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Abstract

For decades, Taiwan's relationship with China has been an important policy issue. On January 11, 2020, voters in Taiwan went to the polls in part to determine the state's future with China. This election is a fascinating study in election data, polling results, and electoral consequences. After the 2018 midterms, popular opinion suggested that the pro-China policies of the Kuomintang Party (KMT) would prevail in the 2020 general election. However, a wave of anti-China sentiment swept the country in the wake of the Hong Kong protests. The protests left many Taiwanese fearful of a closer relationship with China. Despite efforts by China to influence the election, President Tsai Ing-wen, of the progressive Democratic People's Party (DPP) won a decisive victory over Han Kuo-yu and the KMT. The DPP was also successful at winning seats in Taiwan's legislature, the Yuan.

The results of the election also provide an interesting study into the effects of electoral systems. Taiwan uses a parallel system, which allows political scientists to observe the practical functionality of this unique electoral system. Taiwan's location in the South China Sea, a region of increasing global importance, makes this study even more fascinating. In presidential elections FPTP is used; this has contributed to the development of two major parties, the DPP and KMT. In legislative elections, Taiwan uses a PR system, which allows for more cohesiveness and gives a voice to minorities.

It is possible that by rejecting a closer relationship with China Taiwan will see economic development and stronger relationships with other democracies. However, in the wake of the election, China could further pressure and influence the otherwise democratic institutions of Taiwan. While the effects of the election remain to be seen, they should be considered a global victory for democracy and for Taiwan.