The Polarization of Taiwan’s Party Competition in the DPP Era

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1. Polarizing Politics after 2000?

The Democratic Progressive Party’s (DPP) victory in Taiwan’s second direct presidential election in 2000 was widely acclaimed as a democratic milestone for the island. It was the first instance of a Chinese society experiencing a change in ruling parties through a free democratic election. Election rhetoric meant that the public had unrealistically high hopes for the new administration. There was an initial honeymoon period in which the president received high support levels and faced a relatively uncritical media.¹ In order to create a smooth transition and a working relationship with the majority party in the parliament, the DPP appointed Kuomintang (KMT) party members as premier and a number of ministers. Even within the KMT, many saw the positive side of losing power, as the party embarked on its most ambitious program of party reforms since the late 1950s.² In short, there was a great deal of optimism at the outset of the DPP era.

By the first anniversary of the change in ruling parties, much of the initial goodwill had been dissipated.³ The attempt by the opposition parties to recall Chen over his

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² This point was made by a number of KMT politicians to the author during interviews in 2001. Key reforms included a complete reregistering of party members and the introduction of a radical new nomination system that incorporated closed member primaries and public opinion polls.
³ Satisfaction with Chen’s performance had fallen almost 40 percent to only 41 percent. See TVBS Poll
handling of the Fourth Nuclear Power Station construction project represents the first in a series of unprecedented political crises Taiwan has faced during the DPP era. These include the island’s worst economic recession, record levels of unemployment, high levels of political violence, a series of corruption scandals involving high ranking DPP politicians including Chen and his close relatives, huge demonstrations calling on the president to step down over corruption allegations and three votes in parliament to recall the president. A critical feature of this period has been the adversarial relationship between the ruling party and the coalition of opposition parties (known as the Pan Blue bloc). The incessant political conflicts in parliament have contributed to the declining public confidence in the island’s democratic institutions. This political cynicism has been visible in falling election turnout rates and also the public sentiment to punish the parliamentarians by halving their numbers.

Democratic theorists agree that democratic consolidation requires strong and institutionalized political parties. Back in the late 1990s, Shelley Rigger listed strengthening political parties as one of the six main challenges facing the island’s democracy. Ten years later, as we approach the end of the second Chen Shui-bian administration, it is a good time to take stock of the state of party competition. Since the DPP era has gained the reputation as a time of party polarization, this study focuses on the ideological dimension of party politics. The distance between the


4 The Pan Blue bloc incorporates the KMT, PFP and the NP. Blue refers to the main color on the KMT party badge.

5 In the December 2004 legislative elections the turnout fell to a record low of 59.16 percent and in the 2005 National Assembly elections the turnout was only 23.35, compared to 76.21 in the 1996 National Assembly contest. See Wu Chung-li, “Vote Misreporting and Survey Context: The Taiwan Case,” *Issues and Studies*, 42, No. 4 (December 2006): 223-239, 229; Editorial, “Finally an Election to Cheer about,” *Taipei Times*, May 15, 2005, 8.
island’s main political parties is examined by addressing the following core questions:

1. Are we witnessing an intensification of the levels of inter-party polarization?
2. If so, how do we explain this trend of policy divergence?
3. What are the prospects for party competition following the end of the Chen Shui-bian administration?

The answers to these questions have important implications for the quality of Taiwan’s democracy. Only where political parties offer distinct policy packages will voters view elections as making a difference. However, if the parties completely forsake the centre ground for the poles, then political stability is unlikely. In previous works, I argued that Taiwan had a healthy state of party competition, in which “although the main parties moved towards a moderate centre and ideological distance between parties has reduced, the parties consistently stress different issues and the public are able to distinguish between parties on core issues.”6 I term this pattern of competition “moderate party differentiation.”7 Thus this study aims to test whether Taiwan still deserves the label of a “healthy democracy.”8

Moreover, an examination of the factors creating heightened polarization can offer suggestions for how such divergent politics may be ameliorated. In Party Politics in Taiwan, I employed a framework which sought to explain changing party position as a result of changing internal balance of power between election orientated and ideologically conservative factions. It was hypothesized that when the party is

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7 Ibid, 143.
8 Working independently Joseph Wong also used the medical term to describe the quality of the island’s democracy in the volume Healthy Democracies: Welfare Politics in Taiwan and South Korea, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004).
dominated by election orientated politicians, the party will respond to public opinion and election results by taking more popular and moderate positions. In contrast, when the party is dominated by ideologically conservative factions, the party will seek to stick to its traditional positions, even though these may be “electoral poison.” I am interested to see whether this framework is still applicable to party change in the DPP era. Lastly, as we approach the end of the second Chen Shui-bian term it is important to examine the future prospects for party politics in Taiwan. As if Taiwan’s political elite continue on their current conflictual trajectory, the island’s democratic future must be called into question.

In order to examine changing patterns of ideological distance between the main parties, I look at the parties’ positions on the central salient issues during the second Chen Shui-bian administration. It is argued that in contrast to much of the Lee Teng-hui era and also much of the first Chen term, the parties have become increasingly polarized in Chen’s second term. The framework employed in Party Politics in Taiwan has been adjusted to one in which party change is explained as a result of inner-party and inner-bloc balance of power, in conjunction with responses to rival parties’ policy moves.

2. Salient political issues in the second Chen Shui-bian term?

In this paper, I examine changing party positions on the most salient issues of Chen’s second term. The following issue areas are discussed: (1) Taiwan independence versus Chinese unification, (2) Taiwanese versus Chinese identity, (3) constitutional reform, (4) military procurement, (5) political corruption. In each case, the generally

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9 The term electoral poison was often used by more moderate DPP politicians that the author interviewed in 2001 to refer to radical Taiwan independence.
convergent trends of the 1990s and first Chen administration are briefly sketched. This is followed by a more detailed discussion of the party divergence since 2004.

There has been significant variation in the most salient issues during the 1990s, in Chen’s first term and his second term. Political corruption shows considerable change in its salience in these three periods. Anti-corruption appeals were by far the most stressed issue in election campaigns of the 1990s. Then though the issue declined in salience during the first Chen term, anti-corruption returned to the top of the political agenda in his second term.

Almost all political scientists working on Taiwan agree that national identity is the most salient political issue in Taiwan’s electoral politics. Questions of national identity address two central issues, who are the people and what are the boundaries of the state. In the Taiwan case these overlap with the disputes over Taiwan independence versus unification (commonly known as the TongDu issue) and self identification as Chinese versus Taiwanese. These disputes have permeated almost every election since the outset of multi-party elections in the late 1980s. Overall changes in the issue structure in the post 2000 period has meant that as a number of the cross-cutting social issues have declined in salience, parties have become increasingly reliant on identity issues. During the 1990s both social welfare and political corruption were central appeals for the opposition parties to attack the KMT. However, since the DPP became the ruling party it has found dealing with these issues problematic and thus has increasingly fallen back on the tried and tested manipulation of the identity issue.

3.1 Party Movement on TongDu
The TongDu issue can be viewed as a spectrum in which the far left incorporates calls for immediate Taiwan independence (I term this “Pure Taiwan independence), the far right refers to calls for unification and the centre means maintaining the status quo. Between the two poles, the centre left (I term this “Diluted Taiwan independence”), which includes opposition to unification and more moderate self determination appeals, while the centre right (termed as “Taiwan independence: negative”) includes calls to protect the Republic of China (ROC) and opposition to independence.10

A number of studies have attested to the gradual process of convergence away from the parties’ initially polarized positions of the early 1990s.11 In 1991, the parties were truly poles apart. The DPP had just passed its Taiwan Independence Clause (TIC), which called for declaring a Republic of Taiwan (ROT) and a new constitution. In response, the KMT promoted the National Unification Guidelines (NUG), a framework for a three stage process towards eventual unification. However, during the 1990s, both parties moved away from these extreme positions. Although the KMT continued to attack the DPP’s Taiwan independence platform, it steered clear of unification during subsequent 1990s campaigns. In addition, the KMT co-opted a number of components of the DPP independence agenda, such as support for the UN application and scrapping the provincial government. The DPP also contributed to the convergent trend by dropping its open espousal of “Pure Taiwan independence. It ceased openly calling for a ROT, and instead repackaged its independence message with more electorally popular appeals, such as opposition to unification. The DPP’s more moderate approach was formalized in its 1999 Resolution Regarding Taiwan’s Future, which recognized the ROC as the national title. In addition, it was made clear

10 For more details on the sub-issues in this spectrum see Fell, Party Politics in Taiwan, 86-89.
that there was no need to declare independence as, “Following the 1992 general elections of the National Legislature, the 1996 direct presidential elections and constitutional reform to abolish the provincial government, Taiwan has become a democratic and independent country.”12 Although the KMT gave heavy emphasis to its terror equation of “DPP=Taiwan Independence=CCP invasion” in the 2000 presidential election, in terms of TongDu policy, the two parties were closer than at any time in their histories. There was little distance between Lee Teng-hui contention that cross-Strait relations be designated as “nation to nation (guojia yu guojia), or at least as special state to state ties (teshu de guoyuguo de guanxi),”13 and the DPP’s Resolution Regarding Taiwan’s Future. By the end of the Lee Teng-hui era, the parties had converged on the centre left of the TongDu spectrum.

