules condition the effect of one party's superior ability to coordinate in converting votes into seats. Like that of positioning, the effect of coordination asymmetry on ruling party survival is a function of the threshold of exclusion, T_E . Importantly, however, the effect is in the *opposite* direction: poor coordination ability is most problematic for opposition parties when T_E is low, and its effect on ruling party survival declines as T_E increases.

To see this, first consider the nature of the opposition coordination problem in an electoral system without vote pooling, such as SMD-P or SNTV. Oppositions must solve two coordination problems in this case: (1) nominate an optimal number of candidates to run, and (2) get opposition supporters to coordinate their votes on this slate of nominees. If neither elite nor voter coordination takes place, then the share of seats captured by the opposition camp may fall far short of its total share of votes (cf. Cox 1997: 238-250).

³² An additional difference is the greater importance of gerrymandering and malapportionment in single member districts than in high-magnitude PR. The ruling coalition in Malaysia, among others, has made frequent use of such tactics to disadvantage the opposition (Chin 2002: 213-214). Malapportionment is not limited to SMD systems; under SNTV in Japan, the LDP systematically benefitted from overrepresentation of rural areas (Scheiner 2006: 178-182).

These electoral coordination problems are simplest to solve in single member districts with a plurality winner rule (SMD-P)—that is, those with a magnitude of one. For the opposition camp, the optimal number of nominees to run in each district is one, and the optimal voter allocation strategy is for all supporters in the district to vote for the same candidate. The incumbent party candidate will almost certainly win the seat if opposition voters fail to coordinate on a single challenger. Party elites can remove this possibility by agreeing on a single nominee to represent the entire opposition.³³ Thus, if elites in all opposition parties most value maximizing the number of seats the opposition camp as a whole wins, they have a clear incentive to jointly nominate a single candidate in each district.

These dual coordination problems become much more complex as district magnitude increases and one moves from an SMD to an SNTV world. Raising the district magnitude from one to five, for instance, greatly complicates both challenges for both the opposition and the incumbent. Rather than simply to decide *whom* to nominate as their candidate, they now have to decide as well *how many* to nominate—anywhere from one to five candidates. And rather than direct all supporters to vote for the same single candidate, they must now develop a way to get voters to distribute votes as evenly as possible across all nominees. Determining the optimal number of candidates requires good estimates of the level of support the combined opposition will receive on election day—information which may be hard to come by, especially if voting patterns are volatile or some parties and candidates have never before run in the district. And getting

³³ This is, of course, the same logic that underpins Duverger's (1954) Law—that countries which employ SMDs with plurality rule will tend toward two-partism at the district level.

voters to distribute votes evenly across all opposition nominees requires a loyal and relatively sophisticated block of supporters willing to follow party instructions and vote strategically rather than sincerely—also unlikely when parties are new or there is great uncertainty about what other voters will do.

Thus, in a non-vote-pooling world, the ability to coordinate effectively in elections becomes much more important to a party's chances of winning seats as district magnitude rises. If one party is systematically better at coordinating in elections than the others, this advantage will be magnified in low-threshold electoral systems. And incumbent parties are most likely to have this advantage: by virtue of their stronger party organization, including greater experience, superior information networks, firmer grasp on large blocs of voters, and control over more resources to reward voting groups for following the party's allocation strategy and to punish candidates from deviating from it, they should be better equipped than the opposition to mitigate these coordination problems (cf. Cox and Niou 1994; McCubbins and Rosenbluth 1995; Liu 1999; Tsai 2005; Baker and Scheiner 2007).

For this reason, Gary Cox (e.g. 1997: 238-250), among others, has argued that electoral systems which feature high average district magnitudes and no vote pooling, such as those found under SNTV in Japan and Taiwan, tend to be super-proportional—that is, incumbent parties do systematically better at converting votes into seats than do challenger parties. This “seat bonus” gained through superior coordination in turn helps cushion the incumbent party against loss of support in the electorate. Contra Greene, Cox predicts that dominant party systems should be *more* likely to be maintained under SNTV rules, not less. The reason these predictions are at odds with one another is the reliance

on different mechanisms of asymmetry: Greene invokes spatial positioning as the source of dominant party persistence, while Cox invokes coordination. When we consider that *both* mechanisms can operate simultaneously, though, it is no longer clear which way the net effect on ruling party survival will go: as the importance of positioning goes up, that of coordination goes down.

The electoral coordination story is quite different in systems with vote pooling—that is, those in which votes cast for one candidate can be transferred to other candidates. In contrast to SNTV systems, coordination problems at the election stage under AV, STV, or PR rules are usually quite benign, because the formal electoral rules in effect do the work of coordination for voters. In Alternative Vote (also known as Instant Runoff voting), voters create a rank-ordering of at least some of the candidates on the ballot; if no one secures a majority of first-place votes, the last-place candidate is eliminated and his votes distributed among the remaining candidates. The procedure is repeated until one candidate secures a majority of the votes. In Single Transferable Vote, the same procedure is used, except multiple seats are awarded from one district.

In both AV and STV, the transfer of ballots from last-place finishers to more competitive candidates effectively solves parties' coordination problems for them. For instance, imagine a three-way race between an incumbent who wins 40 percent of first-place votes and two opposition candidates who win 31 and 29 percent of the vote, respectively. In SMD-P, the failure of opposition elites to nominate a single candidate, and of opposition voters to support either one or the other *en mass*, allows the incumbent to retain the seat with less than a majority. If all opposition supporters prefer either opposition candidate to the incumbent, however, then AV will prevent this kind of failure

from costing the opposition the seat: the third-place finisher is eliminated, and all his votes are transferred to the other opposition candidate. As a result, the opposition will win the seat easily despite having failed to coordinate on a single candidate during the election.

By the same logic, STV eliminates the difficult coordination problem that routinely bedevils parties in its non-pooling SNTV cousin. Opposition parties do not need to decide how many candidates to nominate nor come up with a vote-allocation strategy to ensure support is relatively even among them. Instead, the electoral system does all the work. As long as opposition supporters rank all the opposition nominees above the incumbents, opposition seat shares should mirror their vote shares in each district.

The effect of coordination asymmetry on ruling party survival is similarly weakened in proportional representation systems, in which voters typically cast a ballot for a party instead of, or in addition to, a candidate. Votes are pooled across all candidates of the same party, so there is no need to get opposition voters to follow complicated vote-distribution schemes as there sometimes is under SNTV. Opposition leaders need only worry about winning enough support to pass the threshold of exclusion, and the PR rules will do the rest. As in AV and STV, the vote-pooling that occurs under PR limits the disproportionality that can occur from coordination asymmetry between parties.³⁴

³⁴ This is not to assert that opposition parties will never lose seats because of coordination failure in these systems: parties that do not win enough votes to cross the threshold are shut out of the vote reallocation, so the conversion of votes into seats can still be disproportional—highly so when T_E is high. What vote-pooling does, however, is ensure that all parties that cross T_E benefit equally from this disproportionality,

Thus, we have the following two predictions about how electoral systems should condition the effect of coordination asymmetry. First, *in electoral systems without vote pooling, as the threshold of exclusion rises, coordination asymmetry has less effect on ruling party survival.* Second, *in electoral systems with vote pooling, coordination asymmetry's effect on ruling party survival is unrelated to the threshold of exclusion.* These predicted relationships are shown graphically in Figure 4.2.

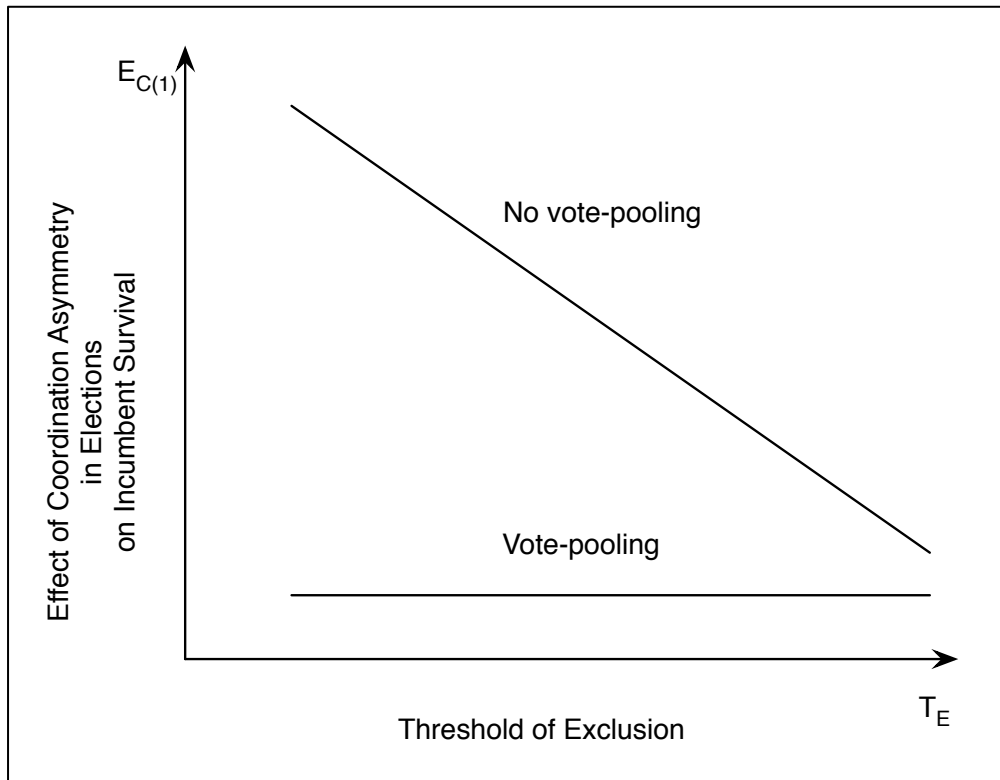


FIGURE 4.2. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE THRESHOLD OF EXCLUSION (T_E) AND THE EFFECT OF COORDINATION ASYMMETRY ACROSS PARTIES IN ELECTIONS ($E_{C(1)}$)

not just the incumbent. Thus, vote pooling substantially reduces asymmetry *between all the parties winning seats*—each gets proportionally the same boost in seat share over vote share.

How the Electoral System Affects Coordination Asymmetry in Government Formation

Let us now consider how electoral rules affect coordination in the second stage, *government formation*. In parliamentary regimes, winning enough seats to deny the incumbent a majority is not enough to end its reign: gaining control of the executive also requires opposition parties to cooperate at forming a governing coalition, as this process will determine which parties control the prime minister's seat and the allocation of ministerial portfolios in the executive. Because presidential systems are winner-take-all—the winning presidential candidate typically gains full control of the executive—coordination in government formation is almost exclusively a problem facing oppositions in parliamentary systems.³⁵ The difficulty of government formation is in turn a function of two variables: (1) the *number of opposition parties* needed to form an alternative government to the incumbent, and (2) the *ideological distance* between them.

The threshold of exclusion systematically affects both of these variables, and as a consequence the electoral system has an additional, separate effect on the incumbent's likelihood of survival at the government formation stage. In general, the number of opposition parties winning seats in the parliament will be larger when T_E is low, and their ideological distance from one another will be greater. In high-magnitude PR systems, for instance, the threshold is sometimes so low that even small extremist parties that attract two or three percent of the vote can win seats. In order to forge a coalition that excludes a large, centrist incumbent party, the opposition alternative then often has to include several extremist parties from both ends of the political spectrum. In such circumstances,

³⁵ Presidents do not, of course, always control a majority in the legislature, and therefore may have to form a policy coalition with other parties *after* taking office. But as far as securing control of the executive branch is concerned, the task is quite simple in a presidential regime: win the election. See the next section.

the incumbent stands a much better chance of picking up a junior coalition partner or two than the opposition does of coalescing into a workable alternative.

As a consequence, low-threshold electoral systems make opposition coordination at the government formation stage especially difficult to achieve. By contrast, when T_E is high, the number of opposition parties should be much lower, and their ideological distance from one another less, all else equal. Opposition coordination should then be easier to achieve and more likely to result in the incumbent party losing the executive. To state the prediction explicitly, *as the threshold of exclusion rises, the effect of coordination asymmetry in government formation on the likelihood of incumbent survival falls*. Figure 4.3 illustrates this predicted relationship.

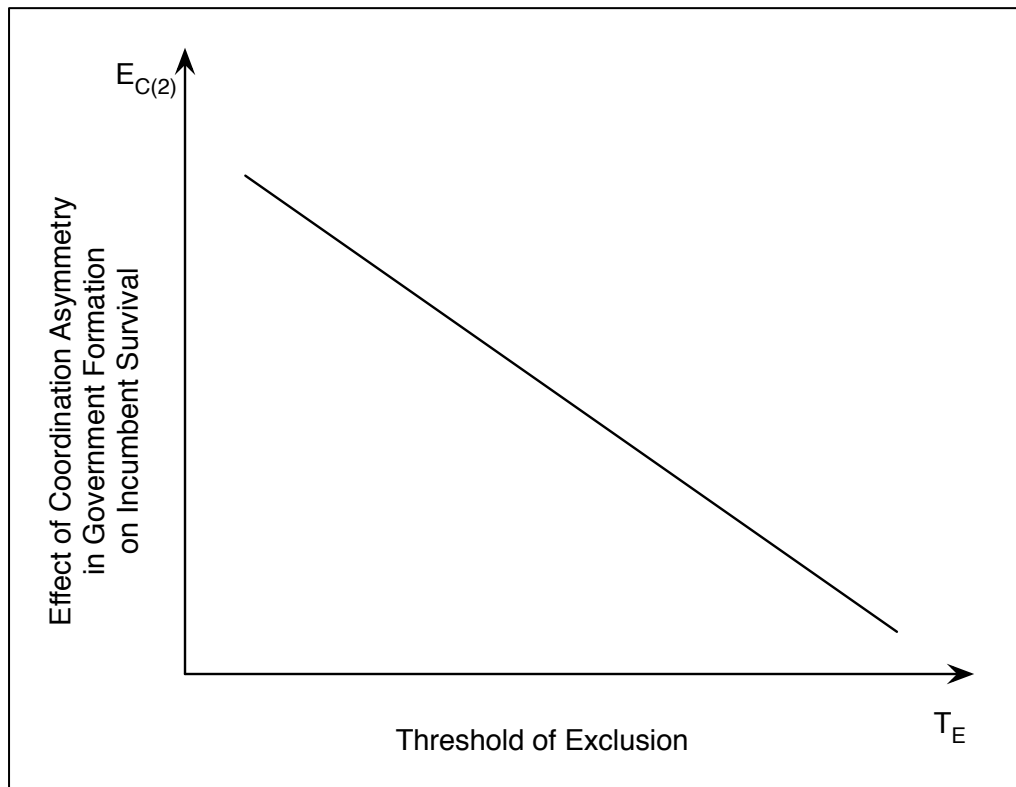


FIGURE 4.3. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE THRESHOLD OF EXCLUSION (T_E) AND THE EFFECT OF COORDINATION ASYMMETRY ACROSS PARTIES IN GOVERNMENT FORMATION ($E_{C(2)}$)

This prediction comes with a couple important caveats. First, it may only show up empirically in comparisons between countries with similar social structures. That is, the *all else equal* clause is especially important here. The reason is that in countries with strong regional cleavages, single-member districts can produce a party system that looks more like the high-magnitude PR case: opposition winners may be from different parties in different regions, and they may be separated by deep divides over linguistic, religious or cultural issues that map onto regions. In these circumstances, cooperation with the incumbent may well be preferable to forming a governing coalition with each other. This kind of inter-regional coordination problem appears to have been an important factor in long ruling party duration in several countries with SMD-P electoral systems. During a long period of Liberal Party rule (1935-1957) in Canada, for instance, the opposition was divided between pro-business conservatives who polled strongest in the Maritime provinces and Ontario, and “prairie populists” whose base was in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba (Carty 1996). In India, the incredible linguistic and religious diversity across Indian states had a similar effect on the opposition parties competing against Congress from 1947-1977 (Morris-Jones 1966; Burger 1969). And in Malaysia, the opposition remains split along racial and religious lines that are reinforced by regional and urban-rural differences, hindering the formation of a united alternative to the ruling Barisan Nasional (Chin 2002: 218-220).

Second, the threshold of exclusion in effect imposes only an *upper bound* on the number of parties and their ideological distance from one another. It does not, however, ensure that either the number of parties or their ideological range will actually reach the

maximum permitted by the electoral system. The social cleavage structure may in fact be highly reinforcing, so that even in a low-threshold PR system, two parties are sufficient to express differences on most of the salient cleavages in the electorate, as was the case in postwar Austria. Thus, the electoral system has some systematic effect on the difficulty of coordination at the government formation stage, but it is by no means always decisive—social differences are at least as important in shaping the number and range of parties in the party system. Nevertheless, the prediction still stands as long as social structure is held constant across regimes: opposition winners should still be more similar in high T_E systems than in low ones, all else equal; and opposition coordination to oust an incumbent should be more likely to occur.

Among the regimes to experience dominant parties, Israel appears to be the best example of how an incumbent can be advantaged at the government formation stage when T_E is low. From 1948 to 1992 the Israeli parliament, or Knesset, was elected from a single nation-wide district with 120 seats and a low threshold of 1 percent.³⁶ The low barrier to new party entry allowed small, ideologically-motivated parties to win many seats between them, raising both the number of and the ideological distance between opposition parties. While the high district magnitude freed opposition elites from having to coordinate before election day and opposition supporters from having to vote strategically, it increased the difficulty of opposition cross-party coordination at the government formation stage and helped sustain a central role for a large moderate party in the ruling coalition. This appears to be a key reason every prime minister from 1948 to

³⁶ The threshold was raised to 1.5 percent in 1992, and 2 percent in 2003—still quite low by comparative standards.

1977 was from Mapai (later renamed the Labor Party), even though it never controlled a majority of legislative seats during that time period (Levite and Tarrow 1983; Hazan 1998: 153).

Remember that what we ultimately would like to predict is the combined effect of coordination at *both* stages, in elections and in government formation. This can be obtained simply by adding together $E_{C(1)}$ from Figure 4.2 and $E_{C(2)}$ from Figure 4.3. The conditional effect of the electoral system and the combined coordination asymmetry is then shown below in Figure 4.4.

In systems without vote pooling, coordination problems fall rapidly as T_E increases, because coordination at both the election stage and the government formation stage should become simpler. The closest real world comparison to this change would be moving from the relatively high-magnitude world of Taiwan's SNTV system³⁷, where as many as 16 seats were elected from a single district, to Japan's lower magnitude system, where the maximum magnitude was 6. In practical terms, the predictions here are that (1) Taiwan's opposition parties should have greater difficulty converting votes into seats than Japan's, and (2) they should have greater difficulty coordinating to form a majority that excludes the incumbent, because the number of and ideological distance between opposition parties is potentially greater than in Japan.

³⁷ I use this example for illustrative purposes only; because Taiwan is a presidential regime, the payoff to coordinating against the incumbent in the legislature is quite different there than in Japan.

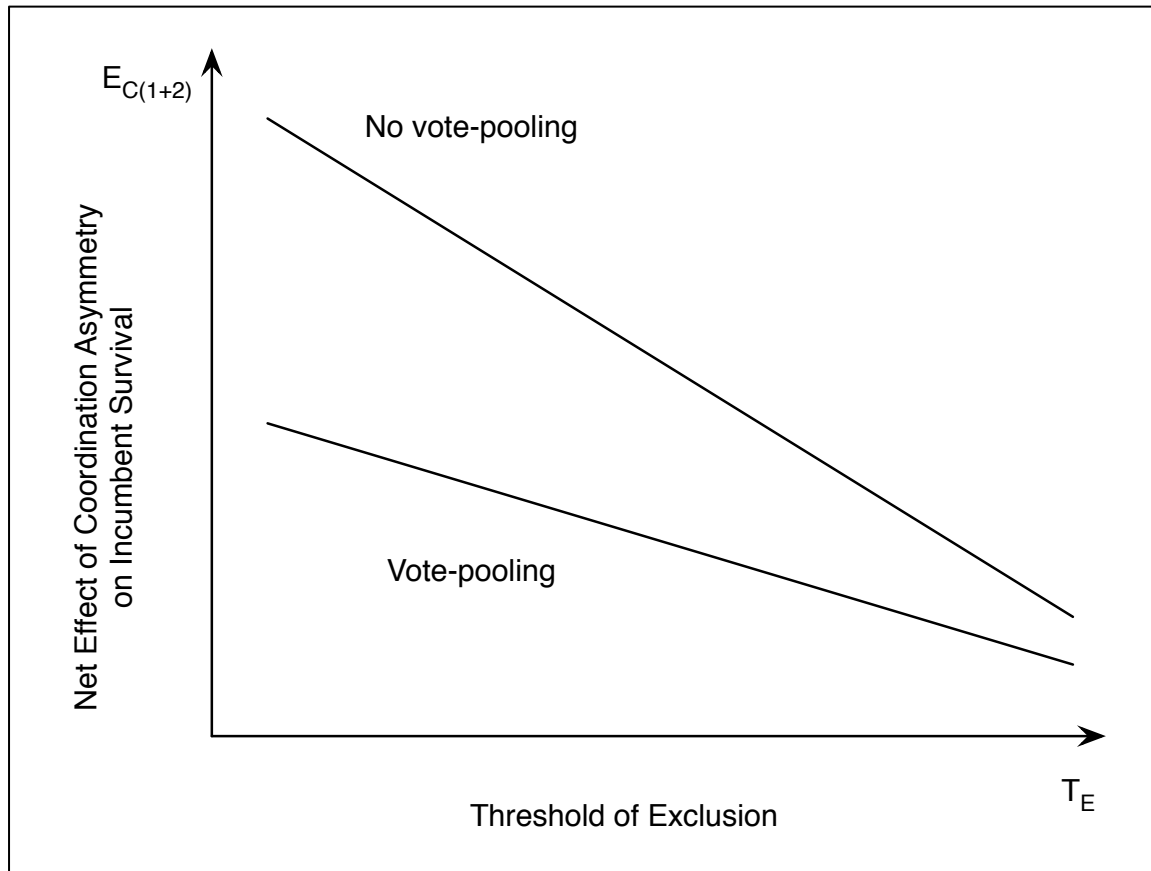


FIGURE 4.4. THE COMBINED EFFECT OF COORDINATION ASYMMETRY IN ELECTIONS AND GOVERNMENT FORMATION ($E_{C(1+2)}$) ON INCUMBENT SURVIVAL UNDER DIFFERENT ELECTORAL RULES

In systems with vote pooling, there is still a decline in coordination problems as T_E rises, but it is entirely because of the expected reduction in the number and ideological distance between parties winning seats. A real-world example of this kind of change would be switching from Ireland’s STV system, with median district magnitude of 4, to Australia’s AV system, with magnitude of 1.³⁸ Here, the difficulty of coordination in elections is not affected by T_E , but the same reduction in the number of and distance

³⁸ An even better example is the difference between Australia’s House, elected using AV, and Senate, elected using STV. After the most recent federal elections, the Green Party held 9 of 76 seats (11.8%) in the Senate, while it held only 1 of 150 seats in the House (0.66%).

between opposition parties mean that coordination problems should be less severe at the government formation stage in Australia than in Ireland.

Other PR systems also follow this same pattern. Moving from the minimum value of T_E to a moderate value is akin to switching from the electoral system of Israel to Sweden. Coordination at the election stage is similarly uncomplicated in both, but the number of parties and the ideological distance between them should be larger in the Israeli case. And in fact, this is what we typically observe: in the current Swedish parliament, eight parties hold seats, while in the current Israeli one there are 13. By the argument of this section, coordination in government formation should be more difficult, all else equal, in Israel than in Sweden as a result.

The Net Effect of Electoral Rules on Ruling Party Survival

Now let us consider what happens when both the spatial positioning and coordination mechanisms are operating at the same time. That is, we are interested primarily in the net effect of both positioning and coordination asymmetry *in combination* on the likelihood that ruling parties persist in power, rather than either one in isolation. And an important ambiguity becomes apparent when one attempts to combine both arguments into a single prediction about the net effect of electoral rules on ruling party survival. This is that the threshold of exclusion works in opposite directions through the two types of asymmetry. Increasing T_E should make positioning asymmetry harder for the opposition to overcome, all else equal. But it should make net (election + government formation) coordination asymmetry easier to deal with.

To see this graphically, note the opposite slopes in Figure 4.1 versus Figure 4.4. Without knowing more about which type of asymmetry—positioning or coordination—is more severe in the party system, we cannot use the threshold of exclusion alone to predict which electoral systems are more likely to sustain dominant parties. Lower thresholds of exclusion increase the effect of coordination asymmetry, but they also reduce positioning asymmetry. And while vote-pooling systems greatly mitigate coordination problems at the election stage in high-magnitude systems, the net effect on ruling party survival is reduced or even reversed at the government formation stage: high district magnitudes also increase coordination asymmetry through the presence of multiple small, ideologically-oriented parties.

To see whether dominant parties are in fact more common in some kinds of electoral systems, I categorized each of the parliamentary³⁹ dominant parties in my sample by level of threshold (high, medium, or low) and vote-pooling (present or not). The patterns are shown in Table 4.1.

³⁹ In presidential regimes, control of the executive does not depend on the outcome of legislative races. Thus, I do not include the electoral systems used to elect the legislature in presidential regimes.

Table 4.1. Electoral Systems and Their Effects on Asymmetry

<i>Electoral System</i>	<i>T_E (Typical Range)</i>	<i>Vote Pooling</i>	<i>Positioning Asymmetry</i>	<i>Coordination Asymmetry</i>	<i>Government Formation Asymmetry</i>	<i>Dominant Party Cases</i>
<i>High-Threshold Systems</i>						
SMD-P	T _E = 0.5	No	High	Low	Low	Antigua and Barbuda Botswana Canada Ethiopia India Lesotho Malaysia St. Kitts and Nevis Samoa S. Africa (I) Trinidad and Tobago
SMD-AV	T _E = 0.5	Yes	High	Low	Low	Australia
PBV	T _E = 0.5	Yes	Very High	Low	Low	Singapore
<i>Medium-Threshold Systems</i>						
SNTV	0.05 < T _E < 0.5	No	Medium	High	Medium	Japan
STV	0.05 < T _E < 0.5	Yes	Medium	Low	Medium	None
PR (med M)	0.05 < T _E < 0.1	Yes	Medium	Low	Medium	Austria Belgium W. Germany Guyana Liechtenstein (I, II) Luxembourg (I, II) Sweden
<i>Low-Threshold Systems</i>						
PR (high M)	T _E < 0.05	Yes	Low	Low	High	Italy Israel South Africa (II)

As the table shows, dominant parties have occurred in six of the seven different types of electoral system shown here.⁴⁰ Most have occurred in either SMDs with plurality rule or in PR systems with a medium or high median district magnitude.⁴¹ We cannot infer that dominance is more likely in these systems, however, because together they make up the large majority of electoral systems in use worldwide: the only parliamentary regimes that have employed SNTV are in Japan and Vanuatu; STV has been used only in Ireland and Malta; AV only in Australia and Papua New Guinea; and PBV only in Singapore (Golder 2005). What the data do show, instead, is that dominant parties occur both in systems where spatial positioning should be very important (SMD-P) to winning seats and where it should not (PR), and where coordination should be highly problematic (SNTV) and where it should not (SMD-AV). They also occur in electoral systems which promote high numbers of ideologically extreme parties (high-magnitude PR) and those which do not (PBV).

The argument I have laid out in this section provides us with a better understanding of this pattern. It is not that electoral rules have *no* effect on the likelihood of ruling party survival, but rather that they have countervailing effects. The threshold of

⁴⁰ To keep the discussion as general as possible, I have left out several other electoral systems that are either unusual or have ambiguous effects. The net effects of mixed-member parallel systems, in particular, are impossible to predict without saying more about the details of each regime's rules: the effects of an SMD lower tier will work in the opposite direction from those of a PR upper tier, for instance, so it is necessary to know the number of seats awarded from each to make predictions.

⁴¹ I have included West Germany's mixed-member compensatory system in the medium-threshold PR category, because the net effect of the rules are nearly the same as a pure PR system with $T_E=0.05$. In Samoa, the majority of seats are elected using SMD-P, but several contain two seats elected using bloc vote, where each voter has two votes to cast. For its second contested election after liberalization, Lesotho adopted a mixed-member system combining 80 single-member districts with 40 seats awarded through a compensatory PR tier. The net effect, however, is still more majoritarian than proportional.

exclusion works in opposite directions through two different mechanisms. And the net effect on the likelihood of ruling party survival is impossible to predict without knowing the severity of each type of asymmetry.

In fact, the only firm prediction one can make about net electoral system effects is that adding vote pooling in low- T_E systems reduces the likelihood of one-party dominance, all else equal, by reducing the importance of coordination asymmetry at the election stage. In practical terms, this describes only one type of electoral system change, from non-vote-pooling SNTV to vote-pooling STV. If district magnitude is the same in both, coordination problems at the election stage will be much simpler in STV, so one party's superior coordination ability will have less consequence for winning seats, and long-lived one-party rule will consequently be less likely. By this logic, one-party dominance should be more likely in pre-1996 Japan than in Ireland or Malta. For any change in T_E , however, the net effect is impossible to predict without additional information about party system asymmetry.

In sum, the logic laid out here ends with an ambiguous conclusion: in general, the effect of electoral rules on ruling party duration is indeterminate. Dominant party systems appear equally possible under SNTV, PR, and plurality rule SMDs—we cannot a priori identify any major class of electoral system as especially prone, or hostile, to long spells of one-party rule.

4.2. Executive Selection: Why Dominant Parties are More Likely in Parliamentary Regimes

In contrast to electoral systems, the difference across regimes in executive selection generates an unambiguous prediction: party system asymmetry has a smaller effect on the likelihood of ruling party survival in presidential regimes than in parliamentary ones. The effects of partisanship, spatial positioning, and coordination advantages on incumbent survival are all weaker in presidential races than in parliamentary ones. Thus, long-lived one-party rule should be much less likely in presidential regimes, all else equal, than in parliamentary ones.

By *executive selection*, I mean here the way the chief executive⁴² of the regime is chosen and held accountable. In general, the chief executive in presidential regimes, the president, has a fixed term in office, does not depend on legislative confidence, and is directly elected in a popular, nation-wide vote. The chief executive in parliamentary regimes, the prime minister, is selected by the legislature, depends on the support of a majority in the parliament for his control of the office, and can be removed before his term is up through a vote of no-confidence. In addition, cabinet appointments are shared among members of the parliament, whereas in presidential regimes these appointments usually cannot be individuals who are also sitting legislators.

Of these differences, the crucial one here is whether the executive is chosen indirectly by the legislative assembly or directly through a popular vote. The way the executive is selected conditions the effect of party system asymmetry: presidentialism weakens the effect of the incumbent's partisanship and spatial positioning advantages on

⁴² To simplify the argument, I omit any theoretical consideration of semi-presidential regimes for the moment. I discuss how I deal empirically with dual-executive regimes in Chapter 2, Section 2.1.

the probability of winning, and it reduces the asymmetry of coordination as well. I consider how presidentialism modifies the effect of each mechanism in turn.

How Presidentialism Weakens The Effect of Partisan Advantage in Elections

In party systems where the incumbent holds a large partisan advantage in the electorate, presidential races blunt this advantage. This is for two reasons: (1) presidential elections are more personalist and (2) presidential election outcomes are higher variance than parliamentary ones.

Presidential elections tend to be more *personalist* than parliamentary ones in the sense that, in addition to the parties to which they belong, the intrinsic characteristics and policy preferences of the candidates matter a great deal to voters (Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina 1987). The direct election of the executive creates opportunities for charismatic outsiders to win executive power without the support of strong party organizations (Samuels and Shugart 2010: 62-65). In these elections, voters face a choice not only between a set of policy platforms or offerings of pork or patronage for their district or interest group, but also between individuals who would be president. As a result, opposition parties that perform poorly on a generic partisan ballot may nonetheless have a good shot at capturing executive office if they nominate a candidate with wide popular appeal—what we might term a “superstar effect.” In other words, in presidential regimes, the winning party is more likely to benefit from the candidate’s independent popularity rather than the other way around. This kind of “outsider” campaign for office tends to be much harder to pull off in parliamentary regimes, where major party

nominees almost always are members of the legislature and have served for many years in various party positions (Samuels and Shugart 2010: 77).

In addition, even in highly authoritarian contexts, one expects the opposition to be better positioned to win if it needs only to recruit a single star candidate rather than a whole slate of them. The lack of a deep political “bench” of candidates to run and the threat of harassment by the state agents of the ruling party should have a much greater impact on opposition chances across legislative races than in presidential ones. For one, the payoff to winning the presidency is quite large: the most attractive potential opposition challengers are more likely to risk harassment by the authorities, loss of career opportunities in the private sector, personal threats against them and their family members, and other potentially large costs of running against the incumbent party if winning means capturing full control of the executive rather than simply a seat in opposition in the legislature. In other words, presidential contests are more appealing to ambitious office-seekers because they are winner-take-all: an opposition victory removes the incumbent from executive power in one fell swoop and transfers full control to the winner. As a consequence, opposition candidates for president often are willing to risk great harm to themselves for a shot at knocking off the incumbent. In Zimbabwe, for example, the opposition candidate Morgan Tsvangirai endured beatings and jail time to challenge the incumbent president Robert Mugabe. Such intimidation did not keep him out of the race, and in order to retain power the ruling party had to resort to ever more-brutal tactics against opposition supporters, and eventually, massive electoral fraud (Bratton and Masunungure 2008).

