Adapting to the new electoral system: Taiwanese political parties’ legislative candidate selection in 2008 in comparative perspective.

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Abstract

As a result of Taiwan’s constitutional reforms of 2005, the single non transferable vote in multi-member district electoral system that had been used for over five decades was replaced by a single member district two vote system. In addition, the number of legislators was halved from 225 to only 113. In January 2008 Taiwan conducted its first election under the new system. Political analysts place significant emphasis on the mechanical effects of electoral systems on political behaviour, arguing that a single member district system promotes centrist parties and the development of a two party system.

In this study, the critical political process of candidate selection under the new electoral system is examined. First, the degree of inner party democracy in candidate nomination for 2008 is compared with previous elections. Second, the parties’ satisfaction with their current nomination practices is discussed, using an elite survey and newspaper data. Thirdly, the actual consequences of the parties’ 2008 legislative
nomination procedures are examined. In other words, I seek to show whether the recent primaries have had an impact on electoral success, prevalence of rebel or allied party candidates, the party system and on the socio-demographic background of parties’ nominated candidates.
Adapting to the new electoral system: Taiwanese political parties’ legislative candidate selection in 2008 in comparative perspective.

A Landslide victory under a new electoral system

On January 12, 2008 Taiwan conducted its first legislative election under the new Single Member District Two Vote system. The new system also featured a halving of the number of legislators from 225 to only 113. The election saw a landslide victory for the Kuomintang (KMT) and humiliating defeat for the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). The scale of change can be seen from Table 1, which shows how compared to the multiparty system of the 2001 and 2004 elections, Taiwan has reverted to a one party dominant system. The KMT rose from a third of legislative seats to almost three quarters in 2008. Although the DPP’s vote share actually saw a slight rise, its seat share fell dramatically to its lowest level in its 22 year history. As the KMT also won the presidential election two months later it now has achieved its most dominant position since the late 1980s.

Table 1: Party Vote and Seat Shares

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>KMT</th>
<th>DPP</th>
<th>TSU</th>
<th>NP</th>
<th>PFP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>28.6 (30.2)</td>
<td>33.4 (38.7)</td>
<td>8.5 (5.8)</td>
<td>2.9 (0.4)</td>
<td>18.6 (20.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>32.8 (35.1)</td>
<td>35.7 (39.6)</td>
<td>7.8 (5.3)</td>
<td>0.1 (0.4)</td>
<td>13.9 (15.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>51.2 (71.7)</td>
<td>36.9 (24)</td>
<td>3.5 (0)</td>
<td>4 (0)</td>
<td>0.3 (0.9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note 1: This table shows the parties’ vote shares in three legislative elections. The figures in parenthesis are for parties’ seat shares.
Note 2: Vote share figures for 2008 are for the second vote PR vote share, while the parties’ seat share figure is the percentage of the total number of legislators. The only exception is for the PFP in 2008, which allowed a number of its candidates to be nominated on the KMT’s PR list rather than have its own list. Therefore the figures for the PFP in 2008 are for its two district candidates, of whom one was successfully elected.

There are multiple variables to explain this landslide election. Undoubtedly, the design of the new electoral system, the collapse of the People First Party (PFP) and widespread dissatisfaction with the DPP government’s performance all favoured the KMT. In contrast to more routine discussions of this result, this paper examines of candidate selection in the 2008 legislative election. An examination of candidate selection systems in Taiwan is more than just an academic question. Compared to the relative apathy regarding the often closed world of party selection in many advanced democracies, the Taiwanese media offers detailed reporting and analysis to the process. In contrast to the media attention, candidate selection has tended to be a neglected issue in Taiwanese political science. Nevertheless, it has become a growing field in comparative politics over the last two decades. Austin Ranney stressed the significance of the process in his comment that, “What is at stake (in the nomination struggle)···is nothing less than control of the core of what the party stands for and does.”¹ Similarly, Michael Gallagher and Michael Marsh argue that, “The quality of candidates selected determines the quality of the deputies elected, of the resultant parliament, often of the members of government and to some extent of a country’s politics.”²

Studies on candidate selection tend to ask three central questions, (1) how?, (2) why? and (3) So what? In other words, the sub-field is examining how parties select their candidates, why certain mechanisms for candidate selection are adopted, and what are the consequences of these mechanisms. In this piece I focus on the “how” and “so what” dimensions. Firstly, I am interested to see how the parties conducted their candidate selection in this critical election and the degree that they adjusted to the new electoral system. Secondly, I examine the consequences of the adopted selection methods, looking at whether the mechanisms had a positive or negative impact on the general election results, affected the state of the party system, and if the selection mechanisms altered the sociological background of the selected candidates. Since the main parties did not radically reform their selection systems for this election, I only touch upon explaining variation in selection methods in this piece.³ Lastly, I consider the prospects for future reform of the parties’ selection methods.