Despite the inter-party tensions of the first Chen term, the convergent pattern on the TongDu spectrum did actually continue. In Chen’s inaugural speech he made his “Five Noes” declaration. In other words, so long as the PRC did not use military force against Taiwan, he would not declare Taiwan independence, would not support changing the national title of the Republic of China, would not push for the inclusion of Lee Teng-hui’s “state-to-state” description in the ROC Constitution, would not promote an island-wide referendum on the island’s status, and would not abolish the National Unification Council (NUC) or the NUG.14 This was the first time that the DPP had made such explicit declarations on moderating its cross-Strait positions.

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12 See DPP website
13 Cited in Richard Bush, “Lee Teng-hui and ‘Separatism,’” in Dangerous Strait: The US-Taiwan-China Crisis, ed. Nancy Bernkopf Tucker (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 70-92, 87. Lee made this comment in a radio interview with Deutsche Velle in July 1999. This statement is generally referred to as the “special state to state relations,” but is termed the “two state theory” (liangguo lun) by his detractors.
Throughout the first Chen administration, he did stick to these pledges and generally steered clear of TongDu in the election campaigns. In 2000, DPP Chairman Frank Hsieh went even further than Chen’s “five noes” in his remark that the DPP does not rule out unification as an option and that the party’s current goal is to defend Taiwan’s status quo. On occasion, Chen did make provocative statements, such as arguing that there is “one country on either side” of the Taiwan Strait and Taiwan should “go its own way.” Nevertheless, the general DPP trend was moderate, exemplified by the DPP’s decision in 2001 to elevate the Resolution Regarding Taiwan’s Future to the same level as the TIC in the party charter.

Initially the new KMT chair Lien Chan did make some attempts to reposition the party to the centre right on TongDu. Lien dropped references to the “special state to state” and floated a proposal for a confederacy model for cross-Strait relations in 2001. In addition, “one China” and the “1992 consensus” were again stressed. However, when in 2001 its fellow Pan Blue party, the NP held the first party to party talks with the Chinese Communist Party, the KMT did not follow suit. In an interview in 2001 the head of the KMT Mainland Affairs Department stated that the KMT tried to steer clear of unification because, “We know the Taiwan public is afraid of unification.” By 2003 the gap on TongDu between the parties once again narrowed, as the KMT ceased stressing “one China.” In the run up to the 2004 presidential election, KMT Vice Chairman Wang Jin-ping even refused to rule out Taiwan

17 Joyce Huang, “DPP makes minor revisions to stance on independence,” Taipei Times, October 21, 2001, 3.
independence as a possible future option. Chairman Lien Chan took a slightly more centrist stance by commenting that, “We are opposed to the ideas of immediate independence, we also oppose immediate unification.” Unlike in 1996 and 2000, the KMT refrained from using the anti Taiwan independence terror equation in the 2004 presidential campaign. In a mark of convergence, the KMT even allowed a Referendum Bill to be passed in late 2003, despite the fact that many view referendums as a component of Taiwan independence.

Following his narrow and controversial victory in 2004, Chen began his second term on a moderate note. In his 2004 inaugural address, Chen reiterated his “five noes” pledge and called for establishing a cross-party “Committee for Cross-Strait Peace and Development,” to draft the “Guidelines for Cross-Strait Peace and Development.” In early 2005, Chen also infuriated Taiwan independence extremists by signing a ten-point agreement with PFP leader James Soong that reiterated support of the ROC.

It was not until the final two years of Chen’s second term that we saw a more consistent DPP move away from the centre ground on TongDu. Firstly, in January 2006, Chen Shui-bian raised the idea of scrapping the NUG and NUC. This created a political storm, as such a move would be breaking one of Chen’s “five noes.” Finally, on February 27, Chen announced that the NUG would cease to apply and

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21 Ibid.
NUC cease to function.\(^{26}\) Although the play with words was meant to appease the US, in reality both the NUG and NUC have been scrapped.

Despite the storm created by Chen’s abolition of the NUC and NUG, the move was more symbolic than substantive. Both had already been marginalized under Lee’s second term and already ceased to function or apply as soon as Chen came to office in 2000. On March 4, 2007 Chen made his most comprehensive repudiation of the “five noes” when he declared that, “Taiwan wants independence, wants name rectification, wants a new Constitution and development.”\(^{27}\) Even tougher rhetoric has been used by the DPP party chairman and possible presidential contender Yu Hsi-kun, who has stated that if he wins election, he will no longer accept the “four noes and one without” pledge.\(^{28}\)

The KMT’s critical move away from the centre on TongDu came in the immediate aftermath of the PRC passage of its Anti Succession Law (ASL) in February 2005, a law which aimed to formalize the PRC’s threat to use force against Taiwan if it crossed certain red lines. This was an opportunity for a cross-party unity in the face of the China threat, something that Taiwan did achieve for much of the Lee presidency. Although a number of KMT leaders including Ma Ying-jeou did openly attack the ASL, the Blue camp boycotted the 1 million strong protest march against the ASL on March 26, 2005.\(^{29}\) Undoubtedly, the historic visit by KMT chairman Lien Chan to the PRC in April 2005 did help to reduce cross-strait tensions, but it had a divisive impact


\(^{29}\) Caroline Hong, “Blue Camp calls rally a waste,” Taipei Times, March 27, 2005, 5.
on Taiwan. Lien’s departure from Chiang Kai-shek International Airport for China saw the worst scenes of political violence between rival party supporters since the early 1990s. Lien’s promotion of the “One China” principle, failure to mention the ROC or the condemn the ASL and pledge to cooperate with the CCP against Taiwan independence mean that the KMT was moving even further to right than in the early 1990s. The KMT had been fostering closer ties with the CCP since Chen’s first term, however, Lien’s trip was the first time any of Taiwan’s major parties had face to face meetings with leading CCP and PRC officials. Not only was the visit undermining the elected DPP government but it also went against the letter of the KMT era NUG, which stipulated that official negotiations should only take place after the ending of the state of hostility.

Since Ma Ying-jeou replaced Lien Chan as KMT Chairman in the summer of 2005, the party has continued its rightwards direction. Ma has pledged to uphold the agreements that Lien reached in the PRC and given Lien a free hand to continue improving cross-Strait ties. To appeal to floating voters, Ma issued a newspaper ad in the Liberty Times to explain that independence could be an option for Taiwan, though he later clarified that it was not an option for the KMT. Instead, Ma has been making increasingly pro-unification statements. In a December 2005 interview with Newsweek magazine, Ma argued that “For our party, the eventual goal is unification.” Under Ma, the KMT has also revived its support and emphasis of the NUG and the “One China principle.” During Ma’s UK tour in 2006, he called for a

32 Since leaving the KMT head quarters Lien has continued making visits to China. During Ma’s visit to London in February 2006, Ma reaffirmed his support of the agreements that Lien had struck with the PRC.
return to the “1992 consensus” of “One China different interpretations,” at the same time, the KMT’s Deputy Party Whip Tsai Chin-lung called for a return to the NUG and NUC, calling them, “a safety value in the often tense relations between Taiwan and China.” In response to Chen’s abolition of the NUG and NUC, Ting Shou-chung, a senior KMT legislator, even attempted to initiate a recall vote to punish Chen for taking Taiwan to the “brink of war.” More recently, Ma has again called for Taiwan to return to the “1992 consensus” as the basis for reviving the dialogue with the CCP that had been broken off since 1999. In short, by the time of writing this piece, the leaders of both main parties have dragged their parties to their most polarized positions on TongDu since the early 1990s.

