

Analysis for Taiwan 2010 Five-Cities Elections

| Yao-nan Hung

Election results showed the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) failed to clinch three or four special municipalities as expected, but the party won the popular vote (see Figure 1) by more than 400,000 votes over the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT). In the city councilor elections, though the DPP for the first time ended in a tie with the KMT, with each claiming 130 seats, the number of the seats the DPP garnered has surged significantly (see Figure 2). Other parties and non-partisan or independent candidates gained only 54 city councilor seats.

The DPP undoubtedly held a large lead over the KMT throughout the election campaigns. DPP Chairperson Tsai Ing-wen once said people's sentiment during vote count formed the yardstick of winning or losing elections. Perhaps it is because the public had higher expectations for the seats the DPP would win that they felt the election results had fallen short of hopes. There may be numerous variables contributing to the electoral victories and losses, but these election results will influence the future of the two major political parties mainly in the following ways:

Elections Ended the “Blue-Green” Divide

1990-2000: Locals and Non-locals

After former president Lee Teng-hui became acting president in 1988, he resorted to arousing conflicts between the mainstream and the non-mainstream in order to fortify his power within the KMT and win the party's nomination for the 1990 presidential election. Since pushing for the popular presidential election, Lee had also formulated the struggle between locals and non-locals and successfully won the KMT's nomination to run for Taiwan's first-ever popular presidential election in 1996.

2000-2010: Pan-blue and Pan-green

In the 2000 presidential election, the DPP's candidate Chen Shui-bian faced two rivals who respectively led the two split forces of the KMT, namely Lien Chan, the KMT's candidate, and James Soong, who later founded the People First Party (PFP). The KMT, which lost power for the first time in the 2000 presidential election, affiliated itself with the New Party and the PFP to form the pan-blue base. The 2004 presidential election was

an extension of the confrontation between the pan-blue and the pan-green camps. However, because of the March 19 shooting incident on the eve of the 2004 presidential election, the pan-blue camp had turned the race into a confrontation between Chen's opponents and supporters. The 2005 local elections of county magistrates and city mayors, the 2006 mayoral elections in Taipei and Kaohsiung under the shadow of the "red-shirt army," and the 2008 legislative and presidential elections had seen the escalation and finally the climax of the anti-Chen forces. Voting for the KMT's candidate Ma Ying-jeou in the 2008 presidential election was in a way a reflection of the anti-Chen sentiment.

The strong sentiment among the pan-blue camp generated by its opposition to Chen had become directionless after Chen's detention in 2008. Consequently, blue camp supporters' motive and desire for voting had flagged. Although Sean Lien's being wounded by a gunshot on the eve of the five special municipality elections had stimulated voter turnout, raised it to 5 to 7 percent higher than the expected 65 percent, and resulted in the parties' share of the vote being again in line with the sizes of the blue-camp and the green-camp bases, the gap between the blue camp's and the green camp's share of the vote has been significantly narrowed compared with

that in the 2008 presidential election (narrowed by 14 percent in Taipei City and by 18 percent in Sinbei City).

2010: The Beginning of a New Era

Changes in mobilization approaches: In Lee Teng-hui's time, people were mobilized through the stimulation of local consciousness or Taiwan-centric consciousness. During the Chen administration since 2000, every election campaign had been geared toward intensifying ethnic consciousness, and ethnic mobilization had become one of the DPP's basic campaign strategies. However, through the five special municipality elections, the DPP has transformed ethnic mobilization into class mobilization. On their campaign trails, DPP candidates spoke about issues that the middle class and the lower middle class are concerned about, such as social housing and childcare.

The Transformation of Local Factions

The merger and upgrade of the municipalities (Taichung County and Taichung City, Tainan County and Tainan City, and Kaohsiung County and Kaohsiung City) have downsized political resources. For example, township and district chiefs will be appointed, elections of township and district representatives canceled, and city council seats reduced. The fierce

competition will impact changes in the climate of local factions. Local factions are expected to weaken and transform. The conflicts between local factions and the KMT’s nominations during the special municipality elections have helped the DPP expand its political terrain in Greater Tainan and Greater Kaohsiung, and Greater Taichung’s political landscape has also experienced seismic changes.

during the campaigns the DPP has promoted its policies and beliefs extensively through the Internet, interactions with voters, support groups initiated and organized by citizens, living room meetings, and concerts. The DPP did not win the confidence of the majority of the electorate, but it has emerged from the blue-green structure and established the center-left line as its base. In contrast, the KMT has sunk further into the blue-green maelstrom and has turned every election into a confrontation between the blue and the green camps. The reality is that voters already know which side is the victor and which side the loser. **BT**

The Beginning of a New Era of Election Campaigns

Although the KMT retained three special municipalities and the DPP won two seats,

Figure 1: Political parties’ share of the vote in the five special municipality elections

| Political parties | Number of votes | % of votes |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------|------------|
| DPP | 3,772,373 | 49.87% |
| KMT | 3,369,052 | 44.54% |
| DPP + KMT | 7,141,425 | 94.41% |
| Independent and non-partisan candidates | 422,692 | 5.59% |

Figure 2: Political parties' share of city councilor seats in the five special municipalities

| Political parties | Number of seats |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------|
| KMT | 130 |
| DPP | 130 |
| Independent and non-partisan candidates | 45 |
| FPF | 4 |
| New Party | 3 |
| Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU) | 2 |

Figure 3: Political parties' share of the vote in the five special municipalities' city councilor elections

| Political parties | Number of votes | % of votes |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------|------------|
| KMT | 2,890,154 | 38.63% |
| DPP | 2,643,828 | 35.34% |
| FPF | 151,661 | 2.03% |
| TSU | 126,359 | 1.69% |
| New Party | 95,050 | 1.27% |
| Green Party | 24,650 | 0.33% |
| Taiwan Constitution Association | 188 | 0% |
| Taiwan Citizens' Will Party | 138 | 0% |
| All parties | 5,932,028 | 79.28% |
| Independent and non-partisan candidates | 1,549,926 | 20.72% |