**Candidate selection in Taiwanese parties prior to 2007**

In the late 1980s, Taiwan began its transition from a one party state to multi-party politics. Simultaneously Taiwan’s main parties began to experiment with inner party democracy, with both leading parties using member primaries for the selection of candidates in the 1989 national elections. Using the scale of inner-party democracy in candidate selection displayed in Table 2 we can see in Table 3 how the two main parties have adjusted their selection methods since the outset of multi-party democracy. Neither the KMT nor the DPP has followed a linear path towards more

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democratic selection methods. In particular, the KMT abandoned primaries in the 1990s, replacing them with a more top down approach that left members and supporters powerless to influence nomination. Although the DPP has also revised its nomination methods on a number of occasions, it has at least been consistent in its use of primaries throughout. A critical development was its introduction of a system in 1998 that combined a member primary with public opinion polls to select DPP district candidates. This methodology involves a weighting in which the member primary accounts for 30% and the surveys for 70%. Following its defeat in the 2000 presidential election, the KMT also adopted the same basic member vote/survey formula as the DPP for the 2001 and 2004 legislative elections. In both parties, primaries were only used where there were more internally registered candidates than the number the party planned to nominate. For multi-member district legislative elections, it was standard practice to hold primaries for most constituencies in the DPP. For instance, in 2001 the DPP held primaries in 22 out of the 28 districts. Despite the KMT’s traditions for top down nominations, it also showed increasing levels of acceptance of primaries in 2004 compared to 2001. Therefore for the leading parties, there was a convergence on inclusive nomination methods in the post 2000 period. The pattern in Taiwan’s smaller parties has been quite different. With the exception of the New Party in 1998, the smaller parties have always adopted authoritarian nomination methods, placing them at either point 6 or 7 on the inner party democratization scale in Table 2. In other words, the key location of nomination decision making has either been the dominant party leader (such as James Soong in the PFP) or a central level nomination committee.⁴

⁴ For instance James Soong was long the dominant figure in determining nomination in the People First Party, while the NP’s standard practice for nomination has tended to be a central level nomination committee. For details see Fell (2006), 188-192.
Table 2 Scale to Measure Democratisation of candidate selection procedures in Taiwan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Values</th>
<th>Explanations of categories:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Electorate: Including primaries in which all eligible voters may participate or selection by opinion surveys in which survey results account for over 100% of the selection weighting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Mixed system of closed member primaries and opinion surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Party Members: Closed member primaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Mixed system of party cadre primary and closed member primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Local/Center Negotiation: This involves negotiations between three parties: the local party branch, local party factional leaders, and the party center. This normally allows a candidate to be selected by conciliation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Non Selected Party Agency: a selection committee at the national level makes the nomination decision. This may involve candidates from outside the constituency being parachuted in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Party Leader: The national party leader makes the nomination decision.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 Categorization of Taiwan’s Parties’ Levels of Democracy in Candidate Selection Procedures: 1989-2008.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Elections held</th>
<th>KMT</th>
<th>DPP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Legislative</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Legislative</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Seats</td>
<td>Districts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Legislative</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Legislative</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Legislative</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Legislative</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Legislative</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Candidate Nomination for the 2008 Legislative Election**

**Challenges from the new system**

The introduction of Taiwan’s new legislative electoral system represented a significant challenge for the operation of the major parties’ nomination systems. Firstly, the halving of the number of legislators meant there was enormous competition for nomination as the vast majority of incumbents sought reelection. Competition was further intensified by involvement of lower level elected candidates, such as from county councils. Also the shift from large and medium sized constituencies to small constituencies meant that rather than county wide campaigning, candidates needed to focus on smaller geographic areas. Patterns of party support meant that there was often intensive competition for nomination in some of the new constituencies and a lack of candidates in others. For instance, prior to reform Kaohsiung North was a six member district, with three incumbent DPP legislators, but after the boundary changes it became three smaller districts. As a result of overlapping support bases two DPP incumbents fought for primary nomination in the new Kaohsiung City 3 district, but initially not a single DPP politician registered for Kaohsiung City 1, where the DPP was traditionally weakest. Another challenge to the existing nomination methods was the use of single member districts. Since the first
experimentation with primaries in the late 1980s, Taiwan’s parties have tended to be
more prepared to use primaries in the multiple member district elections than the
winner takes all single member district contests. A final related challenge was how to
resolve the demands for nomination from the major parties allied parties. In the old
multiple member districts, the main parties often did not object to their allied parties
also nominating in the same district. On occasions the DPP and Taiwan Solidarity
Union (TSU) even ran join campaigns in some constituencies in 2004’s legislative
election. However, with single member districts, multiple Blue or Green candidates
are a recipe for disaster. The fact that both the TSU and PFP had electable incumbent
legislators, while the NP had well known former legislators vying for nomination
created a formidable challenge to the major parties.