In contrast, parliamentary regimes tend to offer popular opposition figures a much less straightforward way to national power than do presidential ones. In parliamentary regimes, winning control of the executive typically requires recruiting not just one strong candidate who can win a single national race, but putting forward a whole slate of them and winning many races—a task which typically requires investing valuable time and resources in developing a party organization. Thus, presidential races provide a better opportunity for opposition parties to win the executive: one popular candidate can negate most of the partisan advantage the incumbent may possess (cf. Scheiner 2006: 216).

As a practical illustration of this claim, consider the patterns of partisan support in the United States after WWII. From at least 1954 to 1992, and probably stretching back to the New Deal coalition of the 1930s, the Democrats enjoyed a significant partisan advantage in the American electorate: on average, about 53 percent of voters identified with the Democratic Party on ANES surveys, while only 37 percent identified with the Republican Party (Campbell 1996: 48-9). At no point during this period did Republican partisans ever outnumber Democratic ones. But the Republican Party still could, and did, capture the presidency by running candidates with broad cross-over appeal, whose own personal popularity could overcome the generic weakness of the party in the national electorate. Thus, Dwight D. Eisenhower won two terms by wide margins not because he was a Republican but despite it—he was a popular war hero with a reputation as a moderate (cf. Campbell et al. 1960: 136-142). Indeed, the argument here suggests that the U.S. in the 20th century has not had sustained periods of one-party control of the

executive in part because of this feature of presidentialism: the weaker of the two parties can still win a given election by finding an Eisenhower.⁴³

Presidential contests are more dangerous for advantaged ruling parties, however, not merely because candidates' personal qualities have a greater effect on who wins, but also because control of the executive depends on the outcome of a single winner-take-all election. A more personalized campaign by itself does not necessarily lower a ruling party's chances; over a large number of races, ruling parties with a resource advantage tend to recruit more high-quality candidates than the opposition does (Greene 2007). Thus, when executive control depends on the joint outcome of many races, an incumbent party with a partisan advantage is all-but-assured of retaining power. Were the incumbent to nominate unappealing candidates in 10 percent of all parliamentary races, for example, it would barely affect the expected outcome of the election: the ruling party might win a few less seats, but it would still retain a majority. The law of large numbers ensures this: opposition parties may beat the odds and win a race here and there, but over a hundred races, the incumbent will secure a seat share that is in rough proportion to the asymmetry in the party system.

By making executive control dependent on the results of a single race, however, presidentialism injects a greater element of chance into the election. The incumbent's survival in office is much more dependent on the popularity of its single presidential

⁴³ In the U.S. at the state and local level there are many more examples of opposition party candidates winning executive races in localities with a highly asymmetric party system. Rudy Giuliani and Michael Bloomberg, for instance, both won multiple terms as Republicans in New York City, where registered Democrats outnumber Republicans 5-to-1. Both ran the same kind of charismatic, "independent outsider" campaigns that effectively turned the race into a referendum on their personal qualifications to be mayor, rather than their partisan affiliation.

nominee, rather than the whole slate of candidates running for the legislature.

Nominating a lackluster candidate for president can lose the ruling party the entire executive, while nominating one for the legislature risks only a single seat. Thus, there should be greater variance in a party's performance in the competition for power in presidential regimes than in parliamentary ones.

This simple difference in executive selection can lead to radically different expected incumbent survival rates over several elections. To see this, consider a highly stylized example. Assume that the incumbent party enjoys a partisan advantage over all other parties, such that its probability of winning any given race is 0.6, and that the party must contest elections in a parliamentary regime with 100 MPs elected from single member districts. In order to remain in power, the party has to win at least half, or 50 seats. By the cumulative binomial distribution, the probability that it finishes with at least 50 seats is over 0.98; that is, the party faces a less than 2 percent chance of losing power when it expects to win any given race with a probability of 0.6. But in a presidential regime, given the *exact same partisan advantage*, the ruling party's probability of retaining the executive is only 0.6! The one-shot nature of presidential contests puts the ruling party's hold on power in much greater jeopardy.

That is not all. Remember that what we really care about is a ruling party's ability to retain power through *multiple* elections. If we assume a term of four years and the same advantage in each election, then the likelihood that a ruling party with a 0.6 probability of winning any given race survives past 20 years is simply the joint probability of winning in each election. In parliamentary regimes, this is $(0.9832)^5$, or about 0.92. In presidential regimes, it is $(0.6)^5$, or about 0.08. The difference is huge: in

a parliamentary regime, the advantaged incumbent would survive past 20 years over 90% of the time; in presidential regimes, less than 8%! Clearly, under these circumstances, an advantaged ruling party is much safer contesting parliamentary elections than presidential ones.

We might term this the “Cinderella” effect: contests decided by a single victory are better for underdogs—the Cinderellas of the world—while those that require multiple victories are better for the favorites. The number of rounds required to win thus drastically affects the probability of an upset. We can see the same principle at work in sports competitions. Basketball championships, for instance, are decided differently in college and the NBA: while the NCAA decides winners based on one game, the NBA has best-of-seven series. As a result, chance plays a much greater role in the NCAA tournament. The more talented teams can lose for all kinds of quirky reasons: the lower seed surprises with an innovative game plan; the favorite’s star player gets into early foul trouble; a bench player on the underdog shoots the lights out; and so on. Over the NBA’s seven-game playoff series, though, these random events tend to even out: teams make adjustments, players’ shooting reverts to their season averages, and the better team’s strengths become decisive. Thus, less talented teams often steal a game or two, but they rarely win a series. In the 2001 NBA finals, for instance, the Philadelphia 76ers won Game 1 in overtime against the defending champions and heavily favored LA Lakers, featuring Shaquille O’Neal in his prime. It was LA’s first loss of the entire playoffs: they had gone 12-0 to that point. Had this been the NCAA tournament, the 76ers’ win would have been celebrated as one of the greatest sports upsets of all time, akin to the U.S. Olympic hockey team’s “Miracle on Ice” in 1980, or the New York Giants’ win over the

New England Patriots in Super Bowl XLII. Instead, the NBA's best-of-seven format meant Game 1 was a mere bump on the Lakers' march to the title: having had time to make adjustments, they won the next four games by an average of 10 points, and the 76ers victory is now little more than the answer to a trivia question.

Parliamentary elections are a lot like an NBA playoff series: the party with the structural advantage will win the most seats with a high degree of certainty, which in turn puts them in the best position to control the executive. Many improbable events have to occur simultaneously for an underdog to win. Presidential elections are a lot more like the NCAA championship: executive control is determined by a one-shot, high-variance contest, where the strongest party on a generic party ballot is much more likely to be upset. Over several elections, this difference results in a much higher survival rate for advantaged incumbents in parliamentary than in presidential regimes.

This conclusion rests on a highly stylized example, of course, and there are several objections that might be raised against it. One is that, even in parliaments elected from many districts, the outcomes in each race are not independent of one another: the probability of opposition victories in each district are likely to shift up or down together. But this is merely a way of saying that the ruling party's advantage is systematic: if it declines in one district, it tends to decline elsewhere. What I have argued above implies that the ruling party's chances of winning are lower in presidential regimes *even when we hold its advantages constant*.

Another possible objection is that many parliaments are elected using PR rather than plurality rule, and from only a few or even a single district—as, for instance, is Israel's. Thus, the law of large numbers mechanism does not operate in these cases. The

counter is that in PR, seats shares usually closely mirror partisan support in the electorate, regardless of the quality of the party's nominees. If the partisans of one party make up 40 percent of the electorate, while the nearest opponent's are only 20 percent, then the first party is highly likely to win the most seats, regardless of its nominating strategy or the popular appeal of its candidates. And winning the largest number of seats puts that party in the driver's seat for coalition formation—although we will have to invoke a second mechanism, that of spatial positioning, to complete the argument. (See the next section.)

The best counter to these objections, however, may be to look at empirical evidence of the different partisan winners in presidential versus legislative races when both occur simultaneously. In a recent book project, Shugart and Samuels (2010: 143-146) do exactly this: across 38 presidential and semi-presidential systems, they find an average difference across all districts between the vote for a presidential candidate and his or her partisans of about 10 percent; in elections in 17 countries at least one party had a difference greater than 20 percent. In other words, presidential candidates routinely receive electoral support that differs significantly from that of their legislative co-partisans.

The United States provides several good illustrations of what this difference means in practice to an advantaged party's chances of retaining the executive. The Democratic Party held a consistent partisan advantage over Republicans in the electorate throughout the 1980s, for instance, but that advantage did not prevent the party's loss in three consecutive presidential elections. This dismal performance is particularly striking when contrasted with Democratic performance in House elections: in 1980, for example, Democrats across the country won 243 seats on 50.3 percent of the vote, while

Republicans won 192 on 47.6 percent. Yet the Democratic incumbent president, Jimmy Carter, won only 41.0 percent of the vote, while the Republican challenger Ronald Reagan won 50.7 percent. The advantages that Democrats enjoyed in House races evidently did not carry over to the presidential contest; indeed, Samuels and Shugart find that the difference between the vote share of the average Democratic House candidate in 1980 and the share for Carter in that district was over 25 percent, indicating that a sizeable fraction of voters split their tickets.

The same pattern of split-ticket voting shows up frequently at the state level in the U.S., where a large partisan advantage typically delivers long-term control of the legislature to one party, but does not prevent the weaker party from occasionally winning the governorship. There are a remarkable number of “disadvantaged” party candidates who managed to win governor’s races in states with partisanship highly skewed toward the other major party. In just the last decade, for instance, Democratic candidates won governor’s races in several states where Republicans had a large and long-lasting majority in the legislature, including Kansas, Wyoming, and Arizona, while Republicans did the same in Massachusetts, Connecticut, California, and New Jersey. Were executive control in these states determined by the majority in the legislature, as in parliamentary regimes, this kind of partisan alternation seems much less likely to occur.

How Presidentialism Weakens the Effect of Spatial Asymmetry in Elections

The second way presidentialism makes long-lived one-party rule less likely is by weakening the effect of spatial positioning asymmetry in the party system. Recall from Chapter 3 that positioning asymmetry occurs when one party has a greater ability to take

positions that maximize its expected vote share. Presidentialism weakens the link between having greater ideological flexibility and winning control of the executive in two ways.

First, presidential candidates tend to be less bound by their party's previous policy statements than are candidates for prime minister, and thus better able to take vote-maximizing positions. Sitting presidents are less subject to control by their party's membership than are prime ministers. Presidents do not depend on the confidence of the rank-and-file in the legislature for their office: the fixed terms, separate origin, and different constituency of the presidency means they can more credibly promise to take policy positions independent of their party (Samuels 2002). As a consequence, presidential candidates can position themselves closer to the median voter on issues on which their party membership is relatively extreme. Parliamentary leaders are, by contrast, much more constrained in election campaigns: party leaders' efforts to take moderate, vote-maximizing positions in election campaigns are often undercut by their dependence on a more ideological, extremist membership. Thus, even when opposition party leaders are more personally popular than the incumbent prime minister, they may be hamstrung by a party membership that can sanction them *ex post* (cf. Samuels and Shugart 2010: 49-51).

Second, executive control is more likely to be captured by a centrist party in parliamentary regimes than in presidential ones. In parliamentary regimes, there is another stage after the election: if no party wins a majority, parties negotiate to form a government. Policy flexibility and centrist positions are especially valuable at this stage. In presidential regimes, by contrast, there is no government formation stage—the

incumbent party must win a plurality in the election to ensure it remains in office.⁴⁴

Thus, there is greater variance in the likelihood that holding a centrist position results in winning control of the executive.

In fact, in presidential regimes, centrists often lose three-way contests. For instance, Taiwan's 2000 presidential election evolved into a three-way race between a centrist candidate from the incumbent KMT, a more rightist renegade KMT candidate, and a more leftist opposition DPP candidate. The DPP candidate won a plurality with less than 40 percent of the vote, followed closely by the KMT renegade; the centrist KMT candidate came in a distance third, with less than 25 percent. Similarly, in Mexico, the 2000 presidential election turned into a three-way race between candidates of the rightist PAN, centrist PRI, and leftist PRD. The PAN's candidate won the election with 43 percent of the vote, while the PRI won 36 percent and the PRD 17 percent.

It is instructive to consider the counterfactual in these cases: what if these results were in parliamentary regimes, and they decided the composition of parliament rather than the presidential winner? At the government formation stage, both the KMT and the PRI would have been well-placed to remain in the governing coalition, at least. Certainly, their chances of being part of government would be better than the certainty of being shut out of the executive. It is in this way that parliamentarism offers an additional bulwark against defeat to a centrist incumbent: if it performs poorly in the election, the party may still maneuver into power at the government formation stage. Presidentialism, by contrast, offers no such safety net: second place is worth nothing.

⁴⁴ Or at least, a large enough share of the vote to advance to the second round, if the electoral system is a two-round system. Even in the two-round case, it may make sense to be extreme rather than centrist in the first round. See France, where many first-round winners are the more extreme of the major party candidates (Tsebelis 1990: 187-234; Cox 1997: 123-138).

How Presidentialism Leads to More Symmetric Electoral Coordination

Presidentialism also lowers an advantaged incumbent's chances of retaining power in a third way, by reducing the coordination advantage that the incumbent enjoys through its superior party organization. As we saw in the previous section, opposition coordination problems can arise at both the election and government formation stages in parliamentary regimes, and they can sustain ruling parties in power. In presidential regimes, by contrast, coordination problems occur only during the election, and they tend to be both simpler to understand and easier to solve. As a consequence, coordination asymmetry on average is much more important to who wins the executive in parliamentary than in presidential races: incumbent parties cannot depend on poor opposition coordination to retain power in presidential regimes.

As I detailed in the previous section, coordination problems can be quite complex at the election stage in some electoral systems. Under SNTV rules, for example, both nominating an optimal number of candidates in each district and getting supporters to allocate their votes evenly across all the party's nominees can be quite difficult. Vote-pooling systems drastically reduce or eliminate these problems, however, so that elections in most PR systems and STV result in a fairly proportional conversion of votes into seats.

The real bite of coordination asymmetry instead comes at the government formation stage, where the opposition may consist of several parties from opposite ends of the political spectrum. For instance, under high-magnitude PR, there tends to be a high effective number of parties and a large ideological range across the opposition.

Removing the incumbent from office requires that these opposition parties cooperate with one another rather than with the incumbent to form a government. And this is by no means a foregone conclusion; during much of Italy's postwar party system, for instance, removing the DC from the prime minister's office would have required parties of the far right to cooperate with the Communists, and in Canada the Liberals retained power in part because the Conservatives and the various "prairie populist" parties were deeply opposed to one another's positions on state intervention in the economy (Tarrow 1990: 317; Carty 1996). In these and other cases, the ideological commitments of the opposition parties left them much more predisposed to support a prime minister from the centrist incumbent than one drawn from the far extreme of the political spectrum. Thus, in parliamentary regimes the government formation stage introduces an additional step at which opposition coordination can fail, and the incumbent can survive in power.

This kind of post-election coordination problem simply does not exist in presidential regimes. Control of the executive is decided as soon as all the votes are counted: the candidate who comes out ahead is the winner, and that is that. The coordination problem in presidential races is entirely one of pre-election coalition formation—of getting opposition elites and voters to support the same ticket. Furthermore, in contrast to the complex coordination dilemmas that parties face in parliamentary races in some systems like SNTV, the opposition coordination problem in presidential races is quite simple: nominate one candidate, and get all the anti-incumbent elites and voters to coordinate on him. Succeed at this task, and the opposition has a fighting chance of winning. Fail, and the incumbent can start planning the inauguration ceremony. This is not to say that all the anti-incumbent groups will coalesce behind a

single opposition candidate—they often do not. But because the optimal solution to the coordination problem is obvious to everyone involved, the chances are better that either opposition elites will work out a way to nominate only one candidate, or if they fail, that opposition supporters will vote strategically to achieve the same outcome.

In addition, there is a powerful incentive for the opposition in presidential regimes to cooperate pre-election: the contest for the presidency is both single-stage and winner-take-all. If the opposition does not cooperate in the election, there is no second stage at which to work out a compromise. Instead, everyone in the opposition remains shut out of power. The presidency is also an enormous and indivisible prize: the president controls all the bureaucracy and does not depend on the confidence of any group in the legislature to do so. Thus, there is less opportunity to bargain for a share of power *ex post*. By contrast, in parliamentary regimes a small opposition party can hold out hope of becoming a junior coalition partner in the government, and by doing so, winning a payoff in executive power and perks that far exceeds the share of seats it contributes to the government. As a small opposition party, then, the expected payoff of running alone in a parliamentary election tends to be higher than it is in a presidential one, making pre-electoral cooperation less appealing (cf. Magaloni 2006: 235). Thus, in general the opposition should have less incentive to coordinate under parliamentarism than presidentialism (cf. S. Golder 2006: 23-26; Hicken and Stoll 2008).

Interestingly, the reverse appears more often true of an advantaged incumbent party: effective *intra*-party coordination is *harder* to achieve in presidential regimes than in parliamentary ones. The reason is what we might term the “renegade problem”: how to keep candidates denied the nomination from running independent campaigns and

splitting the ruling party vote. Ruling party nominations are both valuable—because of the high likelihood of winning—and scarce—because there are more aspirants to office than there are nominations to be given. As a consequence, there will inevitably be aspiring candidates denied a nomination. The problem for the party arises when one or more of these candidates has strong personal appeal—they could win a great deal of electoral support even without the ruling party’s nomination, and as a consequence have a stronger incentive to run a “renegade” campaign against the party’s official nominee.

In parliamentary regimes, this problem is typically solved through a promise by the party leader to share power with popular rivals after the election—perhaps by allocating important cabinet ministries or by committing to policies that they advocate. Rivals can ensure these deals are credible by maintaining the support of some of the party’s members of parliament: the party leader can then be kept from reneging on a pre-election agreement by the threat of a no-confidence vote or an intra-party leadership challenge once the new parliament is seated. In this way, the typical prime minister is merely “first-among-equals”: his hold on the office depends on the support of his own party members, constraining his independence and requiring him to share decision-making and build intra-party consensus to advance his agenda. Indeed, a key part of a prime minister’s survival strategy is sharing portfolios with potential rivals in the party (Ono 2010). As a result, popular rivals can have considerable ex post leverage within the party, ensuring continued influence and access to the perks of power.

In presidential regimes, by contrast, this kind of power-sharing promise is much less credible. Presidents almost always have a fixed term of office and cannot be removed except in extraordinary circumstances such as impeachment. Thus, they do not

face existential threats from their own party or supporting coalition in the way that prime ministers do (Samuels and Shugart 2010: 95). They are also the undisputed principal in the executive branch to which all other officials report, so there is typically nothing to stop presidents from reneging on agreements to give intra-party rivals broad influence within the executive once they are in office. They may still need to win support from rivals to get policy objectives accomplished, but they can fire or reshuffle cabinet appointees without consulting their party membership. This lack of post-election leverage over the executive means that a presidential candidate's promise to share power is worth considerably less to popular rivals than that of a candidate for prime minister. As a consequence, the expected payoff of winning the party's nomination for chief executive is generally much higher, and that of *losing* the party's nomination is lower, in presidential than in parliamentary regimes. Put simply, presidentialism raises the stakes of the intra-party nominating contest: the winner is better off, and the losers worse off, than under parliamentarism.

It follows that the rewards of leaving the incumbent party—even a highly advantaged one—and running as a renegade are potentially much higher in presidential regimes. Not only is the expected utility of staying in the ruling party lower under presidentialism, but that of running an independent campaign is also greater, as the more candidate-centric nature of presidential contests gives popular rivals a better shot at converting their personal appeal into electoral victory. Moreover, these renegade campaigns are potentially disastrous in presidential races, where splitting the incumbent party vote can open the door to an opposition candidate victory with much less than a majority; by contrast, in parliamentary regimes such splits may only force the incumbent

party into a coalition with its splinter faction. Thus, we should be more likely to see damaging incumbent party splits as a result of competition over the nomination for chief executive in presidential regimes than in parliamentary ones.⁴⁵ The end consequence is that there should be less coordination asymmetry in the party system in presidential contests: they increase the opposition's chances of effective coordination and decrease the incumbent's.

Evidence: Dominant Parties in Presidential Regimes

To recap, I have argued that advantaged ruling parties should be more vulnerable to defeat in presidential than in parliamentary regimes, for three distinct reasons. First, party competition for the executive is higher-variance in presidential regimes, because the winner is determined by the outcome of a single, candidate-centered race where partisan advantages are less decisive. Second, spatial positioning asymmetry matters less in presidential regimes, because presidential candidates can more credibly distance themselves from the extreme positions of their party, and because there is no government formation stage where a party's centrist positions are especially advantageous. Third, coordination between parties is more nearly equal in presidential regimes: the problem is simpler to understand and solve, the winner-take-all nature of presidential races increase

⁴⁵ Interestingly, the PRI in Mexico developed an unusual institutional solution to the renegade problem. It retained a constitutional rule of nonconsecutive reelection for all elected offices, increasing the circulation of elites between different offices and raising potential renegades' continuation value of remaining within the party. It also forbid reelection of the president, which meant that those denied the nomination would have a shot in six years. By giving the sitting president enormous power to handpick his successor and nominate PRI candidates for other elected offices as well, the PRI also created stronger incentives for aspirants to the presidency to remain loyal to the party and discouraged the formation of intra-party factions around strong candidates (Magaloni 2006: 46-49). This innovation appears to have helped the PRI reduce the threat posed by renegades in presidential elections and contributed to the PRI's exceptional longevity in power.

both the benefits of opposition coordination and the costs of not coordinating, and the incentives for renegade incumbent campaigns are greater. As a consequence, long-lived one-party rule should be much less likely in presidential regimes than parliamentary ones, all else equal.

The question now is whether the patterns of dominance that I identified in Chapter 2 are consistent with this prediction. At first glance, they do not appear to be: in Table 4.2, which shows all 41 parties categorized by whether they held power in a presidential or parliamentary regime, there is a roughly equal number occurring in both regime types. Moreover, there are 514 cases of ruling parties in parliamentary regimes, and only 178 in presidential regimes. So of 514 parliamentary cases, only 26, or 5.1 percent, survived at least 20 years in office, while of 178 presidential cases, 15, or 8.43 percent, survived that long. By these numbers, long-lived ruling parties certainly do not appear to be any less common in presidential regimes.

¹Personalist incumbent leader **Table 4.2 Dominant Parties by Type of Executive Selection**

<i>Country</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Start Month</i>	<i>End Month</i>	<i>Tenure at Risk (Months)</i>
<i>Parliamentary Regimes</i>				
Antigua and Barbuda	LP	Nov-81	Mar-04	268
Austria	SPO	Apr-70	Feb-00	358
Australia	LP+CP	Dec-49	Dec-72	276
Belgium	CVP	Apr-74	Jul-99	303
Botswana	BDP	Sep-66	-	483*
Canada	LP	Oct-35	Jun-57	260
Ethiopia	EPRDF	May-95	-	139*
Germany, West	CDU+CSU	Sep-49	Oct-69	241
Guyana	PPP/Civic	Oct-92	-	170*
India	INC	Aug-47	Mar-77	355
Israel	ILP	May-48	Jun-77	349
Italy	DC	Apr-48	Jun-81	398
Japan	LP/LDP	Dec-54	Aug-93	464
Liechtenstein (I)	FBP	Jul-28	Mar-70	500
Liechtenstein (II)	VU	Apr-78	Apr-01	276
Lesotho	LDC	Apr-93	-	164*
Luxembourg (I)	CSV	Oct-45	Jun-74	344
Luxembourg (II)	CSV	Jul-79	-	329*
Malaysia	UMNO/BN	Aug-65	-	496*
St. Kitts and Nevis	SKNLP	Jul-95	-	137*
Samoa	HRPP	Apr-88	-	224*
Singapore	PAP	Aug-65	-	496*
South Africa (I)	NP	Jun-48	May-94	551
South Africa (II)	ANC	May-94	-	151*
Sweden	SAP	Sep-36	Oct-76	481
Trinidad and Tobago	PNM	Aug-62	Dec-86	292
<i>Presidential Regimes</i>				
Belarus ¹	n/p	Jul-94	-	149*
Cameroon	CPDM	Oct-92	-	170*
Djibouti	RPP	May-93	-	163*
Gabon ¹	PDG	Dec-93	-	156*
Gambia	PPP	Feb-65	Jul-94	353
Malawi	UDF/DPP	Apr-94	-	152*
Mexico	PRI	Jul-46	Dec-00	653
Mozambique	FRELIMO	Oct-94	-	146*
Namibia	SWAPO	Mar-90	-	201*
Russia	Yeltsin/UR	Dec-91	-	180*
Senegal	PS	Feb-78	Apr-00	266
Seychelles	SPPF	Jul-93	-	161*
Tanzania	CCM	Oct-95	-	134*
Zambia	MMD	Nov-91	-	181*
Zimbabwe ¹	ZANU-PF	Apr-80	-	320*

* Incumbent still in power; tenure calculated through December 2006

These data, however, are rather deceptive. In fact, the argument I have made is a conditional one: *all else equal*, presidentialism is easier for oppositions to win in than parliamentarism. But all else is *not* equal across the parties in Table 4.2; in particular, most of the presidential regimes are quite authoritarian and place significant restrictions on the opposition's ability to campaign and otherwise contest elections. Most of the parliamentary dominant parties, by contrast, occur in democratic regimes. To distinguish between parties in these two regime types, I used the overall score on PolityIV's democracy-autocracy scale: if the regime in which the party held power was always a 7 or above, I classified it as a democracy; otherwise, it was an autocracy. By this measure, 20 cases were in democracies and 21 in autocracies. I then separated parties in each regime type by their method of executive selection, shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3. Countries w/ Dominant Parties, by Type of Executive Selection		
	<i>Presidential</i>	<i>Parliamentary</i>
<i>Democratic</i>	None	Antigua and Barbuda Austria Australia Belgium Canada West Germany India Israel Italy Japan Lesotho Liechtenstein (2) Luxembourg (2) St. Kitts and Nevis Samoa South Africa (ANC) Sweden Trinidad and Tobago
<i>Autocratic</i>	Belarus Cameroon Djibouti Gabon Gambia* Malawi Mexico Mozambique Namibia Senegal Seychelles Tanzania Zimbabwe*	Botswana Ethiopia Guyana Malaysia Singapore South Africa (NP)

*Initially parliamentary; regime switched to presidential during ruling party tenure

The pattern that emerges once we take political openness into account is quite striking: dominant parties simply do not occur in presidential democracies. Indeed,

among democracies, *all 20* ruling parties that endured over 20 years in office were in parliamentary regimes, while there is not a single case of a ruling party controlling the executive for over 20 years in a presidential regime. Since there are many more cases of incumbents in parliamentary regimes than in presidential, however, a better comparison is to look at the relative frequency of dominant parties in each group. By frequency, 20 of 460 parliamentary incumbents in democracies survived at least 20 years in office, or 4.35%, while 0 of 96 presidential incumbents did: 0.00%. [Difference of Means test] In autocracies, by contrast, 13 of 82 presidential incumbents, or 15.85%, survived at least 20 years in office, while 6 of 54 parliamentary incumbents, or 11.11%, survived at least that long.⁴⁶

What these relative frequencies suggest is that there is an important difference across regime types, but only when the right of opposition parties to contest is fully respected. In the authoritarian regimes, the ruling party advantages that produce asymmetry in the party system may be so great as to render any institutional effects irrelevant to ruling party survival.

One far-reaching implication of this finding is that as presidential regimes become more politically open, the chances of ruling party defeat should begin to diverge from those in parliamentary regimes (cf. Scheiner 2006: 24). A good example is in Mexico: even as the regime liberalized during the 1980s and 1990s, the PRI should have been well-positioned to remain in power. It had a partisan advantage: more in the electorate self-identified as PRI partisans than PAN or PRD supporters combined. It had a

⁴⁶ Both Gambia and Zimbabwe switched from parliamentary to presidential during the ruling party's tenure in office. If we reclassify both as parliamentary, the rate for presidential regimes is slightly lower (13.75% vs. 14.29%) but the difference is still not significant.

positioning advantage: it was the centrist incumbent flanked by the leftist PRD and rightist PAN. And it had a coordination advantage: the electoral rules used to choose Mexican Congress created incentives for both the PAN and PRD to run candidates separately in single-member districts, while the PRI ran centrist candidates (Diaz-Cayeros and Magaloni 2001). Because of this, and because of the huge ideological gulf between the PAN and the PRD, opposition cooperation in elections remained very limited even after the regime became more liberal and the opposition camp as a whole drew as much voter support as the PRI. As a result, the PRI was consistently over-represented in Congress relative to its overall vote share, and it continued to hold the critical centrist position even when it lost its majority in 1997.

Yet in the 2000 presidential election, these advantages proved insufficient to keep the PRI in power: a three-way presidential race, with a lackluster PRI candidate and a strong PAN candidate, produced an opposition winner with only a plurality of the vote. The PAN's Vicente Fox far outperformed his party's vote share in any previous national election, and so the PRI went down to defeat despite holding the leading position in a party system that remained quite asymmetric. The PRI probably would have won the 2000 election had it been decided entirely by elections to Congress, where it derived greater benefit from advantages over its competitors. Mexico's political liberalization created the conditions for meaningful opposition contestation, but it was presidentialism that delivered the death blow to PRI dominance.

4.3. Centralization of Authority: Why Dominant Parties are More Likely in Highly Centralized Regimes

In addition to electoral system and method of executive selection, there is a third institutional feature that conditions the impact of party asymmetry: the degree to which political authority is *centralized*. In some states, authority is highly concentrated in the national executive: local officials such as governors and mayors are appointed by the center rather than elected, and most significant political decisions are made in the capital. In others, local officials are elected by the people over whom they have jurisdiction: their constituency is not officials in the central government but local citizens. When their offices also come with significant resources and autonomy, provincial, state and city leaders have not only the incentives but the ability to act independently of the central government. Local autonomy is a potential threat to ruling party control at the central level because it provides opportunities for opposition parties to pursue a bottom-up party-building strategy. Control of local offices enables opposition parties to reduce their disadvantaged position in the party system in three ways.

First, by winning control of powerful local offices, opposition parties gain access to resources that they can use to change the type of members that the party recruits. As I argued in Chapter 3, without the promise of material benefits, opposition parties have to make ideological appeals to attract members, and this limits their ability to reposition themselves in policy space. Control of elected office, however, opens access to resources and patronage, and thereby allows opposition parties to recruit more pragmatic office-seekers who are willing to sacrifice ideological principles for a better shot at winning elections. Given enough of these new recruits, the party can gain substantial ideological flexibility, making it much more competitive with the incumbent in subsequent elections.

In other words, local offices provide a resource stream that, over time, substantially reduces positioning asymmetry between the opposition party and the incumbent.

Second, opposition parties can also use local offices to increase the number of partisans in the electorate and the value of the party brand to potential office-seekers among the elite. By becoming the “governing party” in a particular state or city, they can counter the reputations for ideological extremism and rigidity that can be so damaging to their national electoral appeal. They can claim credit for any improvements in the jurisdictions under their control and use these to demonstrate what they would do if they won the next national election. A successful term as the governing party also increases the value of the party’s endorsement to office-seekers, and it marks a party as a more serious contestant for national office. Thus, electoral victories in local races can reveal which opposition party is the strongest and should be the beneficiary of strategic coordination by anti-incumbent voters and elites in national elections.

Third, local offices provide valuable opportunities to develop high-quality candidates for national office (cf. Scheiner 2006: 132-145). Mayors and governors tend to make strong candidates in presidential races: their executive experience is directly relevant to the job, and their personal popularity is closely related to their electoral prospects. Opposition candidates who manage to defeat advantaged incumbents at the central level are often local executives and prominent political figures in their own right. For instance, in Taiwan, the DPP’s winning presidential candidate Chen Shui-bian had previously been the mayor of Taipei, Taiwan’s capital and largest city, and in Mexico, the PAN’s candidate Vicente Fox was a popular and prominent governor of Guanajuato state before running for president. The most successful also tend to be

pragmatists: they can counter the extremist reputations of their parties by pointing to their accomplishments at more concrete tasks like getting roads paved, improving sanitation, reducing crime, and furthering economic development.

Although the benefits that the opposition accrues by winning local offices should improve their electoral prospects, these depend as well on the method used to choose the central government executive: the personal popularity of local executives is more easily converted into electoral appeal in presidential elections, as both Chen and Fox were able to do. By contrast, in parliamentary regimes, personal popularity matters less in the election and is harder to turn into executive control. In Japan, for instance, non-LDP members frequently won local governor's races and proved popular once in office; prominent examples include Ryokishi Minobe in Tokyo (1967-1979), Ryoichi Kuroda in Osaka (1971-1979), and Torazo Ninagawa in Kyoto (1950-1978).⁴⁷ None, however, were able to convert their national following and popularity into a serious run at the prime minister's office; Japan's highly centralized parliamentary regime effectively closed the door to these kinds of outsider campaigns.

Winning local offices can nevertheless be beneficial to opposition parties in parliamentary regimes, as they can still increase their ideological flexibility and improve their party brand by doing so. For instance, in India, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) became a more credible alternative to Congress at the federal level once it had captured several state governments in North India (Malik and Singh 1992). In general, however, the lack of a directly elected president forces opposition parties to engage in more intensive, bottom-up party building in order to translate these local advantages into

⁴⁷ I am indebted to Yoshikuni Ono for these examples.

improved prospects in national elections. The route to national power is less clear, and the process more involved, in parliamentary than presidential federal regimes.