Analysis of survey data in Table 1 can also offer some support for the trend towards party polarization on the TongDu issue. The survey question asks respondents to place themselves and the main parties on an issue spectrum in which the fastest independence equals 0, maintaining the status quo is 5, and immediate unification is 10. As with the qualitative review of party movement, the public views the main parties as moving towards the centre during the 1990s through to 2000, then the parties are seen as diverging through to December 2004. The table also shows how unlike in the 1990s, when the KMT remained close to the median voter, the gap between the public and the main parties on TongDu has widened considerably since 2000. In other words, the polarization of parties has taken them out of step from median public opinion which has remained close to the centre since the mid 1990s.

Table 1: Party Image Survey on the Taiwan independence versus Chinese unification spectrum

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Note 1: This table shows where respondents place themselves and the main political parties on an issue spectrum in which the fastest independence equals 0, maintaining the status quo is 5, and immediate unification is 10.

Note 2: The 2002 survey only covered Taipei and Kaohsiung city, so these figures represent the average placement for these two cities.


3.2 Party Movement on Taiwan versus Chinese identity

We see a similar pattern of convergence and more recently polarization on the Taiwan versus Chinese identity spectrum. The far left of this spectrum is a form of exclusive Taiwanese identity that incorporates anti-Mainlander appeals and the tragic Taiwan appeals, the centre left includes more inclusive Taiwanese appeals, such as the “New Taiwanese, the centre is dual identity, the centre right is ROC identity and the far right
is greater Chinese nationalism.\footnote{For the detailed list of the sub-issues I include in each zone of this spectrum see Fell, \textit{Party Politics in Taiwan}, 88.}

In 1991 the parties took quite contrasting identity appeals during the first full democratic multi-party election. The DPP stressed an exclusive Taiwanese identity, with anti Mainlander attacks focusing on Premier Hau Pei-tsun, and giving heavy emphasis to the tragic Taiwan appeals such as “White Terror” and the February 28 Incident. In contrast, the KMT still used the Chinese nationalist symbol Chiang Kai-shek in its ads and made Mandarin its primary language of political communication. However, in the 1990s the two parties moved closer on the symbolic dimensions of identity. By the mid 1990s, the KMT was appealing to voters at the centre with its slogan, “We’re all Taiwanese, even more, we’re Chinese.”\footnote{United Daily News, December 1, 1994, 1.} Chinese nationalist symbols such as Chiang Kai-shek and Sun Yat-sen were dropped from the KMT’s ads, and the KMT began to actively compete with the DPP over ownership of Taiwan identity. Examples of this new project include the increasing use of maps of Taiwan in KMT political advertising and Lee Teng-hui’s “New Taiwanese” discourse in 1998.\footnote{For an example of the rising use of Taiwan maps in KMT ads see KMT ad, \textit{China Times}, 12 March, 1996, 20; For details of Lee’s famous New Taiwanese speech see Corcuff, \textit{Memories of the Future}, 187.} The DPP also adjusted its identity message from the mid 1990s, reducing use of the tragic Taiwan appeals and also anti-Mainlander appeals, as by the mid 1990s the KMT had ceased to be a Mainlander dominated party. By the end of the Lee Teng-hui era, there appeared little difference on questions of identification. This was highlighted in the controversy over the “Getting to Know Taiwan” textbooks in 1997. Both the KMT and DPP were supportive of these new junior high school texts which were designed to tackle the long-term lack of coverage of Taiwan in society, history
and geography curriculum.\textsuperscript{41}

Under the DPP, Taiwan has seen a continuation and acceleration of the Taiwan consciousness policies begun by Lee Teng-hui. The Chen government was regularly denounced as promoting desinification policies. According to Chang Bi-yu the aim of DPP’s cultural policies is to, “reduce the Chinese claim on Taiwanese culture and political ownership.”\textsuperscript{42} Nevertheless, the Taiwan identity DPP rhetoric has been far greater than the actual policy implementation, thus claims of desinification have been wildly exaggerated. A good example is in language policy, where though native language education has been introduced to primary schools it only amounts to a couple of hours conversation class per week and is not a language of instruction for other subjects. As Henning Klöter argues, “Mandarin remains more equal.”\textsuperscript{43}

In a number of other identity related policies the DPP continued where the Lee administration left off. In the late 1990s, the KMT had cancelled the national holiday for Chiang Kai-shek’s birthday, Chen did the same for Sun Yat-sen’s birthday.\textsuperscript{44} Official commemorative activities for the February 28 Incident began under Lee, and under Chen February 28 became arguably the primary national holiday, increasingly eclipsing Double Tenth National Day. Similarly, just as Lee began the practice of using the ROC and Taiwan interchangeably, Chen has followed suit. The difference is that under Chen the balance is stacked heavily on the side of Taiwan. Thus in his 2000

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\item \textsuperscript{42} Chang Bi-yu, “Constructing the Motherland: Culture and the State since the 1990s,” in \textit{What has Changed? Taiwan before and After the Change in ruling Parties}, ed Dafydd Fell, Chang Bi-yu and Henning Klöter (Harrassowitz, 2006), 187-206, 203.
\item \textsuperscript{43} Henning Klöter, “Mandarin remains more equal: Changes and Continuities in Taiwan’s Language Policy,” in \textit{What has Changed? Taiwan before and After the Change in ruling Parties}, ed Dafydd Fell, Chang Bi-yu and Henning Klöter (Harrassowitz, 2006), 207-224.
\item \textsuperscript{44} See Chang, 201.
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inaugural speech he referred to Taiwan 33 times and the ROC only nine times.

The DPP is often accused of Hokklo chauvinism and stirring up ethnic tensions. For instance, Chao Chien-min talks of a process of “Hokkloization.” In the first term, the DPP had a mixed record in this area. It undoubtedly did reach out to certain minority groups, such as Hakka and aboriginals. There has been a large increase in the number of Hakka cultural centers, creation of Hakka TV and radio stations, and inclusion of Hakka as an option in the native language education project. Nevertheless, one group that has been excluded from this project is Mainlanders. Mainlanders have been largely overlooked in selecting cabinet ministers in the national government. While Mainlanders made up almost half of cabinet ministers in 1993, they accounted for just five percent or only two cabinet members in 2001. The DPP did also fall back on anti-Mainlander appeals in some campaigns. For instance, Chen cast doubt on Mainlander, Ma Ying-jeou’s loyalty to Taiwan by referring to him as having “athlete’s foot” (Hong Kong foot in Chinese). On the eve of the 2004 presidential election, the DPP organized the “Hand in Hand” Rally, in which citizens created a human chain from the far north to the far south of the island. For the DPP this was meant to be an inclusive multi-ethnic event to show a united front against the PRC missile threat, however by holding the event on February 28, it was perceived my many Mainlanders as further proof of Chen playing the divisive ethnic card.

In 2000 and 2001, the KMT employed a far stronger Chinese identity message than it

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47 Chao, 17.
had during the latter part of the Lee Teng-hui era. After a long absence, Chiang Ching-kuo and Sun Yat Sen returned to KMT election ads. In the 2001 legislative elections, the KMT used old TV footage of Chiang Ching-kuo in its TV ads.48 The KMT also gave greater importance to ROC nationalist rituals such as the pilgrimage to the Martyrs Shrine.49 However, by the time of the 2004 presidential campaign, the KMT was once again competing for ownership of Taiwan identity. The most consistently used KMT slogan in the campaign was “Change the president, Save Taiwan.”50 Similarly, in the climax of the campaign, Pan Blue presidential candidates Lien Chan and James Soong kissed the ground to show their love for Taiwan.51 However, by boycotting the “Hand in Hand” rally, the KMT lost an opportunity to promote ethnic reconciliation. Similarly, the focus on savage personal attacks, such as likening Chen to figures Saddam Hussein, Bin Laden, and Hitler was widely perceived among Taiwanese as playing the divisive ethnic card.52

In sum, by the end of the first Chen term, both the KMT and DPP had shown mixed trends in their treatment of identity issues. Nevertheless, they were further apart than they had been in the final years of the Lee Teng-hui era. In the second Chen term, the parties have projected similar mixed identity messages but were continuing to drift apart.