**Changes to nomination methodology**

Despite the challenges posed by the new electoral system, both major parties
continued their use of the member primary + opinion poll, with its weighting of 30:70.
Therefore both the KMT and DPP remain classified at point 2 of my inner party
democracy scale. Nevertheless, the one significant change in methodology was in the
DPP’s controversial adoption of the so called “exclude Blues” survey (排藍民調) into
its primary surveys. For district legislator primaries the new regulation meant that
when survey respondents were asked for their party identification and replied one of
the Blue parties (KMT, PFP, NP etc.) they would be excluded from the sample. But if
the respondent answered “no party identification” or “other,” then a follow up
question would ask “If the DPP puts forward a good candidate would you support
him/her?” If the respondent answers “yes,” then the respondent would be included in
the primary sample, but if answer is “no,” then they would be excluded.\(^5\) It was calculated that this would exclude approximately 50 percent of voters in most constituencies.

At least publicly two main arguments were employed to support the revision. Firstly, it was claimed that without this change there was a serious danger that the KMT would mobilize its supporters to disrupt the DPP primaries, by perhaps encouraging their supporters to select a weaker DPP candidate if polled.\(^6\) Secondly, it was seen as a way to bring the party back to its ideals and avoid nomination of those whose loyalty had wavered during the Red Shirts Protests of 2006.\(^7\)

**Explaining DPP Change and KMT Continuity**

DPP Chairman Yu Shyi-kun argued that excluding blue supporters from the DPP primary process would, “enable everyone to return to propagating the DPP’s basic values.”\(^8\) Similarly, when the KMT first introduced primaries in 1989 it was claimed that it was aimed at making the KMT a more democratic party. Such statements reflect the frequent use of lofty ideals to justify the employment of primaries. In reality, the forces motivating nomination reform in parties throughout the world tend to be far more instrumental than idealistic. For instance, the British Labour Party’s attempt to make candidate selection more inclusive in the 1990s was principally an

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\(^8\) Ibid.
attempt to centralize the process and defang the more radical activist party base.\textsuperscript{9} In previous studies I have thus employed a framework that explains Taiwanese parties' choice of nomination system as being the result of changes in leadership and factional balance of power, and election results.\textsuperscript{10}

The KMT reintroduction of primaries after 2000 was both a response to its disastrous presidential defeat (largely caused by a faulty nomination system) and a change in the party leader and factional power structure. Under Lien Chan the pro primary Non Mainstream Faction became increasingly influential after 2000.\textsuperscript{11} After Ma Ying-jeou replaced Lien as party chairman in 2005, the KMT has not only increased its use of primaries but also institutionalized the process. Ma himself is highly supportive of primaries, partly as he is, like the Non Mainstream Faction, a beneficiary of primaries. This was apparent in his overwhelming victory over Wang Jin-ping in the KMT party chairmanship primary in 2005. Other variables encouraging the KMT’s continued use of primaries include its string of electoral victories since 2004 and the increasing strength of the Non Mainstream Faction.

In contrast to the KMT’s consistency, the DPP’s adoption of the “exclude Blues” was closely linked to internal (leadership & factional balance of power) and external (electoral) factors. Firstly, since 2004 the DPP had suffered a series of poor electoral results and declining levels of party identification. Throughout the party’s history it has repeatedly attempted to respond of electoral defeat by adjusting its policy

\textsuperscript{10} See Fell (2006), for details.
\textsuperscript{11} I appreciate that the use of the terms Mainstream and Non Mainstream KMT have ceased to be commonly used. However, as the ideology and actual personalities of the Non Mainstream remain central to the current KMT I continue to use the term. This also makes comparative analysis of the pre and post 2000 eras easier. I would welcome suggestions for alternative and more appropriate terms for these groups.
positions and organization. Secondly, the revisions were a tool for inner DPP factional struggle. In particular, DPP Chairman Yu Shyi-kun, Acting Chairman Chai Trong-rong, and legislator Wang Shih-chien played the key roles in pushing this reform through the party’s decision making process. For these politicians the key driving force was to destroy the influence of the DPP’s New Tide Faction and other DPP figures that had become critical of Chen Shui-bian during the height of the 2006 corruption scandals. These blacklisted politicians, commonly referred to as the “11 Bandits” were accused of disloyalty and being too Pro-China. Even after the nomination process began a relentless campaign was launched on the pro-DPP radio stations and Chai’s Formosa TV to undermine the “11 Bandits” chances in the primaries. One senior DPP legislator even likened the tactics used in the nomination process to “McCarthyism.”