To sum up, decentralization of authority reduces the effect of party system asymmetry on ruling party survival in two ways: by winning local offices, opposition parties can (1) increase their share of partisans and (2) develop a more ideologically flexible organization. The effects of partisanship and positioning asymmetry are therefore weakened in competition for national office, making advantaged incumbents more vulnerable to defeat. This decline in ruling party survival occurs regardless of regime type: switching from a unitary to a federal state should lower advantaged ruling party survival rates in both parliamentary and presidential regimes. In addition, the decline should be steeper in presidential than parliamentary regimes, because even strong federal parliamentary regimes reduce the possibility of local “superstar” candidates emerging as independent threats in national elections.

Thus, the effect of party system asymmetry on the likelihood of ruling party survival should be weakest in regimes that are both presidential and strongly federal: regimes such as the United States, Brazil, and Argentina. It should be strongest in regimes that are both parliamentary and highly centralized: regimes such as Britain, Israel, and the Netherlands. And among the intermediate cases, it should be greater in parliamentary regimes than presidential ones with roughly the same degree of centralization: for instance, greater in Malaysia than in Mexico, and greater in Japan than in Taiwan.

Stated more formally, we have three predictions. First, *as the degree of centralization rises, the effect of positioning asymmetry on ruling party survival*

increases. Second, the ruling party's likelihood of survival is higher in parliamentary regimes than presidential ones. Third, moving from a decentralized to a centralized regime produces a greater increase in the effect on ruling party survival in presidential regimes than in parliamentary ones. These hypotheses are shown in graphical form in Figure 4.5.

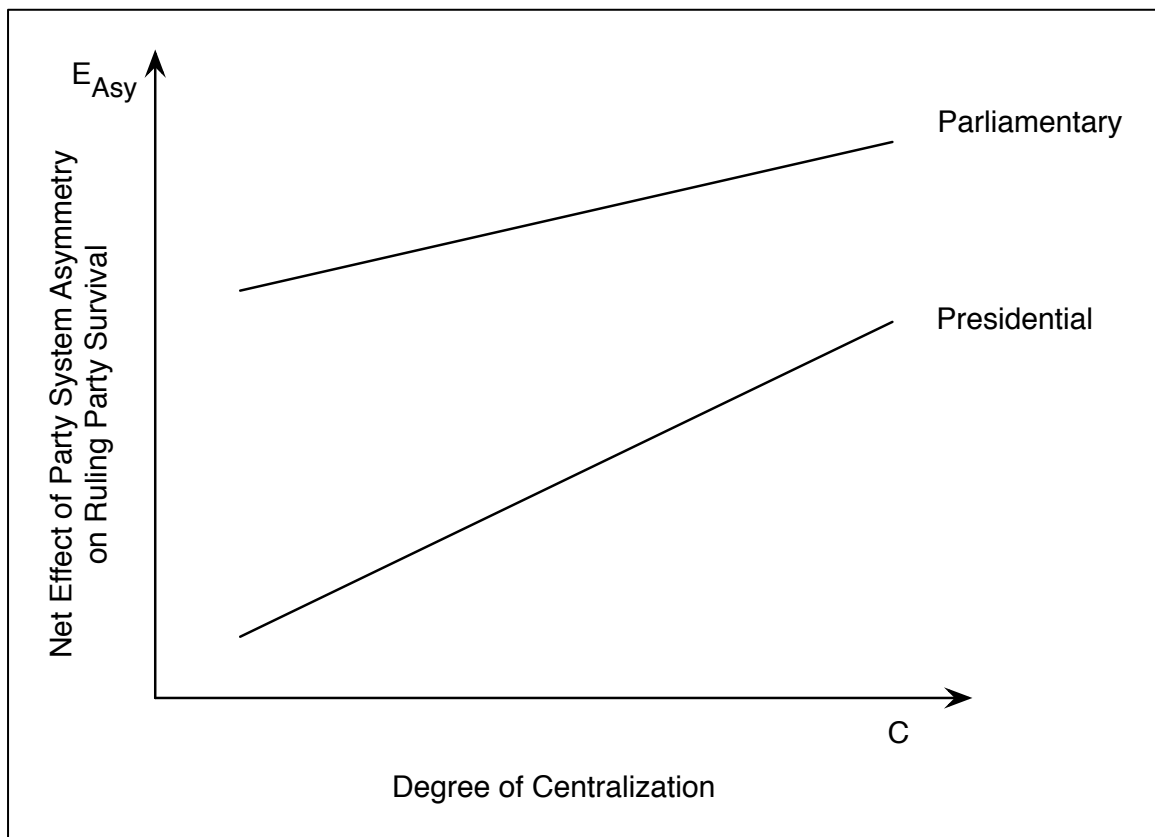


FIGURE 4.5. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN REGIME CENTRALIZATION AND THE EFFECT OF PARTY SYSTEM ASYMMETRY (E_{ASY}) ON RULING PARTY SURVIVAL

To see how dominance relates to the centralization of the regime, I categorized each regime as either centralized, decentralized, or intermediate, following Watts (1996).

I then broke these categories out by type of executive selection. The patterns are shown in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4. Countries w/ Dominant Parties, by Degree of Centralization and Type of Executive Selection		
	<i>Presidential</i>	<i>Parliamentary</i>
<i>Decentralized</i>	Mexico Russia	Australia Austria Belgium Canada Ethiopia West Germany India Malaysia St. Kitts and Nevis South Africa (I, II)
<i>Intermediate</i>	Cameroon Namibia Tanzania	Antigua and Barbuda Italy Japan
<i>Centralized</i>	Belarus Djibouti Gabon Gambia* Malawi Mozambique Senegal Seychelles Zimbabwe*	Botswana Israel Guyana Lesotho Liechtenstein (I, II) Luxembourg (I, II) Singapore Samoa Trinidad and Tobago

*Initially parliamentary; regime switched to presidential during ruling party tenure

Unlike the presidential-parliamentary comparison, dominant parties do occur in both centralized and decentralized regimes. The combination of decentralized

presidentialism does have the fewest number of dominant parties in it, but we cannot say whether this is meaningful without also considering the frequencies of each regime combination in the comparison group of non-dominant parties. To do that, we will have to confront several complications. One is that several of these regimes have become significantly more or less centralized over time. For instance, in Russia, Putin effectively ended most of what regional autonomy remained in 2004 by eliminating the election of governors and replacing them with presidential appointees. In order to test for the effects of centralization, then, our empirical strategy needs to allow for the possibility that this institutional feature may vary over time. We also must deal with how to operationalize the concept of “centralization,” as there are several competing measures, of which Watts (1996) is only one. There is also the need to test for interactive effects—for instance, it is possible that presidentialism with decentralization has a multiplicative rather than an additive effect on ruling party survival. And most importantly, we are better served modeling the dependent variable—duration in power—as continuous rather than as a simple dichotomy for whether the ruling party survived 20 years in office or not.

Thus, we have just about reached the limit of empirical inferences we can draw from a simple comparison of dominant party cases to one another. For that reason, I undertake a more comprehensive evaluation of the determinants of ruling party duration in the next chapter. Before concluding, however, I address one final theoretical concern, about when institutions can rightly be expected to have independent causal effects.

4.4. Institutions as Dependent Variables: Why Do Incumbents Choose Presidentialism?

To this point, I have considered institutions as fixed and having independent effects on party asymmetry. But as I noted in Chapter 2, institutions are themselves especially malleable at the advent of a new electorally-contested regime. Dominant parties are typically in position to reshape the formal rules of competition to their advantage, because they often begin the contested period with full control of the state. Thus, we face a danger in attributing independent effects to institutions, when those institutions themselves may be the consequence of previous choices by the incumbent party.

This concern has been articulated especially well by Tom Pepinsky. He argues that in authoritarian contexts, we should be skeptical about the ability of formal institutions to shape and restrain power-holders from taking actions that they prefer. Institutions only modify behavior as long as no decisive coalition of the relevant actors forms to overturn them. Most authoritarian dominant parties, however, *are* the decisive coalition: because they enjoy unfettered control over the state, they can change the rules of competition at will. This creates a problem for theories that attribute independent effects to institutions in authoritarian contexts. In Pepinsky's words,

“if dominant party institutions under authoritarian rule are vulnerable to manipulation because political actors believe that institutional manipulation will help them to shape political outcomes in their favor, then it is probably also true that those factors that explain the origins of (and changes in) dominant parties also directly shape those political outcomes” (Pepinsky 2011: 5).

This criticism should be taken seriously. It has the potential to undercut much of the institutional argument I have presented to this point, at least as it pertains to the more authoritarian regimes. Rather than the institutional configurations themselves having independent causal effects, they themselves may well be the outcome of some deeper cause, and focusing on the institutions themselves obscures this more fundamental process.

Indeed, a glance at some of the institutional manipulations of dominant parties in the sample indicates widespread and frequent changes in the rules that govern electoral competition. UMNO in Malaysia, for example, has unilaterally altered the constitution hundreds of times, created new hurdles for opposition party registration, changed district boundaries to disadvantage opposition candidates, increased the representation of its rural strongholds at the expense of the more competitive urban constituencies, and applied national security laws for blatantly partisan objectives (Chin 2002). In Mexico, the PRI changed the electoral system several times, including adopting a mixed-member system with a PR tier that increased the incentives for opposition parties to run against each other and split the anti-incumbent vote in single member districts (Diaz-Cayeros and Magaloni 2001).

Nor are these changes limited to the authoritarian cases. The LDP in Japan, for instance, was one of the great rule-changers among dominant parties: McElwain (2008) has documented dozens of seemingly minor “reforms” it adopted that effectively protected incumbent party candidates, including shortening the official campaign season, limiting advertising, and lifting restrictions on private donations while blocking public

funding of campaigns. It also prevented reapportionment that would distribute more seats to urban areas at the expense of its rural base (Christensen and Johnson 1995).

Put simply, the problem these examples raise is, *how can we claim institutions have independent effects on ruling party survival when they can so easily be changed by the incumbent?* In particular, if presidentialism is so much worse for ruling party survival, then why don't ruling parties simply change to parliamentarism? After all, they should know better than any armchair theorist which institutional setting makes them better off. As we saw in Figure 4.5, most of the authoritarian dominant parties occurred in presidential, not parliamentary, regimes, which seems odd if parliamentarism is so much better for long-term party survival. Moreover, in the full set of regimes in the sample, switches from parliamentarism to presidentialism have occurred in several, including France, Sri Lanka, Gambia, and Zimbabwe, while there are no instances of switches from pure presidentialism to pure parliamentarism.⁴⁸ Why then do autocratic parties, who have the fewest constraints on their ability to rework the institutions of the state, adopt or retain the type of executive selection that ultimately makes them more vulnerable to defeat?

There are three reasons Pepinsky's concern does not undercut the claims I have made in this chapter. First, even if advantaged ruling parties can change the rules of the electoral game at will, it is useful for us to know *how* these changes work to the incumbent's advantage. One way to view the conclusions in this chapter is as a set of

⁴⁸ There are a couple cases of significant weakening of presidential powers in semi-presidential regimes, in Portugal in 1982 and Croatia in 2000. In the latter case this effectively transformed the regime into a fully parliamentary one. In addition, Israel switched to a direct election of the prime minister for two elections, in 1996 and 2000, before returning to selection by parliament. See Samuels and Shugart (2010: 162-192) for a discussion of the effects of this change on the Israeli party system.

predictions about what institutional changes incumbents will be tempted to make under different kinds of asymmetry. When the ruling party enjoys a large coordination advantage over its competitors, for instance, it makes sense to adopt or maintain electoral institutions that make coordination more difficult.

Second, not all institutions are easily changed at all times: some changes are costlier for the ruling party than others. Redistricting seats or changing the rules for filing candidacies can often be done with little public outcry. But other changes, such as redrawing provincial borders or eliminating local elections, are potentially more damaging: they may be long-standing practices in some regimes, and attempting to alter them can whip up popular opposition. In Taiwan, for instance, local elections were a key source of the regime's internal and external legitimacy; as a party initially dominated by mainlanders, the KMT never dared to eliminate them entirely (Lin Chia-lung 1998: 137-156). Moreover, many institutions exhibit a form of path dependence: the longer they are around, the more the relevant actors in the political system come to benefit from them, and the more costly it is to change to something different (cf. Pierson 2000). Thus, rules that the incumbent party adopts at the beginning of the regime may ultimately become impossible to change even when they no longer serve the party's interests. Institutional changes can also have unforeseen consequences. A good illustration is the defeat of the Republican People's Party in Turkey in 1950, which was ensured by the use of highly majoritarian electoral rules that the incumbent party itself had adopted. The RPP was wiped out when the upstart opposition managed to attract a plurality of the vote, a possibility that the RPP's leaders had apparently not considered when they introduced multi-party elections four years earlier.

Third, even if the ruling party as a whole can form a decisive coalition to change the institutions of the regime, there is no guarantee that the interests of all the relevant actors *within* the party align. In some cases, institutional arrangements can bind leaders' behavior because other powerful actors within the ruling party benefit from them. For instance, the PRI in Mexico successfully enforced a one-term limit on its presidents for 70 years. And in Japan, members of the LDP prevented changes from SNTV even when their leaders argued it would benefit the party as a whole (McElwain 2008).

I would suggest that it is this third factor, *intra-party* conflict of interests, that accounts for why so many autocratic dominant parties retained or adopted presidentialism. Put simply, it is in the advantaged ruling party's long-term interest to maintain parliamentarism, but in general it is in the party *leader's* interest to adopt presidentialism. As I argued at length above, in parliamentary regimes, leaders are subject to sanction by their party membership. Because their appointment as prime minister depends on the tacit support of a majority of their own membership, they can be removed from power if they do not respond to party concerns. By contrast, party leaders who become president are much less directly accountable to their party membership: they serve fixed terms in office and do not depend on parliamentary confidence. In addition, parties select the two types of executives based on different criteria: prime ministers tend to be chosen based on their service and loyalty to the party, while general popularity among the electorate factors much more heavily in presidential nominations (Samuels and Shugart 2010: 47-51). Thus, by design, parliamentarism creates greater incumbent party constraints on executive action than does presidentialism.

This difference in accountability to the full party membership creates a strong preference for presidentialism among party leaders. It is not a stretch to assert that most party leaders would prefer greater freedom of action than the membership of their party permits, and presidentialism promises this additional leeway. Thus, party leaders have an incentive to switch the regime to presidentialism, along with those who favor the party leader over his opponents within the party. The rest of the party, however, should prefer parliamentarism for the same reasons: it gives them greater control over the behavior of the chief executive.

It is likely that only party leaders who already have centralized power within the party will be able to overcome opposition from the rank-and-file to make the switch to presidentialism; a more collegial party leadership with power diffused more widely is likely to succeed in opposing such a change. As a consequence, switches to presidentialism are most likely to occur as the consequence of a power struggle that the incumbent party leader wins. Once presidential regimes are established, the fixed terms and separate origin of the president further weaken the party's control over the leader, making it more difficult for the party to replace their leader. In other words, we are more likely to see parties effectively constrain leaders in parliamentary dominant parties, while we should see unconstrained leaders in presidential ones.

Although there are only four examples of changes from parliamentary to presidential regimes in the sample, these do offer some support for this story. In France, Charles de Gaulle was the main force behind the founding of the Fifth Republic, and he assumed the office of president as soon as it was created in 1959. In Gambia, Dawda Kairaba Jawara had held the leadership of the ruling PPP since independence in 1965,

and he won the first direct presidential election in 1982. In Sri Lanka in 1977, newly-elected prime minister J.R. Jayawardene pushed through a constitutional amendment creating the office of president and allowing him to assume that title and the expanded powers that came with it without having to be popularly elected. And in Zimbabwe, the creation of the office of the president in 1987 was led by Robert Mugabe of ZANU, backed by the new national military and initiated in part as a reaction to violence in parts of the country sympathetic to the other major independence party, ZAPU. In all four cases, the figure leading the ruling party at the time the change was adopted subsequently became the first president.

At the least, then, it is not inconsistent to argue both that presidentialism is worse for long-term one party rule and that many leaders of dominant parties seek to switch to presidential rule. The struggle for power within the ruling party may result in an institutional decision that is suboptimal for the party's long-term interests.

More generally, Pepinsky's concerns notwithstanding, institutions can still have independent causal effects on ruling party survival even under one-party rule. If intra-party power is diffuse, so that multiple groups with different interests have veto power over institutional changes, then the institutions of the regime can serve to constrain even the leaders of the ruling party. And even if the formal rules are malleable at the advent of the regime, the cost of changing them may rise over time, increasing their ability to shape inter-party competition.

4.5. Summary and Implications

In this chapter, I developed a theory of how formal institutions affect the persistence of dominant parties. I focused on three features of the regime: (1) the electoral system, (2) the way the executive is selected, and (3) the degree of political centralization. The electoral system has been the focus of most institutional explanations of dominant party systems, but I showed that it is impossible without additional information to derive clear theoretical expectations about which systems are most likely to sustain long periods of one-party rule. Dominant parties are equally plausible under high-magnitude PR, SMD-plurality, or SNTV electoral rules. By contrast, the way the executive is selected does have a consistent effect: for a given degree of asymmetry in the party system, the ruling party's survival rate is lower in presidential than in parliamentary regimes. I also derived a third prediction: that partisan asymmetry has a greater impact on ruling party survival in highly centralized regimes. I ended with a consideration of the origins of such institutional choices, and I argued that the institutions best suited to promote the long-term survival of the party as a whole are not necessarily those desired by its leader. Thus, presidentialism can be preferred by a party leader even when it worsens the long-term survival prospects of the ruling party.

The implications of these arguments are wide-ranging. The first and most obvious is that institutional theories of dominance still have considerable explanatory power. Work that downplays formal institutional explanations of one-party rule tends to do so largely based on contradictory or inaccurate predictions about electoral system effects (e.g. Greene 2007: 22-24; cf. Scheiner 2007). What this chapter shows is that both proponents and critics of institutional theories have been focusing on the wrong set

of institutions: *executive selection*, rather than electoral system, is the institution that most directly and consistently affects ruling party survival rates.

A related implication is that to properly test theories of electoral system effects on ruling party survival, one should separate elections in parliamentary regimes from those in presidential ones. Most previous work has treated legislative elections in both regime types as equally important to dominant party survival, but they clearly are not: in parliamentary regimes, retaining a majority in the legislature is decisive, while in presidential regimes it is not. Thus, it is odd to talk of SNTV contributing to ruling party defeat in Taiwan, as several scholars have done, when that defeat occurred in a presidential, not parliamentary, election. Party system asymmetries simply do not have the same consequences in presidential elections as they do in parliamentary ones.

A third implication is that scholars risk misinterpreting the causes of ruling party defeat in a number of prominent instances where those defeats occurred in presidential rather than parliamentary elections. The Mexico and Taiwan cases, in particular, have attracted a great deal of scholarly attention because of how much better-organized and resourced the ruling parties were when they were defeated. The explanation I have presented in this chapter suggests that these defeats should not have been so shocking after all—the advantages that both parties enjoyed in legislative races did them much less good in presidential contests. In particular, the causal impact of the resource decline that affected both parties may consequently be overstated in existing explanations of their defeat. Conversely, the continued survival of dominant parties in parliamentary regimes, such as the UMNO in Malaysia and PAP in Singapore, should be attributed in part to the

method of executive selection in use in those countries. Party system asymmetries matter more in the competition for executive control in the parliamentary cases.

Finally, this difference in regime type should show up not only in the data on dominant parties, but also in the survival rates of all other ruling parties in the sample as well. The best test of the institutional theory I have put forward is to see if ruling parties in presidential and parliamentary regimes face meaningfully different hazard rates over time, all else equal. It is to this task that I turn in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

EMPIRICAL TESTS: THE COVARIATES OF RULING PARTY DEFEAT

“I intend to live forever. So far, so good!”

--Woody Allen

In the previous empirical chapter, Chapter 2, I used simple cross-tabs and Kaplan-Meier plots to examine the patterns of ruling party duration. Chapters 3 and 4 subsequently developed a theory to explain some of that variation—in particular, why cases of long-lived one-party rule appeared to be absent in presidential democracies. In this chapter I return to and extend the empirical analysis in Chapter 2. I describe additional data I collected on possible covariates of ruling party survival, and I employ a parameterized model to test for these effects.

The chapter proceeds as follows. I first discuss the hypotheses from Chapters 3 and 4 to be tested. I then describe the data and measures employed in the empirical analysis. Following that, I address the difficult issue of model specification—in particular, how to address a serious non-proportional hazards problem that arises in attempting to assess the effect of presidential versus parliamentary regime type. The analysis follows. Using a Royston-Parmar flexible parametric model, I find several interesting results. Being a first-mover party and high party system asymmetry both lower the ruling party hazard rate, as do economic growth and age of the regime. In

contrast, openness of the regime and term limits raise the hazard rate. Most importantly, I find that the effect of regime type depends greatly on the degree of party system asymmetry: when asymmetry is high, presidential parties are much more likely to be defeated than parliamentary parties under the same conditions, while when asymmetry is low, presidential parties are more likely to survive than are parliamentary parties. The results thus support the central contention of Chapter 4: advantaged ruling parties are more vulnerable to defeat in presidential than parliamentary regimes.

5.1. Hypotheses and Data

The discussion in Chapters 3 and 4 generated a host of hypotheses about the determinants of ruling party survival. I review these here.

Party System Asymmetry Variables

The first hypothesis is a *resources effect*: a large ruling party resource advantage should be associated with a lower hazard rate. The key here is deciding how to measure “resources.” The term as used in previous work refers to some combination of state jobs, rents, and spending used for overtly partisan ends on the one hand, and party-owned assets on the other. These are all quantities that are hard to measure systematically across a large number of states and particularly over time (cf. Greene 2009).

In response, I have used a proxy variable, the state share of the economy—that is, the ratio of total state consumption relative to total consumption. This is admittedly a noisy measure of the potential resource advantage an incumbent may have. Nevertheless,

in the absence of much more refined measures of “partisan resources,” the state share proxy is the best we have. Thus, I expect the presence of a large state sector to increase both the opportunity for and the potential impact on the electorate of partisan use of state resources. The state size measure (*kg*) is taken from the Penn World Tables, version 7.0.

Stated more formally, the hypothesis is:

H1: The state’s share of the economy should be negatively associated with ruling party defeat.

The second hypothesis is a *repression effect*: the level of regime openness to competition should affect the ruling party’s survival prospects. If opposition party candidates and organizations are systematically harassed or jailed, or if campaign rallies and political advertising are strictly curtailed, then opposition parties should have a harder time running competitive campaigns for office. The measure that I use for regime openness is the regime’s aggregate Polity score, which is scaled from -10 to 10, with more open regimes receiving higher scores.⁴⁹

Stated more formally, this hypothesis is:

H2: A higher Polity score should be positively associated with ruling party defeat.

⁴⁹ As an alternative measure, I also substituted Vanhanen’s (2000) Polyarchy score for Polity. Coefficient estimates for the other variables in the model did not change significantly, but the Vanhanen measure was not significant while the Polity measure was.

The third hypothesis is about the asymmetry of the party system *when the incumbent first came to power*. Because the underlying concept is central to my theory, I will discuss in more detail the measures I used to capture asymmetry. In Chapter 3 I defined party system asymmetry as a condition in which one party consistently has the highest probability of controlling the chief executive's office. This advantage could be produced in at least three different ways.

First, one party could have more partisans in the electorate—in effect, having to attract fewer independent and undecided voters to its cause than any other party, and thereby having the best chance of winning the election. In an ideal world we would measure this feature of the party system through surveys, as is regularly done with the ANES, for instance. Unfortunately, this kind of detailed survey data is not available for the large majority of ruling party cases in the dataset, particularly those that came to power in the distant past.

Second, one party could have a spatial positioning advantage over all others. In an ideal world we would be able to capture this advantage through some kind of aggregate ideological score for each party—something akin to NOMINATE scores in the U.S. context—and measure the distance to the median voter in the electorate. Again, however, to the extent it would even be possible to develop these measures for all the cases in the sample, the effort entailed in collecting the appropriate data is currently prohibitive.

Third, one party could be better than others at coordinating in elections—that is, at converting votes into seats, and seats into executive control. One measure of this

advantage is the difference between a party's vote and seat share in elections. These data are considerably easier to assemble, and I have done so for most of the cases in the sample.

Ultimately, however, we are less concerned here with the individual effects of each kind of asymmetry than we are with the net size of the initial asymmetry. And this "distance" between the first and second parties in the party system should be reflected in two readily observable outcomes: the size of the winning party's vote share in the elections in which it came to power, and of its seat share, relative to the second-place party. Thus, I measure party system asymmetry in two ways. The first is the difference between the first and second-place parties in the lower house elections most nearly concurrent to the time the incumbent took office. The second is the difference between the first and second party's share of seats in the lower house for the same election. I was able to gather these data for most of the ruling party cases in the sample.

Stated more formally, the hypothesis is:

H3: High party system asymmetry, as measured by both the difference in lower house vote and seat shares in the initial election, should be negatively associated with ruling party defeat.

Institutional Variables

In addition to party system asymmetry, I also developed several hypotheses about the modifying effects of institutions on ruling party survival. The primary focus was on

the different expected effects of presidential versus parliamentary regimes. From this discussion I derived two hypotheses. First,

H4: Ruling parties face different hazard rates in presidential and parliamentary regimes.

Second,

H5: The method of executive selection has a conditional effect on ruling party defeat: the larger the initial party system asymmetry, the greater the presidential hazard rate relative to the parliamentary one.

In the previous chapter I also devoted considerable space to the effects of the electoral system and of local elected offices on ruling party survival. In the end, I derived no general prediction about the effect of different kinds of electoral systems; I therefore do not include any electoral system feature in the analysis in this chapter. I did, however, predict that autonomous, directly-elected local offices would increase the likelihood of ruling party defeat. Unfortunately, I have not been able to locate data for more than a handful of regimes in the dataset on this question; thus, I will have to leave its evaluation for future research.

Control Variables

In addition to the hypotheses derived from my theory, we also need to control for several other potentially important confounding effects on ruling party survival.

Foremost among these is economic growth: there is a strongly positive association between short-term economic performance and incumbent reelection prospects (Duch and Stevenson 2008). Thus, I expect positive economic growth in the previous year to improve ruling party survival. The measure I use for economic performance is taken from the Penn World Tables version 7.0.

Another theoretically important factor is the length of the executive's term—intuitively, parties are at greatest risk of defeat at election time. Thus, I expect a longer executive term to be negatively associated with ruling party defeat. Term length data were taken from the Database of Political Indicators (DPI); for those pre-1975 regimes, I coded term length using the same sources as for party turnover.

In addition, some presidential executives are subject to term limits, while others are not. By contrast, parliamentary executives are almost never subject to formal term limits. As I argued in Chapter 4, the fact that a battle for succession takes place in the run-up to an election is a serious disadvantage of presidentialism from a ruling party's perspective. This disadvantage is lessened if the incumbent runs again, however. Thus, ruling parties should be at greater risk of defeat if the incumbent is term-limited out of office. Term limits data I coded myself from the Nohlen et al. handbooks.

The age of the regime also is an important variable. I argued in Chapter 3 that in regimes with an advantaged first-mover party, there should be a “natural” process of evolution toward a more symmetric party system, such that older regimes should be less

likely to see long periods of one-party rule than newer regimes. In that case, age should be positively associated with defeat. Alternatively, the age of regime measure may pick up the effect of party system instability in new ECRs where there is no advantaged first-mover, in which case age should be negatively associated with defeat. The age variable used in the analysis was constructed by taking the natural log of the number of years since the regime began. For regimes that pre-date the first party in the sample, I used the year that multi-party elections were first held, if after 1900. For ECRs that began even earlier, I counted the age beginning in 1900.

Finally, in the process of coding ruling party turnover, I found that semi-presidential regimes appeared to have different patterns of turnover: in several cases, turnover of the premier occurred much more frequently than did either the legislature or the presidency. To control for a possible semi-presidential effect, then, I created a dummy recording whether the premier could be removed by either the president or the legislature—that is, had two principals.

Descriptive Statistics for the Long-Form Dataset

A few comments are in order about the construction of the dataset used in the analysis. First, because several of the variables vary over time, I generated a long-form version of the dataset in which each observation is a month in the life of a ruling party rather than a ruling party case. I then added in the time-varying covariates (TVCs), including economic growth, size of the state, Polity, and regime age. Note that the term limit variable can also vary over time for the same ruling party; for instance, the Republican president Ronald Reagan faced a term limit in his second term, from

February 1985 to January 1989, but not in his first, from February 1981 to January 1985. Thus, the term limit dummy is a 1 for Reagan starting in February 1985, then reverts to 0 beginning with George H. W. Bush's presidency in February 1989.

Second, for a significant number of ruling party cases, I was unable to locate data on one or more of these variables for at least part of the time in which they held office. I dealt with this issue in one of two ways. When data was missing for only the first part of a ruling party's period in power, I dropped these observations and adjusted the recorded entry into the dataset to correspond with the first month for which data was available—that is, these cases are treated as left-truncated. Thus, the month in which the party takes office is recorded, followed by a period in which it is at risk but not observed, and then another period in which it is. As with the parties taking power before 1950, identifying separate origin and entry points allows the statistical model to incorporate these cases into the model without biasing the estimates. However, when data was missing for the entire time period, I dropped the case entirely. As a consequence, the number of ruling parties included in the parameterized analysis is smaller than in the survival estimates shown in Chapter 2.

Third, I estimate parameterized models using two separate measures of party system asymmetry: the vote-share difference and the seat-share difference between the ruling party and its nearest competitor. In a handful of cases, party seat-share data was available but vote-share data was not. In response, I generated two slightly different versions of the dataset: one containing only observations for which vote-share data was available, and a slightly larger one containing all observations for which seat-share data

was available. Thus, the descriptive statistics for the independent variables are slightly different depending on the measure of party system asymmetry used.

Table 5.1 shows the descriptive statistics for these variables calculated separately for the two datasets.

Table 5.1. Independent Variable Descriptive Statistics				
	<i>Vote-share dataset</i>		<i>Seat-share dataset</i>	
	M	SD	M	SD
Vote-share difference	0.366	0.482		
Seat-share difference			0.234	0.311
Polity	7.211	3.990	7.107	4.082
Age of democracy (ln)	2.878	1.032	2.860	1.036
Term length (years)	4.568	0.735	4.583	0.742
Semi-presidential	0.096	0.295	0.097	0.295
State share of economy	10.211	5.018	10.241	5.059
GDP growth rate	0.026	0.053	0.026	0.053
No. of parties				
Duration (months)				

5.2. Method

In the analysis in Chapter 2, I estimated non-parametric survivor functions, meaning the estimates did not control for any potential confounding variables. Here I build on that analysis by employing duration models, which allow me to estimate how survival patterns may differ across regime type while controlling for other, non-institutional factors. The test of the primary hypothesis—that advantaged ruling parties

face lower long-term survival prospects in presidential than in parliamentary regimes—is not straightforward. Instead of a claim about the average time in power in the two regime types, it is centrally about a difference in the shapes of hazard rates that ruling parties face. As a consequence, the statistical model that I use must be able to estimate two possibly very different shapes of hazard rates with time.

In choosing a method of analysis for this problem, I follow the lead of Maeda and Nishikawa (2006), who examine the same question but for a much smaller set of ruling party cases in democratic regimes. Maeda and Nishikawa's analysis is particularly interesting and relevant to this study for two reasons. First, they make several arguments parallel to mine about the different hazard rates of ruling parties under presidential and parliamentary regimes. Second, they make a compelling case for the estimation of a flexible parametric, or Royston-Parmar, model rather than the much more widely-used Cox proportional hazard model. As they note, both Cox and other survival models such as the Weibull require the researcher to assume proportional hazard rates across different groups of cases. In other words, if we want to use a Cox model to compare the different hazard rates across presidential and parliamentary regimes, we have to assume that they are proportional to one another over the entire period of observations. But it is precisely this assumption that I have hypothesized does *not* hold; instead, my theory implies that the hazard rates may have wildly different forms over time in the two executive types. Thus, we have strong theoretical reasons to avoid the Cox model if there is a viable alternative. The Cox model has the additional disadvantage of not estimating a baseline hazard function—a particular problem if the shape of the hazard function is central to one's analysis.

Fortunately, Royston (2001) and Parmar have developed an attractive alternative to the Cox model. The Royston-Parmar approach differs from the Cox and other standard parametric approaches in that, rather than assuming a particular distribution function a priori, it uses splines to model the baseline hazard function. The observed time period is divided into several segments and the estimated hazard rates for each segment are smoothed so that they connect with one another to produce a continuous curve. As a result, the shape of the overall hazard can be estimated more flexibly, and its potential time-dependency can be more readily observed. Box-Steffensmeier and Jones (2004: 88-89) note that for research questions primarily involving time dependency in the data, the Royston-Parmar approach “offers an attractive middle ground between the standard parametric models and the Cox model.” Hence, a flexible parametric model employing splines appears to be the most suitable method for this study.

5.3. Analysis and Results

One challenge of the Royston-Parmar approach is that one has to select both the parent distribution (either log cumulative hazard or log cumulative odds) and the number of splines in the model. These decisions can substantially change the estimation results and shape of the estimated hazard function, so model selection is a tricky issue. Royston and Lambert (2011: 74-78) suggest making this determination by comparing the Akaike information criterion, or AIC, across several different spline functions. By this rule, the log-odds function with five degrees of freedom (four knots) appeared to be the best fit.