The DPP began its second term in a relatively conciliatory manner. In Chen’s 2004 inaugural speech, he called for ethnic reconciliation of all groups in the “New Taiwan

52 See the now infamous KMT ad likening Chen to Hitler at Liberty Times, March 12, 2004, 8.
Family.” This was followed up by the DPP’s passing of its “Multi-Cultural Resolution,” which was a reworking of Lee’s inclusive “New Taiwanese” discourse. It attempts to incorporate all ethnic groups, including Mainlanders into the Taiwan consciousness project. It calls for mutual toleration of ROC or Taiwan identities, an acceptance that all ethnic groups are the masters of Taiwan, that all ethnic group languages are Taiwanese languages, ethnic harmony, and in place of previous assimilation policies an acceptance of Taiwan as a diverse multi-cultural state.

Despite the positive and inclusive message contained in this resolution the DPP’s reputation for promoting exclusive Taiwan identity and desinification has actually been reinforced in Chen’s second term. Under the new education minister Tu Cheng-sheng, principles previously employed in the “Getting to Know Taiwan” textbooks have been extended to the Senior High School history curriculum. The new Taiwan centric approach involves separating Taiwan history from Chinese history in a course titled “Domestic History” and placing the study of China post 1500 (including the ROC until 1949) in the course on “Modern World History.”

In the second term, the DPP first showed signs of moving away from its moderate position on symbolic identity issues in election campaigns when it began echoing the Taiwan Solidarity Union’s (TSU) call for name rectification in December 2004. At an election rally, Chen called for the names of all government agencies to be changed from China to Taiwan in two years. However, it appeared that this was just a temporary shift, as soon after the election, the new Premier Hsieh Chang-ting took a

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55 See Chang, 200.
more cautious approach to name rectification in January 2005.\textsuperscript{56} In the run up to the 2005 National Assembly elections, Chen’s speeches and DPP election ads cast doubts on the loyalty of the KMT to Taiwan. These were once again perceived as inciting ethnic tensions.\textsuperscript{57} It was not until 2007, that the DPP has actually begun implementing name changes of government owned enterprises. In February 2007 Chen’s administration succeeded in having the company names of Chunghwa Post and Chinese Petroleum Corporation to Taiwan Post and Taiwan CPC Corporation respectively.\textsuperscript{58} In a highly symbolic move, the first postage stamp in which the ROC was replaced with Taiwan (in English and Chinese) showed the February 28 Incident Memorial Museum.\textsuperscript{59}

The DPP’s more exclusive Taiwan identity message has been accelerated in 2006-2007 with the campaign against the cult of Chiang Kai-shek. Although the DPP frames such moves as part of democratization and transitional justice, in some circles it is perceived as an attack on the Mainlander community. The gradual removal of Chiang Kai-shek statues and portraits had already begun quietly under Lee Teng-hui and had been continued during Chen’s first term. In the first step Chiang Kai-shek International Airport was renamed Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport in September 2006.\textsuperscript{60} The anti Chiang campaign continued into 2007 with the removal of the huge Chiang statue from Kaohsiung Cultural Centre and the Ministry of Defense pledge to remove all Chiang statues from its bases within a month. In Taipei

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\textsuperscript{57} Ho Po-wen & Hsiao His-chin, “In response to Chen’s accusation of an alliance with the CCP against Taiwan independence, the Lien camp says don’t paint us red,” \textit{China Times}, May, 9, 2005, A4.

\textsuperscript{58} Shih Hsu-chuan, “Chen pushes corporate name-change,” \textit{Taipei Times}, February 9, 2007, 3.

\textsuperscript{59} See Taiwan Post Website, online source \texttt{http://www.post.gov.tw/post/internet/w_stamphouse/stamphouse_eng.htm} (accessed April 7, 2007).

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the central government is also proposing to rename Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall into Taiwan Democracy Memorial Hall.\footnote{Flora Wang, Rich Chang & Shih Hsiu-chuan, “CKS statues’ removal nears completion, \textit{Taipei Times}, 6 February, 2007, 1. The choice of Taiwan Democracy Memorial Hall is an off one, seeming to imply that democracy is something Taiwan has already lost.}

The Taiwan identity policies of the DPP since 2000 show a high degree of continuity from those practiced under Lee’s KMT in the 1990s. The sense of polarization is exacerbated by the hugely different reaction to these moves from the KMT. The KMT is reacting to the continued Taiwanization of the education system in a similar matter to that of the NP in the late 1990s. Pan Blue legislators’ questioning Minister Tu has verged on hysteria, with wild accusation such as “involvement in a desinification conspiracy.”\footnote{Peter Huang, “Altered Map caused silly legislative encounter,” \textit{Taipei Times}, June 6, 2008, 8.} During Lien Chan’s speech at Beijing University, he was highly critical of the current desinification, arguing that things had got so bad that parents now have to take their own initiative to “allow young people to receive Chinese culture.”\footnote{United Daily News, “Lien Chan’s Question and Answer session at Beijing University, April 29, 2005.}

The KMT has also taken a sharply different approach to the greater Chinese nationalist symbols Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek. As in Chen’s first term Sun was employed in KMT election communication. On the day after the Pan Blues retained their legislative majority in December 2004, the KMT ran a full page ad with a portrait of Sun and the slogan, “Thank you for allowing me to continue to be the Nation’s Father.”\footnote{KMT ad, \textit{China Times}, December 13, A11.} However, the change in KMT party values is more apparent in their treatment of the Chiang Kai-shek statue debate. The KMT has taken its most pro Chiang Kai-shek stance since the early 1990s. The KMT run Taipei City government is attempting to block the name change to the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall and
removal of its surrounding walls. In Kaohsiung the KMT dominated city assembly has roundly condemned the removal of the Culture Centre Chiang statue. On March 31, 2007, the KMT even organized a march and rally to protest against the anti-Chiang campaign, in which demonstrators shouted, “Long Live Chiang Kai-shek!” KMT leaders have repeatedly condemned the anti Chiang campaign as similar to the Chinese Cultural Revolution and as inciting ethnic tensions. Increasingly KMT politicians are emphasizing Chiang Kai-shek’s contribution to Taiwan rather than his role in the February 28 Incident and White Terror. For instance, in April 2007, the party organized a photograph exhibition to mark the anniversary of Chiang’s death titled, “The age of Takeoff….Old Chiang and Old Taiwan,” which links Chiang with the Taiwanese economic miracle.

In short, in contrast with the convergence at the centre left of the identity spectrum by the late 1990s, the post 2000 period, in particular during the second Chen term has seen the KMT and DPP drifting back towards the far right and far left positions that they occupied in the early 1990s.

Content analysis of party election propaganda before and after 2000 in parliamentary elections offers further support for the view that the political agenda is becoming more focused on identity issues and of party polarization. Table 2 shows the most stressed issues in party newspaper election ads in the 1990s and post 2000 era. In the 1990s, there were only two identity related issue categories in the top ten, in contrast there were five in the post 2000 period top ten. Moreover, while no identity issue was

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65 Mo Yan-chih, Thousands Protest anti-Chiang campaign,” Taipei Times, April 1, 2007, 3.
66 For instance, KMT legislator Shuai Hua-min made this argument, see Rich Chang, “KMT statue proposal generates uproar,” Taipei Times, March 21, 2006, 1.
in the top five in the 1990s, there were two in the post 2000 period. The polarization thesis is supported by the presence of “Pure Taiwan independence” in the top ten and the high salience of both Chinese and Taiwanese nationalism.

Table 2 Top ten issues in party election newspaper ads in parliamentary elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>1990s</th>
<th>Post 2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Political corruption 17.5</td>
<td>Party: positive 25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Party: positive 17.2</td>
<td>Taiwan nationalism 8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Uncategorizable/ Others 15</td>
<td>Candidate: positive 7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Government competence 5.7</td>
<td>Taiwan independence: negative 6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Political stability 5.3</td>
<td>Economic growth and prosperity 6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Democracy 4.5</td>
<td>Political stability 4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Diluted Taiwan independence 4.3</td>
<td>Diluted Taiwan independence 4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Party: negative 4.1</td>
<td>Chinese nationalism 4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Economic growth and prosperity 4</td>
<td>Pure Taiwan independence 3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Taiwan independence: negative 3.2</td>
<td>Other parties lack of government competence 3.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note 1: This table shows the top issues stressed by the main political parties in their newspaper ads in
the parliamentary elections of 1990s, and post 2000 period.