A third and related factor was for politicians to enhance their own nomination prospects. Thus for instance, Yu was the most extreme on national identity of the four candidates in the DPP’s presidential primary, therefore he hoped that the “exclude Blues” survey would enhance his campaign and damage the New Tide backed candidate Su Chen-chang. Although Yu’s bid ultimately failed, Wang Shih-chien did successfully ride of this wave to defeat the popular New Tide legislator Hsiao Bi-kim in the Taipei City 2 primary.

**Operation of primaries and nomination in 2007**

Table 4 lists the districts under the new electoral system in which the two main parties conducted primaries. Out of the 73 districts, the KMT (28 districts) and DPP (28 districts) both conducted primaries in almost 40 percent of districts. The vast majority of these followed the standard model of the 30 percent party member vote: 70 percent

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12 For details on DPP policy adjustments following electoral setbacks see Fell, *Party Politics in Taiwan* (London: Routledge, 2005).
13 Quoted in Yang Shu-mei, “Calling up evil the Spirit of McCarthyism” *The Journalist*, No.1039.
survey weighting primary. There were only a few exceptions to this pattern. In a small number of constituencies only surveys were used. For instance, the DPP selection in Kaohsiung County 4 only used surveys. Perhaps the most irregular inner party primary took place for the KMT in Taoyuan County 6, where the primary consisted of voting by 40 party cadres. In those constituencies that I classified as unofficial KMT primaries, opinion poll surveys were held between the official KMT registered candidate and incumbent PFP candidates seeking reelection. For instance in Kaohsiung City 1, the KMT's Huang Chao-hsun polled higher than the PFP’s Chang Hsien-yao, after which Chang withdrew. In Taichung City 3, a survey was held between the winner of the KMT primary, Hong Chao-nan and the PFP incumbent Huang Yi-chiao. After Huang won the primary, Hong withdrew from the race and Huang was nominated as a KMT candidate.

Table 4: Primaries Used in 2007 Legislative Nomination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KMT</th>
<th>DPP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal Primaries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Kaohsiung City 2</td>
<td>1. Kaohsiung City 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Taipei City 3</td>
<td>2. Kaohsiung City 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Taipei City 4</td>
<td>3. Taipei City 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Taipei City 6</td>
<td>4. Taipei City 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Taipei City 8</td>
<td>5. Taipei County 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Taipei County 5</td>
<td>6. Taipei County 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Taipei County 8</td>
<td>7. Taipei County 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Taoyuan County 1</td>
<td>8. Taipei County 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Taoyuan County 4</td>
<td>9. Taipei County 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Taoyuan County 5</td>
<td>10. Yilan County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Taoyuan County 6</td>
<td>11. Taoyuan County 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Hsinchu County</td>
<td>12. Taoyuan County 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Miaoli County 1</td>
<td>13. Taichung County 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Taichung County 4</td>
<td>14. Taichung County 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Changhua County 3</td>
<td>15. Changhua County 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Four methods were employed by the main parties to settle nomination in the remaining constituencies. Firstly, where only one viable candidate registered, they would be nominated. For instance, once KMT Secretary General Wu Tun-yi registered for Nantou County 1, no other candidates were prepared to challenge him in a primary. Secondly, in a number of constituencies where more than one candidate registered, negotiation was used to persuade candidates to withdraw from the race and thus avoid primaries. For instance, in Taipei County 10 (Li Chuan-chiao) and Pingtung County 2 (Liao Wan-ju), incumbents were persuaded to withdraw by the offer of nomination on the KMT’s proportional representation list. This negotiated approach tends to be more commonly employed by the KMT than the DPP. Thirdly, where no candidate or no viable candidate registered, then parties tended to “appoint” a popular candidate that had not formally registered. For instance, in Taipei City 6, the DPP replaced the originally nominated 25 year old Kao Chia-yu with Chen
Shui-bian’s former right hand man Luo Wen-chia. In addition, some politicians from
the DPP allied party, the Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU) defected in order to be
nominated by appointment by the DPP. The practice of “appointing” candidates tends
to be particularly common in constituencies viewed as hopeless seats. For instance,
DPP candidates were reluctant to register in Taoyuan 4-6. Lastly, in a number of
constituencies major parties decided not to nominate candidates to give their allies a
chance to contest the seat. For instance, the KMT gave up competing in three districts
and instead supported candidates from the Non Party Alliance, while the DPP gave
the TSU a free run in Taichung County 4.