The estimates presented in Table 5.2 are for this model with 10 variables:

executive type (*execleg*), lower house vote difference (*lvsdif*), political openness (*polity*), regime age (*lnregmage*), first mover party (*firstmover*), term limits (*tlim2*), term length (*term2*), semi-presidentialism (*semipres*), state share of the economy (*kg*), and previous year's growth rate (*grch*). In addition, I include an interaction term between lower house vote difference and executive type (*execleg_lhvdif*). I also ran the model specified several other ways. Of the most relevance is the effect of lower house seat differential—Model 2 in Table 5.2—which produced similar results to the vote-share differential.

Several of the coefficient estimates are statistically and substantively significant. First, the *polity* variable is positive and significant; as expected, an increase in regime openness is associated with a higher risk of ruling party defeat. State share of the economy, however, is not significantly different from zero. Although this result does not provide support for a resource theory of ruling party survival, the measure is also a proxy and quite a bit removed from the real factor of interest—use of state resources for partisan ends. Thus, we should be careful not to view this as evidence *against* a resource explanation. A more conclusive test of this hypothesis will have to wait until better measures of resources than this are available.

Table 5.2. Estimated Effects on the Ruling Party Hazard Rate by Executive Type				
	Model 1 (vote-share)		Model 2 (seat-share)	
	Coefficient	SE	Coefficient	SE
Presidentialism	-1.279	.383**	-1.364	0.349**
Presidentialism x vote-share diff	2.305	1.162*		
Vote-share difference	-6.446	0.680**		
Presidentialism x seat-share diff			2.052	0.751**
Seat-share difference			-4.164	.448**
Polity	0.136	0.041**	0.127	.039**
Age of regime	-0.670	0.115**	-0.612	.113**
First-mover	-1.476	0.293**	-1.434	.292**
Term limits	0.812	0.338*	0.727	.323*
Length of term	-0.217	0.137	-0.121	0.134
Semi-presidential	0.603	0.237*	0.599	.237*
State share of economy	0.003	0.0171	0.0005	0.0167
Economic growth	-5.197	1.905**	-3.652	1.781*
Spline 1 x presidentialism	0.811	0.464	0.479	0.349
Spline 1 constant	2.634	0.143**	2.569	.139**
Spline 2 x presidentialism	-0.558	0.441	-0.582	0.318
Spline 2 constant	-0.007	0.116	-0.027	0.114
Spline 3 x presidentialism	-0.180	0.267	-0.077	0.212
Spline 3 constant	-0.091	0.0811	-0.08	0.079
Spline 4 x presidentialism	0.056	0.1377	0.06	0.125
Spline 4 constant	0.092	0.0545	0.113	0.054*
Spline 5 x presidentialism	-0.013	-0.0895	-0.094	0.083
Spline 5 constant	-0.110	0.0357**	-0.0102	0.0357
Parent distribution	odds		odds	
Number of knots	4		4	
N	34,754		35,617	
Log likelihood	-479.21		-502.93	

** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$

Both age of regime and first mover are negative and significant, as well, indicating that both are associated with a lower risk of defeat. The first mover result is expected and consistent with the finding in Chapter 2 that these parties lasted longer on average than non-first movers. The negative effect of regime age is more surprising; it suggests that, overall, ruling party duration increases as the regime gets older, consistent

with the view that party system consolidation lowers the risk to incumbents. Term limits also, not surprisingly, appear to be positively associated with ruling party defeat, while economic growth is negatively associated, as expected.

Most relevant for the central argument of this study, however, is the effect of presidentialism. The coefficient on presidentialism is negative and significant, indicating that parties in presidential regimes, all else equal, last longer in office than those in parliamentary ones. At first glance, this result appears to be at odds with my central hypothesis. Remember, however, that this coefficient estimates the effect of institutional type on the hazard rate over the entire observation period in the sample, and for the *average* ruling party. When we look at *advantaged* ruling parties instead, as measured by vote-share differential, the picture is very different. The coefficient on the interaction term of presidentialism with vote-share differential is positive and large, suggesting that moving from a parliamentary to a presidential system greatly *increases* the risk of defeat when party system asymmetry is high. Put differently, although ruling parties are *on average* at greater risk of defeat in parliamentarism, this difference declines as party system asymmetry rises. Moreover, this effect is substantively the same for both the vote-share (Model 1) and seat-share (Model 2) measures of asymmetry.

Because the Royston-Parmar model determines the baseline hazard function by smoothing the splines, however, we cannot easily tell from these estimates how the effect of executive varies over time. Instead, the difference is best interpreted graphically. Figure 5.1 shows the estimated out-of-sample prediction of presidential and parliamentary hazard rates when party system asymmetry and all the control variables are set at their means.

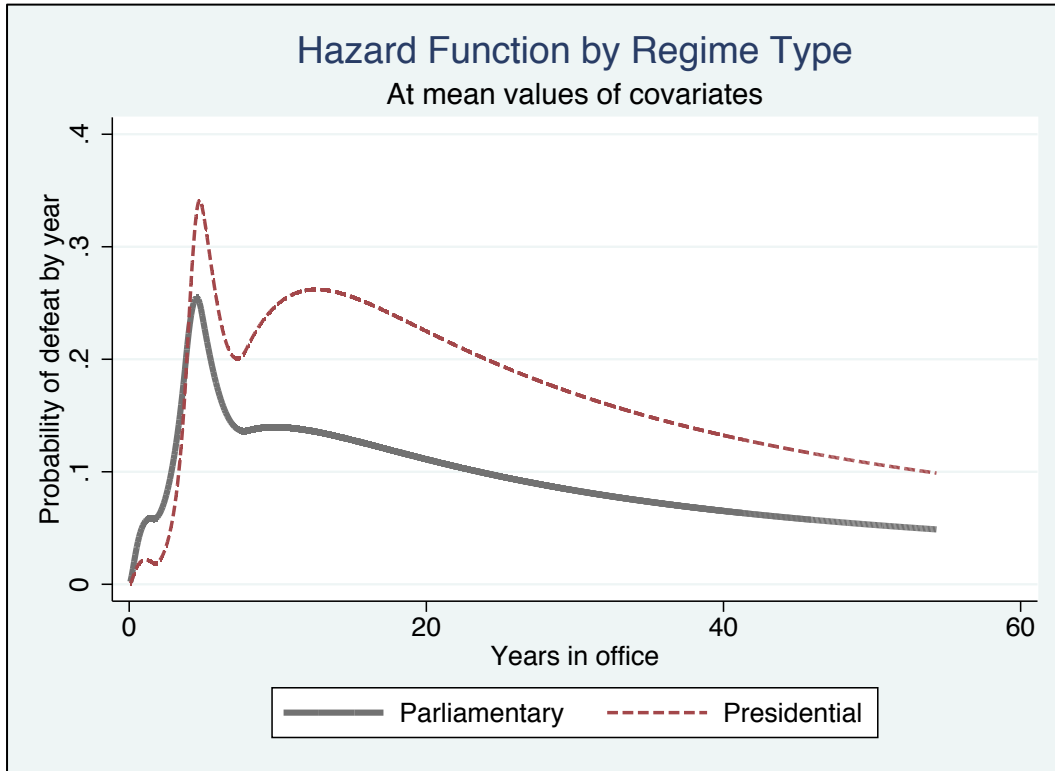


FIGURE 5.1. ESTIMATED HAZARD RATES OF PRESIDENTIAL VERSUS PARLIAMENTARY RULING PARTIES AT MEAN VALUES OF COVARIATES

For both presidential and parliamentary ruling parties, the hazard appears to be largest in the first 8-10 years at risk of electoral defeat. Initially, parliamentary hazard rates are higher than presidential ones—not surprising in light of the fact that most prime ministers can be removed by parliament before their term is up, while most presidents cannot. The early spike in hazard rates occurs at between 4 and 5 years in office and has a clear substantive implication: given that executive terms are typically 4 or 5 years, parties are at greatest risk when their terms end and they have to face the voters in an election. After this initial spike, however, the hazard rates diverge significantly. Parliamentary parties face a declining hazard rate after about 8 years in office, while presidential parties face a rising rate once again. At 20 years, the difference is stark:

about 22 percent of all parties still in office in presidential regimes are predicted to lose power, while only about 11 percent of parties in parliamentary regimes will.

What we are most interested in, however, is not just how ruling party hazard rates differ between executive types but how this effect of executive itself changes with party system asymmetry. To examine this interactive effect, then, we need to estimate the hazard rates for the two executive types across the range of party system asymmetry. In Figure 5.2 I have plotted the hazard rates under various conditions: at low (two standard deviations below the mean), medium (at the mean) and high (two standard deviations above the mean) levels of party system asymmetry, measured by vote-share differential, and by non-first-mover parties (top row) and first-mover parties (bottom row).

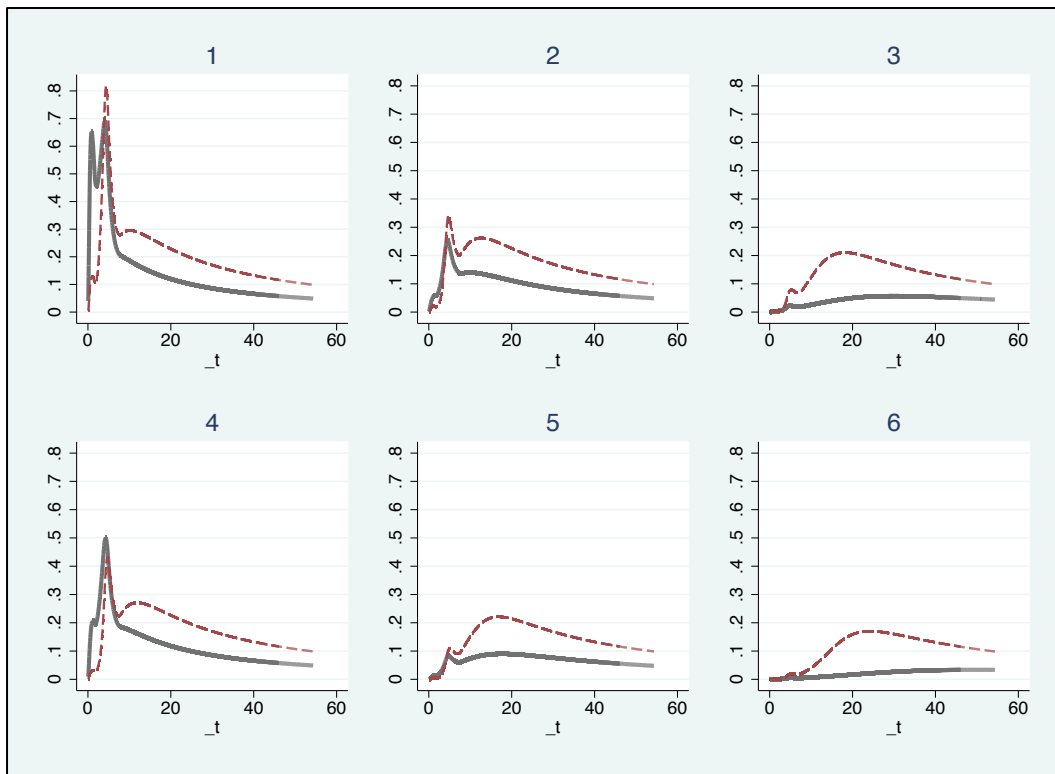


FIGURE 5.2. ESTIMATED HAZARD RATES AT LOW, MEDIUM, AND HIGH LEVELS OF PARTY SYSTEM ASYMMETRY, FOR NON-FIRST-MOVER (TOP) AND FIRST-MOVER PARTIES (BOTTOM)

The patterns in Figure 5.2 provide strong support for my central hypothesis. As expected, the hazard rates facing ruling parties in both executive types decline as party system asymmetry increases: they are quite high early on when asymmetry is low, with ruling parties in both regime types facing hazards as high as 50 percent or more at about 4 years in office. Moving from the graphs on the right to those in the center and on the left shows that increases in asymmetry lower hazard rates for both executive types. Importantly, however, the difference between presidential and parliamentary hazard rates grows. The difference occurs regardless of whether the ruling party is a first-mover or not, as well, although begin a first-mover does result in lower hazard rates for both executive types.

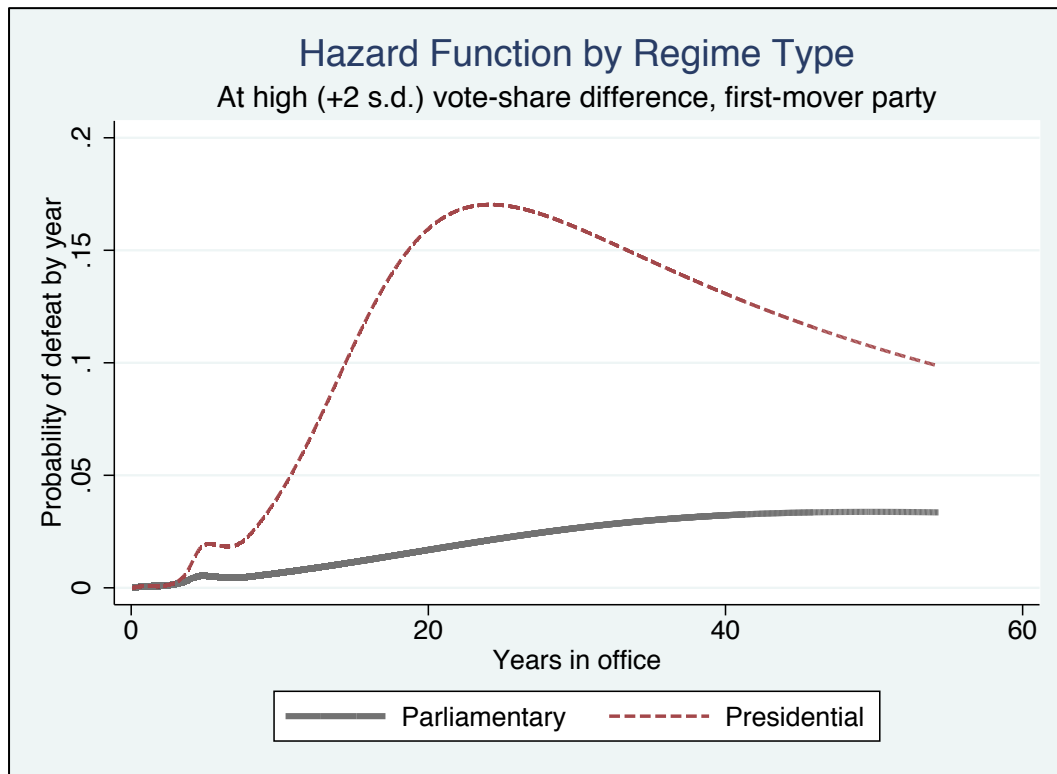


FIGURE 5.3. ESTIMATED HAZARD RATES AT HIGH PARTY SYSTEM ASYMMETRY FOR FIRST-MOVER PARTIES

Figure 5.3 shows the most extreme case, where the vote-differential is two standard deviations above the mean and the ruling party is a first-mover. In this case, the gap between presidential and parliamentary hazard rates is quite large: at 20 years in office, a party in a parliamentary regime has only about a 2 percent chance of defeat in a given year, while a party in a presidential regime has about a 16 percent chance, or about *eight times as great!* Thus, we have additional evidence that the marginal effect on survival of switching regime type is largest when vote-share differential is greatest.

To check the robustness of these findings, I have also estimated the hazard rates using the seat-share differential instead of vote-share. The corresponding hazard rates are shown in Figure 5.4. As before, the panels on the left show the hazard rates when the seat-share differential is two standard deviations below the mean for non-first-mover (top) and first-mover (bottom) parties; the panels in the center show the effect at the mean seat-share differential; and the panels on the right show the effect at two standard deviations above the mean. The picture is substantively the same: a rising seat-share differential leads to a greater effect of regime type on ruling party hazard rates. When the seat-share differential is highest, ruling parties are much more likely to survive in a parliamentary than a presidential regime.

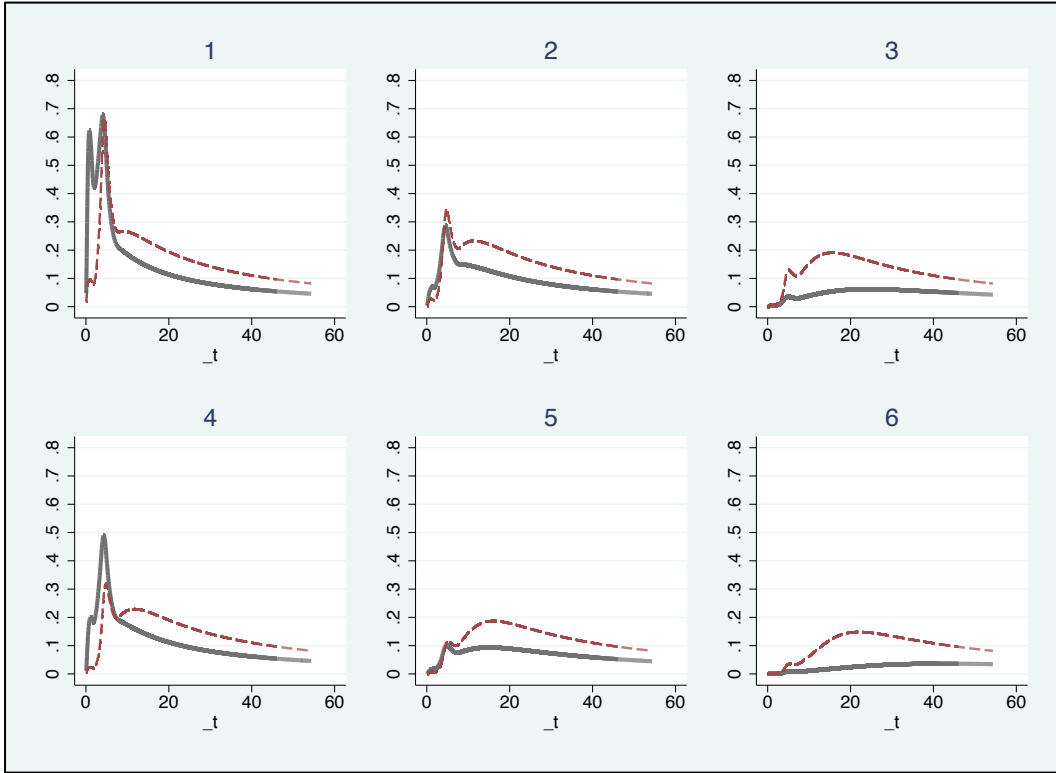


FIGURE 5.4. HAZARD RATES BY REGIME TYPE USING SEAT-SHARE DIFFERENCE

5.4. Discussion

The results of the estimation and graphics provide substantial support for the central hypotheses of the theory. As expected, repression and economic growth both improve ruling party survival, while term limits reduce it. More surprisingly, the age of the regime is positively associated with survival—ruling parties last longer in office the older the regime is, all else equal. The key findings of this chapter, however, are twofold. First, party system asymmetry, measured either as vote-share or seat-share differential, has a large and positive effect on ruling party survival. Second, that benefit is substantially reduced in presidential regimes relative to parliamentary ones. And it is most reduced at the highest level of party system asymmetry. Thus, advantaged ruling

parties face significantly lower hazard rates in parliamentary regimes, and therefore are more likely to be extraordinarily long-lived, than are advantaged ruling parties in presidential regimes. Above all, these results indicate that the type of executive selection matters a great deal for ruling party survival.

The central finding about the better survival prospects of advantaged ruling parties in parliamentary regimes has some far-reaching implications for our interpretation of instances of advantaged party defeat. If presidential regimes feature inherently higher-variance contests for the executive than do parliamentary regimes, then in cases such as Taiwan and Mexico where advantaged parties lost, we may be attributing their defeat to the wrong causes. Indeed, that is precisely what I will argue in the next chapter: the KMT in Taiwan remained well-positioned to win most elections on the island, but its advantaged were substantially blunted in the 2000 presidential contest. Rather than being a consequence of declining partisan resources, the KMT's defeat was first and foremost the result of adopting direct election of the president.

CHAPTER 6

THE CASE OF TAIWAN: WHY THE KUOMINTANG LOST

鷸蚌相爭，漁翁得利。

In the fight between the snipe and the clam, it is the fisherman who benefits.

--Chinese proverb

In the preceding chapters I developed a general theory of dominant party origins and decline and presented cross-national data on ruling party survival in support of the argument. In this chapter I focus on the events leading up to a specific instance of ruling party defeat, of the Chinese Nationalist Party (*Kuomintang* 國民黨, or KMT) in Taiwan's 2000 presidential election.

My analysis of the party system in Taiwan has two objectives. The first is to show the theory in action—to “put some meat on the bones” of the argument by illustrating how the mechanisms of party system asymmetry affect ruling party survival in a real-world example. The second is to reinterpret a case that contradicts existing theory. The defeat of the KMT, I will argue, is not well explained by a resource theory of dominant party decline. Instead, part of the reason the KMT lost power is that the primary cleavage in Taiwanese politics was, and remains, over national identity, which reduced party system asymmetry despite the KMT's enormous resource advantage. The other part of the explanation is that Taiwan's institutions, particularly the direct election

of the executive, made the KMT more vulnerable to defeat. The adoption of a presidential system inadvertently increased the likelihood of an opposition victory; without that single transformation, the KMT would probably not have lost control of the central government.

6.1. The Puzzle: Why Did the KMT Lose Power?

Taiwan's recent political history presents a puzzle. At the beginning of the 1990s, the leadership of the KMT voluntarily adopted contested elections for the national legislature and presidency, creating for the first time the possibility that it could lose power through the ballot box. There were few indications at the time that the party's control would be seriously threatened by these reforms: it had extensive experience running in and winning competitive races for local offices, it remained popular among the electorate, and the nascent political opposition was poorly equipped to mount an electoral challenge to its rule. And in fact, the KMT initially performed quite well in these elections, winning nearly 60 percent of the seats in the first legislative elections in 1992 and capturing 54 percent of the vote in a four-way race for the presidency in 1996. The party appeared to have managed the gradual liberalization of Taiwan's political system without seriously threatening its grasp on power.⁵⁰

Yet this string of electoral successes ended quite suddenly in the 2000 presidential election. In the months leading up to that election, the KMT's base was divided by a

⁵⁰ For a representative contemporary view, see Chu Yun-han's optimistic take on the KMT's survival prospects (1999a).

renegade campaign led by a former KMT member, James Soong (宋楚瑜). Soong's run as an independent created the opportunity for Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁), the nominee of the opposition Democratic Progressive Party (*Minjindang* 民進黨 , or DPP), to win the race with less than 40 percent of the total vote. Surprisingly, the KMT's official nominee and sitting vice president Lien Chan (連戰) came in a distant third place behind both Chen and Soong, obtaining less than 25 percent. Thus, despite having won clear majorities in all previous national elections, the KMT for the first time in its 55-year history on Taiwan suddenly found itself in opposition, no longer in control of the central government. It was a watershed moment in Taiwanese politics.

The KMT's Puzzling Defeat in Comparative Perspective

What makes the KMT's defeat all the more striking is that, according to our existing theories of dominant party systems, it should not have happened. While in many other cases the "stunning" electoral defeats of former autocrats were predictable to just about everybody except the autocrats themselves⁵¹, in Taiwan the incumbent regime remained quite formidable through the 1990s. The ruling KMT had presided over several decades of stellar economic growth, which had transformed Taiwan's economy from a small, poor, mainly agricultural one into an industrial powerhouse. It had a proven track record of winning competitive elections at the local level, having contested county offices since the 1950s. The party had a vast patronage machine and financial resources that dwarfed any of its opponents, enjoyed a dominant advantage in the island's print and

⁵¹ See, for instance, Samuel Huntington's (1991) entertaining descriptions of electoral defeats of a long list of autocrats in *The Third Wave*.

broadcast media, and maintained firm control over the civil service, the military, and the security services. At the time of its defeat in 2000, it remained one of the most formidable ruling parties in the world.

Given these advantages, the comparative literature on dominant party systems leads us to expect that the KMT should have persisted in office indefinitely. Most existing scholarship on dominant party durability has focused on the resource advantages these parties enjoy. As Ken Greene notes, dominant parties such as the KMT typically have access to several types of “illicit public resources they can use for partisan purposes,” including the diversion of funds from state-owned (and in the KMT’s case, party-owned) enterprises and directly from the public budget; the use of public-sector jobs for patronage and spoils; the manipulation of state laws to solicit kickbacks and illegal campaign contributions from businesses and to prevent those businesses from funding opposition challengers; and the use of state administrative resources to support party mobilization of voters (2006: 9; see also Aldrich et al. n.d.).

Taken together, these resource advantages enable dominant parties to stay in power, by discouraging party elites from defecting (Magaloni 2006), providing ruling party candidates with financial advantages and clientelist networks of supporters to tap during election campaigns (Scheiner 2006), and forcing opposition parties to rely on more ideologically driven activists, to run more extreme candidates, and ultimately to develop as “niche” parties consistently unable to appeal to the median voter in the electorate (Greene 2007).

Yet in attempting to show the KMT’s defeat as a consequence of declining resource advantages, scholars have had to resort to extraordinary manipulations of the

historical evidence. Greene, for instance, argues valiantly but unconvincingly that it was the decline in state-owned enterprise production from seven to five percent of Taiwan's GDP over the 1990s that fatally weakened the KMT. The result, he argues, was that "[t]his reduction deprived the federal [*sic*] government of substantial assets and large numbers of jobs that could have been used for patronage purposes." In addition,

"the KMT's businesses came under more pressure for efficiency gains to compete in increasingly open domestic markets and internationally. As a result, these firms were transformed from protected organizations that could be milked as cash cows for patronage into competitive ones in which managers more strictly controlled budgets" (2007: 266).

Together with a permissive electoral system, Greene argues, the erosion of this resource advantage allowed the opposition parties to attract more pragmatic, office-seeking candidates, which in turn made them more competitive in head-to-head competition with the KMT. The split in the incumbent party, and the DPP's victory in the 2000 election, he suggests, are therefore attributable primarily to declining dominant party resources.

This argument should strike knowledgeable observers of Taiwan's recent political development as quite odd. In truth, explanations like these that center on resource asymmetries (Greene), economic crisis (Magaloni), and the breakdown of clientelist networks (Scheiner) are difficult to reconcile with the KMT's defeat. During its 50 years in power, the party governed Taiwan as one of the most effective single-party regimes the world has ever seen. Unlike dominant parties in Mexico and Japan, the party had an impressive, sustained track record of economic stewardship right up through the 2000 election: starting from a poor, predominantly agricultural base in the 1950s, Taiwan's economy had rapidly been transformed into one of the richest and most advanced in Asia,

and its economy continued to grow at a robust 6-8 percent clip for most of the 1990s (Chu 1999b). It also weathered the Asian Financial Crisis better than just about any other country in the region; by the 2000 presidential election the island's economy had rebounded to its pre-crisis growth rates (Chu 1999b; Nobel and Ravenhill 2000).

Likewise, the argument that the KMT's party machine was suffering from "resource decline" seems highly questionable. It remained one of the richest political parties in the world at the time of its defeat, with a net worth in 1998 estimated at about US \$5 billion, and evidence that the party drew liberally on those resources to support its candidates in elections at all levels of government was not hard to find (e.g. Wang Chin-shou 2004). The KMT's enormous private wealth dwarfed the DPP, which remained close to broke and often unable to pay party worker salaries throughout the 1990s (Arrigo 1994: 163-66; Rigger 2001: 67-69; Chu Yun-han 2001: 94, fn. 11; Randall and Svasand 2002: 18; Chin Ko-lin 2003: 134-139). The KMT also controlled a majority in the legislature through the 2000 presidential election, which allowed it to manipulate public budgets and government agencies for political purposes (Arrigo 1994; Luor and Wann 1999). The party maintained its advantage in the media, as well: while the number of opposition-oriented radio stations and newspapers grew rapidly after martial law was lifted in 1987, KMT- or central government-owned print and broadcast media still possessed a qualitative advantage in funding, readership, and range throughout the 1990s (Liu Kuang-hua 1999).

In addition, the KMT had considerable residual support in the electorate for its managerial know-how: its export-oriented industrialization policies had delivered near-double-digit economic growth for a generation, and by the early 1980s the island's level

of inequality was the lowest of any developing country in the world (Chu 1999a: 68). The party had accumulated vast experience in its campaigns for local elected office and built up a formidable and entrenched electoral machine, which benefited from several large captive blocks of supporters including most military veterans and their families, government employees, and workers in the large number of state-owned and operated enterprises (Bosco 1994; Chang Kuang-ming 1995; Lin Jih-wen 1996; Liu I-chou 1999). As a consequence, from the time opposition parties were first allowed in 1986 through its defeat in the 2000 presidential election, the KMT competed on an electoral playing field tilted heavily in its favor.

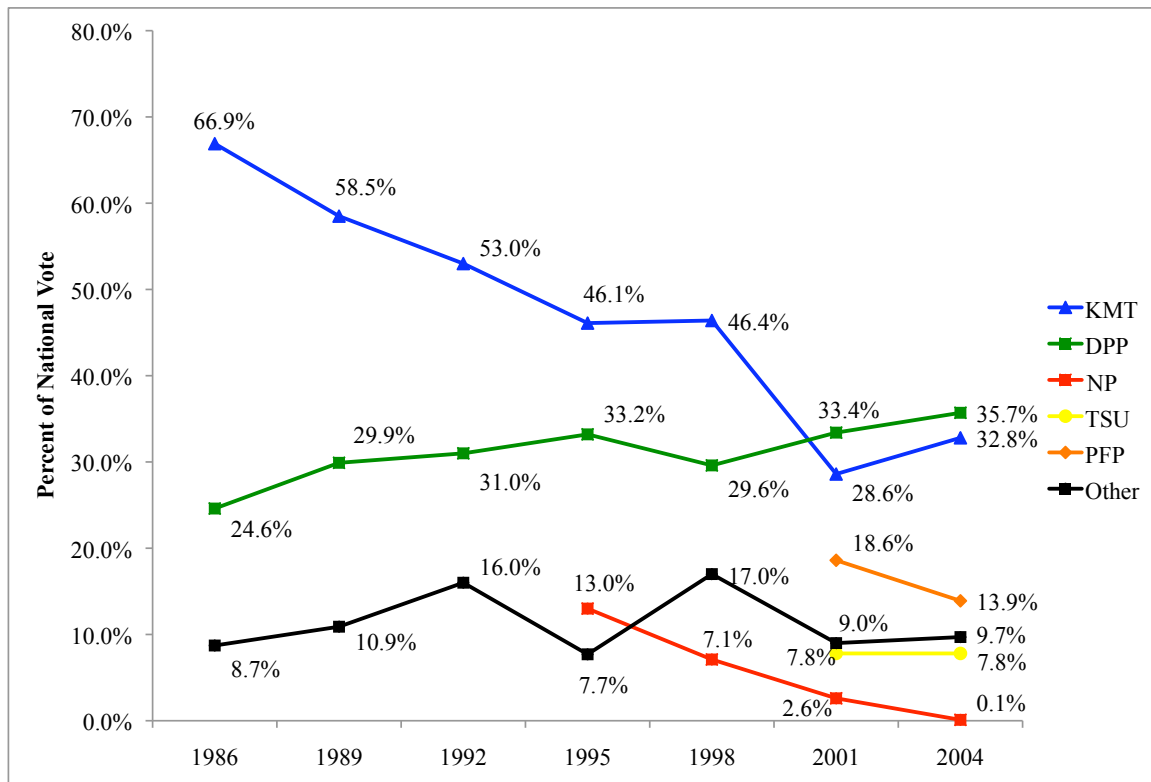


FIGURE 6.1. VOTE SHARE OF TAIWANESE POLITICAL PARTIES IN LEGISLATIVE YUAN ELECTIONS, 1986-2004

One can get a good sense of the electoral consequences of these advantages by looking at the KMT's vote share compared to its competitors over this time period. Figure 6.1 shows the shares of each party beginning with the first multi-party election in 1986, for supplementary seats to the Legislative Yuan, switching to fully-contested elections in 1992, and continuing on through the post-2000 split of the KMT. In all five multi-party elections held before it lost the presidency, the KMT outdistanced the DPP by no less than 13 percent of the vote. If the KMT really was suffering from resource decline, it does not appear to have seriously threatened the party's majority in legislative elections: in 1998 it won 46.6 percent of the vote, while the DPP was a distant second with 29.6 percent, and the party retained nearly 55 percent of the seats to the DPP's 31 percent, as Figure 6.2 shows. Only *after* it lost the presidency in 2000, and with it much of its remaining direct control of patronage and state resources, did the KMT's vote and seat shares share fall below the DPP's.