Note 2: The main parties included in the analysis are DPP, KMT and NP for the 1990s and the DPP, KMT, NP, TSU and PFP for post 2000.


Note 4: The figures are the average percentage of issue mentions for each issue category in the 1990s and post 2000 campaigns.

3.3 Party Movement on Constitutional Change

In Taiwanese politics the question of whether to essentially preserve the 1947 constitution, revise the constitution to adapt to contemporary Taiwanese circumstances or create a new Taiwan constitution has been bitterly debated since the outset of multi-party politics. The fact that a new Taiwan constitution is seen as an integral component of Taiwan independence means that the issue is intimately linked to the TongDu spectrum.68

Constitutional reform is another area where the parties converged in the 1990s, but have been diverging since 2005. As with TongDu, the parties began the 1990s poles apart. In the 1991 election, almost all DPP candidates carried the title, “Constitution Drafting National Assembly Candidate” on their publicity material.69 In contrast, the KMT argued that only minor revisions were required for the existing constitution and that a new constitution would lead to recession and PRC invasion.70

68 In the DPP party charter, the section on “Establishing a sovereign, independent Republic of Taiwan” calls for the creation of a new constitution. See www.dpp.org.tw (accessed April 8, 2007).
70 These arguments were made in the KMT’s 1991 TV ad titled, “Constitutional Revision Ad.”
Between 1991 and 2000, Taiwan went through six phases of constitutional reform.\(^{71}\) Although the KMT rejected the DPP demand for a new Taiwan constitution and its National Assembly majority meant it was able to dictate the terms of the first three stages of constitutional reforms, the actual contents of revision mirrored DPP reform demands. For instance, though the official KMT position in 1991 was opposed to direct presidential elections, by 1994 the KMT had adopted the DPP position. Similarly, the DPP dropped its insistence on a new constitution and agreed to promote its reform agenda through constitutional revisions. Convergence was even greater in the second half of the 1990s, as constitutional reform took a more balanced negotiated approach. In 1997 and 2000, the KMT and DPP cooperated as partners in radical constitutional reform measures, such as effectively eliminating the provincial government, ending provincial elections and turned the National Assembly into a “non-standing body only responsible for endorsing future constitutional amendments.”\(^{72}\) In a mark of the degree of consensus of the time, the DPP, KMT and NP all supported the revisions in 2000.

In the early years of the Chen Shui-bian era, there was a lull in the constitutional reform process. As part of the “five noes” of Chen’s inaugural speech, he had pledged not to revise the constitution to incorporate the “special state to state” description of cross-strait relations. It was not until September 2003 that Chen pledged to construct a


\(^{72}\) Jean-Pierre Cabestan, “A New Constitutional Balance and the Prospect for Constitutional Change in Taiwan, in The Chen Shui-bian Administration in Comparative Perspective, Robert Ash and Steven Goldstein (forthcoming)
new Taiwan in 2006. Apart from clarifying that there would be no change to the national title, the DPP was quite vague on the planned contents of the new constitution. The pledge was at the time primarily a bid to gain support in the run up to the 2004 presidential contest, however, it meant that the DPP was returning to its more radical stance of a brand new constitution rather than further tinkering with the old constitution. The KMT position also appeared to have shifted back to the one it had held in the early 1990s. In response KMT Party Spokesman Tsai Cheng-yuan equated Chen’s proposal to “a timetable for independence,” and argued that constitutional reform was no longer a primary concern.

Chen began his second term on a more moderate note, talking of constitutional reengineering rather than a new constitution. A cross-party “Constitutional Reform Committee” was proposed to draw up the reform proposals and Chen explained that, “consensus has yet to be reached on issues related to national sovereignty, territory and the subject of unification/independence: therefore, let me explicitly propose that these particular issues be excluded from the present constitutional reengineering project.” However, the high levels of inter-party hostility following contested presidential election meant the KMT ignored Chen’s call for a consensus seeking conference along the lines of the 1996 National Development Conference. Chen continued to reach out for a consensus on further constitutional reform, again calling for a cross-party conference in December 2004 and agreeing to pursue constitutional revision rather than a new constitution in his ten-point agreement with James Soong.

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75 President Chen Shui-bian’s Inaugural Speech (2004).
Considering the inter-party tensions it is quite remarkable that the next phase of constitutional reform received the support of all five relevant parties in the summer of 2004 to pass the Legislative Yuan and in 2005 the KMT and DPP cooperated to see these reforms through the final National Assembly. This set of reforms was focused on the electoral system, replacing the multiple member district system with a single member district two vote system and halving the number of legislators.

Since the above reforms were achieved the parties have returned to polarization on the constitution issue. A number of constitutional proposals have come out of the Pan Green camp, all of which have been roundly condemned or ignored by the KMT. Chen has proposed a “second round of constitutional reforms,” in which he hopes civic groups will take the lead in drafting and promoting the creation of a new constitution. In April 2007, the Constitutional Reform Alliance claimed that it had received sufficient signatures of legislators for its draft constitution to proceed to the Legislative Yuan’s Procedure Committee. However, by attempting to bypass the KMT dominated Legislative Yuan, such projects are doomed to failure, as constitutional changes require a three quarters majority. Moreover, after Ma became KMT chairman, the party has taken a position opposed to any further constitutional changes, even technical revisions are ruled out.

### 3.4 Party Movement on Military procurement

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76 Caroline Hong and Huang Tai-lin, Chen, Soong sign 10-point consensus,” 25 February, 2005, Taipei Times, 1.
77 For details see Cabestan, 16.
79 Ma made this point in discussions with academics in London, February 2006.
The pattern of the question of military procurement differs greatly from the previous three case studies. Military procurement had barely featured in Taiwan’s party political debate prior in the 1990s. The DPP did occasionally raise military issues to attack the KMT in the 1990s and the KMT trumpeted its success of buying advanced weaponry such as the F16 fighters from the US and Lafayette Warships from France. Instead, there was a cross-party consensus that Taiwan needed to buy high-tech military equipment to maintain its defense against China.

The change in this pattern came in the run up to the 2004 presidential election, as the issue was transformed into a divisive and polarizing one. The extensive arms package the US offered Taiwan in April 2001 was the largest since 1992. Although, a number of more extreme Pan Blue politicians such as Ting Shou-chung and Lee Ching-hua were critical of aspects of the package, the KMT party centre and leaders were not initially openly opposed to the deal. As Steve Tsang points out, “the Taiwanese requests were largely drawn up before Chen came to power.” In other words, much of the US package had been already been on Taiwan’s shopping list when the KMT was still the ruling party. Unlike when Lee was offered the F16 package in 1992, the DPP administration did not immediately put a special arms budget to the parliament. It is quite likely that such a bill would have received sufficient cross-party support, as the Economic Development Conference of August 2001 proved that there was still scope for consensual policy making. Instead the DPP administration delayed

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80 In one 1992 DPP TV ad the talking head jokes that the Indigenous Defense Fighter (IDF) planes should be renamed “I don’t fly.” Also the DPP has repeatedly accused the high level KMT figures of receiving kickbacks from high profile defense procurement contracts, for instance surrounding the Lafayette warship deal.

81 For Lee Ching-hua’s criticism see Brian Hsu, “Ex-navy chiefs object to plans to purchase Kidds,” *Taipei Times*, April 26, 2001, 3.


83 Joyce Huang, “KMT to get rolling on cross-party meeting on EDAC,” *Taipei Times*, August 29, 2001, 2.
sending the special budget to the Legislative Yuan until May 2004.

It was the inclusion of an item in the 2004 referendum on whether or not to buy anti-missile weapons to meet the challenge of the growing number of PRC missiles directed at Taiwan that made military procurement a contested partisan issue.\(^84\) It was apparent during the presidential campaign that the former consensus on arms sales had been lost, as during the first presidential debate in 2004 Lien warned of the dangers of creating an arms race with the mainland.\(^85\) As the Pan Blues had boycotted the referendum (that included the question of anti-missile systems) and the referendum did probably contribute the Chen’s narrow victory in 2004, this meant that the issue was highly polarized by the time the arms bill finally reached the Legislative Yuan. At that time, in late spring 2004, the Pan Blues did not recognize the legitimacy of Chen’s presidential election, there were huge anti Chen demonstrations, a number of which turned violent. Moreover, Pan Blue politicians were preparing first for gaining inner-party nomination for the December parliamentary elections and then had to run their actual campaigns, both of which required appealing to hard line party supporters. This meant that there was little chance of the DPP’s special arms bill getting approved at that time.