Levels of satisfaction with the operation of primaries in 2007

Ever since the first experimentation with primaries in 1989 this nomination practice
has been highly controversial. Opponents of primaries have made a series of
arguments against their use. First, it is argued that primaries exacerbate inner-party
conflict. Second, the difference in structure between primary voters and the general
electorate means that some primary winners are not necessarily competitive in general
elections. Third, the involvement of money politics in primaries damages the
reputation of elections. Many primary candidates have used inappropriate methods to
gain votes, such as vote buying, violence and insulting other candidates. Fifth, since
candidates undergo two campaigns for one election (nomination and election
campaigns), they spend energy and money twice; especially money for bribes to
secure the nomination and election. It has been criticized as “skinning an ox twice.”

In order to gain an understanding of the levels of satisfaction with nomination systems

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14 For a detailed discussion of the common critiques of primaries in Taiwanese parties see Wu Chung-li
and Dafydd Fell, “Taiwan's Party Primaries in Comparative Perspective,” Japanese Journal of Political
in 2007 a mail survey of legislators was conducted. Below in Table 5 the results are shown on the questions of what is the best system for legislative nomination and satisfaction with the operation of the process for this election. Firstly, there is a consensus among those respondents that replied that the current member primary/survey system is the best model for selecting legislative candidates. Out of the 13 respondents only two supported alternative top down nomination methods. Nevertheless, when we look at the figures for levels of satisfaction for the 2007 primaries, we can see that almost half the respondents were dissatisfied. The most commonly listed complaints in this survey about the 2007 primaries are also displayed in Table 5. These show a mixture of new and old problems with primaries. A number of legislators repeated the age old complaint that primaries allow vote buying in the form of “pocket members,” which are party members that are owned by party politicians who will pay their membership fees. Two legislators also argued that open primaries create party divisions and competing candidates will openly attach their fellow party members. However, we can also see evidence of two new complaints. Firstly, the claim that under the new smaller electoral districts the telephone surveys is in danger of being manipulated where candidates buy large numbers of telephone numbers. Secondly, four of the DPP respondents were highly critical of the “exclude Blues” survey. For instance, one wrote that under the new system “the winners are all extremist,” and another that these surveys, “lose the opinions of voters at the centre.”

Table 5. Legislators Views on Nomination in 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the best system for nominating legislative candidates?</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Party Leader Nominates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre Party Nomination Committee</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Local Negotiation                  1
Party Member Vote                  
Party Member and Survey            11
Survey                            
Open Primary                       
Total Respondents                  13
Are you satisfied with this year’s legislative primary in your party?
Satisfied                          7
Dissatisfied                       6
Total Respondents                  13
Most common Complaints about primaries in 2007
Manipulation of telephone surveys  4
Vote buying among party members    4
Exclude blues loses middle voters and allows extremist to be nominated 4
Inner party conflict               2
Party Centre biased                1
Inability to investigate fraud     1

A review of newspaper coverage reveals that the survey findings overlap with some of the most common controversies during the operation of primaries for the nomination of district legislative candidates in 2007. During the 1990s, the accusation of politicians owning pocket members had been highly damaging for the DPP’s reputation for clean politics. Indeed this had been one of the factors in its decision to bring surveys into the primary process. It was hoped that if the member primary was no longer so influential in determining outcomes, the problem of “pocket members”
would fade away. As the KMT did not use primaries for most of the 1990s, the term “pocket members” was exclusively associated with the DPP. However, the KMT’s post 2000 adoption of DPP style primaries has encouraged some of its wealthier politicians to also copy some of the DPP’s less admirable practices. For instance, after losing the KMT primary in Taipei County 8 by a surprisingly wide margin, veteran KMT legislator Li Ching-hua accused his local factional rival of massive use of “pocket members.” As a result Li claimed that even if Ma Ying-jeou came to join a primary in the district facing a “super golden ox” like Chang Ching-chung, it’s hard to predict whether he could win.  

Similarly, one of the most highly regarded KMT incumbent legislators Joanna Lei withdrew before the primary began in Taipei County 11, arguing that her rival, Lo Ming-tsai’s “pocket members” would make it an unfair contest. These two cases suggest a subtle shift in the operation of KMT primaries. When primaries were first introduced in the KMT in the late 1980s it was argued that they favoured the Mainlander or Non Mainstream Factional candidates and were damaging for the election prospects of local Taiwanese KMT candidates. However, in these two cases in Taipei County, it was local factional candidates that defeated famous Mainlander Non Mainstream KMT politicians.