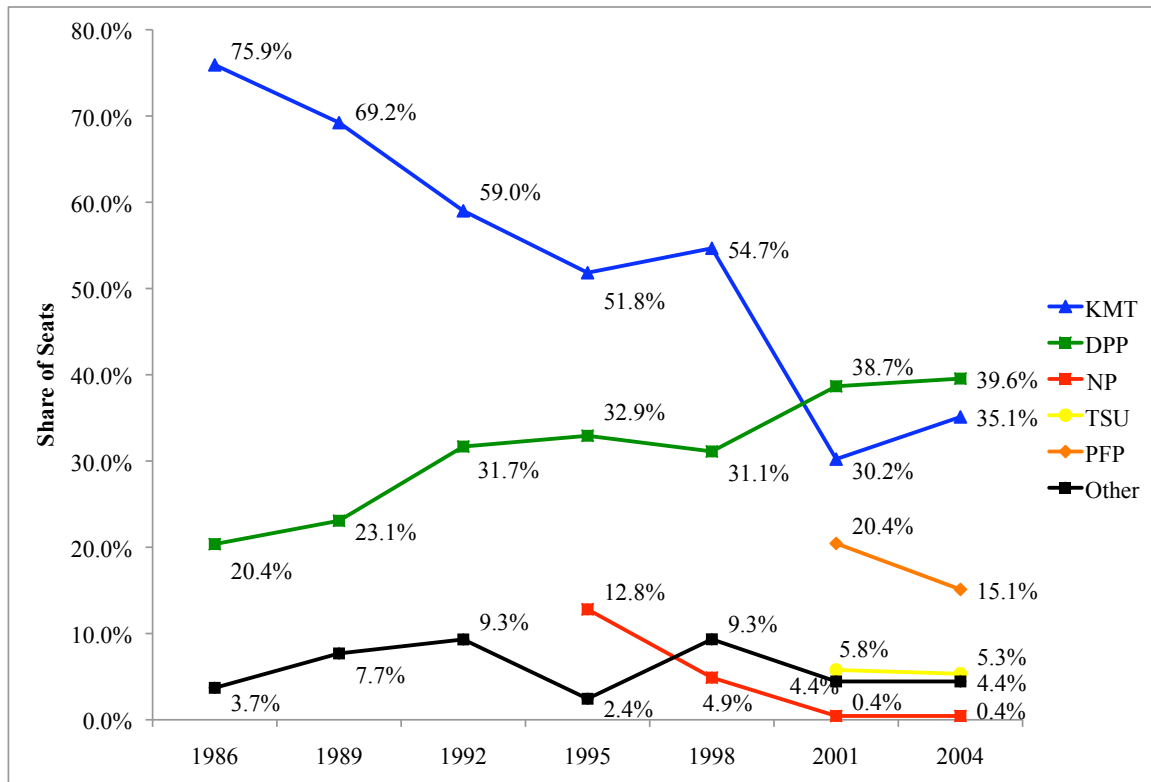


FIGURE 6.2. SEAT SHARE OF TAIWANESE PARTIES IN LEGISLATIVE YUAN ELECTIONS, 1986-2004

As a whole, existing scholarship on dominant party systems is unable to account for the defeat of the KMT in Taiwan. The leading explanations of dominant party persistence and defeat all point toward the same conclusion: given the size of the resource advantages it continued to possess over its competitors in the party system, the KMT simply should not have lost power when it did.

Idiosyncratic Explanations: Was the KMT Simply Unlucky?

A different set of explanations of the KMT's loss in 2000—that it resulted simply from bad luck, or other idiosyncratic reasons—is more common among observers in the media or academia in Taiwan. One account is that the defection from the KMT of James

Soong in the 2000 presidential race, and the presence of Chen Shui-bian, an unusually well-liked and well-qualified DPP opponent, was an improbable worst-case scenario for the ruling party (e.g. Niou and Paolino 2003). Variations on this theme highlight the idiosyncratic personality conflict between the incumbent president Lee Teng-hui (李登輝) and Soong, Lee's poor choice of a successor in Lien Chan, or the fact that Chen Shui-bian had a compelling poor-local-boy-makes-good personal story that appealed to many Taiwanese voters (e.g. Diamond 2001). Another favorite explanation is that Lee Teng-hui was a "wolf in sheep's clothing" who secretly harbored nativist sympathies and intentionally sabotaged the ruling party from within (e.g. Lin and Tedards 2003).

These kinds of "just-so" stories can tell us something about why the particular events of the 2000 presidential campaign played out the way they did. But in focusing on factors peculiar to a specific time and place and on the highly idiosyncratic personalities involved—in effect, explaining the outcome as a consequence of random events—these stories completely ignore any deeper systematic causal processes that might be at work. And it will be my contention that there *were* systematic factors that made an opposition victory not so far-fetched under the conditions present in Taiwan's political system in the 1990s. In my view, Lee Teng-hui played an important role in the ultimate defeat of the KMT, but for a quite different reason: he attempted to concentrate power in his own hands at the expense of others in the party, and in so doing pushed for direct election of the president. Put differently, we need not assume exceptional cunning or nefarious intentions of Lee; knowing that he was a politician, and therefore probably most concerned with preserving his own influence and weakening his rivals, is all we need to support an institutional explanation of the KMT's defeat.

The Argument in Brief

The theory and data presented in the previous chapters suggests that we should look beyond resources to understand what caused the KMT's defeat. In the following sections, I present an alternative, non-resource-based explanation. It has two parts.

First, the presence of a highly salience national identity cleavage both aided the partisan development of the DPP and generated new strains within the KMT elite as it attempted to retain support from both mainlander and native-born Taiwanese voters. As a consequence, ideological disputes over the national identity question eroded discipline within the ruling party, and it suffered a series of defections and unsanctioned campaigns by renegade party members throughout the 1990s, *even as its resource advantage remained largely unchanged*. In the language of my theory, both partisanship and coordination asymmetry declined markedly as a result of the party system's realignment around what I call the "national question."

Second, these defections from the KMT proved much more damaging to the party in winner-take-all, plurality rule executive races than in the multi-member legislative district races. In many county and city executive elections in the 1990s, renegade candidates siphoned enough support away from the KMT's official nominees to throw many elections to the DPP. By contrast, the DPP performed much worse in Taiwan's multi-member legislative races, never coming close at the national level to capturing a majority in either the Legislative Yuan or the National Assembly. The 2000 presidential election followed this pattern: a unified DPP faced off against a divided KMT and triumphed despite winning less than 40 percent of the vote. Put simply, the combination

of a highly salient national identity cleavage with a presidential rather than parliamentary regime led most directly to KMT defeat, not a decline in party resources.

6.2. The Primacy of the National Identity Question in Taiwan's Party System

The Changing Nature of Identity Categories in Taiwanese Politics

Since shortly after the transition to a multi-party regime in the late 1980s, the fundamental cleavage in Taiwan's party system has been one of *identity* (Cheng and Hsu 1996). The politics of identity in Taiwan is complex, involving at least three distinct categories of divisions.

The first concerns an *ethnic consciousness* (*zuqun yishi* 族群意識) based on spoken language (Wang Fu-chang 1998). Categorized on this dimension, Taiwan's inhabitants fall into two groups based on pre-1949 provincial origin. About 13 percent are Mainlanders (*waishengren* 外省人) who came to Taiwan with the Nationalist government on the heels of its defeat on the mainland in 1949, or whose parents did, and who hailed from every other Chinese province. The rest are "native" Taiwanese (*benshengren* 本省人), whose parents were born and raised on Taiwan. *Benshengren* can be further divided into three separate ethnicities based on spoken language, with Hoklo speakers (*fulaoren* 福佬人) the single largest group at about 70 percent of the population; Hakka speakers (*kejiaren* 客家人) at about 15 percent; and various tribes of Aborigines (*yuanzhumin* 原住民) together making up about two percent of the island's

population.⁵² The Hoklo-Hakka division extends back to the earliest days of Han Chinese settlement on the island, as does Han Chinese conflict with Aborigines, the original inhabitants of Taiwan. After 1949, differences between the mainlander émigrés and the “native” population partially superseded these older ethnic cleavages. Thus, at the time martial law was lifted in July 1987, provincial origin (*shengji* 省籍) was the most salient identity marker in Taiwanese social and political life.⁵³

The second division concerns a *national identity* (*guojia rentong* 國家認同) based on whether the inhabitants of the island see themselves as part of a larger, “Chinese” nation that also encompasses the People’s Republic of China; as members of “Taiwan,” a country and people distinct from “China”; or as “both Taiwanese and Chinese” (Chu and Lin 1996). We can get a sense of the breakdown among the population on this dimension by looking at public opinion polls. A version of this question has regularly been asked in surveys since 1992 by the Election Study Center at National Cheng Chi University in Taipei, providing us with a time series of nearly two decades.⁵⁴ As Figure 6.3 shows, there has been a gradual but significant shift in identity defined this way: the percentage of respondents identifying as exclusively “Chinese” dropped from a high of 26.2 percent in 1994 to 12.1 percent 1999, three months before the election that ended the KMT’s reign; by 2010 it had fallen to a negligible 3.8 percent. Those identifying simply as “Taiwanese” rose from 17.6 percent to 52.7 percent over the same period. As these data show, the 1990s were a period of gradual but steady

⁵² The population of the small islands of Jinmen and Matsu, under ROC control but lying just offshore the mainland, are counted as “mainlanders” in these figures.

⁵³ For a good introduction to ethnicity in Taiwan and a guide to further sources, see Rigger (2006).

⁵⁴ The Chinese-language version of the survey question and available responses are listed in the appendix.

strengthening of a Taiwanese national identity at the expense of a Chinese one. Today, more than half the Taiwanese population identifies simply as “Taiwanese,” while most of the rest identify as “both Taiwanese and Chinese.”

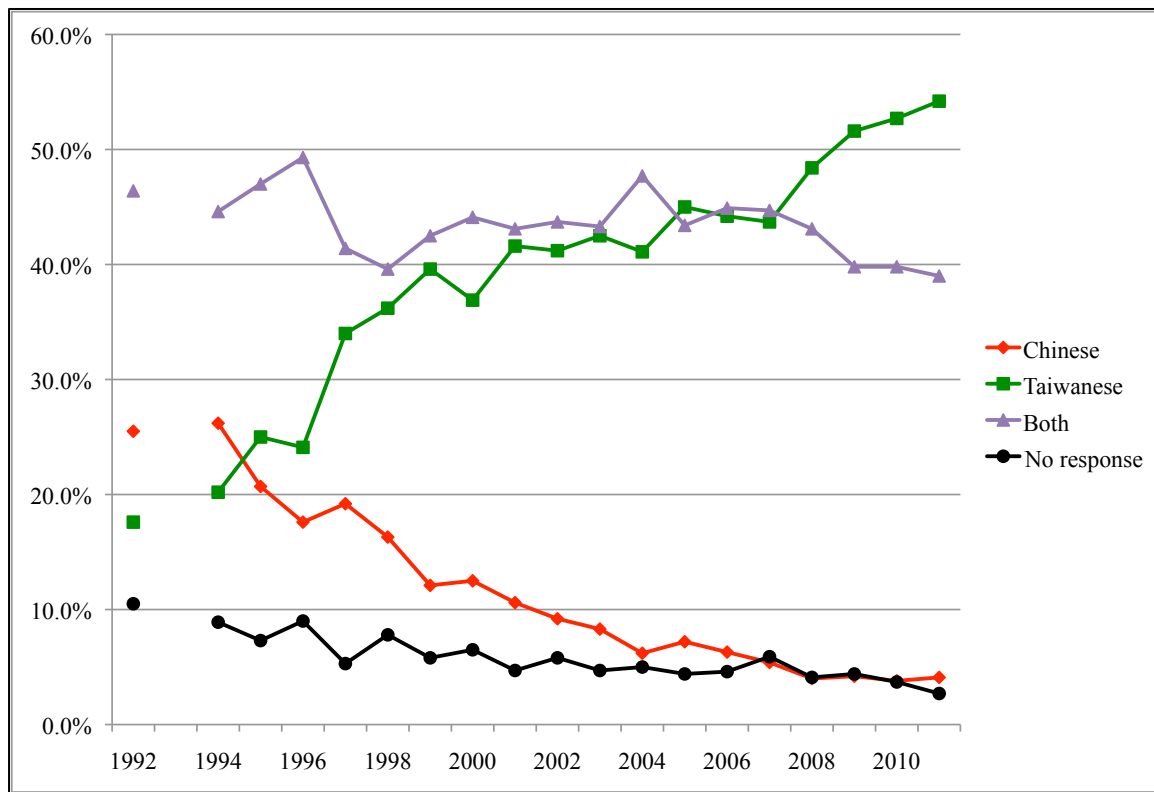


FIGURE 6.3. CHANGES IN TAIWANESE/CHINESE IDENTITY, 1992 – 2011
 (SOURCE: NATIONAL CHENG CHI UNIVERSITY, ELECTION STUDY CENTER)

The third division is related to both ethnic and national identity but concerns a concrete *policy question*: should Taiwan move toward formal independence, seek unification with the mainland, or retain the status quo? (Chu Yun-han 2004; Wu Nai-teh 2005) As with national identity, we have a long time series of responses to public opinion surveys on this issue, shown in Figure 6.4. Here the trends are less apparent.

Support for the “status quo,” either “forever” or until an indefinite point in the future, has always been the most popular position on this “independence-unification” question. Nevertheless, support for independence, either “immediately” or at some point in the future remained significant in the 1990s, drawing between about 11 and 18 percent of all respondents. Similarly, support for unification, either “immediately” or at some point in the future, drew a consistent 18-20 percent of all respondents. The main shift that appears to have occurred in these views is *after* the 2000 election: the proportions have flipped, so that support for independence has risen to between 20-23 percent, while support for unification has fallen to about 10 percent.

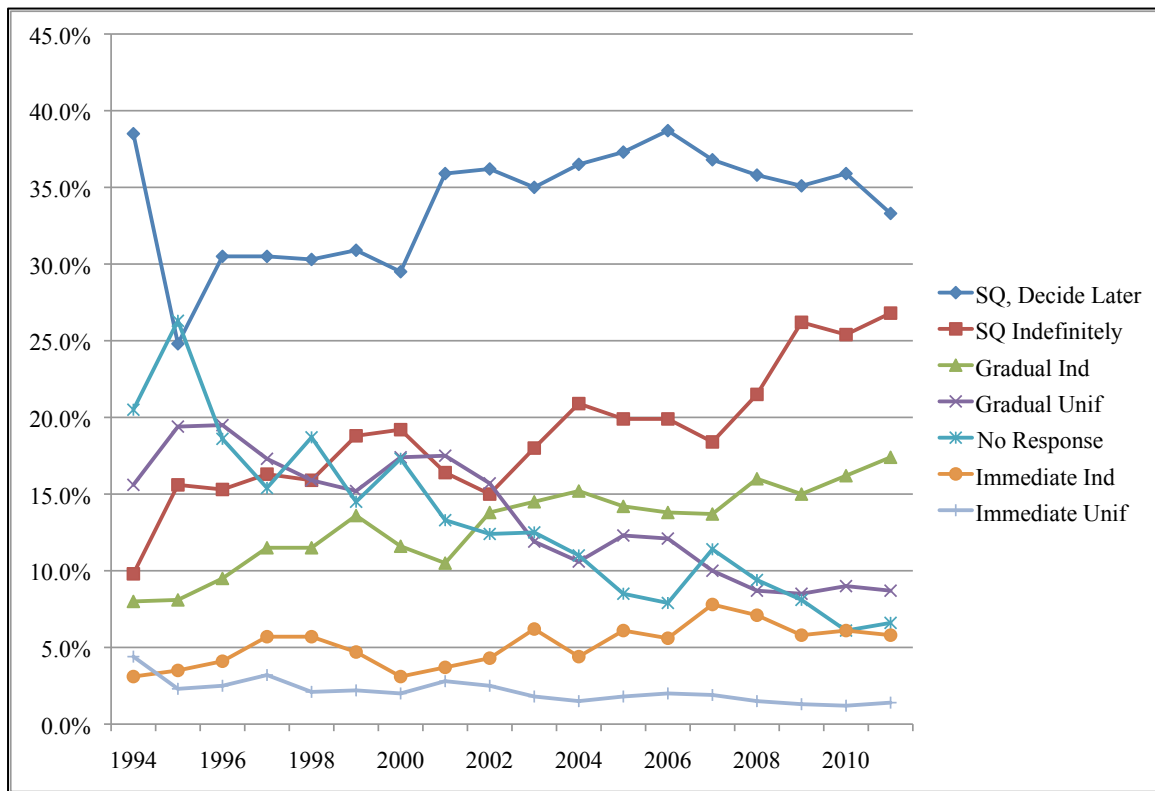


FIGURE 6.4. CHANGING VIEWS ON THE INDEPENDENCE-UNIFICATION ISSUE, 1992-2011
 (SOURCE: NATIONAL CHENG CHI UNIVERSITY, ELECTION STUDY CENTER)

Taken together, these three categories of identity make up what I will call the “national question” in Taiwan. The national question has been the subject of a great deal of interest and debate by Taiwanese social scientists over the last 20 years (e.g. Hu and Chu 1992; Chu and Lin 1996; Yu Ching-hsin 1996; Liu I-chou 1998; Hsu Yung-ming 1999; Wu Yu-shan 2001; Wang Fu-chang 2004; Chang and Wang 2005; Wu Nai-teh 2005; Wu Rwei-Ren 2007). Although there are some continuing points of disagreement about concepts and methods, the bulk of quantitative research on this topic supports two general conclusions about the salience and change in meaning of the national question. First, the categories of ethnic consciousness, national identity, and preference for independence or unification are actually quite distinct: answers to one are only weakly correlated with answers to others (Liu I-chou 1998). Second, these correlations have weakened significantly over time: directly following the end of martial law, the associations between ethnicity, national identity and opinions about Taiwan’s political future were strong; by the late 1990s, however, they were much less strong (Wu Yu-shan 2001), in part because of generational change in the electorate (Wu Nai-teh 1999). Thus, over the last 25 years, the meaning of the “national question” has shifted from the first and second kinds of divisions to, increasingly, divisions over the third. Hence, the “identity” question that drives politics today is mainly about Taiwan’s relations with the PRC (cf. Rigger 2006).

The Origins and Evolution of the “National Question”

Regardless of whether it is framed in ethnic, national, or policy terms, the national question has been so central to the past 30 years of Taiwanese politics that it is worth

considering in more detail how this cleavage came to dominate all others. The issue of what constitutes the “nation” to which the inhabitants of Taiwan belong remains contentious today, but during the martial law era (1949-1987), in which the KMT was the sole legal political party on the island, the official answer was simple: everyone in Taiwan was unambiguously “Chinese.” The Republic of China (ROC), as the official name of the regime on the island implies, also claimed to be the rightful government of all of China, not just Taiwan and the handful of offshore islands that it actually controlled; suggesting otherwise was considered tantamount to treason. Messages to that effect were delivered through the state media, public education, and during mandatory military service (Bullard 1997).

Nevertheless, the social and political differences between *waishengren* and *benshengren*, especially in the two decades directly following the 1949 defeat, were stark, and reinforced by a wide range of policies that in practice favored mainlanders. For instance, the Nationalist government required teachers and civil servants to speak good Mandarin as a condition of their employment. But educated native Taiwanese who might have been expected to fill those positions had come of age when the island was still a Japanese colony⁵⁵; most spoke Taiwanese (*taiyu* 台語, also know as *minnanhua* 閩南話) or Hakka (*kejiahua* 客家話) as their native tongue and had learned to read, write, and speak Japanese rather than Mandarin in school (Roy 2003: 94-96; Sandel 2003). As

⁵⁵ Taiwan was ceded to Japan in 1895 as part of the Treaty of Shimonoseki, which ended the first Sino-Japanese War. It remained a Japanese possession until the end of World War II, when, following the terms of the Cairo Declaration, representatives of the Nationalist government under Chiang Kai-shek formally accepted the surrender of the senior Japanese commander in Taiwan and assumed control of the island.

a result, the Nationalist language policy ensured that positions on the public payroll initially went overwhelmingly to mainlanders (Jao and McKeever 2006).

In addition, a huge slice of the government budget (80 percent or more in some estimates) was allocated to the military, a sizeable share of which was directed toward social welfare programs—housing, health care, and old-age pensions—for military families and their dependents, most of whom, again, were mainlanders who had fled to Taiwan at the end of the civil war (Chan 1988; Ward et al. 1993; Wang Fang 1994). Admission to universities on the island included special quotas for students from each Chinese province, which led again to an anti-Taiwanese bias: because students from the Province of Taiwan far outnumbered those whose official registration was from all other provinces combined, admissions standards were significantly lower for children of mainlanders (Roy 2003: 96). Moreover, the regime’s ostensibly popularly-elected representatives in the Legislative Yuan, which functioned as the national legislature, and the National Assembly⁵⁶, which elected the president, were drawn from constituencies all over China, rather than chosen by the Taiwanese electorate. Because the regime only effectively controlled Taiwan and a few offshore islands, elections for the vast majority of seats in both bodies were suspended until the party-state could “retake the mainland”—a possibility so unlikely by the 1960s that it effectively granted their members life-long tenure.⁵⁷ Native Taiwanese were also barely represented in the

⁵⁶ An unusual body by comparative standards, the National Assembly combined the roles of an electoral college (to elect the president) and a constitutional assembly (to pass constitutional amendments). It had no role in the review or passage of ordinary legislation, however, and so should not be mistaken for an upper house of the legislature.

⁵⁷ These “10,000 year legislators,” as they were derisively called by opposition politicians, eventually became the focus of much criticism at the end of the 1980s, and were forced to retire by the end of 1991 as part of the transition to fully-contested elections.

KMT's Central Committee, and their numbers only grew slowly at lower levels of the party (Tien Hung-mao 1989: 78-80; Huang Teh-fu 1996).

Arguably as important to the later salience of the national question was the historical legacy of the KMT in the short period after Taiwan returned to Chinese control, but before the ROC's defeat on the mainland at the hands of the Communists. The KMT appointees assigned to take over Taiwan from the Japanese proved to be exceptionally corrupt and rapacious even by the dismal standards of the post-war period in Nationalist-controlled China, and they rapidly ran the island's economy into the ground. By 1947, economic and political grievances, exacerbated by linguistic and cultural differences, sparked an uprising by Taiwanese against the KMT regime. This rebellion, called the 2-28 Incident for the day it began, Feb. 28, 1947, lasted several weeks before it was brutally suppressed by military force, resulting in an estimated 10,000 - 30,000 deaths, including many members of the island's former political and economic elite. The legacy of 2-28 added to the sense of distrust of and hostility toward the KMT by many native Taiwanese in later eras, especially the generation old enough to have first-hand experience of the event (Edmonson 2002).

Strict authoritarian control by the party kept these grievances under wraps in Taiwan through the 1970s. But the death in 1975 of the KMT's long-time leader Chiang Kai-shek and the succession of his son Chiang Ching-kuo to the presidency coincided with a gradual loosening of the regime's security apparatus; the founding of the first opposition party, the DPP, in September 1986; and in July 1987 to the lifting of martial law, which had been in place since 1949.⁵⁸ Over the late 1980s the regime loosened

⁵⁸ A succinct review of this gradual transition is provided in Rubinstein (1999).

restrictions on freedom of the press and opposition campaigns as well. These changes opened the door for the first time to serious discussions about definitions of the national territory, symbols, and identity, the KMT's role in the darker periods of Taiwan's past, and the direction political reform should take.

Developments both within and outside Taiwan contributed to the increasing salience of the national question during this period. On the outside, the Republic of China had steadily lost official international recognition to the PRC throughout the 1960s and 70s, culminating in a vote of the United Nations General Assembly in 1971 to switch control of the China seat on the Security Council. Humiliated by the turn of events, the Republic of China withdrew from the United Nations entirely. Even the United States, the regime's staunchest ally, switched formal diplomatic relations to the PRC in January 1979, catching the Nationalist government in Taipei off guard and delivering another body blow to the regime's legitimacy. As a consequence, by the end of the 1980s the ROC's claim to be the rightful government of all of China appeared increasingly delusional, not least to many Taiwanese.

Domestically, the national question quickly moved to the center of debates over political reform. The institutions of the Republic of China were still structured to maintain the fiction that the regime was the rightful government of all of China—not just Taiwan. Thus, forcing the mainland representatives of the National Assembly and Legislative Yuan to retire, and replacing them with members elected from Taiwanese constituencies, inevitably raised questions about how far to “indigenize” (*bentuhua* 本土

化) the constitution, and they dominated debate in the National Affairs Conference, an extraordinary body convened by Lee Teng-hui in 1990 to discuss political reform.⁵⁹

In the end, the constitutional changes adopted during the subsequent decade downgraded the Taiwan Provincial Government, instituted direct elections for the mayors of Taipei and Kaohsiung, shortened the presidential term from six to four years, and introduced direct elections for that office as well. But they did not ultimately resolve the question of Taiwan's national status. To this day the regime on Taiwan retains the formal title of "Republic of China" and continues to operate under a constitution drawn up by the Nationalist regime in 1948 to govern all of mainland China, albeit now significantly amended. The ROC functions in practice as a fully independent state but without official diplomatic recognition from any but a handful of small, mostly poor countries in the developing world.

Events in the PRC itself have also led to a shift in the nature of the national question away from ethnic and national identity conflicts and toward the independence-unification issue. The bloody crackdown on student protestors in Tiananmen Square in June 1989 swung Taiwanese public opinion sharply against unification with the mainland and added to the salience of the issue. The idea of an independent Taiwanese nation-state was not only open for debate but also looked increasingly appealing: while tanks rolled through the streets of Beijing, electoral and political reform continued to move forward in Taipei (Hsieh and Niou 1996). Later, in the run-up to the 1996 presidential election, PRC leaders attempted to influence the outcome by calling on Taiwanese voters to reject pro-

⁵⁹ Reviews of the debates in the conference can be found in Feldman (1991: 22-47) and in Chao and Myers (1996: 196-215)

independence candidates and by deploying the military to hold war games near the island. Since then, Taiwan's political relations with the PRC have been rocky if not downright hostile, with Beijing consistently refusing to recognize the ROC as a separate political entity and insisting that Taiwan remains a province of the PRC—positions that have been rejected out of hand by all sitting administrations in Taipei. Most worryingly, Beijing has consistently threatened that a Taiwanese declaration of independence would be cause for war, and over the last decade the People's Liberation Army has built up a large military presence on the other side of the Taiwan Strait, including over a thousand ballistic missiles. At the same time, however, the cultural and economic exchanges between the two sides have steadily increased over the last two decades: Taiwan's economy has become closely intertwined with that of the mainland as its domestic export-oriented industries moved much of their production across the Strait, leaving mainly R&D at home. Thus, Taiwan's political future remains murky and unsettled (Niou 2004).

The National Question and the Party System

As ethnic and national identity cleavages have evolved into a division over the independence-unification issue, so has Taiwan's party system. To a remarkably consistent degree, the sharpest ideological difference between Taiwan's major political parties has been in their positions on the question of the regime's future (cf. Fell 2005: 85-128). Socioeconomic and urban-rural inequality, the proper role of the state in the economy, labor versus capital, state corruption, spending on social welfare versus defense: all these alternative cleavages have been subsumed under the independence-unification question: should Taiwan declare formal independence, move towards

unification with the PRC, or maintain the ambiguous “status quo?” (Hsieh and Niou 1996).

As a consequence, one can without much difficulty differentiate all significant parties in Taiwan’s party system over the last 25 years along this single policy dimension, as shown in Figure 6.5. At one end—let us call it the left, although without the usual, western political connotations of that term—are parties that advocate for the complete independence of Taiwan as a nation-state separate from China. Most members of these parties have been highly suspicious of any attempts to improve relations with the mainland and favor doing away with the “Republic of China” title and other trappings of the regime that link it to its mainland Chinese origins. The most extreme of these to win seats in the legislature was the Taiwan Independence Party (*Jianguodang* 建國黨 or TAIP), founded in 1996, although it proved short-lived as a meaningful political force. Since 2001, the Taiwan Solidarity Union (*Taiwan tuanjie lianmeng* 台灣團結聯盟 or TSU) has been the party furthest to this end of the political spectrum. At the other end fall parties that support a full union with China, even if it means joining the PRC under the “one country two systems” formula promoted by Beijing. In the early post-martial law period, only a fringe element in Taiwan supported a full merger with the PRC; the New Party subsequently emerged in the 1990s as the most “pro-China” of all the parties in Taiwan’s legislature, and it in turn was largely surpassed after 2000 by James Soong’s People First Party (*Qinmindang* 親民黨 or PFP).

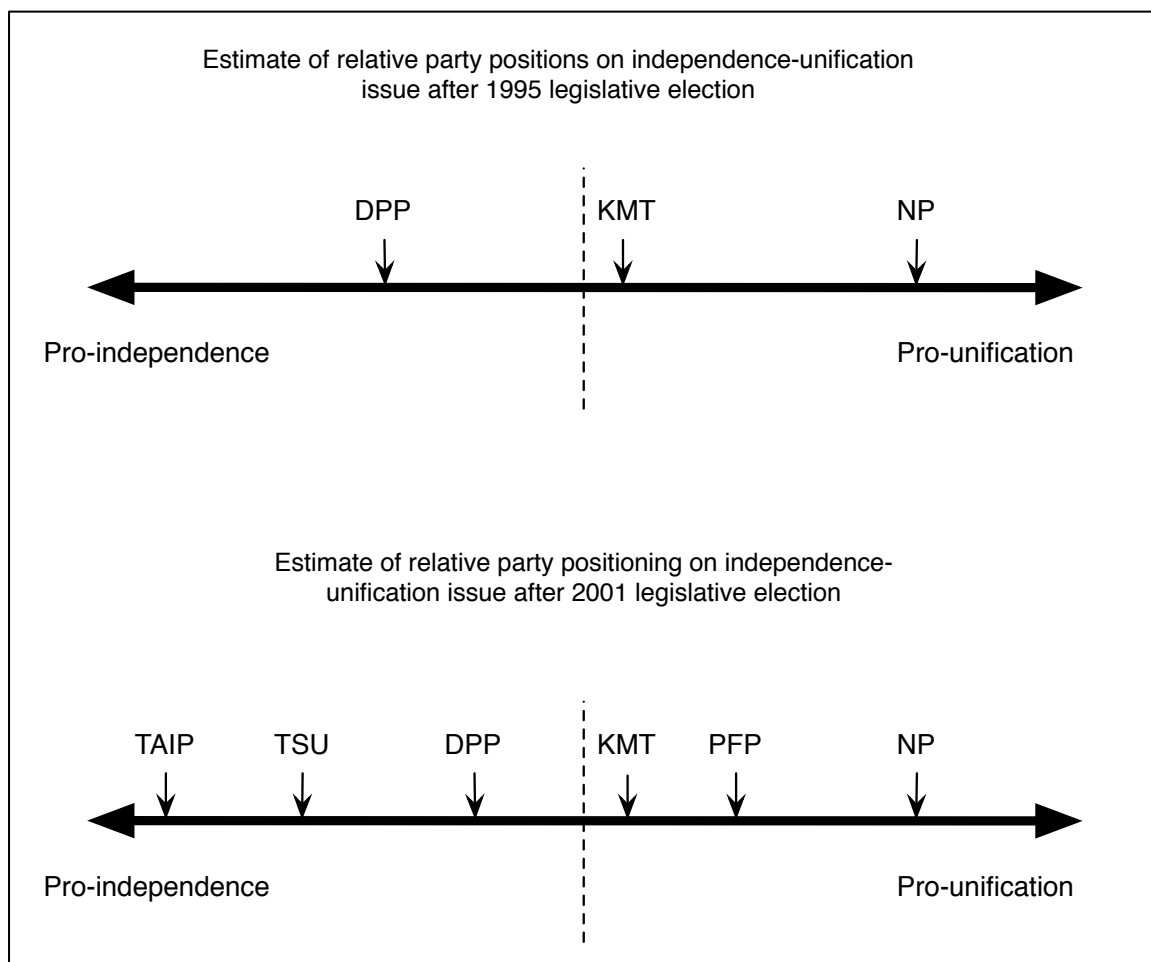


FIGURE 6.5. SPATIAL POSITIONING OF TAIWANESE POLITICAL PARTIES ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION

The two largest parties in Taiwanese politics have consistently fallen somewhere between the extremes of the TAIP and the NP, with the DPP located somewhere to the left of center and the KMT generally slightly to the right, their relative positions remaining much as they have been ever since the first fully contested legislative elections in 1992. In the early 1990s the DPP added a call for a referendum on independence to its party platform, although it later backed away from that position, and it has consistently favored a greater “Taiwanization” of government and education; as a consequence it has long been viewed with extreme suspicion in Beijing. In the 2000s, by contrast, the KMT has tended to favor closer cross-Strait ties while generally opposing attempts to change

the name or other symbols of the Republic of China. Rather ironically, given the party's historically bitter antagonism toward the Chinese Communist Party, the KMT is now viewed in a much more positive light in Beijing than is the DPP. For instance, the present-day KMT presidential administration of Ma Ying-jeou has been significantly more successful at striking cross-Strait agreements than the previous DPP administration under Chen Shui-bian, aided in part by the PRC's eagerness to take steps that weaken the more nativist, pro-independence parts of the Taiwanese electorate and to strengthen the KMT.

How the National Question Affected Party System Asymmetry

In the following sections, I argue that the emergence of the national question as the primary cleavage in Taiwanese politics had profound consequences for electoral competition between the parties. In the language of my theory, this development played out through all three mechanisms of party system asymmetry: partisanship, spatial positioning, and coordination. Taiwanese nationalism was a potent source of support for the DPP in its early days and helped cement the loyalty of a large bloc of voters to the party, lowering the asymmetry of partisanship. The salience of the national question also hampered the KMT's efforts to coordinate in the 1990s, and it played a key role in the defection of many mainlanders, previously the strongest supporters of the KMT, to the New Party.

At the same time, however, the subsequent rise of the independence-unification issue as the key cleavage *increased* the KMT's spatial positioning advantage. The departure of the most dogmatic defenders of the regime's one-China policy to the New

Party gave the KMT leadership more flexibility to craft a set of positions that appealed to the broad middle swath of Taiwanese voters. The DPP and NP, by contrast, were more constrained by the strong ideological views of their core membership; neither could as easily reposition toward the median voter. As a consequence, despite the considerable deterioration of its partisan and coordination advantages during the 1990s, the KMT remained both the largest party and the one at the center of the political spectrum, leaving it well-positioned to retain power into the next decade.