In the subsequent three years, the main parties have continued to diverge on arms procurement. The special arms budget had been rejected repeatedly in the Legislative Yuan’s Procedure Committee. Even after Ma replaced Lien as KMT party chair, the parties appear equally divided. Although Ma and Legislative Yuan Speaker Wang

\(^84\) The full question asked voters, “The people of Taiwan demand that the Taiwan Strait issue be resolved through peaceful means. Should Mainland China refuse to withdraw the missiles it has targeted against at Taiwan and to openly renounce the use of force against us, would you agree that the Government should acquire more advanced anti-missile weapons to strengthen Taiwan’s self-defensive capabilities?”

Jin-ping have agreed to support a revised arms bill, they have been unable or unwilling to convince their fellow partisans in the Legislative Yuan to fulfill this pledge. The issue appears too polarized to find a compromise, as both camps have mobilized their supporters in demonstrations for and against arms procurements.\textsuperscript{86} In an incident that highlights the strength of feeling in the Pan Blue camp on the issue, on October 21, 2006, independent legislator Li Ao sprayed tear gas in the Procedure Committee to stop discussion of the arms bill.\textsuperscript{87} At the time of writing, the parties remain deadlocked on this issue. Despite talk of some form of compromise in which the KMT will exchange arms bill passage in return for its desired reform of the Central Election Commission, there is little likelihood of such legislation before the presidential election. In short, what had long been a consensual non partisan issue has been transformed in Chen’s second term into a polarizing partisan one.

3.5 Party Movement on Political corruption

No examination of Taiwan’s issue agenda can be complete without a discussion of political corruption. As Table 2 shows, during the 1990s, corruption was the most stressed political issue in parliamentary elections. This valence issue differs from the above discussed positional issues, as no politician will be openly pro corruption. However, as I have argued in previous studies, we can see party movement on a number of corruption related sub-issues.

At the outset of multi-party elections the KMT and DPP took quite distinct positions on corruption. Until the early 1990s, the KMT resolutely defended the legal basis of its huge business and property empire (known as the party assets) and was prepared to

\textsuperscript{87} Shih Hsiu-chuan, “Li Ao gasses legislative meeting,” \textit{Taipei Times}, October 25, 2006, 1.
turn a blind eye to corrupt practices such as vote buying and contract corruption by KMT politicians at the local level. In election campaigns throughout the 1990s, the DPP and NP made anti-corruption appeals central to their election campaigns, while the KMT tried to steer clear of the issue and move the agenda on to more favorable issues. By the mid 1990s, election pressure was forcing the KMT to adjust its positions. When Ma Ying-jeou was Minister of Justice he took drastic measures against local level vote buying, regardless of the fact that most rounded up were KMT politicians. While in the 1996 National Development Conference, the KMT accepted the need to resolve its party assets question for the first time. A testament to the degree of convergence was that in the run up to the 2000 presidential election, the KMT candidate Lien Chan was openly pledging to end KMT involvement in profit making businesses.  

In the first Chen term, there was a degree of convergence for stricter anti-corruption measures, though progress was far less than DPP rhetoric in the 2000 election had led voters to expect. The DPP set out with a highly ambitious set of proposals titled, “Program for Sweeping away Organized Crime and Corruption.” This involved a combination of government restructuring, new legislation and revision of existing measures. A new “Anti Corruption Task Force,” with powers of search seizure and arrest was proposed. The grassroots financial institutions that had long been the source of funds for corrupt local KMT politicians were to be closed or merged.

Planned legislation included a Political Party Law, Lobby Law and Political

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88 For a detailed discussion of party change on the political corruption issue in the 1990s see Dafydd Fell, Party Politics in Taiwan, Chapter 4; Dafydd Fell, “Political and Media Liberalization and Political Corruption in Taiwan,” China Quarterly 184, 875-893.

89 For a comparison of anti corruption policy before and after 2000 see Christian Göbel, “Beheading the Hydra: Combating Political Corruption and Organized Crime in the KMT and DPP Eras,” in What has Changed? Taiwan Before and After the Change in Ruling Parties, ed Dafydd Fell, Henning Klötzer and Chang Bi-yu (Harrassowitz, 2006), 61-82.
Contributions Law.

The KMT did make a serious effort to remove its corrupt image with new regulations preventing politicians that had a criminal record from joining the party’s nomination process. In addition, the KMT was prepared to support certain DPP government anti-corruption bills. For instance, on the eve of the 2004 presidential election, a Party Contributions Law was passed with cross-party support. Some limited progress was made on the assets issue, as a small number of KMT properties were returned to the state. By 2006, the KMT claimed that it had returned 56 plots of land to local government. However, the degree of convergence on tough anti-corruption measures should not be exaggerated. In 2004 the DPP claimed that the KMT had only returned one percent of its assets. Göbel also points out that the vast majority of DPP anti-corruption bills, “were voted down by an alliance of KMT, PFP and independent legislators, who would face severe losses if the new regulations had been passed.” Although anti-corruption programs were one of the highlights of the first Chen term, it failed to live up to expectations. A good instance of this was its sudden policy U-Turn on reforms of grassroots financial institutions when faced by Farmers’ Association protests on the eve of the 2002 local elections.

The positive anti-corruption trends of the 1990s and the first Chen term appear to have come to a halt since 2004. Not only have the parties failed to work together on


91 Mo Yan-chih, “KMT unveils particulars of party assets,” Taipei Times, August 24, 2006, 1.
93 Göbel, “Beheading the Hydra,” 76.
strengthening Taiwan’s anti-corruption legislation and institutions, both main parties have suffered from damaging corruption scandals.

Even after Ma took over as KMT chair, the DPP and KMT are as far apart as ever on how to deal with party assets. The DPP tactics on assets are designed as an election mobilization tool rather than to actually find a cross-party consensus on resolving the issue. For instance, it has proposed “statute on stolen assets” and is currently collecting signatures for a national referendum on demanding the return of KMT party assets. Such confrontational methods, while popular with party faithful stand no chance of success in a Pan Blue dominated legislature and referendum review committee. The KMT continues to block DPP sponsored anti-corruption legislation, including the long delayed Lobby Bill. In addition, there are some subtle shifts in the KMT discourse and treatment of its assets. Under Ma, rather than negotiate the return of assets to the state, the party has accelerated the selling off of party assets. Major recent sales include Central Motion Pictures, Broadcasting Corporation of China, China Television and its former headquarters building (facing the Presidential Palace). In the more conservative wing of the party, it is increasingly felt that the KMT has already made too many compromises on party assets. As legislator John Chiang argues, “The KMT’s management of the assets during the party-state period made a contribution to the country… We don’t need to explain anything.”

After a highly welcome relative absence of political corruption scandals during Chen’s first term, both major parties have had their clean governance images severely tarnished since 2004. In 2005, DPP politicians’ corruption scandals related to the

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95 At the time of writing the Return Assets campaign takes up most of the DPP party website home page.
 Kaohsiung Rapid Transit project and stock market insider trading contributed to the party’s worst local executive results since 1993. More recently corruption accusations against Chen himself, his wife and son in law sparked off the three recall votes in the Legislative Yuan and the massive anti-corruption red shirt demonstrations of 2006. The KMT has not been immune to such scandals. In 2005, its winning unofficial candidate in Taitung, Wu Chun-li was dismissed almost as soon as he assumed office, as he had been convicted by the High Court of corruption. The winning KMT executive in Keelung, Hsu Tsai-li was soon sentenced to seven years for corrupt involvement in a land procurement case. The KMT’s anti-corruption credentials were again challenged when in 2007 it decided to nominate Chang Tong-jung as Hsu replacement (following his sudden death) despite the fact that Chang has a vote buying conviction from the 1990s. Perhaps most damaging to the KMT’s reputation has been the indictment and possible future conviction of KMT Party Chairman Ma Ying-jeou over alleged misuse of his special allowance while Taipei mayor. The case has hit the party’s anti-corruption reputation, as in response it first revised its anti black gold nomination rules to allow a indicted politician to be nominated as a party candidate and is now planning a further revision to enable Ma to stand for the presidency even if convicted.