There were reported cases in both parties of accusations that candidates were attempting to manipulate the telephone survey component of the primary by purchasing large numbers of temporary phone lines from Chunghwa Telecom. However, media reports of these cases were particularly prevalent in DPP primaries. The DPP party centre conducted investigations into a number of such cases. In three

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DPP primaries the winners were accused by their rivals of primary fraud by applying for large numbers of temporary phone numbers. One such case was the DPP’s Taipei County 3 primary. In the party member primary Lin Shu-fen lost by 46.55% to Huang Chien-hui’s 53.45%. However, on the eve of the survey stage, Lin accused her rival of applying for 1000 temporary telephone lines to distort the surveys. Although it was not proved that these measures had been decisive in determining the primary results, after investigation, all three of the accused were replaced by the second place primary candidates.

At least for the DPP, by far the most common cause of controversy in its 2007 primaries was its “exclude Blues.” As mentioned earlier, this was a thinly disguised method of conducting political struggle against the New Tide Faction and those politicians whose loyalty to the party and president was perceived to have faltered in 2006. Even before the survey stage was conducted numerous DPP politicians questioned the appropriateness of these surveys for the new single member district system. The incumbent legislator Lin Shou in Yunlin County 2 stated that not only are they retrogressive surveys but are also destroying the DPP. Lin argued that while many voters, particularly those in the education and civil service sectors, though identifying more with the KMT, often will support DPP candidates. Therefore in a single member district, it would be damaging to exclude these potential DPP voters from the primary. Despite the warnings that for single member districts candidates must appeal beyond party loyalists in order to gain over 50% in a given constituency, the DPP still passed these primary revisions.

18 The other two constituencies were Taipei County 4 and Kaohsiung City 3.
Consequences of the 2007 nomination systems

As mentioned earlier, the consequences of different candidate selection systems is the third dimension of the nomination literature, however it appears to be the least developed of the three. The field has tended to focus on the impact of the process on the backgrounds and behaviour of selected candidates, party cohesion and the power structure of the party itself. However, results have often been quite contradictory and inconclusive. Studies have shown that while democratizing candidate selection in the United States and Israel have reduced party cohesion, in a number of western European cases the reforms have actually served to strengthen the party centre.

Similarly, the impact of selection on the demographic background remains an unanswered question. For instance, though Vicky Randall (1987) has argued that centralized nomination will lead to greater female representation, Pippa Norris has shown a simple correlation between the centralization of the selection process and the gender of candidates proved to be insignificant. Moreover, Hazan notes that “two clear generalizations can be made concerning the kinds of candidates that are produced as a result of the various candidate selection methods: incumbents have an advantage and women have a disadvantage.” Undoubtedly, attempting to unravel correlation from causation is a serious challenge for studies on the impact of different nomination systems. As Michael Gallagher warns us at the outset of his volume, “in some or many cases candidate selection may be an intervening variable rather than an independent one.”

This study follows the practice of the existing literature by examining whether there is

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20 Reuven Hazan in Comparing Democracies 2, 115.

21 Michael Gallagher, Candidate Selection in Comparative Perspective, 15-16.
a link between the selection systems and the demographic qualities of nominated candidates in the areas of (1) gender, (2) age, (3) incumbency, and (4) ethnicity. In addition, I attempt to break new ground by testing whether there is a relationship between types of selection system and both election results and the state of the party system. This direction makes considerable sense as in interviews with party elites in Taiwan I was repeatedly informed that selection systems were reformed with the dual goals of improving election results and avoiding inner party splits over nomination disputes.

**Impact of candidate selection on the election results**

Multiple factors determine electoral success or failure. Although they receive less academic attention, an examination of Taiwan’s recent electoral history reveals that nomination practices have been as influential as issue positions or campaigning techniques in determining election results. Two critical realms where we can view the relationship between nomination and election results, particularly in single member district contests, are (1) the presence of rebel party candidates, and (2) the presence of allied party candidates. In the 1997 local executive and 2000 presidential elections, rebel KMT candidates were critical for the parties’ two most disastrous defeats. Similarly, competition from rival Blue parties such as the New Party and PFP served to split the Blue vote in local and legislative election in the 1990s and post 2000 era, thus allowing the DPP to benefit.