6.3. Partisanship: The Origins and Growth of DPP Support

The first mechanism through which the national question reshaped Taiwan's party system is *partisanship*. The KMT emerged from the martial law era with a huge partisan advantage over the DPP by any measure. For instance, the number of formal members of the party dwarfed that of the nascent DPP: in 1992, it had 2.6 million formal members—about 17 percent of the total population of Taiwan, while the DPP had only 20,000 (Lu Ya-li 1992: 133; Huang Teh-fu 1996: 115). More crucial to its electoral success, however, was its control over and support from factions at the local levels of Taiwanese politics—counties and cities, towns and villages, wards and neighborhoods. By managing the flow of state resources, the KMT had built up effective patron-client networks that delivered votes for the party's candidates at election time, and it had the organizational capacity to run candidates in all elections and to ensure that its supporters turned out to vote. By contrast, the DPP's geographic reach was initially limited—it fared best in a few anti-KMT strongholds and in cities such as Taipei with a relatively

wealthy, educated population, while it had little presence in the more rural, underdeveloped jurisdictions of the island. Nor did the party initially have much access to the local networks that were the lifeblood of local politics—it held virtually none of the local elected positions that these networks were based upon. As a result, the DPP began its existence at a stark partisan disadvantage to the KMT.

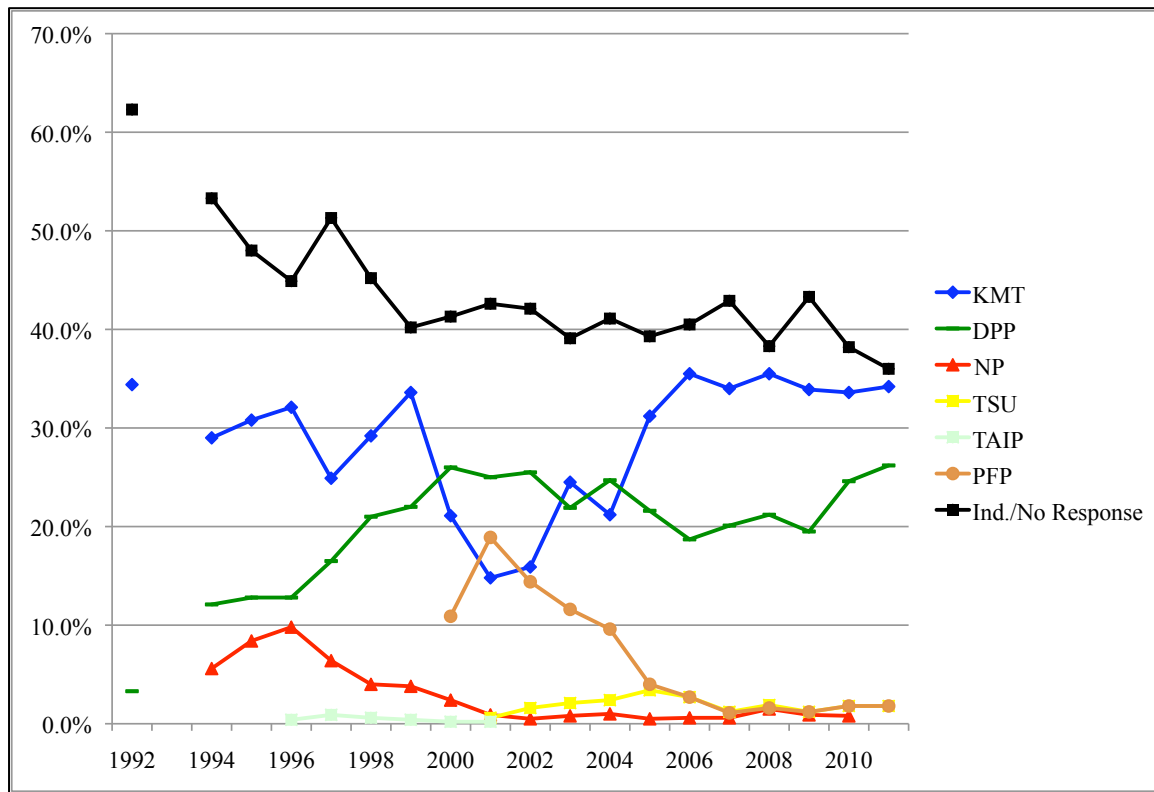


FIGURE 6.6. CHANGES IN TAIWANESE PARTISAN IDENTIFICATION, 1992 – 2011
(SOURCE: NATIONAL CHENG CHI UNIVERSITY, ELECTION STUDY CENTER)

Beginning from these towering partisan heights, however, the KMT’s relative advantage declined gradually over the next decade. While measures of partisan identification used in public opinion surveys do not capture the effect of the patronage system, and therefore greatly understate the KMT’s expected support, we can

nevertheless still get an idea of the shifting patterns over this time by looking at polling data. Figure 6.6 shows the trends in responses to the standard party ID question from 1992 through 2004.⁶⁰

For our purposes, two patterns stand out. First, respondents who identify with the KMT were far and away the largest group of partisans in the electorate over this entire period. Second, from the first data point in 1992 on, the leading alternative was the DPP; self-identified DPP partisans grew steadily larger as a share of the electorate. By contrast, the KMT's self-identified partisans did not increase noticeably before 2000, instead fluctuating between about 25 and 35 percent of the electorate. By the 2000 presidential election, then, the difference between DPP and KMT partisans had shrunk to 11.6 percent, from a high of 31.1 percent in 1992.

To account for declining party system asymmetry, then, we need to explain this steady increase in DPP partisanship. The answer I will argue for here is twofold: it is a consequence both of the party's origins in an older anti-KMT electoral coalition and its subsequent wholehearted embrace of the "Taiwanese" side of the national question. I address each part in turn.

Creating Opposition Partisans: Local Elections and the Origins of the DPP

Until the 1990s, no part of the central government of the ROC on Taiwan was subject to popular election. During the martial law era (1947-1987), the vast majority of Legislative Yuan and National Assembly members who had been elected in the late

⁶⁰ The exact wording of the survey question from which this measure is taken is listed in the appendix.

1940s ostensibly represented provinces in mainland China. Thus, after the KMT's defeat on the mainland and retreat to Taiwan, they did not have to face re-election as long as the ROC did not control their respective provinces—in effect giving them life-time tenure in office. Only Taiwan Province's representatives to the national government were directly elected from the island. Since the president of the ROC was formally chosen by the National Assembly, this position, too, was effectively removed from contestation. Beginning in 1969, the ROC did hold “supplementary” legislative elections every three years⁶¹ in Taiwanese constituencies to replace the increasing number of mainland representatives who were dying. The number of seats open to direct contestation increased each cycle, but even in the last election in 1989 less than a third of the legislature was filled through these elections.

By contrast, most local offices were subject to direct elections from the regime's earliest days on Taiwan. And despite the ban on the formation of opposition parties, non-KMT candidates could run as independents in elections for townships, counties and cities and for the Taiwan Provincial Assembly.⁶² Although KMT candidates won most of these elections, many were hotly contested, and independents occasionally scored upsets, especially in jurisdictions such as Kaohsiung County and Chiayi City that had been the site of large-scale violence during the 2-28 Incident and continued to harbor strong anti-KMT attitudes (Ting Tin-yu 1989).

⁶¹ Elections scheduled for the end of 1978 were suspended when the United States announced it was switching diplomatic recognition to the PRC; they were held two years later, in 1980.

⁶² The provincial governor remained a centrally-appointed (i.e. unelected) position until 1994. Mayors of the centrally-administered municipalities of Taipei (after 1964) and Kaohsiung (after 1978) were also appointed until 1994.

In fact, these elections played a central role in the early political development of the opposition movement on the island, and ultimately to the growth of DPP partisanship. The electoral origins of the opposition can be traced back to 1977, when non-KMT candidates for the first time attempted to coordinate their campaigns for local office with one another (Lu Ya-li 1992: 123-24). In order to skirt the ban on opposition parties, they referred to themselves collectively as the *Dangwai* (黨外), literally “outside the Party.”⁶³ *Dangwai* candidates won four of 21 county executive races, the most the KMT had ever lost in a single election cycle, and carried 30 percent of the vote island-wide. These victories added political value to the *Dangwai* label, establishing its candidates as a coordinated and viable alternative to the KMT and delivering a sizeable share of votes to those who held its endorsement.

The *Dangwai* received another major shot of publicity in December 1979 as a result of the Kaohsiung Incident, when a protest in the southern city of Kaohsiung led by a number of more radical members of the democracy movement turned violent. The KMT regime used the protests as a pretext to detain many of the leaders of the *Dangwai*, and their arrests and subsequent trials attracted widespread attention both in Taiwan and abroad. Those arrested were eventually all sentenced to prison, some for a decade or more, dealing a major short-term blow to the nascent opposition movement. But in a strategic sense, the crackdown backfired: the trials were reported prominently in the KMT-controlled press, and as a consequence the accused became household names in Taiwan. The lawyers on the defense team, as well as many of the spouses and relatives

⁶³ The history of the *Dangwai* movement and the early DPP is covered at some length in Huang Teh-fu (1992: 40-47); Kuo Jeng-liang (1998); Lin Chia-lung (1998); Rigger (2001: 15-36); and Cheng Ming-teh (2004: 61-108), among many other sources.

of those convicted, were able to use this fame to win political office in the early 1980s, and most ran as part of the *Dangwai* coalition. The groundswell of sympathy for those convicted in the Kaohsiung Incident thus added to the *Dangwai* label—anyone running under it was likely to attract a sizeable bloc of votes from those who disliked the KMT.

Nevertheless, the *Dangwai* was beset by deep differences among its membership that made it difficult to put forth a unified front against the KMT. It was first and foremost an electoral coalition, a loose alliance of candidates held together only by their shared antipathy toward the ruling party. Attempts to coordinate nominations across the *Dangwai*'s diverse and quarrelsome groups broke down completely in 1983, and *Dangwai* candidates performed poorly in the supplementary legislative elections held that year. Within the *Dangwai*, these disputes were reflected in the development of a number of separate factions. The most serious disagreements in the mid 1980s were between members of the Dangwai Editors and Writers Association (DEWA), who were sympathetic to Taiwanese independence and favored social movements over parliamentary participation to bring about political change, and members of the Dangwai Public Policy Research Association (DPPRA), who favored taking a moderate tack in negotiations with the KMT and preferred to focus on electoral contestation over mass mobilization (Rigger 2001: 24-25). The tensions between these two groups, as well as others, continued right up to the meeting at which the DPP was founded, in September 1986.

The opposition movement in Taiwan may well have ended up permanently divided between these moderate and radical camps, with dire consequences for the electoral viability of non-KMT candidates, were it not for some clever maneuvering by a

few leading figures in the *Dangwai*.⁶⁴ Over the spring and summer of 1986, working in secret, a handful of key people conceived a plan to found a new party at the upcoming *Dangwai* conference that September, which was organized to choose a set of candidates and a policy platform for the supplemental legislative elections scheduled for December 1986. With the full *Dangwai* membership assembled at the Grand Hotel in Taipei on September 28, 1986, a motion was made to establish a new political party, catching many of those in attendance, as well as the KMT authorities, by surprise. By the end of the day the motion had passed and the various elements in the *Dangwai* had been formally reconstituted as the Democratic Progressive Party—the first new political party to be successfully established since the beginning of martial law in 1949.⁶⁵

Founding the new party at this meeting had several advantages that proved crucial to its early success. Because the *Dangwai* was by this time an established electoral coalition and well-known among the electorate as the only island-wide organization of anti-KMT candidates, its endorsements were highly valued by most of the opposition movement's factions. As a result, representatives from all the major components of the *Dangwai* coalition were in attendance, even those from the more radical DEWA. Second, the timing maximized the likelihood that all the key components of the *Dangwai* would join the new party, rather than try to found their own—a critical challenge in a movement deeply divided along ideological and ethnic lines.⁶⁶ Once the proposal to

⁶⁴ Much of the following party history is drawn from Lin Chia-lung (1998: 209-253).

⁶⁵ There was at least one previous attempt to found a new political party in Taiwan, in 1960, but it was quickly snuffed out by the KMT.

⁶⁶ Although the DPP eventually developed a reputation as a Taiwanese nationalist party, at its founding its ranks included “quite a few” mainlanders, including prominent opposition figures Fei Hsi-ping, Fu Cheng and Lin Cheng-chieh (Cheng and Hsu 1996: 144).

found the party was announced and passed by delegates, the pressure on all factions in attendance to join in the name of opposition unity was intense. Indeed, as was probably anticipated by the conference planners, DEWA members at the founding meeting were initially reluctant to join the new party but found it too difficult to resist the calls for opposition unity and the face-to-face entreaties of their *Dangwai* colleagues (Lin Chia-lung 1998: 240, fn. 50).

The party name—Democratic Progressive Party—was also not an accident. Originally suggested by Frank Hsieh, one of the Kaohsiung Incident lawyers, it was chosen by the planners because it presented the most broadly palatable and ideologically neutral title possible. It deliberately did not contain the words “Taiwan” or “socialism” in an attempt to sidestep ethnic and ideological disputes between different *Dangwai* factions, which might have ruined attempts to unify under a single party banner (Lin Chia-lung 1998: 242).

Finally, the location of the party’s founding conference also aided the new party—it was held in the capital, Taipei, at one of the largest and most luxurious hotels in the city, with many reporters in attendance because of the *Dangwai* nomination meeting. Founding a new political party was a self-consciously provocative act and was illegal under the martial law provisions then still in effect. The new party was able to generate considerable publicity, so that most of the electorate quickly learned of the founding conference and of the united front the opposition movement presented there. It also raised the costs to the KMT leadership of a crackdown on the new party, which would take place in the capital, involve nearly all of the key figures of the opposition, and be widely reported in the international media. Thus, the founding of the DPP created a

major dilemma for the KMT—it could crack down and risk international condemnation (especially from the US, where opposition figures living in exile could be expected to put considerable pressure on Congress to act) and significant domestic unrest, or it could acquiesce to the de facto existence of a full-fledged opposition party. In the end, the ROC president and KMT leader Chiang Ching-kuo decided to tolerate the new party, and two weeks later in an interview with the *Washington Post*, he declared his intention to end martial law in the near future.

The way in which the DPP was founded gave it several enduring advantages over potential challenges to its claim to represent the pro-democratization, anti-KMT position in the political arena. First, it effectively brought over a significant chunk of the electorate by absorbing the *Dangwai* label. This fact gave the new party instant credibility—its candidates would be viable, and its endorsements therefore valuable to both voters and aspirants to elected office. Put differently, the DPP’s founding enabled it to lower voter uncertainty about what it stood for and to co-opt voters loyal to the *Dangwai* “brand”—in effect, instantly delivering a significant number of “partisan” supporters. Second, subsuming all major components of the fractious opposition movement under the party’s label, getting them all to agree on how the party should be governed, and convincing them to abide by party decisions about who to nominate to run in elections, all helped ensure that the DPP rather than some alternative became the single focal point on which voters sympathetic to the opposition would coordinate. Third, the party provided large economies of scale for the candidates that it endorsed—most of the electorate was aware of the new party, making it easier to disseminate information about the party’s positions and to rally support. Finally, the *Dangwai* had about a decade of

experience running coordinated campaigns under the SNTV electoral system, and as a result was clearly the only other coalition apart from the KMT able both to contest more than one seat in a district and to manage the substantial coordination problems that such competition entailed.

Thus, the DPP began its existence with a near-monopoly on the anti-KMT vote and a strong brand name, and it had unified nearly all the key elites in the opposition movement under its party banner. These initial advantages gave it a lead over alternatives in the battle for partisan supporters, a lead which it has retained ever since.

The Independence Issue Fuels Growth of DPP Partisanship

Despite the initial success of its founding, the DPP faced grave challenges in its early days. The party had no access to the resources of state that were the lifeblood of local power in Taiwan, and it could not hope to gain control of these resources as long as it remained firmly in the minority. It therefore needed to find some kind of alternative strategy to attract voters and mobilize activists. As the first opposition party, it initially emphasized a pro-democratization and pro-political reform platform, so that the post-martial law era party system began with party competition around a pro-regime versus anti-regime cleavage. Open discussion of Taiwanese independence, relations with the mainland, revision of the constitution and changes to the name of the regime and national symbols were all still forbidden by the regime itself. But as some components of the opposition pushed against the regime's limits on speech, with few repercussions, these issues gradually came to the fore, and the party's leaders and activists took on a more nativist tone (Cheng and Hsu 1996: 143-150).

Appealing to Taiwanese nationalism for votes came naturally to many members of the party, a number of whom had connections with exiles in the overseas Taiwanese independence movement. But it also made good strategic sense in at least two ways. First, the national question was a potent but cheap and readily available political weapon that enabled the DPP to attract and retain a significant segment of the electorate as core partisan supporters. Second, to the extent the party could polarize the electorate around divisions between *benshengren* and mainlanders, it would put the KMT at a distinct disadvantage, given the demographics of the electorate. The onus would be on the KMT, rather than the DPP, to maintain or increase their appeal to *benshengren* voters while still preventing the defection of their core mainlander constituencies. The DPP, by contrast, could potentially win elections without a single mainlander vote, as long as they attracted enough support from *benshengren* (cf. Chu and Lin 1996; Wang Fu-chang 2004).

Hence, the DPP's candidates and leadership increasingly adopted nationalist rhetoric in an attempt to brand themselves as the party for "native Taiwanese." This shift culminated in 1991 in the adoption of a clause in the party platform calling for a national referendum on independence—a provocative position to take, since the PRC had long held that this would be a *casus belli*. The party's open embrace of Taiwanese independence had two long-term consequences. On the positive side, it cemented the support of a core group of 15-20 percent of the electorate for whom formal Taiwanese independence was a cherished goal. The share of DPP partisans grew markedly after this period, as Figure 6.6 shows. On the negative side, however, it also saddled the DPP with a position that was not popular among the electorate at large, creating a drag on its electoral prospects that it fought for at least the next decade. In legislative elections in

the 1990s, the party's vote share topped out at about 30 percent, and even in local executive races, where it tended to fare better, it never came close to winning a majority during the decade.

Thus, the shift of the national question from one about national identity to one more narrowly focused on the independence-unification question was a double-edged sword for the DPP: it solidified a partisan core at the same time that it seriously limited its potential to win a majority in the long term. As I discuss in the next section, in contrast to the KMT, the DPP's share of the vote remained significantly lower, and through much of the 1990s the party appeared to be constrained by a ceiling on the potential support it could attract from the electorate.

6.4. Spatial Positioning: How the KMT Captured the Center

The National Question Splits the KMT

In contrast to its partisan advantage, the KMT began the multi-party era in Taiwan in a precarious position on the national question. The ruling party faced a dilemma posed by the mathematics of ethnicity on the island: its core mainlander supporters made up less than 15 percent of the total electorate, while *benshengren* were more than 85 percent. Even as it enjoyed the support of most Hakkas and Aborigines, giving it another 15 percent, simple demographics required that it obtain a sizeable share of the Hoklo vote as well to win competitive elections in many parts of the island (Huang Teh-fu 1996: 113).

Given this unfavorable demographic picture, the KMT leadership under Lee Teng-hui began to soften the party's stance on the national question, moving it closer to

the center of the emerging identity cleavage and seeking to improve its appeal to *benshengren*. Thus, when, for example, the DPP raised the pressure for a more explicit acknowledgement of Taiwan's special historical experience, the KMT responded by adopting educational reforms to increase emphasis on Taiwanese rather than mainland Chinese history, geography, and culture (Corcuff 2002). Lee's background as the first native Taiwanese to become head of the KMT and president of the ROC also gave the party much-needed credibility on the national question and allowed it to make this shift toward the emerging political center. In addition, the KMT's "indigenization" policy of recruiting and promoting more *benshengren* in the party, originally set in motion by Chiang Ching-kuo, had by the early 1990s substantially transformed the party's ethnic makeup. Whereas in 1969 only about 40 percent of all KMT members were native Taiwanese, by 1992 nearly 70 percent were. A later but similar shift in ethnic composition occurred at higher levels of the party: of the members of the executive cabinet, nearly 70 percent were mainlanders in 1978, dropping to 55 percent in 1993; and in the KMT's Central Standing Committee, the percentage dropped from 77 percent in 1976 to 43 percent in 1993 (Huang Teh-fu 1996: 114-117). Thus, the rise of native Taiwanese to positions of power throughout the KMT party hierarchy substantially weakened the link between ethnic identity and party identification by the early 1990s (Chu and Lin 1996).

Nevertheless, while the "Taiwanization" of the KMT and its moderation on the national question improved its electoral prospects, they also generated serious tensions within the party. Many of the remaining older generation of mainlanders in the party were fiercely opposed to the democratic reforms pushed by the DPP, and they decried the

party's shifting stances on national symbols and cross-Strait policies. By 1990, these differences had crystallized into two factions within the party elite. On one side was the Mainstream faction (*zhuliu paixi* 主流派系) consisting of Lee Teng-hui and his mostly *benshengren* allies. On the other was the Non-Mainstream faction (*feizhuliu paixi* 非主流派系), led by premier Hau Pei-tsun (郝柏村) and most of the conservative group of mainlanders. Over the next two years, Lee and the Mainstream faction gradually outmaneuvered and weakened the conservatives' influence in the party; a clear sign of their declining fortunes was the resignation of Hau in January 1993, who was forced to step down, ostensibly to take responsibility for the KMT's performance in the 1992 legislative elections. By mid-1993 several key members of the Non-Mainstream faction, increasingly marginalized and unable to prevent greater "Taiwanization" of the party, broke away to found the New Party.⁶⁷

The New Party's emergence marked a fundamental shift in the party system. In the short run, the defection of the more conservative, predominantly mainlander cadres seriously harmed the KMT: many of its former core partisan supporters in the mainland community voted for the New Party candidates in 1995, and the KMT's legislative majority shrank considerably. Coordination in elections became a much bigger problem for the KMT as well, as I detail in the next section.

But the departure of the KMT renegades to the New Party was not nearly so damaging in the big picture: they were among the KMT's most ideological members, and by leaving, they freed the ruling party from having to placate a faction that held views

⁶⁷ A good overview of the events leading to the founding of the New Party can be found in Rigger (2001: 148-177)

significantly to the right of the median voter. Thus, Lee continued to reshape a number of ROC policies toward mainland China, culminating in his statement that cross-Strait relations should be considered “special state-to-state relations” rather than merely “two political entities” both laying claim to the right to govern all of China (Lin and Tedards 2003: 38-40; Kuo Su-feng 2000). This positioned the KMT in the political center, giving it a clear electoral advantage over both the more ideologically-driven opposition parties.

Examples of the KMT's Spatial Positioning Advantage

At the same time that the KMT moved to the center of the independence-unification issue, the party also took advantage of its ideological flexibility by co-opting several other policy initiatives advanced by the DPP. Of particular interest is the issue of social welfare—state-provided health insurance and old-age pensions. At the beginning of the multi-party era, state social welfare provision was highly unequal and distributed mainly to households of government employees and military veterans. Because these groups were disproportionately ethnic mainlanders, social welfare had the potential to become “ethnicized” in the same way that constitutional reform was. As Dafydd Fell has recorded, the DPP saw social welfare as a major vote-winner and consistently advocated for the expansion of state health care and pensions in campaigns in the 1990s (2005: 28-54). But the KMT responded to this challenge quite effectively: in 1986 it announced a plan to introduce National Health Insurance (NHI) by the year 2000; in 1988 the start date was brought forward to 1995; and the bill adopting the final program was drafted by the Department of Health, under a KMT-controlled cabinet, and passed in the summer of

1994 with little debate and few amendments (*ibid.* 39). Thus, the KMT could take just as much credit as the DPP for this expansion of the welfare state.

Electoral competition generated similar pressure for the expansion of old-age pensions. The DPP promoted this issue with aplomb in electoral campaigns in the 1990s, sparking an intra-party battle within the KMT about how to respond. While mainlanders in the party generally opposed any changes to pensions, and then pushed to require individual contributions and means-testing for eligibility, many of the native Taiwanese in the party advocated the most generous expansion as a way to appeal to rural and less educated voters who were largely left out of existing pension programs. On this issue, too, Lee Teng-hui's mostly native Taiwanese allies ultimately won out, and Lee came out publicly in favor of a non-contributory plan in the heat of the 1997 local election campaign (Fell 2005: 40-45; cf. Wong 2004).

The KMT also took other policy steps to head off issues that might provide votes to the DPP. Most prominently, the central government embarked on a massive increase in infrastructure spending during the 1990s, including the construction of metro systems for Taipei and Kaohsiung and a major expansion of the island's highway system. To pay for this new outlay, the government for the first time began to run regular budget deficits, while at the same time shifting resources away from the military (Cheng and Haggard 2001). As a result, by the mid-1990s there was little to differentiate the KMT from the DPP apart from their positions on the independence-unification issue. At the other end of the political spectrum, the New Party was able to draw a clear contrast with the KMT by staking out a clear "pro-China" position, but like the DPP's pro-independence stance, this harmed more than helped its electoral performance. The only issue on which the KMT

was consistently vulnerable was corruption—or as it was known in the parlance of the time, “black gold” politics (黑金). Both the DPP and the NP enjoyed an advantage over the KMT on this issue, as the ruling party was much more reliant on the use of state and party assets and its ties to local factions to win elections (Fell 2005: 54-84).

Nevertheless, the two opposition parties’ stark ideological differences on most other issues precluded any serious attempt to team up against the KMT in elections; the parties were much more likely to work with like-minded legislators in the KMT itself than with each other. Thus, in the latter half of the decade, the KMT held a formidable spatial positioning advantage over both opposition parties—it was not only still the largest party in the system, but also the most pragmatic and centrist.

The Enduring Weakness of Other Political Cleavages

The saliency and subsequent stability of the divisions between Taiwan’s major political parties on the independence-unification issue is striking, given the number of alternative issues that the parties themselves have raised to appeal to Taiwanese voters. For instance, the DPP in the late 1980s was certainly not the only game in town for opposition supporters: the political market for anti-KMT voters quickly became crowded after the passage in January 1989 of the Law on the Organization of Civil Groups, which created a legal basis for multi-party competition in the ROC. By the end of the year more than 50 political parties had registered with the government (Rigger 1999: 132). Yet at election time none of these parties was able to make inroads against the KMT and DPP.

An especially revealing example of the primacy of the independence-unification issue in Taiwanese politics is that of the labor movement. Labor’s failure to establish a

viable political party was not for lack of a vibrant trade union sector; as Tien Hung-mao describes it, when martial law was formally lifted in July 1987, “independent trade unions were organized in various industrial regions on the island, mainly among workers of larger corporations and state enterprises. The Brotherhood unions, under the leadership of Lou Wei-wen, a militant factory activist, [were] gaining support among disenfranchised industrial laborers who refuse[d] to affiliate with the KMT-controlled trade union federation.” Rather than join the DPP, the movement instead attempted in December 1987 to throw its weight behind the creation of the Labor Party, whose manifesto “proclaim[ed] its hope of becoming the main political instrument for Taiwan’s industrial workers” (1992: 49). Yet the Labor Party’s impact on the political scene was short-lived; by June 1988, Lou and other activists had broken away and formed a new, more radical Worker’s Party that explicitly advocated unification with the mainland. Fatally weakened by divisions over ideology and the independence-unification issue, neither party won a single seat in any national election from 1989 through 2001 (Schafferer 2003: 70).

That no party with workers as its main constituent base has ever won a seat in the Legislative Yuan or National Assembly seems odd, given that Taiwan’s large-magnitude SNTV electoral system appears tailor-made for candidates from small but concentrated interest groups. But the labor movement was not alone in failing to transform its political potential into electoral victories. The number of social movements in Taiwan exploded in the late 1980s: Michael Hsiao counted 18 distinct issue groups in 1989, which in addition to labor included consumers, antipollution protesters, environmental conservationists, women, aborigines, students, religious groups, farmers, teachers, the

handicapped, veterans, human rights advocates, mainlanders advocating for the right to visit the mainland, anti-nuclear power activists, renters (non-homeowners), and ethnic Hakkas. Hsiao noted that the DPP had by no means locked up the support of these social activists and their sympathizers in the electorate; rather, the leaders of most of these movements

“adopted an apolitical strategy by avoiding any obvious connection with the political opposition... Though DPP politicians appeared to be supportive of many of the protests, there is still no clear sign that the DPP has formulated a concrete political stand in relating to most of the social movements. Moreover, the social movement leaders have apparently seen no advantage in aligning openly with the DPP” (1992: 70).

Yet when some of these groups eventually did attempt to form new political parties and contest national elections, they consistently flopped at the ballot box. Schafferer (2003: 70-72) notes 32 different political parties that ran candidates in the 1990s; of these, only four managed to get even one of their candidates elected to office. In 1992, a single candidate from the Chinese Social Democratic Party (中華社會民主黨) won election to the Legislative Yuan (LY); in 1996 a member of the Green Party (綠黨) was elected to the National Assembly; in 1998 a single member of the Taiwan Independence Party (TAIP, or 建國黨) won a seat in the LY, and in 2001 a member of the Taiwan No. 1 Party (台灣吾黨) was elected to the legislature. Of these, only the first two were parties clearly competing on issues other than the independence-unification question; the impact of even these four parties on Taiwan’s politics has been negligible.

In sum, after political liberalization Taiwan’s party system rapidly realigned from a pro- versus anti-regime cleavage to a national identity one. Political activists tried and

failed in numerous attempts to align the island's politics along other latent social cleavages—socioeconomic lines, or occupational ones, for example. Yet in the newly-emergent party system of the 1990s, the three parties which won significant numbers of seats—the DPP, the KMT, and the New Party—were distinguished first and foremost by their positions on the independence-unification question rather than on socioeconomic issues.

Conclusion

By the time of the 1996 presidential election, the KMT was in an advantageous position: it was the leading party in a new three-party system in which it was both the largest party and the centrist one. Thus, the first direct election for the president played out on terms highly favorable to the KMT, as both the DPP and NP nominated polarizing, ideological candidates who did not have much serious prospect of winning. With the full force of the KMT's party apparatus behind him, Lee Teng-hui easily won re-election despite the turmoil of the previous decade. The KMT appeared to be well-positioned to remain Taiwan's ruling party for the foreseeable future. In the end, the ultimate weakness of the KMT would prove to be tactical, not ideological: it struggled to coordinate in elections. It is to this factor that I turn next.

6.5. Coordination: Toward Greater Symmetry

Having examined how partisanship and spatial positioning affected Taiwan's evolving party system, now let us consider how the development of the party system

affected electoral coordination. Comparative scholarship often references Taiwan under the KMT as an example of a dominant party system sustained by asymmetric coordination (e.g. Cox and Niou 1994; Cox 1996; Hsieh 1996; Cox 1997; Lin Jih-wen 2006). Yet coordination asymmetry does not appear to have been critical to ruling party survival in Taiwan, at least once legislative elections were fully opened to opposition contestation. Instead it was in elections for *local executives*, rather than national legislative races, that coordination problems were most consequential to party performance. In the late 1990s, the KMT consistently struggled to coordinate behind a single nominee in these races, frequently splitting the vote and opening the door to DPP victories in counties with a solid KMT partisan majority. These DPP county and city executives in turn increased their own national profiles and helped moderate the party's image, leaving it better positioned to compete at the national level.

Coordination Problems in Taiwan's SNTV Electoral System

From the time the KMT assumed control of the island until 2008, legislative elections at all levels of government in Taiwan were held under the Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV) electoral system. Under SNTV, voters cast a ballot for a single candidate, but multiple candidates win seats. Thus, in a five-seat district, even the top vote-getter typically wins only 15 to 30 percent of the total vote, and the "last winner" might win with less than 10 percent, depending on how dispersed votes are across all candidates. As has been widely noted in the literature on comparative electoral systems, SNTV poses two difficult challenges for the leaders of any political party that

aims to capture more than one seat in a district.⁶⁸ First, they must estimate their overall expected level of support in the district, and nominate the maximum number of candidates that could be elected with that support. Identifying the optimal number requires a delicate balancing act—nominate too many candidates, and most lose by small margins; nominate too few, and the party could have won another seat with excess votes cast for its candidates. Second, once the party leaders decide how many candidates to nominate, they must find a way to get votes distributed as equally as possible across all the party’s nominees—what in the parlance of local campaigns in Taiwan is known as the “vote division system” (*peipiao zhidu* 配票制度).

By the advent of the first fully contested elections for the legislature in 1992, the KMT had become especially adept at distributing votes among multiple candidates in a district, as it had been running election campaigns since the 1950s for local county and city councils as well as the Taiwan Provincial Legislature. The KMT’s principal vote allocation strategy was to assign each nominee his or her own exclusive “responsibility zones” (*zeren qu* 責任區) within the district—smaller areas, typically demarcated at the ward (*li* 里) or village (*cun* 村) level, in which they were to target their campaign appeals. Once assigned, candidates were forbidden from campaigning in the responsibility zones of others. In effect, this strategy created an informal set of single-member districts out of the larger multi-member district. The responsibility zone system proved reasonably effective at equalizing the votes won by each member, because the

⁶⁸ See the discussion and literature cited in Section 4.1. Notably, the median SNTV district in Taiwan had twice as many seats as in Japan, the other prominent country to use SNTV: in the 1998 election, for instance, the median legislator came from a district with eight seats, while in 1993 in Japan the median was four (my calculation). As a consequence, intra-party coordination problems in Taiwan were significantly more complex than in Japan.

party could estimate from the previous election how many loyal KMT votes were available in a given ward (Liu I-chou 1999). Voters in turn typically learned about and followed the vote distribution strategy of the party through a kind of local “vote broker”—called *zhuangjiao* (樁腳) in Mandarin, or in Taiwanese, *tiau-a-ka*. These influential local figures, often holding official elected administrative positions such as chief of the ward (*lizhang* 里長), village (*cunzhang* 村長) or neighborhood (*linzhang* 鄰長), cultivated close social ties with most households in their community, often over many years, and provided assistance or favors in exchange for support at election time (Rigger 1999: 87-94). Instructions about which KMT candidate to support could then be communicated to voters through local-level *tiau-a-ka*.