In short as we approach the end of the second Chen Shui-bian term, the parties further apart on controversial questions such as party assets than in 2000, are unable to reach consensus on important anti-corruption legislation and have had severe setbacks in their bids to remove internal corruption.

Table 3 offers a simplified picture of the overall direction of party movement on the five salient issue case studies in four political eras. As has been argued above, the parties moved from polarized positions at the outset of multiparty politics in the late 1980s into a period of convergence for most of the 1990s. While the initial post 2000 era showed a mixed picture of convergence in some policy areas and divergence in other, the second Chen administration has seen high levels of polarization across the board. In the next section, I offer some thoughts on how we can best explain the recent polarizing trends.

Table 3: Overall Direction of Party Movement on salient issues for in four political eras:

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<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TongDu</td>
<td>Divergent</td>
<td>Convergent</td>
<td>Convergent</td>
<td>Divergent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan identity vs.</td>
<td>Divergent</td>
<td>Convergent</td>
<td>Divergent then Convergent</td>
<td>Divergent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese identity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constitutional</td>
<td>Divergent</td>
<td>Convergent</td>
<td>Convergent</td>
<td>Divergent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reform</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military procurement</td>
<td>Non issue</td>
<td>Minor issue</td>
<td>Minor issue, then Divergent</td>
<td>Divergent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political corruption</td>
<td>Minor issue</td>
<td>Convergent</td>
<td>Some Convergence</td>
<td>Divergent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

4.1 Explaining divergence
How can we best explain the trend towards partisan divergence since 2004? Taiwan’s electoral system, public opinion and the change of status from opposition party to ruling party and vice versa are all often employed to explain party issue positional changes. Although these variables can contribute to our understanding of party issue trends, they cannot offer a satisfactory explanation for why polarization was especially serious in Chen’s second term. Electoral systems do tend to have a mechanical effect on party positioning, however, if this was the critical variable then we would not expect to see polarized politics in the run up to the new single member district legislative elections and presidential contest. Public opinion and electoral results do also have a constraining effect on the political parties. Lin Chia-long’s research showed how the general public tends to have more moderate positions on identity issues than party elites. In the 1990s, the main parties did respond to opinion that was moving towards the centre by moderating their positions. However, public opinion change, at least on identity spectrums has not shown a radical change of direction since 2000, thus cannot explain the polarization trend. Since 2000, Chinese identity has continued to decline, thus public opinion cannot be decisive in the KMT’s renewed embrace of Chinese identity symbols during 2000-2001 and since 2005. Lastly, undoubtedly, the status of government or opposition party does affect party positions. After becoming the ruling party, the DPP was forced to take a more pragmatic stance on cross-Strait relations. Nevertheless, if this were the decisive variable, we would expect DPP moderation to persist the longer it retained central office, rather than its recent moves back towards “Pure Taiwan independence” since 2004.

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100 Lin found far greater support for Taiwan independence among political elites than was found in mass surveys. See Lin Chia-long, “Paths to Democracy: Taiwan in Comparative Perspective,” (PhD Dissertation, Yale University, New Haven, 1998), 508.

Although the inner-party balance of power framework worked for explaining party change in the 1990s, an adjustment is required for developments in the more complex multi-party environment since 2000. Here I propose a framework in which party position change can be explained as a result of fluctuations in inner-party and inner-bloc balance of power along with a reactive element whereby parties adjust positions in response to competitors’ tactics. Below I briefly use this framework to discuss the divergent trends taken by the KMT and DPP.

4.2 Explaining KMT movement since 2000

Changes in the inner KMT and Pan Blue bloc balance of power were critical in the party’s shifting policy positions after 2000. After the defeat in the 2000 presidential election, Lien Chan replaced Lee Teng-hui as KMT Party Chairman. Under the new leadership, there was a significant shift in the factional balance of power, as the Non Mainstream Faction grew in strength and the Mainstream Faction (now increasingly referred to as the Localized Faction) was weakened by Lee’s departure and defections to the TSU. The Non Mainstream Faction had long taken a more pro unification and pro Chinese identity and anti-corruption stances, while in contrast, the Mainstream Faction tended to be more ambiguous on corruption and independence and take a more Taiwan first position. The Non Mainstream Faction was favored by Lien in appointments at the party headquarters and in his inner circle of advisors.\textsuperscript{103}

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\textsuperscript{102} The terms Mainstream and Non Mainstream Faction have ceased to be fashionable among political analysts, but they are useful for explaining change and continuity in the KMT’s internal power structure before and after 2000.

\textsuperscript{103} During interviews in 2001 a number of KMT politicians claimed that Lien’s inner circle included Yu Mu-ming, Chao Shao-kang and Kuan Chung. All were once key figures in the Non Mainstream KMT. The first two were by 2001 leading members of the NP, while Kuan had been marginalized in the KMT since 1989.
Within the Pan Blue bloc, the newly formed PFP, located slightly to the right of the KMT on the identity spectrums represented a far more serious challenge to the KMT than the NP ever had done in the 1990s.

These balance of power changes can help explain the KMT’s early policy shifts. Lien’s promotion of the Confederacy Model in 2001 was his attempt to make a clean break from Lee Teng-hui on TongDu, with his own personal policy initiative. Similarly, the revived interest in “One China,” “the 1992 consensus” and Chinese identity symbols was intimately linked to the greater strength of the Non Mainstream Faction within the KMT itself and also increased competition from the PFP. Former KMT Party Spokesman Huang Hui-chen explained the party’s changing approach after 2000 in these terms, “A group of the KMT’s leadership’s (Non Mainstream Faction) ideology is close to the NP type. They have taken control over explaining the KMT’s ideological power. They have some distance from localization.”

Similarly, the KMT’s Lin Yu-hsiang explained the impact of inner-bloc competition from the PFP, “There is an overlap of KMT and PFP supporters and the PFP is declining in support…therefore, this year the KMT has a new policy, we’ve arranged all the leading figures to go to the martyrs shrine at Yuanshan to pay respects. It’s a clear move to attract those voters between the KMT and PFP.”

In addition, the KMT’s serious attempt to deal with its black gold reputation was linked to the revived strength of the Non Mainstream Faction. Under Lien, leading Non Mainstream politicians such as Ting Shou-chung and Kuan Chung were influential in the drawing up of its new anti-black gold nomination regulations.

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104 Cited in Fell, *Party Politics in Taiwan*, 120.
105 Cited in Party Politics in Taiwan, 119.
There was also a reactive element to the initial KMT shift to the right. As the DPP moved towards the centre on TongDu after 2000, the KMT was placed in a dilemma. As political scientist Wu Yu-shan explained, “If the KMT stays at the centre, it will sound like it is echoing the present government’s positions. So the KMT moved to the right.”

In the second half of Chen’s first term, there was a move back towards the centre by the KMT, at least on the identity spectrums. Within the Pan Blue bloc, as the relationship with the PFP became more harmonious and the PFP was seen as less of a threat, appealing to deep blue voters became less pressing for the KMT. In addition, the more centrist line in the run up to the 2004 presidential election may be linked to the increasing influence that the former DPP Propaganda Chief Chen Wen-chien had on Lien. There was also a reactive side to the changed KMT approach leading up to 2004. Chen’s “one country on either side” comments in 2002 made the DPP appear less centrist, allowing the KMT space to move back to the centre. In addition, the KMT accepted referendum legislation to contest ownership of the referendum issue and to prevent the DPP from gaining points by accusing the KMT of being anti-democratic.

In Chen’s second term the inner-party and Pan Blue bloc balance of power and DPP polarizing moves have pushed the KMT away from the centre again. The trends in KMT factional balance of power of the first Chen term continued into his second. Under Lien Chan and then Ma as Party Chairman, the position of the Localized Faction continued to weaken. This was highlighted in Ma Ying-jeou’s resounding defeat of Wang Jin-ping in the party chair election in 2005. Although Ma uses a

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106 Cited in Fell, *Party Politics in Taiwan*, 120.
different set of advisors from Lien, most would also fall into the category of Non Mainstream KMT. The position of the Non Mainstream has been further strengthened by the defection of first NP and then many PFP politicians back to the KMT since late 2004, as most of these figures had been part of the Non Mainstream before they left the KMT in the 1990s.