**Rebel candidates in 2008**

To get a picture of the development of the rebel candidate phenomenon, Table 6 lists the number of rebel and unendorsed/open nominated candidates for the two main parties in legislative elections since 1989. Although it is often argued by critics of
primaries that they encourage inner party divisions and result in rebel candidates, here we can see a clear correlation between use of more inclusive nomination systems and lower levels of rebel candidates. Thus the DPP, with its relatively consistent use of primaries has seen a consistently low level of rebel candidates. Despite the criticism of the primary process within the DPP in 2007, the numbers of DPP rebels in 2008 remained low. The KMT had high number of rebel candidates throughout its more authoritarian nomination period of the 1990s. However, as the party introduces and gradually expands its use of primaries in the post 2000 period, there is a progressive decline in the number of KMT rebels and unendorsed/open nomination candidates.\textsuperscript{22}

Moreover, when looking at Table 6, we should also consider that in the new election system employed in 2008 there was an increase in the number of constituencies, so that both parties’ further reduction of rebels that year is even more significant.

Table 6: Rebel (and permitted) candidates in legislative elections

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KMT</td>
<td>32(14)</td>
<td>41(18)</td>
<td>17(14)</td>
<td>46(5)</td>
<td>36(4)</td>
<td>19(3)</td>
<td>11(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPP</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
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Naturally the number of rebel candidates does not tell the whole story, as many rebel candidates will be insignificant players in a district. A detailed examination suggests that primaries have been successful at avoiding damaging rebel candidates. Out of the 11 KMT rebels only two could be said to have significantly contributed to KMT.

\textsuperscript{22} Unendorsed candidates are those that are not officially expelled for standing for election, sometimes directly against an official candidate. Open nomination occurs when the KMT allows two party candidates to contest a single member district. These kinds of nomination appear to only occur for the KMT.
defeats. In Taipei County 2, a KMT rebel gained 10.9%, while the official KMT candidate received 39.9%, enabling the DPP candidate to win with 43.2%. The second case was in Pingtung County 3, where the rebel KMT candidate gained 5.7%, the official KMT received 43% and the DPP won with 51.3%. Interestingly, these were both districts where the KMT did not run primaries, rejecting the KMT candidates that actually registered, and instead used top down nomination.

The number of DPP rebels was lower than the KMT, however, two of these seven rebels contributed to DPP defeat and another almost led to defeat of the DPP candidate. Particularly serious was the case of Kaohsiung City 3, where the rebel gained 7.11%, the official DPP candidate received 42.7, allowing the KMT candidate to win with 49.1%. Moreover, it is significant that in all three cases of damaging DPP rebels the party had held primaries in these districts. In the past DPP candidates defeated in primaries rarely stood against the primary winners, however, in 2008 this occurred in Kaohsiung City 3 and Kaohsiung County 3. Although the DPP rebel in Taipei City 2 had not joined the primary, it was no coincidence that former party reformer Chou Yi-cheng chose to stand against the official candidate Wang Shih-chien. A likely factors was that Wang had been a key promoter of the “exclude Blues” survey and led bitter and divisive attacks against party moderates and reformers during the primary process.

Nomination of allied party candidates

The second dimension of the link between nomination and election results is that of allied party candidates, who can also seriously split the vote of the mainstream parties. Table 7 lists the numbers of allied party candidates for the district legislative elections since 1995. This shows that in every legislative election between 1995 and 2004 the KMT has far more competition from its fellow Blue parties than the DPP did from its
allied parties. As a result the Blue vote tended to be far more dispersed. The exception to this pattern was 2008 when for the first time since the early 1990s there was a single blue party in almost every constituency. Even though there were 13 TSU district candidates in 2008, none of these were viable candidates that could damage the prospects of DPP candidates. As a result the vast majority of districts in 2008 were fought between the KMT and DPP candidates.

Table 7: Allied Party Candidates in District Legislative Seats 1995-2008

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NP</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PFP</td>
<td></td>
<td>56</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>TSU</td>
<td></td>
<td>37</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>13</td>
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When we look at the candidate success rate we can clearly see a correlation between the numbers of allied party candidates/use of primaries and the electoral fortunes for the KMT. In other words, the KMT suffered its poorest success rate when the party suffered from rebel candidates (1992, 1995) and when it was threatened by growing allied parties (1995 and 2001). In contrast, the KMT has shown its greatest success rates in years when it used primaries that reduced rebels (2004 and 2008) and when it faced no challenge or little challenge from allied parties (1998, 2004 & 2008).

Table 8: Success rate of district candidates nominated by the main parties 1989-2008

|-------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|

Nomination and the party system in 2007-8

Although this is rarely discussed in the nomination literature, nomination systems can have a critical impact on the development of a country’s party system. In the early 1990s nomination issues, in particular the KMT’s abandonment of primaries was one of a number of factors contributing to the defection of party elites to form the NP. Similarly, the lack of a fair nomination process for the 2000 presidential election led to the rebel candidacy of James Soong, which laid the foundation of the next KMT splinter party, the PFP. In both cases, nomination disputes were significant factors in the fragmentation of the party system, promoting the creation of a multi-party system.

