

Taiwan: Presidential Election 2020 Scene Setter | Stanford Internet Observatory

By Stanford Internet Observatory

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On Saturday, January 11, 2020, Taiwanese citizens will vote for their next president. The contest is between the candidates of two parties: Tsai Ing-Wen, incumbent president and a member of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and Han Kuo-Yu, the challenger representing the Nationalist Party (Kuomintang, or KMT). While the focus of Stanford Internet Observatory's project is the upcoming Taiwanese election, we begin with a brief summary of the historical context of these political parties.

From 1945-1949, following Japan's defeat at the end of WWII and its handover of Taiwan, the Nationalist Party (KMT) was briefly the de facto government of both China and Taiwan. However, the KMT was defeated by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) during the Chinese Civil War, and in 1949 the KMT government fled to Taiwan. At that point, both the KMT government (in exile) and the CCP government in Beijing claimed to be the legitimate government of China, as the countries of the world split on what entity to recognize as the rightful leaders of China. In 1971, Taiwan was [expelled from the United Nations](#), and the CCP was recognized as the ruling government of China in the UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council.

The Taiwanese government remained largely a single-party entity until 1987, when it lifted martial law and allowed competing political parties to emerge. The most significant of these was the [Democratic Progressive Party \(DPP\)](#), which [in 2000](#) became the first opposition party to win the presidency. The DPP has controlled the presidency since 2016.

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