The whole system was greased by funds delivered from the party through each nominee’s campaign office to the ward chief for local campaign rallies, feasts, gifts, and other ways to obtain votes from constituents who might need a little extra encouragement to turn out to vote (Rigger 1999: 94-99; Wang Chin-shou 2004). The KMT also occasionally held in reserve blocs of core voters known to be especially reliable party supporters—the so-called “iron vote” (*tiepiao* 鐵票). These were typically the households of veterans, civil servants, or employees of state-owned enterprises, and they could be directed at the last minute to support the candidate(s) in the district who appeared to be at greatest danger of losing (Rigger 1999: 41). As a consequence of decades of refining this system, by the time martial law was lifted the KMT had become quite efficient at converting votes into seats. As Figure 6.7 shows, it won a net seat bonus (seat share minus vote share) of nine percent in the partially contested, “supplementary” elections of 1986, and 11 percent in 1989.

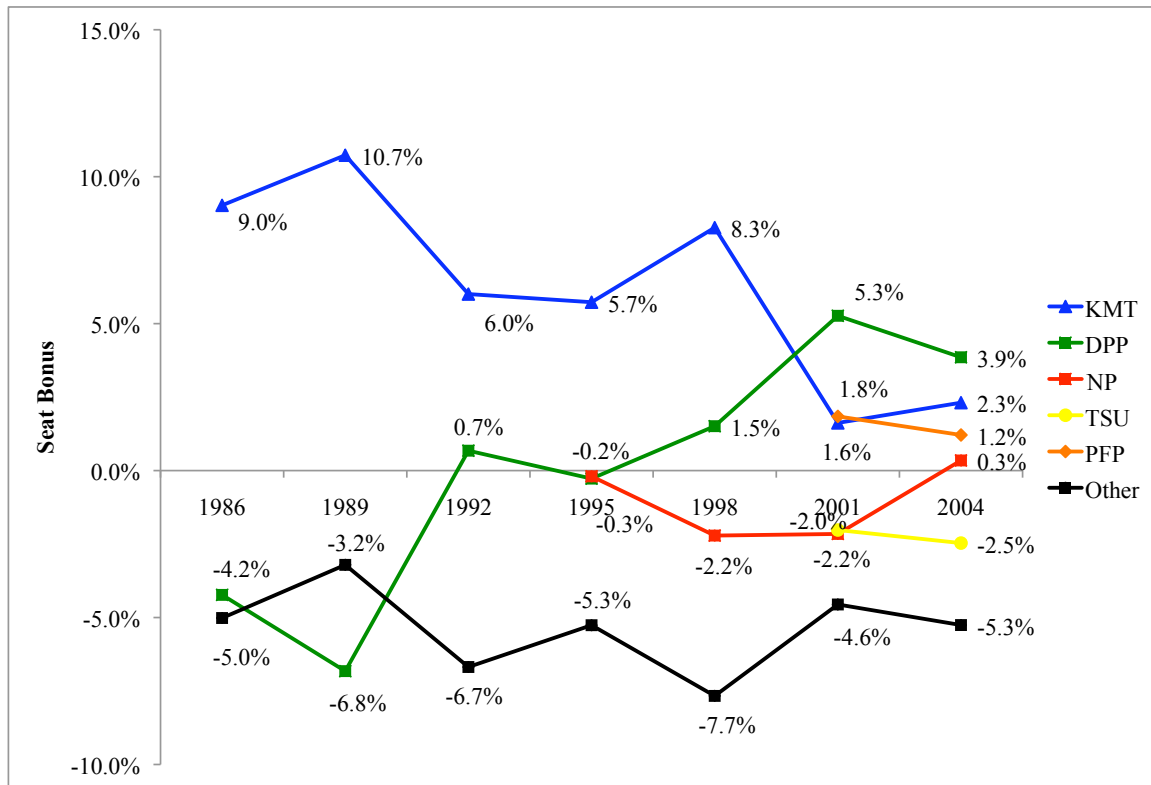


FIGURE 6.7. SEAT VERSUS VOTE SHARE OF TAIWANESE POLITICAL PARTIES IN LEGISLATIVE YUAN ELECTIONS, 1986-2004

The newly-founded DPP, by contrast, could not in its early days replicate the KMT's sophisticated and highly resource-intensive vote allocation system, putting it at a disadvantage. The vote-division challenge facing new parties under SNTV is especially difficult: in order to distribute votes optimally, they need both good estimates of their likely level of support across each district and a large base of core partisans who are willing to follow whatever allocation strategy the party decides on. Because of its previous *Dangwai* experience, the DPP was better positioned than other opposition parties to compete in legislative elections, but even so, it was much less efficient than was the KMT: its seat bonus was actually *negative* in 1986 and 1989—that is, it won a larger share of votes than of seats. The overall effect of this difference was that the

KMT's majority in these elections, and in the 1991 National Assembly election, was padded by its superior ability to coordinate.

However, this asymmetry declined in the 1992 Legislative Yuan elections, the first fully contested elections to that body. In the run-up to the election, the battle between the Mainstream and Non-Mainstream groups in the KMT adversely affected the party's vote division system. The Non-Mainstream faction had close ties to many of the "iron vote" constituencies in military villages; these supported Non-Mainstream-allied KMT candidates rather than following the dictates of the party center. The campaign soon devolved into a free-for-all within the KMT as individual nominees, worried about the defection of these core constituents from the allocation system and facing competition from renegade KMT candidates as well, started invading each other's zones (Rigger 1999: 164). As a consequence, a number of the Non-Mainstream candidates won with tens of thousands of votes to spare, while many Mainstream candidates were defeated; the KMT's seat bonus declined noticeably, from about 11 percent in 1989 to only six percent in 1992. By contrast, the DPP significantly improved its conversion of votes to seats, managing for the first time to exceed parity. Learning from its previous mistakes, the party followed a more conservative nomination strategy in 1992, limiting the number of candidates it ran. Thus, the difference in the two parties' votes-to-seats conversion bonus was cut by two-thirds, from a difference of 17.5 percent in 1989 to only 5.7 percent in 1992. The results of the 1995 and 1998 legislative elections show a similar pattern, despite the emergence of the New Party: the KMT enjoyed a reduced but still significant seat bonus, while both the main opposition parties remained near parity (Hsu and Chen 2004).

Part of the reason for the improved conversion rates of the two opposition parties was their use of a “forced-distribution” (平均配票) vote-division system that relied on core supporters to follow party guidelines so as to equalize their votes across all the party’s nominees (Sheng Shing-yuan 1998). After deciding on its nominees in a district, the party would assign candidates to voters sharing the same birth month or the last digit of their national ID card. For instance, in Taipei City’s South District, the New Party nominated three candidates. Voters whose birthdays fell between January and April were instructed to vote for Chu Hui-liang (朱惠良); between May and August, Chou Yang-shan (周陽山); and between September and December, Lee Ching-hua (李慶華). Because the New Party’s core supporters were generally well-informed about politics and highly motivated to support the party’s candidates, most followed the allocation guidelines; the votes for all three were remarkably evenly distributed across the district, and all three were elected (Pao Cheng-hao 1998).

This randomization system was frequently used by the DPP as well in SNTV elections (cf. Chen and Huang 2004). Figure 6.8 shows an example of how parties in Taiwan communicated this scheme to voters—through large billboards or banners hung throughout the district. The banner shows all the party’s candidates in the 2004 Tainan County race posing with President Chen. Contained in the rings are the name of a candidate and numbers corresponding to the last digit of the voter’s national ID number: a supporter whose ID number ends in a 1 or 2 should vote for the first candidate; a 3 or 4, the second; and so forth. This randomization strategy is one of the chief reasons the DPP’s votes-to-seats ratio improved in the 1990s, despite not having the KMT’s resources or strong ties to informal local networks (Sheng Shing-yuan 1998).



FIGURE 6.8. DPP VOTE-RANDOMIZATION BANNER, 2004 LEGISLATIVE YUAN ELECTION
(© ANFREL 2004)

Nevertheless, despite the weakening of its local vote-broker system and the decline in its coordination advantage over the opposition parties, the KMT remained by far the largest party in the legislature on the eve of the 2000 presidential election. Given this fact, the emphasis in the literature on the role of the SNTV electoral system in the KMT's persistence and eventual defeat seems rather misplaced.⁶⁹ To the extent the electoral system itself significantly altered the KMT's survival prospects, its primary

⁶⁹ For instance, see Cox (1996); Hsieh (1996); Wang Yeh-li (1996); Lin Jih-wen (2006), (2011).

effect was early on: the low threshold of exclusion made opposition nominations more valuable, and helped shift the focus of *Dangwai* efforts from social protest and mass mobilization to winning seats in electoral competition. Coordination asymmetry may have helped the KMT during this period as well, but it was far from decisive.

The Importance of Local Elections to the DPP's Development

In contrast to the large literature on SNTV, much less attention has been paid to the effect of *local elections* on the development of a competitive party system in Taiwan. Yet it is my contention that the existence of direct elections for local executives contributed much more to the development of a credible opposition, and ultimately to the defeat of the KMT. Consistent with the institutional argument I made in Chapter 4, the opposition fared much better in local executive races than in legislative ones. Victories in these elections in turn helped the DPP's leaders develop practical experience at governing, gave them access to state resources, and helped them moderate the party's image—all of which subsequently made the party a more formidable challenger to the KMT at the national level.

Taiwan has a long history of elections for local offices. Since the earliest days of KMT rule, county executives and city mayors have been directly elected and held significant authority independent of the central government, exerting influence over local budgets, land use, and employment. During the martial law era, the ban on opposition parties prevented non-KMT candidates from coordinating campaigns across the island's local jurisdictions, but independent candidates were common, and occasionally even managed to run competitive races against the party's chosen nominees.

Initially, contested elections were held even for the two largest municipalities, Taipei and Kaohsiung Cities. But when the KMT leadership's favored candidate was defeated by an independent in the 1964 mayoral election in Taipei, the party decided to elevate the city to the status of a special municipality, which had the effect of changing the mayor's office from an elected position to one appointed directly by the premier. A similar challenge in Kaohsiung City in 1977 led the KMT to elevate it, too, the status of special municipality, so that its mayor could be more easily controlled by the central government and party.

Despite these institutional manipulations, the KMT refrained from suspending elections in other jurisdictions, and by the late 1970s these races had become a central battleground between the KMT and the nascent opposition movement in Taiwan. Many of the DPP's founding members got their start in politics in these local races, either as candidates or as volunteer campaign workers. And the fact that local races were held at the same time across the island provided the often-fractious opposition movement a focus on a common objective that it lacked at other times (Lin Chia-lung 1998: 223-232).

It is in the 1990s, however, that the opposition most clearly benefited from local executive elections. Among the most prominent DPP victories was in the 1994 Taipei mayor's election, the first since elections were reinstated for that office. That election played out in what became a familiar pattern: Chen Shui-bian won an upset victory with 43.7 percent of the vote when a New Party and KMT candidate split the rest. But the party benefitted in the same way from poor KMT coordination to win a plurality of the next round of local executive contests in November 1997, as Table 6.1 shows. Of the dozen executive positions the DPP captured in 1997, half were won with less than 50

percent of the vote. As in the legislative elections in 1995 and 1998, the KMT consistently failed to clear the field for its official nominees; instead, New Party candidates or KMT members denied the party's nomination ran as independents in several races, badly splitting the pro-KMT vote. As a consequence, the DPP for the first time took a majority of the county and city executive seats and subsequently ran jurisdictions in which over 70 percent of the Taiwanese population lived (Rigger 1999: 186).

Table 6.1. 1997 County and City Executive Elections Summary

Locality	KMT %	DPP %	NP %	TAIP %	SRP %	Ind. %	Seat won by
Taipei County	38.7	40.7	2.3	0.0	0.0	18.3	DPP
Yilan County	46.2	53.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	DPP
Taoyuan County	43.0	56.2	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	DPP
Hsinchu County	32.9	36.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	31.0	DPP
Miaoli County	35.3	4.2	5.7	0.0	0.0	54.8	Ind.
Taichung County	53.6*	37.6	0.0	1.0	0.0	7.8	DPP
Changhua County	49.6	48.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.8	KMT
Nantou County	30.1	30.8	7.3	0.0	0.0	31.8	Ind.
Yunlin County	34.9	29.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	36.0*	KMT
Chiayi County	53.3	46.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	KMT
Tainan County	34.3	65.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	DPP
Kaohsiung County	44.7	51.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.6	DPP
Pingtung County	41.5	55.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.1	DPP
Taitung County	47.6	5.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	46.6	KMT
Hualien County	56.8	43.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	KMT
Penghu County	57.5	42.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	KMT
Keelung City	38.0	42.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	19.3	DPP
Hsinchu City	42.8	56.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	DPP
Taichung City	41.3	49.6	7.3	1.8	0.0	0.0	DPP
Chiayi City	42.5	5.5	0.0	1.8	0.0	50.2	Ind.
Tainan City	38.8*	35.8	1.5	0.0	0.0	24.0	DPP
Kinmen County	58.6	0.0	41.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	KMT
Lienchiang County	61.0	0.0	39.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	KMT
Grand Total	42.1	43.3	1.4	0.2	0.1	12.9	
Seats won	8	12	0	0	0	3	

*Vote split between two or more candidates; DPP plurality winners are highlighted.

KMT = Kuomintang; DPP = Democratic Progressive Party; NP = New Party; TAIP = Taiwan Independence Party; SRP = Social Reform Party; Ind = Independents

The DPP's victories in local executive races helped the party's development in at least three ways. First, control of local executive positions allowed the party to build a reputation for pragmatism and competence that it had previously lacked. Whereas much of the party's older generation remained focused on ideological concerns, especially the national question, the local elected officials had to dirty their hands with the business of

day-to-day governing. Many of these local officials proved popular—Chen Shui-bian, for instance, racked up approval ratings of over 70 percent as mayor of Taipei (Rigger 2001: 101)—and were thus an asset to the national party. Second, by winning control of local governments, the DPP also was able to develop a strong political “farm team” that it could draw on in subsequent elections: a number of these county executives continued on to be major figures in national politics in the 2000s. Chen Shui-bian was only the most prominent and successful of a cohort of local executives that included the future vice president Annette Lu (Taoyuan County executive), premier Su Tseng-chang (Taipei County executive), premier and future presidential candidate Frank Hsieh (Kaohsiung City mayor) and premier and DPP party chairman Yu Shyi-kun (Yilan County executive). Third, by controlling local administrations in which more than two-thirds of Taiwanese lived, the party also gained valuable access to resources and was able to further weaken the KMT’s local patronage networks.

Table 6.2. 1998 County Assembly and City Council Elections Summary

Locality	KMT %	DPP %	NP %	TAIP %	SRP %	Ind %	Winner
Taipei County	46.8	21.4	8.6	0.6	0	22.2	KMT
Yilan County	50.9	27.3	0.9	0	0	20.9	KMT
Taoyuan County	43.4	19.8	4.5	0.1	0.1	25.0	KMT
Hsinchu County	48.5	15.2	2.5	0.2	0	33.7	KMT
Miaoli County	55.4	5.4	2.2	0.7	0.1	36.2	KMT
Taichung County	53.1	15.5	3.8	0.4	0	27.1	KMT
Changhua County	55.6	13.2	0.4	0	0	30.8	KMT
Nantou County	45.7	10.7	1.8	0	0	39.8	KMT
Yunlin County	51.9	7.5	0.7	0.2	0	39.8	KMT
Chiayi County	61.1	9.6	0.1	0	0	29.1	KMT
Tainan County	36.7	14.8	0.6	0	0	47.9	Ind
Kaohsiung County	37.3	19.3	1.8	1.3	0	40.4	Ind
Pingtung County	43.9	13.1	0.7	0.7	0	41.6	KMT
Taitung County	62.0	2.9	1.0	0	0	33.0	KMT
Hualien County	63.2	13.1	2.3	0	0	20.7	KMT
Penghu County	53.3	6.5	0.5	0	0	39.7	KMT
Keelung City	61.0	17.5	6.7	0	0	14.8	KMT
Hsinchu City	51.5	14.5	5.1	0	0	28.9	KMT
Taichung City	60.5	17.8	5.5	0	0	15.3	KMT
Chiayi City	42.7	11.1	1.4	3.0	0	41.8	KMT
Tainan City	42.8	24.7	1.5	1.4	0	29.6	KMT
Kinmen County	73.9	1.7	6.9	0	0	17.4	KMT
Lienchiang County	78.4	0	21.0	0	0	0.6	KMT
Grand Total	48.8	15.8	3.1	0.5	0.1	31.1	
Seats won	522	114	10	1	0	239	(886)

KMT = Kuomintang; DPP = Democratic Progressive Party; NP = New Party; TAIP = Taiwan Independence Party; SRP = Social Reform Party; IND = Independents

Thus, direct election of the executive at the local level was a key factor in the defeat of the KMT. One can get a sense of its importance by looking at the career arc of Chen Shui-bian. Chen initially gained notoriety as one of the lawyers defending members of the *Dangwai* on trial for the Kaohsiung Incident in 1980, then parlayed that fame into a seat on the Taipei City Council in 1981 and later won a seat in the Legislative

Yuan in 1989. He then won the 1994 Taipei mayor's election with 45 percent of the vote when the KMT and NP candidates split the rest. Chen's victory provided the DPP with its most important victory to that point in its history, and immediately gave him both a high national profile and a resource-rich office with which to build a concrete record of achievement. Chen's time as Taipei mayor served to make him the clear front-runner for the DPP presidential nomination, and when he was defeated in the 1998 mayor's race despite improving his vote share, he used his concession speech to launch his presidential campaign (Rigger 2001: 177).

Had these local executive offices been centrally appointed, or had they been filled with someone from the local assembly, the rise of Chen Shui-bian into a candidate capable of winning the presidency would not have been possible. It required both directly elected local and national executives—that is, a presidential regime—for the DPP to win. That both were present points to a final puzzle in the Taiwan case: why was direct election of the president adopted in the first place?

6.6. The Origins and Consequences of Presidentialism

If presidentialism is so much worse for advantaged ruling parties, as I have argued, why did the KMT see fit to adopt it? The answer I will argue for in this section is simple: at the time direct election of the president was adopted, a presidential system was in the KMT leader Lee Teng-hui's best interest. Taiwan's political reforms could easily have delivered a purely parliamentary system if Lee had supported it: the KMT had more than enough votes in the National Assembly to unilaterally change the system

however it preferred. But because presidentialism would weaken his chief rivals within the party and reduce the intra-party constraints he faced, Lee ultimately came down decisively in favor of direct election of the president, undercutting his own party in the long run.

How Presidentialism was Adopted: Constitutional Reform in Taiwan

Under the provisions of the constitution prior to reform, the Republic of China was set up as a kind of semi-presidential system, albeit one with five formal branches of government and several other unusual features. The president was chosen indirectly for a six-year term by the National Assembly, which itself was to be elected in a nation-wide vote.⁷⁰ The president in turn appointed the premier, who selected and headed the Executive Yuan, the government cabinet. The legislature consisted of a unicameral body, the Legislative Yuan, which was elected separately at different times and for different terms than the National Assembly. Legislative confirmation was required for the premier to take office, but once seated he was not subject to a no-confidence vote; only the president could remove him (Wu Jau-shieh 1995: 126-7). On the other hand, neither the premier nor the president had the ability to dismiss the legislature (Cheng and Haggard 2001: 192-193). Thus, the executive and legislative branches possessed both separate origin and separate survival.

⁷⁰ In practice, this occurred exactly once, in 1947. The members of the first National Assembly held their seats until 1991, when they were replaced by representatives elected solely from Taiwanese constituencies. Their potentially crucial role in selecting the president was removed in 1994, well before the president's term expired.

During the martial law era, the president's power in practice was greatly enhanced in two ways. First, he was head of a hierarchical KMT organized along Leninist lines, giving him control over the party machinery that controlled all other branches of government. Second, the president had been granted extraordinary powers by the "Temporary Provisions," an amendment passed by the National Assembly before the regime fled to Taiwan as part of its fight against the Communists. These powers included the suspension of civil rights delineated in the constitution, executive decree authority, and direct supervision of the military and security apparatus through the National Security Council and Taiwan Garrison Command (Feldman 1992: 3-6).

Thus, when Lee Teng-hui assumed the presidency in January 1988, he inherited an extraordinarily powerful office. But his hold on the position was precarious; he had succeeded to the top office only because Chiang Ching-kuo himself had tapped Lee to be vice-president, not because of his standing within the KMT. And in fact, the parallel position of KMT party chairman initially went unfilled in the days after Chiang's death, as the party's Central Standing Committee was divided between "hardliners," including Chiang Kai-shek's widow Soong Mei-ling, who favored collective government for the rest of Chiang's unfinished term, and "softliners" who favored Lee. After rallying support from components of the party grassroots, the softliners' position won out, and Lee was named acting chairman two weeks later.⁷¹

Nevertheless, Lee continued to be challenged by conservatives in the Non-Mainstream faction within the party for the next two years, culminating in a battle over the party's nomination for the presidential election in March 1990. The KMT's control

⁷¹ Much of this section draws from Lin Chia-lung (1998: 303-340).

of 86 percent of the National Assembly seats ensured that its nominee would be selected as president, but in February Non-Mainstream members mounted an intra-party challenge to Lee and put forth an alternative candidate, Lin Yang-kang. Lee managed through some savvy back-room maneuvering to secure the party's nomination, and in the end, Lin withdrew and Lee won reelection with 641 of 688 votes in the National Assembly (Rigger 1999: 150-151).

The Non-Mainstream faction remained a powerful threat to Lee, however—enough so that after his reelection, Lee appointed a conservative mainlander and high-ranking military general, Hau Pei-tsun, as premier. The appointment of Hau as head of the Executive Yuan moved the ongoing division between the two alliances in the KMT into the realm of constitutional reform. Under pressure from the opposition and members of his own party, Lee announced shortly after his reelection the formation of a “National Affairs Conference” (*guoshihui* 國事會) to seek a consensus on political reforms. The conference resulted in a number of points of agreement, including the introduction of direct election of the Taiwan Provincial Governor and the mayors of Taipei and Kaohsiung, the retirement of all senior members of the Legislative Yuan and National Assembly, and the abolition of the Temporary Provisions (Rigger 1999: 152). But the issue of the selection of the president and premier remained controversial. The Non-Mainstream faction members tended to support retaining the indirect selection of the presidency and reducing it to a symbolic role in government. Lee Teng-hui, by contrast, favored direct election (Lin Chia-lung 1998: 363-4).

The most interesting about-face on the executive selection issue came from the DPP. In the Chiang Ching-kuo era, the party had consistently advocated for

parliamentarism, viewing it as the best way to check Chiang's authority. But in the run-up to the NAC, the party endorsed direct election of the president. The primary reason for this change in position appears to be a reevaluation of the party's prospects of winning power under both systems. Party leaders were perceptive enough to realize that by the early 1990s, the DPP "had a better chance [of] getting the governing power through winning the presidential election than winning a majority in the Legislative Yuan" (*ibid.*: 333).

Ultimately, all the constitutional reforms proposed by the NAC had to be adopted by a three-fourths vote of the National Assembly to take effect. The retirement of all senior parliamentarians and the election of a new National Assembly composed mostly of native Taiwanese strengthened Lee's hand vis-à-vis the Non-Mainstream faction, but even so, opposition to direct election from conservatives remained strong enough that the issue was postponed several times, as was any change in the powers of the president and premier.⁷² Finally, in mid-1994, with many conservatives having joined the New Party, public opinion clearly in favor of direct election of the president, and the DPP threatening to campaign on the issue, the reform passed the National Assembly (*ibid.*: 364-66). Taiwan was set to directly elect its chief executive for the first time in history.

The 1996 Presidential Election

The 1996 election actually worked out quite favorably for the KMT. Lee Teng-hui remained relatively popular and well-placed to win the election. The DPP entered the

⁷² A detailed if rather facile discussion of the debate over adopting direct election of the president can be found as well in Chao and Myers (1998: 242-264).

1996 race unusually divided over the issue of Taiwanese independence, and it experienced considerable intra-party turmoil before nominating Peng Ming-min, a fervently pro-independence candidate with a reputation as a radical. On the right, conservative former KMT member Lin Yang-kang chose former premier Hau Pei-tsun as his running mate and ran on a strong pro-China platform. Thus, neither of the two major party alternatives to the KMT put forth centrist tickets. Lee's campaign was aided further by the actions of the PRC, which conducted war games off the coast of Taiwan and warned Taiwanese voters to make "the right choice" by supporting the Lin-Hau ticket. In the end, this belligerence backfired, and Lee ended up winning about 54 percent of the popular vote, an improvement over the KMT's vote share in the 1995 legislative election. His nearest opponent, Peng, won only 21.1 percent, the DPP's worst performance in the post-martial-law era (Copper 1998: 93-134).

The 2000 Presidential Election

Consistent with my argument that presidential contests are higher variance, the second direct presidential election in Taiwan played out much differently than the first. It is instructive to examine more closely why the KMT ticket did so much more poorly this time around for what it can tell us about the problematic nature of presidential races for advantaged parties.⁷³ Four factors common to presidential regimes hurt the KMT in this election.

⁷³ Thorough overviews of this election can be found in Diamond (2001) and Copper (2005).

First, Lee Teng-hui was term-limited out of office and agreed to respect that limit. His retirement opened up a battle within the KMT over succession at a time when it was especially vulnerable: during the run-up to the presidential election. If there had been no term limits and Lee had stayed on, or if Lee had resigned midway through his term and handed over to the vice president Lien Chan, then the issue of succession would not have become linked to the election, and the KMT would have been less likely to split.

Second, the KMT's nomination procedure for the presidency effectively gave Lee the authority to choose his own successor. As a consequence, Lee's preference for Lien Chan over James Soong effectively won out. Soong appeared to be the stronger general election candidate, judging by public opinion polls at the time; he had also won the Taiwan Provincial Governor's race in 1994 and had proved to be popular in that office. The political base that position gave Soong, however, made him a more formidable threat, and Lee eventually forced through a constitutional reform in 1997 that downgraded the Taiwan Provincial government over Soong's objections. Thus, in the run-up to the 2000 election, Lee was strongly opposed to Soong's nomination and used his influence to place vice president Lien Chan at the top of the ticket instead. As a consequence, the KMT entered the 2000 election cycle with a major internal feud brewing between Soong's and Lee's supporters.

Third, because Soong was well-known in Taiwanese politics and had a long track record of running in and winning elections on the island, his prospects as an independent candidate appeared quite good. Thus, the presidential election provided Soong with an excellent opportunity to convert his personal popularity into control of the executive,

despite being denied the KMT's official nomination. Thus, in November 1999, four months before the election, he announced his candidacy.

Finally, for its part, the DPP nominated arguably the strongest candidate it could have in Chen Shui-bian (cf. Solinger 2001). Chen was well-known on the island for his stint as Taipei mayor. During his time in that position he had managed to dispel some of the DPP's reputation for radicalism on the independence-unification issue by focusing on the more mundane task of governing a city; when he left office, his approval rating was over 70 percent. Chen also had the advantage of a wide geographic appeal; although he had served as Taipei mayor, he had previously run in Chiayi City in southern Taiwan, and he was originally from Tainan County. Chen's long history as part of the *Dangwai* and as a key member of the DPP also helped him to tamp down ideological divisions within the party, and he entered the campaign at the head of an enthusiastic and unified DPP; the contrast with the party's previous presidential campaign in 1996 was stark.

Taken together, these outcomes drastically reduced the importance of all of the KMT's structural advantages in the party system. Its lead in partisanship was blunted by the presence of two KMT candidates running against one another, and by a DPP candidate able to appeal to the broad middle of the electorate on the strength of his personal qualities. The KMT's superior spatial position was undercut by the increasingly personalized nature of the race, with both Soong and Lien taking similar positions on the national question and Chen also moving toward the center. And the party's coordination advantage was all-but-destroyed by the winner-take-all nature of the presidential contest, much as it had been in the local executive races in 1997. As a consequence, the KMT lost the presidency to the DPP despite retaining a formidable electoral machine, a strong

record of economic management, and a centrist position on the most salient issue in Taiwanese politics.

The Counterfactual: Taiwan as a Parliamentary Regime?

I have argued that Taiwan's presidential system played a key role in the KMT's defeat in the 2000 election, which sets up a counterfactual: that it would not have lost had Taiwan been parliamentary. Obviously, we cannot rerun history to see whether this is true. But as a second-best strategy, we can look at which parties won the legislative elections held before and after the 2000 race to gain some sense of how the KMT would have fared if the legislature had selected the chief executive.

In the 1998 legislative election, the last held before the KMT's defeat, the voters returned a solid KMT majority of 54.7 percent of the seats. Thus, under a parliamentary system the prime minister would undoubtedly have been a KMT member. More revealing is the result of the 2001 legislative election, held 18 months after Chen Shui-bian took office. This election was the first held under a non-KMT president, denying that party for the first time the access to much of the largess of the state that it had previously relied to win legislative races. Moreover, shortly after the 2000 election, the KMT went through a leadership crisis and fractured into three pieces. James Soong built on his strong showing by founding the PFP and taking roughly 20 percent of the KMT's sitting legislators with him. Lee Teng-hui was confronted with hostile demonstrations by KMT partisans the day after the election, and forced to give up his party chairmanship. After his term as president ended, he, too, founded a new political

party, the TSU, taking with him another handful of KMT legislators. Rather than two major parties in the legislature, Taiwan now had four.

By the time the 2001 election rolled around, this new constellation of parties had formed into two loose alliances. In the local parlance, the DPP and TSU made up the “pan-Green” (*fanlu* 泛綠) camp, while the KMT and PFP along with the now marginal NP made up the “pan-Blue” (*fanlan* 泛藍) camp. As a consequence, the 2001 race took on the form of a straight-up ideological clash between the main parties on either side of the independence-unification divide.

Expectations for the DPP were especially high: it had broken the KMT’s hold on the central government and had greatly weakened its patronage machine. Many in the party elite thought that, with the KMT seriously damaged and with Chen Shui-bian reasonably popular, they could win an outright majority, or at least enough for the pan-Green camp together to control the legislature. Yet the KMT and PFP together retained a majority. Had Taiwan been a parliamentary system in 2001, the most likely outcome is that the KMT would have retained control of the prime minister’s office as the largest party in the majority coalition, and the DPP-TSU alliance would have remained shut out of the cabinet.

Thus, these two election outcomes provide further support for the argument that the adoption of direct election of the president was a crucial factor in the KMT’s defeat.

6.7. Conclusion

I had two objectives in this chapter. The first was to show my theory in action. I focused on a specific case of advantaged ruling party defeat, showing how changes in party system asymmetry interacted with a presidential regime type to reduce the survival prospects of the KMT. The second was to account for an apparent paradox in Taiwan's transition to democracy: the party that initiated the multi-party era and maintained a clear electoral advantage over its opponents was not able to convert that advantage into long-term rule. By describing how the KMT's advantages were less relevant in the direct election of the president than in legislative races, I have shown that the ruling party's defeat was more likely than existing theories of dominant party systems would have us believe.

This case study has relevance for at least two audiences: those interested in Taiwan's transition to a competitive, multi-party democracy, and those concerned more generally with the persistence and breakdown of dominant party systems. For the first audience, the argument I have presented in this chapter indicates that Taiwan's political transformation can be understood in much broader, more comparative terms than it often is. The main feature that sets Taiwan apart is the rapid emergence of an identity cleavage that provided a potent source of fuel for the main opposition party's development. Most other new ECRs with an advantaged incumbent do not have an issue lying dormant, waiting to be exploited by the opposition. Nevertheless, despite the KMT's initial struggles to adapt to a party system realigned around the national question, it emerged exceptionally well-positioned to retain the executive.

Of the post-mortems written on the KMT's electoral defeat in 2000, then, most discount the fundamental strengths that the party retained over its competitors, including its larger number of partisan supporters, its centrist position, and its structural advantage in legislative elections (e.g. Diamond 2001; Solinger 2001; Greene 2007: 261-268). In my view, this has led most observers to overlook the single biggest factor in the party's defeat: presidentialism. Instead, Taiwanese scholars looking for institutional explanations have paid a great deal of attention to the legislative electoral system—an institution *that had no direct relevance to the 2000 election!* If I can hammer home only one point to this audience, it is that direct election of the president, not the SNTV electoral system, was the institutional feature that made the KMT's defeat probable—if not in 2000, then in the subsequent electoral cycle or two.

This case study of Taiwan has relevance as well for the second audience of comparative scholars interested in dominant party persistence and breakdown. If nothing else, the Taiwan case demonstrates that resource advantages are not the end-all be-all source of ruling party survival. Those advantages are meaningful—indeed, quite important—to dominant party persistence in elected office. But they are highly conditional on the institutional environment of the regime: *presidentialism makes long-lived one party rule less likely.* Thus, we risk badly misinterpreting what led to defeat in the many presidential regimes that have featured advantaged ruling parties. This set includes not only Taiwan, but Mexico, South Korea, and Paraguay as well, to name three among many others. And it suggests that advantaged first incumbents in ECRs such as Namibia, Tanzania, Mozambique, and Russia are much more susceptible to defeat than they appear because they hold regular, direct presidential elections. The converse is also

true: the ruling parties in Malaysia, Singapore, Botswana, South Africa, and Cambodia are better positioned to convert their advantages in the party system into continued executive control, because they hold power in parliamentary regimes.