The increased strength of the Non Mainstream Faction and the ideologically more orthodox Chairman Ma have all contributed to the more centre right stance of the KMT. As we saw in the TongDu case, soon after Ma became Chairman, the KMT began to speak positively on unification for the first time since the early 1990s. The shift in positions on direct talks was also related to inner-KMT power struggles. By making the trip to China in 2005, Lien was successfully able to leave his mark and retain continued influence on KMT China policy even after he resigned as Party Chair.

Despite the decline in number of PFP legislators, the KMT still relies on the PFP for its overall legislative majority. This means that the PFP has blackmail potential against the KMT. In other words, the PFP has threatened to ally with the DPP on party assets legislation if the KMT is prepared to allow the arms bill to be approved. Therefore the KMT is forced to compromise with the PFP’s more radical agenda. Although the PFP has been declining in support it remains a relevant party with the potential to split the Pan Blue vote. Therefore, in order to avoid losing votes to the PFP in the 2004 legislative and 2006 Taipei mayoral elections, the KMT had to take a tough line on arms procurement and the anti Chen recall votes.

On the question of political corruption inner party factional issues have also been
highly influential. The cases of Taitung and Keelung local executives reveal the party’s continued reliance on the Localized Faction for electoral success at the local level. The price to be paid is that the KMT will periodically continue to be tainted with the black gold image every time a similar local executive scandal emerges. The picture on party assets is also the same, as despite talk of asset reform, the KMT could no longer outspend the DPP or even pay the salaries and pensions of its staff without its party assets.

A final internal factor that has contributed to the more radical messages coming out of the KMT has been the increasing use of primaries for leadership and candidate selection. As party chair and presidential candidate elections both rely on a closed member primary, candidates need to pander to the dark blue voters rather than floating voters. Thus for instance, Wang Jin-ping and Ma Ying-jeou appealed to Chinese nationalists in the leadership election making tough statements on ROC sovereignty over the Diaoyutai Islands, and Wang even sailed out to Islands with a group of legislators.

The DPP’s repeated polarizing moves in conjunction with the new power structure within the KMT have also pushed the KMT further from the centre. In the 1990s, the KMT and DPP could work together on constitutional reform, however, by framing further constitutional reform in terms of Taiwan independence, the KMT has reached the point that it will no longer even consider necessary technical constitutional reform. By including military procurement in the unilateral referendum in 2004, the DPP polarized a formerly non partisan issue that the KMT is now no longer able to deal with rationally. We see a similar reactive pattern on assets, the NUG/NUC and Chiang Kai-shek. In all three cases, quiet negotiation could probably have either resolved the
issues or at least kept them off the agenda. Since the early 1990s, the KMT had played down the NUG and there was little KMT objection to Chen’s refusal to convene the NUC after becoming president. However, by publicly scrapping the NUC/NUG, the KMT has been pushed into a position where it has to oppose Chen’s unilateral move and thus position itself further to the right.

4.3 Explaining DPP movement since 2000

The framework of internal balance of power and reactions to opponents’ policy moves can also explain changing DPP policy after 2000. The dominant position that election orientated leaders and factions have held in the DPP since the mid 1990s continued well into the post DPP era. This can account for the relatively moderate stances the party took on the core political issues throughout Chen’s first term and for much of the second term. The balance of power within the party between moderates and radicals can be seen by which side occupies the critical positions of Party Chair and the Premier. When these offices are held by more extremist DPP figures, the party has taken more polarizing stances. There were internal constraints to how far the DPP could move away from party ideology due to the strength of ideologically more radical factions. Another constraining factor on convergence was the danger of the TSU siphoning off extremist voters. Prior to 2005, as the DPP was far more successful at setting the electoral agenda it rarely switched positions in response to KMT strategy. However, since the Lien visit to China, a number of KMT policy moves have had a polarizing effect on the DPP.

The internal balance of power within the DPP since 2000 is summarized on Table 4, showing the politicians occupying Party Chair and Premier on each year. The table also lists the principal polarizing events of those seven years that have been discussed
in detail in the case study sections. The obvious pattern is that when these powerful positions are held by radicals such as Yu Hsi-kun, the DPP has tended to take more polarizing policy stances. For instance, the referendum on military procurement and first name rectification campaign occurred while Yu was Premier. More recently, the NUC/NUG incidents, anti Chiang campaign and attacks on the “five noes” have all taken place since Yu became DPP party chair. In contrast, the periods of relative calm have coincided with periods when the relatively moderate Frank Hsieh held positions of power.

The presence of the TSU to the left of the DPP within the Pan Green bloc has had a similar effect to that of the PFP on the KMT. The DPP has needed to rely on the TSU for support in parliament and also had to be vigilant against the TSU capturing voters supporting independence and with strong Taiwan identity. Therefore on occasion the DPP has shifted back to the far left to recapture voters in danger of being poached by the TSU. The best example of this was the attempt by the DPP to steal the name rectification issue in the 2004 legislative election.

Lastly, the DPP has also reacted to what it views as KMT polarizing policy measures. For the DPP, the KMT’s 2005 and subsequent visits to the PRC represent a breaking of a long standing tacit consensus against party to party negotiations with the CCP. The move appeared to be an open alliance with the CCP against the elected Taiwanese government. Therefore it responded with its own divisive accusations of the KMT selling out Taiwan. Similarly, Chen has claimed that it was Ma’s decision to reiterate that the KMT’s eventual goal was unification that prompted him to abolish the NUG and NUC. Even in the realm political corruption we can see DPP reactions to polarizing Pan Blue tactics. The Pan Blue attempt to depose Chen using recall votes
and the Red Shirt anti-corruption demonstrations, both of which focused on Chen’s alleged misuse of the “special presidential allowance fund,” inspired the DPP to dig deeper. These investigations uncovered similar practices in the KMT’s Mr. Clean, Ma Ying-jeou’s finances, leading to his own damaging corruption trial.

5. Conclusion and Prospects for the future

This study has compared the trends in party competition before and after the change in ruling party. It is been shown that while the convergent trends seen in the 1990s continued well into Chen’s first term, since 2004 Taiwan has experienced severe partisan polarization on the central political issues. The term “moderate party differentiation” is no longer appropriate for describing Taiwanese party politics. A framework which incorporates changing inner-party and inner-bloc balance of power along with reactions to opponents’ provocative issue strategies has been employed to explain the shift from convergent to divergent party politics.

At the time of writing this piece, the parties appear to be at their most polarized state for many years. How does this bode for the future of Taiwanese democracy? The results of inner-party power struggles will be critical in the answer to this question. Currently, both main parties are in the process of selecting their presidential and legislative candidates, we are waiting to see if the parties’ nomination processes will produce candidates that can make Taiwanese democracy work or continue the recent destructive and polarizing style of politics. It is encouraging to see that primaries are being held for party nomination and leadership in both major parties, as these help voters to have a clear idea of where politicians stand on core issues. The Taiwanese electorate has a fine record of punishing parties and politicians that go to extremes. We will have to wait until December 2007 and March 2008, to see if they can
maintain this record.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Premier</th>
<th>Party Chair</th>
<th>Polarizing Move</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Tang Fei</td>
<td>Lin Yi-hsiung</td>
<td>Nuclear Power Station decision</td>
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<td>2000</td>
<td>Chang Chun-hsiung</td>
<td>Frank Hsieh</td>
<td>One country on each side</td>
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<td>2001</td>
<td>Chang Chun-hsiung</td>
<td>Frank Hsieh</td>
<td>New constitution &amp; referendum raised</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Yu His-kun</td>
<td>Chen Shui-bian</td>
<td>Referendum held &amp; name rectification raised</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Yu His-kun</td>
<td>Chen Shui-bian</td>
<td>NUC &amp; NUG scrapped, Name rectification implemented, anti Chiang campaign,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>You His-kun</td>
<td>Su Chen-chang</td>
<td>Recover Party Assets referendum signature drive, attacks on five noes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Frank Hsieh Chang-ting</td>
<td>Su Chen-chang</td>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>Su Chen-chang</td>
<td>Su Chen-chang</td>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>Su Chen-chang</td>
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