Finally, the Taiwan case study illustrates how party system asymmetry can evolve in rather complicated ways, as declines in one kind of asymmetry—typically coordination or partisanship—may be offset by increases in another—typically spatial positioning. Thus, the link between causes of asymmetry and ruling party survival is not straightforward even when we take institutional effects into account. Future comparative work on this topic would be well-served to consider how the different mechanisms of asymmetry interact with one another to drive party system change.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION: WHITHER DOMINANCE?

7.1. Contributions of the Dissertation

This dissertation makes three broad contributions to the study of dominant party systems. The first is conceptual. As I reviewed at length in the first chapter, the concept of “dominance” in political science has been used in a variety of competing and often contradictory ways. Such conceptual incoherence has hampered our understanding of the underlying political processes of interest and made more difficult the evaluation of existing theories of dominant party systems with empirical evidence. In this study I focused on two of the most common ways dominant parties are characterized—as parties that last in power a long time, and as parties that win elections by “a lot”—and showed how one is linked to the other. The central organizing concept of *party system asymmetry* is, I hope, a useful extension and refinement of one key feature of dominance.

The second contribution is explanatory. I argued for the importance of executive type—presidential versus parliamentary—to our understanding of long-lived ruling parties. Most previous work has ignored this distinction; yet I demonstrated that the way the executive is selected has potentially very large consequences for the survival of incumbent parties, regardless of the other electoral advantages they might possess. Thus, my institutional theory of ruling party survival provides a corrective to existing work by

Greene, Magaloni, Scheiner, and others, and it helps us better understand cases like the KMT in Taiwan that are inconsistent with resource-based theories of dominance.

The third contribution is empirical. Most previous work on dominant party systems has suffered from a serious selection bias problem, as I detailed in Chapter 2. In particular, if we want to understand ruling party longevity, then we need to employ a survival analysis framework. That in turn requires defining an appropriate universe of cases—short-lived as well as long-lived parties—that permits us to make valid inferences about the determinants of ruling party persistence and defeat. My work to identify this set of cases, along with my preliminary investigation of the determinants of ruling party longevity, I hope will point the way toward a more fruitful study of this aspect of “dominance.”

7.2. Remaining Questions and Directions for Future Research

As with most dissertations, this one ends with as many questions as it resolved. There were several hypotheses I was unable to test systematically because of a paucity of suitable data. My investigation of the sources of what I termed “first-mover advantage,” for instance, was based on a rather cursory qualitative review of many cases, rather than a set of firm measures of the variables of interest. I also was unable to locate or gather data that would allow me to test whether direct elections to local offices played a role in ruling party defeat, or to evaluate more directly whether resource advantages contribute to survival. The collection of additional data to test these implications of the theory remains for future work.

In addition, there remains a great deal of refinement and improvement that could be done to the measures of party system asymmetry I employed in the analysis. I began this project focused primarily on duration in office as the key outcome of interest; but as the study developed, the usefulness of party system asymmetry as an organizing concept gradually became apparent. The multiple ways I have attempted to measure variation in asymmetry—control of all branches of government, vote margin, and seat margin—are a reflection of this. Future iterations of this project will need to tackle head-on the challenge of measuring systematic differences in parties' likelihood of winning the executive.

Finally, there are a number of outgrowths of this project that could potentially bear intellectual fruit. In particular, one topic that remained deliberately walled off from consideration is regime change itself: why, for instance, do some autocrats adopt elections? And with what consequences for the patterns of contestation that follow? The finding in Chapter 2 that the starting conditions of electorally-contested regimes have potentially long-lasting consequences points to the importance of understanding these transitions in the first place. The work in this dissertation has barely scratched the surface of that question.

I leave these issues for future work.

APPENDICES

Appendix A. Sample Selection Coding Rules

Sample Selection Criteria, w/ Coding Rules and Examples: Country-regimes included in the dataset must meet the following criteria.

Criterion 1 - Elections: Elections consistently determine who wields executive power.

1. The following types of cases are ruled out *in toto* by this criterion:
 - a. Military regimes, e.g. Myanmar at present, Argentina under the military junta of 1976-1983
 - b. Theocracies or absolute monarchies, e.g. the Islamic Republic of Iran; Bhutan; Saudi Arabia
 - c. Other regimes where executive power is awarded based on a non-elective process, e.g. Communist regimes such as Vietnam, China, Eastern Europe pre-1989; regimes installed by foreign intervention such as Iraq 2003-2009.
2. The election outcome determines control of central government *executive* power, not *legislative*.
 - a. In presidential regimes, the party of the president is coded as the single executive party
 - b. In parliamentary regimes, the party of the prime minister is coded as the single executive party
 - c. In semi-presidential regimes, executive power is determined by the following:
 - i. If the prime minister is appointed and can be removed by the president without parliamentary approval, then the key executive is the president. The incumbent party is the president's party.
 - ii. If the prime minister's appointment and removal requires parliamentary approval, then cannot be removed by the president), then the key executive is the prime minister. The incumbent party is the prime minister's party.
 - iii. **Divided government rule:** when they occur, periods when the presidency and parliament are controlled by different parties ("cohabitation") are used to determine whether the parliament or the president is the ultimate principal to whom the prime minister is responsible.
3. Indirect elections for executive power count if the following hold; otherwise, the regime is excluded:
 - a. For parliamentary regimes, if the members of the parliament are directly elected

- b. For presidential regimes, if the members of the electoral college are directly elected

Criterion 2 - Contestation: Elections must be contested.

1. Opposition (i.e. non-incumbent or incumbent-friendly) parties must be allowed to field candidates, and these candidates must gain a “meaningful” percentage of the vote.
2. A contest was treated as uncontested if the incumbent party or candidate received >90% of the vote.
 - a. Coded using descriptions of elections and election results from elections handbooks edited by Dieter Nohlen. These were:
 - i. *Elections in Africa: A Data Handbook* (ed. Nohlen et al. 1999),
 - ii. *Elections in Asia and the Pacific: A Data Handbook* (ed. Nohlen et al. 2001),
 - iii. *Elections in the Americas: A Data Handbook* (ed. Nohlen 2005), and
 - iv. *Elections in Europe: A Data Handbook* (ed. Nohlen et al. 2010).
 - b. Cross-checked against the Database of Political Institutions (DPI) Executive Index of Electoral Competitiveness (EIEC) variable (1975-2006):
 - i. EIEC scores the vote share of the winning candidate, with the following ranking:
 1. 5 = multiple parties, only one party wins seats (parl.) or votes (pres.)
 2. 6 = multiple parties win seats (votes) but one wins at least 75%
 3. 7 = multiple parties win seats (votes) and largest party wins less than 75%
 - ii. Contestation requires a score of 6 or 7.
 - c. Cross-checked against the POLITY IV PARCOMP variable:
 - i. PARCOMP gives the competitiveness of political participation, with the following ranking:
 1. 1=repressed, no opposition activity allowed outside ruling party
 2. 2=suppressed, some opposition but sharply limited by government
 3. 3=factional, parochial or ethnic-based factions
 4. 4=transitional, any transitional arrangements from 1,2,3 to 5 or vice versa
 5. 5=competitive, regular, institutionalized competition with alternative of power
 - ii. Contestation requires a score of 2 or greater.

3. In country-regimes in which descriptions were inconsistent with DPI and POLITY IV scores, decisions about contestation were made based on country-specific sources. In several instances, these sources led me to adjust the period of contestation or to exclude the regime altogether.

Criterion 3 – Institutionalization: Elections not only determine who controls power but also are held regularly and are uninterrupted by non-institutionalized changes of power

1. **Two-election rule:** at least two consecutive, contested executive elections must be held, and the term between them uninterrupted by successful non-institutionalized leadership turnover, for the country-regime to be included in the sample. These elections must occur *after* 1950.
2. **Independence rule:** the two consecutive elections must occur *after* the country has gained independence or reacquired full sovereignty.
 - a. Regimes which ban opposition parties after holding the first post-independence elections are excluded, e.g. Chad, Ivory Coast, Senegal, Tanzania
 - b. States which are in “free association” with another state are treated as independent from the month they assume that status, e.g. Cook Islands, Marshall Islands.
 - c. Colonies which are highly autonomous but *not* formally independent are not included until they achieve full independence, e.g. Bahamas internal self-government granted in 1969, independence granted July 1973, regime coded as beginning July 1973.
 - d. Ruling parties in states which have been occupied by foreign powers are not included until full sovereignty is restored through formal treaty, or the occupying power is defeated and a new election is held, e.g. Austria beginning July 1955; Japan beginning April 1952; Norway beginning October 1945; Luxembourg beginning October 1945.
 - e. Ruling parties in states which were officially neutral during WWII are included, e.g. SAP in Sweden 1936-1976, FBP in Liechtenstein 1928-1970.
 - f. Ruling parties in the former Soviet republics are counted beginning with formal recognition of independence—the Baltic states: September 1991; others: December 1991.
3. **Five year rule:** the period of consecutive, contested elections must span at least five full years for the country-regime to be included in the sample, e.g. Somalia 1960-1969 is included, Nigeria 1979-1983 is excluded
4. **Coup d’Etat rule:** coups are an indication that elections are not the main route to power.
 - a. The period prior to the coup is included in the sample only if the case satisfies the two-election rule, the independence rule, and the five year rule

- b. A coup that occurs after at least two consecutive contested elections is treated as the end of the regime; the observation is censored in the month of the coup, not recorded as a ruling party “death”.
 - c. Unsuccessful coups are not coded. An “unsuccessful” coup is one in which the incumbent executive returns to power within a month of the coup attempt, e.g. Chavez in Venezuela April 2002
 - d. A non-military suspension of multi-party contestation that occurs after two consecutive elections, such as a declaration of martial law or proclamation of a one-party state, is treated like a coup, i.e. the observation is censored.
 - e. A declaration of martial law or suspension of constitutional procedures is *not* coded as a coup if followed within five years by a contested election. Examples:
 - i. India 1975-1977: Indira Gandhi declares State of Emergency in June 1975, suspends civil liberties, eventually calls elections for March 1977; coded as no regime change.
 - ii. Malaysia 1969-1972: election held May 1969, leads to ethnic rioting, UMNO declares national emergency and suspends parliament, National Operations Council governs country until September 1970, contested parliamentary elections held September 1974; coded as no regime change.
 - iii. Mauritius 1971-1976: state of emergency declared December 1971 in response to MMM-led strikes, 1972 elections unilaterally postponed, parliamentary elections finally held December 1976, MMM allowed to contest; coded as no regime change.
 - f. Coded based on data from Nohlen handbooks, cross-checked against the CSP Coup d’Etat Database.
5. **Popular protest rule:** popular protests that lead to a change in ruling party are treated differently depending on whether they occurred in response to an election.
- a. If an election campaign or result, such as oppression of the opposition or ruling party attempts at electoral fraud, was the main immediate cause of a popular uprising, the result is coded as follows:
 - i. An incumbent’s loss of power due to a popular, election-related uprising is coded as ruling party “death” in the month the ruler leaves office.
 - ii. Popular protests that do not result in the incumbent leaving office are coded as no turnover.
 - b. If an election was *not* the main cause of a popular protest that led to a change of the ruling party, the event is coded as follows:
 - i. If the change in ruling party occurred through constitutionally-prescribed means, such as resignation and replacement by a constitutionally-designated successor, then the event is a ruling party “death.”
 - ii. If the change did *not* occur through constitutionally-prescribed means (e.g. military intervention to install a new civilian leader, popular rebellion, rebel victory, etc.), then the event is treated like

a coup—the observation is censored rather than a ruling party “death”.

Coding for the Dependent Variable - Ruling Party Duration in Power: The sample includes all ruling parties in electorally-contested country-regimes over the time period January 1950 to December 2006. Duration in power is measured in months.

1. **Birth observation:** The ruling party “birth”—the first period in the duration count—occurs in the month the party takes office, *not* the month the party is elected to office.
2. **Death observation:** The ruling party “death”—the last period in the duration count—occurs in the month the party leaves office
3. **Right-censored observations rule:** Duration counts that end with either a coup or the end of the observation period are treated as right-censored. That is, the ruling party remained in power during the last observed period, and subsequent periods are unobserved. A coup is *not* counted as a ruling party “death.”
4. **Left-censored observations rules:** Duration counts for incumbent party rule that begins before the first observation in the dataset (i.e. truncated observations) are treated as follows:
 - a. **Competitive regimes rule** (Democracies and electoral autocracies only): If the ruling party took office before January 1950, observations on all variables for the month the party took office are recorded and included in the dataset, and the duration count and regime period is adjusted accordingly.
 - i. E.g. in the U.S., the Democratic Party is the ruling party in January 1950, enters office March 1933, so the duration count is adjusted so that March 1933 is month 1, January 1950 is month 301 of ruling party duration.
 - ii. Note that regime periods are also adjusted: the U.S. regime is included in the sample from March 1933 to December 2006, *not* January 1950.
 - b. **Non-competitive regimes (“at risk”) rule:** If the ruling party took office before the first *contested* election, as determined above by the Contestation Criterion, then ruling party duration in power is counted two ways:
 - i. *duration*: This variable records when the incumbent party becomes *at risk* for “death,” beginning with the month the first contested elections for the executive are held.
 - ii. *duration2*: This variable records total duration from the month the party took office.
 - iii. If the party was founded by a non-elected incumbent, such as a military leader, the *duration2* count begins the month that leader took office, *not* the month the party was officially founded. As

before, the incumbent is at risk of defeat beginning in the month the first contested elections are held.

- c. **Independence rule:** If the party was in power before the country achieved independence, ruling party duration in power is counted from the month of independence.
 - i. E.g. in the Bahamas, the PLP took power in 1967, won reelection in 1972, 1977, 1982, and 1987, was defeated in August 1992. PLP ruling party duration count begins with Bahamas's independence, July 1973, ends August 1992.
5. **Name rule:** Incumbent parties frequently are renamed. Name changes are not coded as a change of ruling party if the following are true:
 - a. The leaders, organization, and supporters of the new party are substantially the same as the old
 - b. If the name change is due to a merger or split, the incumbent leader remains the same
 - c. Coded using the Nohlen handbooks, supplemented by handbooks of political parties:
 - i. *World Encyclopedia of Political Systems and Parties* (ed. George Delury and Deborah Kaple, 1999).
6. **Caretaker government (“six month”) rule:** In some regimes, caretaker (non-partisan) governments often assume power between a government's resignation and the next election. These are treated as follows:
 - a. If the caretaker government lasts *less than six full months*, then it is considered an extension of the previous government, regardless of what party replaces it. No turnover of power is recorded until a new PM from a different party assumes office. If the same party wins the subsequent elections, no turnover occurs despite the interim caretaker period.
 - i. E.g. In Bangladesh after 1996, all elections held only after the (partisan) government resigns and hands over power to a non-partisan cabinet led by the chief justice. So the ruling BNP's duration is coded as ending in June 1996, when the election winner BAL replaced the non-partisan caretaker government, rather than in March 1996, when the BNP resigned and handed over power.
 - b. If the caretaker government lasts *more than six full months*, then it is considered an independent government in its own right, and a turnover of power is recorded for the month the “caretaker” PM takes office, and again when a new partisan PM replaces the caretaker government.
 - i. E.g. in Finland the partisan PM resigned and handed power to a non-partisan PM in Dec. 1963; new elections not held and n/p PM not replaced until Sept. 1964, so both Dec. 1963 and Sept. 1964 are coded as a change of party.
 - c. “Caretaker” and non-partisan presidents in presidential regimes are coded using the same rule

Definition of a Dominant Party: For a ruling party to be included in the set of dominant parties, the following conditions must hold:

1. **20-Year Rule:** The ruling party has controlled the executive for an unbroken period of at least 20 years
 - a. In a parliamentary regime, the PM has come from the same party
 - b. In a presidential regime, the president has come from the same party
2. **Contested Election Rule:** The ruling party has been at risk of electoral defeat for at least 20 consecutive years
 - a. If the ruling party has not yet been defeated, it has been at risk of defeat in regularly scheduled elections for at least the previous 20 years
 - b. If the ruling party has lost power due to an electoral defeat, it held power at risk of defeat for at least the preceding 20 years
3. **Party Rule:** The chief executive must have turned over at least once during the ruling party's duration in power. Otherwise, the ruler is coded as a "personalist incumbent"

Definition of a First Mover: An incumbent executive is a first mover if it is the first to hold office in a newly-established electorally contested regime:

1. **Independence rule:** in formerly non-sovereign states, the first mover is the party that holds the chief executive office in the month the state becomes independent
 - a. E.g. Russia, independence from USSR finalized Dec. 1991, Yeltsin is incumbent president, so Yeltsin is first mover.
2. **First contested election rule:** in formerly closed or unstable autocracies, the party that wins the first fully-contested election for the executive is coded as the first mover
 - a. If the incumbent contests and wins the first election, the previous incumbent is the first mover. The duration count begins with the month of the election
 - i. E.g. Taiwan, first direct election of president occurs March 1996, KMT president Lee Teng-hui re-elected, KMT is the first mover, duration count begins March 1996
 - b. If the incumbent contests but loses the first election, the opposition winner is the first mover. The duration count begins with the month the opposition winner is seated.
 - i. E.g. Zambia, first direct election of president occurs October 1991, incumbent president Kaunda of UNIP loses election, opposition winner Chiluba of MMD seated Nov. 1991, MMD is the first mover, duration count begins then
 - c. If the incumbent does not run, the first election is an open-seat contest. The winner of the first election is the first mover. The duration count begins with the month the winner is seated.
 - i. E.g. Argentina, direct election of president occurs October 1983, military does not contest, winner Alfonsin of UCR seated

December 1983, UCR is the first mover, duration count begins then

Definition of an Advantaged First-Mover Party: A first-mover party is “advantaged” if it has full control of the institutions of the central government when the regime begins.

A party has “full control” if the following conditions hold:

1. **Chief executive rule:** A member of the party holds the chief executive office.
 - a. In presidential regimes, the president is a member of the party
 - i. The candidate’s vote share in the presidential election does not matter, only that he/she was seated in the office
 - b. In parliamentary regimes, the prime minister is a member of the party
 - c. In semi-presidential regimes, both the prime minister and the (directly-elected) president are members of the same party
2. **Legislature rule:** The party that controls the chief executive office must also have a majority of seats in the legislature.
 - a. In unicameral or weak bicameral legislatures, the party controls at least 50% of the seats in the lower house
 - b. In strong bicameral legislatures, the party controls at least 50% of the seats in both houses
 - c. Multi-party coalitions are coded as single-party majorities only if there is a pre-electoral pact between parties *and* this coalition wins a majority of seats
3. **First election rule:** The party must secure or retain control of the chief executive and legislature in the first election of the regime.
 - a. Parties that preside over independence but lose the first election are not advantaged, e.g. PUP incumbent party in Belize at independence, September 1981, loses first post-independence election in December 1984, replaced by opposition UDP. PUP coded as non-advantaged first mover.
 - b. See First Mover definition for first election coding rule.

Miscellaneous Notes:

1. Four regimes were excluded because of power-sharing or party-rotation requirements in the executive: Lebanon, Switzerland, Uruguay (1952-1967), Colombia (1958-1974).
2. Zimbabwe, Sri Lanka, and Gambia all changed executive selection from parliamentary to presidential. Because this is a critical distinction in the analysis, these are treated as changes of regime, i.e. Zimbabwe is coded as two separate regimes, one from April 1980-December 1987, and one from December 1987-present.
3. The start month in electorally-contested regime is coded differently depending on whether the incumbent wins or loses the first election. Ideally, the official beginning of the new executive term would be counted as the first month in office for both new and continuing incumbents. However, because data on the

beginning of new incumbent terms were lacking for most continuing incumbents, the month the first election is held is coded as the start month of the electorally-contested regime when the incumbent wins the first election.

An Example: The Philippines.

- Gained independence July 4, 1946.
- Roxas of the Liberal Party elected first president in April 1946, prior to independence
- Roxas dies in office, April 15, 1948, succeeded by vice president Quirino, of the Liberal Party.
- Quirino re-elected 1949, in office until 1953, defeated by Magsaysay of the Nacionalista Party, left office in December.
 - **Enters dataset July 1946, because incumbent party as of January 1950 took office then**
 - **Coded as change in ruling party, December 1953**
 - **Regime satisfies two election rule, December 1953**
 - **Regime satisfies independence rule, December 1953**
 - **Roxas holds presidency at independence, so Liberal Party is a First Mover**
 - **In 1946, Liberal Party holds 49 of 98 seats in House, or 50%, and 9 of 16 seats in the Senate, or 56.25%. So Liberal Party is an Advantaged First-Mover Party.**
 - **Total Liberal Party duration: July 1946 to December 1953 = 89 months**
- Magsaysay in office until March 1957, killed in plane crash. Succeeded by Garcia, also of the Nacionalista Party.
 - **Coded as no change in ruling party**
 - **Regime satisfies five year rule, January 1955**
- Garcia re-elected in 1957, serves until defeated in Nov. 1961, leaves office in December 1961, succeeded by Macapagal of the Liberal Party.
 - **Coded as change in ruling party, December 1961**
- Macapagal defeated for reelection in Nov. 1965, leaves office in December. Succeeded by Marcos of the Nacionalista Party.
 - **Coded as change in ruling party, December 1965**
- Marcos reelected in 1969.
- Marcos declares martial law in September 1972. No direct election of the presidency until 1981.
 - **Coded as regime change; observation of incumbent duration censored**
 - **September 1972 - January 1986 coded as non-competitive; observations not included in sample**
- Martial law lifted January 1981.
- June 1981, Marcos re-elected president, inaugurated for another term. Opposition boycotts.

- **Coded as non-competitive election; observations not included in sample**
- Nov. 1985, Marcos calls for early presidential election in Feb. 1986
- Presidential election held in Feb. 1986, contested by opposition, highly competitive, results disputed
- Feb. 15, Marcos declared winner, EDSA protests begin
- Feb. 25, Marcos leaves country, Aquino of the UNIDO inaugurated as president
 - **Coded as regime change, competitive regime beginning February 1986**
 - **Aquino of UNIDO coded as First Mover in 2nd Philippine electorally-contested regime; duration count begins February 1986**
 - **Supporters of Aquino in legislative elections did not run under single party label, so seat totals unclear. No obvious majority for president in House; coded as no first-mover advantage.**
- Aquino not eligible for re-election. Ramos of the LE-NUCD elected in May 1992, takes office in June 1992
 - **Coded as change in ruling party, June 1992**
- Ramos not eligible for re-election. Estrada of the LMP elected in May 1998, takes office in June 1998.
 - **Coded as change in ruling party, June 1998**
- Estrada impeached, removed from office by ruling of the Supreme Court, January 2001. Succeeded by Arroyo of the LE-NUCD-UMDP.
 - **Coded as a constitutionally-prescribed change in incumbent, January 2001**
 - **Coded as change in ruling party, January 2001**
- Arroyo re-elected in competitive elections in May 2004, inaugurated for full term in June 2004. Current incumbent.
 - **Data series ends December 2006; coded as censored observation**

The entry for the Philippines in the dataset then appears as follows:

Country	Party #	Start Month	End Month	Duration at risk (m)	Censored? (y=1)
Philippines					
(I)	1	Jul-46	Dec-53	89	0
	2	Dec-53	Dec-61	96	0
	3	Dec-61	Dec-65	48	0
	4	Dec-62	Sep-72	117	1
Philippines					
(II)	1	Feb-86	Jun-92	76	0
	2	Jun-92	Jun-98	72	0
	3	Jun-98	Jan-01	31	0
	4	Jan-01	Dec-06	71	1

Appendix B. Electorally Contested Regimes in the Sample

<i>Regime</i>	<i>Regime Months</i>	<i>Regime</i>	<i>Regime Months</i>
Albania	Mar-91 to Dec-06	El Salvador	Jun-84 to Dec-06
Andorra	Dec-93 to Dec-06	Estonia	Sep-91 to Dec-06
Antigua and Barbuda	Nov-81 to Dec-06	Ethiopia	May-95 to Dec-06
Argentina	Dec-83 to Dec-06	Fiji	Oct-70 to May-87
Armenia	Dec-91 to Dec-06	Finland	Mar-48 to Dec-06
Australia	Dec-49 to Dec-07	France (I)	Oct-49 to Jan-59
Austria	Jul-55 to Dec-06	France (II)	Jan-59 to Dec-06
Azerbaijan	Oct-98 to Dec-06	Gabon	Dec-93 to Dec-06
Bahamas	Jul-73 to Dec-06	Gambia (I)	Feb-65 to May-82
Bangladesh	Mar-91 to Dec-06	Gambia (II)	May-82 to Jul-94
Barbados	Nov-66 to Dec-06	Gambia (II)	Sep-96 to Dec-06
Belarus	Jul-94 to Dec-06	Georgia	Oct-92 to Dec-06
Belgium	Aug-49 to Dec-06	Germany	Sep-49 to Dec-06
Belize	Sep-81 to Dec-06	Ghana	Nov-92 to Dec-06
Benin	Apr-91 to Dec-06	Greece (I)	Jan-50 to Apr-67
Bolivia (I)	Jun-56 to Nov-64	Greece (II)	Nov-74 to Dec-06
Bolivia (II)	Aug-85 to Dec-06	Grenada	Dec-84 to Dec-06
Botswana	Sep-66 to Dec-06	Guatemala	Jan-86 to Dec-06
Brazil (I)	Jan-51 to Mar-64	Guinea	Dec-93 to Dec-06
Brazil (II)	Mar-85 to Dec-06	Guyana (I)	May-66 to Oct-80
Bulgaria	Jun-90 to Dec-06	Guyana (II)	Oct-92 to Dec-06
Burkina Faso	Nov-98 to Dec-06	Honduras	Jan-82 to Dec-06
Cambodia	Jul-98 to Dec-06	Hungary	May-90 to Dec-06
Cameroon	Oct-92 to Dec-06	Iceland	Dec-49 to Dec-06
Canada	Oct-35 to Dec-06	India	Aug-47 to Dec-06
Cape Verde	Jan-91 to Dec-06	Indonesia	Oct-99 to Dec-06
Chad	Jun-96 to Dec-06	Ireland	Feb-48 to Dec-06
Chile (I)	Nov-46 to Sep-73	Israel	May-48 to Dec-06
Chile (II)	Mar-90 to Dec-06	Italy	Dec-45 to Dec-06
Colombia	Aug-74 to Dec-06	Ivory Coast	Oct-90 to Dec-99
Comoros	Apr-02 to Dec-06	Jamaica	Aug-62 to Dec-06
Cook Islands	Aug-65 to Dec-06	Japan	Apr-52 to Dec-06
Costa Rica	Jul-53 to Dec-06	Kenya	Dec-92 to Dec-06
Croatia	Jun-91 to Dec-06	Kiribati	Jul-79 to Dec-06
Cyprus (I)	Aug-60 to Jul-74	Korea, S. (I)	Aug-48 to May-61
Cyprus (II)	Dec-74 to Dec-06	Korea, S. (II)	Oct-63 to Oct-72
Czech Republic	Jan-93 to Dec-06	Korea, S. (III)	Feb-88 to Dec-06
Denmark	Nov-47 to Dec-06	Kyrgyzstan	Aug-91 to Dec-06
Djibouti	May-93 to Dec-06	Latvia	Sep-91 to Dec-06
Dominica	Nov-78 to Dec-06	Lesotho	Apr-93 to Dec-06
Dominican Republic	Jul-66 to Dec-06	Liechtenstein	Jul-28 to Dec-06
Ecuador (I)	Sep-48 to Nov-61	Lithuania	Sep-91 to Dec-06
Ecuador (II)	Aug-79 to Feb-97	Luxembourg	Oct-45 to Dec-06

Macedonia	Sep-91 to Dec-06	Spain	Jun-77 to Dec-06
Madagascar	Mar-93 to Feb-02	Sri Lanka (I)	Feb-48 to Feb-78
Malawi	May-94 to Dec-06	Sri Lanka (II)	Feb-78 to Dec-06
Malaysia	Aug-65 to Dec-06	Suriname	Sep-91 to Dec-06
Mali	Jun-92 to Dec-06	Sweden	Sep-36 to Dec-06
Malta	Sep-64 to Dec-06	Taiwan	Mar-96 to Dec-06
Marshall Islands	Oct-86 to Dec-06	Tanzania	Oct-95 to Dec-06
Mauritius	Mar-68 to Dec-06	Thailand	Sep-92 to Sep-06
Mexico	Jul-46 to Dec-06	Trinidad and Tobago	Aug-62 to Dec-06
Micronesia	Nov-86 to Dec-06	Turkey (I)	Jul-46 to May-60
Moldova	Aug-91 to Dec-06	Turkey (II)	Oct-87 to Dec-06
Mongolia	Jul-90 to Dec-06	Tuvalu	Oct-78 to Dec-06
Mozambique	Oct-94 to Dec-06	Ukraine	Dec-91 to Dec-06
Myanmar	Jan-48 to Mar-62	United Kingdom	Jul-45 to Dec-06
Namibia	Mar-90 to Dec-06	United States	Mar-33 to Dec-06
Nauru	Jan-68 to Dec-06	Uruguay	Mar-85 to Dec-06
Nepal	May-91 to Oct-02	Vanuatu	Jul-80 to Dec-06
Netherlands	Aug-48 to Dec-06	Venezuela	Feb-59 to Dec-06
New Zealand	Dec-49 to Dec-06	Zambia	Nov-91 to Dec-06
Nicaragua	Apr-90 to Dec-06	Zimbabwe (I)	Apr-80 to Dec-87
Niger	Dec-99 to Dec-06	Zimbabwe (II)	Dec-87 to Dec-06
Nigeria	May-99 to Dec-06		
Norway	May-45 to Dec-06		
Pakistan	Dec-88 to Oct-99		
Palau	Oct-94 to Dec-06		
Panama	Sep-94 to Dec-06		
Papua New Guinea	Sep-75 to Dec-06		
Paraguay	May-93 to Dec-06		
Peru	Jul-80 to Dec-06		
Philippines (I)	Jul-46 to Sep-72		
Philippines (II)	Feb-86 to Dec-06		
Poland	Dec-91 to Dec-06		
Portugal	Jul-76 to Dec-06		
Romania	May-90 to Dec-08		
Russia	Dec-91 to Dec-06		
St Kitts and Nevis	Sep-83 to Dec-06		
St Lucia	Feb-79 to Dec-06		
St Vincent	Oct-79 to Dec-06		
Samoa	Jan-62 to Dec-06		
Sao Tome & Principe	Feb-91 to Dec-06		
Senegal	Feb-78 to Dec-06		
Seychelles	Jul-93 to Dec-06		
Singapore	Aug-65 to Dec-06		
Slovakia	Jan-93 to Dec-06		
Slovenia	Jun-91 to Dec-06		
Solomon Islands	Jul-78 to Jun-00		
Somalia	Jul-60 to Oct-69		
South Africa (I)	Jun-48 to May-94		
South Africa (II)	May-94 to Dec-06		

Appendix C. Survey Questions for Figures in Chapter 6

Many thanks to the Election Study Center at National Cheng Chi University for access to these survey questions and time series. Data are from various years of the Taiwan Election and Democratization Study (TEDS). More information can be found at the TEDS archive, at: <http://www.tedsnet.org/cubekm2/front/bin/home.phtml>

Figure 6.3

The survey instrument for this measure reads: “In our society, some people consider themselves to be “Taiwanese.” Others consider themselves to be “Chinese,” while still others consider themselves to be “both Taiwanese and Chinese.” Do you consider yourself to be “Taiwanese,” “Chinese,” or “both”?”

The original Chinese text in the survey instrument is:

我們社會上，有人說自己是「台灣人」，也有人說自己是「中國人」，也有人說「都是」。請問您認為自己是「台灣人」、「中國人」，或者「都是」？

Figure 6.4

The survey instrument for this measure reads: “Thinking about Taiwan’s relations with the mainland, consider the following differing positions:

1. Immediate reunification
2. Immediate declaration of independence
3. Maintain the status quo, but move toward unification in the future
4. Maintain the status quo, but move toward independence in the future
5. Maintain the status quo but decide in the future about unification or independence
6. Maintain the status quo indefinitely

Which of these positions is closest to your own?

The original Chinese text is:

關於台灣和大陸的關係，有下面幾種不同的看法：

- 1.儘快（台語：卡緊）統一；
- 2.儘快（台語：卡緊）宣布獨立；
- 3.維持現狀，以後走向統一；
- 4.維持現狀，以後走向獨立；
- 5.維持現狀，看情形再決定獨立或統一；
- 6.永遠維持現狀。請問您比較偏向那一種？

Figure 6.7

The survey instrument for this measure reads, “At present in our country there are several important political parties, including the KMT, the DPP, the PFP, the NP, the TAIP, and the TSU. Do you consider yourself close to any particular party?”

If respondent answers no: “Do you feel yourself a little closer to one of the political parties than the others?”

If respondent answers yes: “Which party do you feel closest to?”

If a party is named: “Do you feel very close to this party, somewhat close, or not very close?”

The original Chinese text is:

目前國內有幾個主要政黨，包括國民黨、民進黨、親民黨、新黨、建國黨，以及台灣團結聯盟，請問您是否（台：敢有）偏向哪一個政黨？

那相對來說（台：那安捏比較起來），請問您有沒有稍微偏向哪一個政黨？

請問是哪一個政黨？

請問，您偏向這個政黨的程度是很強，普通，還是有一點？

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