Just as nomination systems can create party splits, they can also facilitate merging of parties. In other words, after the KMT reintroduced primaries in the post 2000 period and the party became more orthodox on national identity issues, two of the original justifications for the creation of the NP and PFP had been removed. In the first stage in 2004 a number of well-known NP returned to the KMT to be nominated for the legislative elections. Perhaps more important was the precedent set by the KMT’s primary for Taipei County magistrate in 2005. In this contest, two PFP politicians rejoined the KMT to participate in the primary, one of whom, Chou His-wei, not only won the primary, but also won actual magistrate election. There was a similar pattern for the KMT primary for Taipei mayor in 2006, which was won by a former NP chairman. Therefore since 2005 there has been a steady erosion of the numbers of PFP
legislators, as these PFP politicians defected back to the KMT to compete for nomination. Politicians that fell into this category for this election included Li Ching-hua in Taipei County 8 and Sun Ta-chien in Taoyuan County 6. The KMT’s nomination system proved to be flexible enough to accommodate the remaining PFP legislators, and thus avoid divisive allied party candidates. Some, such as Huang Yi-chiao in Taichung City 3 rejoined the KMT after the unofficial survey style primary. Lastly, a number of other PFP incumbents rejoined the KMT to be nominated on its PR list. This process reached its conclusion following the KMT’s victory in January 2008 when the party chairman Wu Po-hsiung was able to announce the merging of the KMT and PFP. In other words, nomination reforms contributed to the KMT becoming the sole significant Blue party.

Although there were a number of defections from the TSU to the DPP in the run up to the 2008 legislative election, as the DPP’s primary system is more rule based than the KMT, it was unable to accommodate these politicians. Instead they were nominated by the DPP using the appointed method, such as ex TSU Liao Pen-yen’s nomination for Taipei County 5, where no DPP candidate had registered. Perhaps due to the more rigid DPP nomination system it also failed to negotiate with the TSU effectively over nomination issues. As a result the TSU nominated candidates to stand against the DPP in eleven districts and the TSU competed especially vigorously with the DPP for the second PR vote.

**Impact of nomination on the socio-demographic background of candidates**

Here I have collected data on four dimensions of the impact of nomination on the socio-demographic background of nominated candidates of the KMT and DPP: (1) ethnicity, (2) age, (3) gender, (4) incumbency.
One of the most common claims regarding primaries in the KMT is that they tend to favour Mainlander candidates. The argument is that they will be backed by the Veteran’s Huang Fu-hsing party branch, which is highly adept at mobilizing its party members for primary elections. The figures from Table 9 do not conclusively support or contradict the stereotype. It is clear that in years with large numbers of primaries, such as 1989 and 2004, Mainlander candidates had their highest nomination levels. However, in 2008 despite KMT enthusiasm for primaries, there was a reduction in Mainlander nominations. In addition, as mentioned earlier, two high profile Mainlander incumbents lost or dropped out of primaries against factional KMT candidates. The decline in Mainlander nominations at the district level was partly compensated for in the PR list, where there was a rise from 12.5% of Mainlanders in 2004 to 20.6 in 2008. However, the KMT’s PR list was nominated in a highly authoritarian manner without any input from party members or supporters.

It appears that the DPP’s inclusive nomination system leaves little space for Mainlanders, as DPP members are unlikely to support Mainlanders in primaries. Neither of the two DPP Mainlander district candidates were nominated using primaries in 2008, but by appointment. This corresponds with comparative studies that show inclusive selectorates tend to undermine the nomination chances of candidates from minority or disadvantaged groups.

Table 9: Ethnicity of District Nominated Candidates: Proportion of Mainlander Candidates
One complaint that is often made regarding the current member primary is that it offers limited scope for younger politicians to gain nomination. Nevertheless, Tables 10 and 11 which show the age of KMT and DPP nominated candidates respectively, does not show a clear relationship between inclusiveness of the selectorate and age. Instead there appears to be an overall trend towards nomination of older candidates for both leading parties.

Table 10 Age of KMT nominated candidates

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A20</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>A30</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>11.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>A40</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>40.2</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>17.1</td>
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<td>A50</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>54.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>A60</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.7</td>
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Table 11 Age of DPP nominated candidates

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A20</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>A30</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>11.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>A40</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A50</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>42</td>
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A third and related dimension of the socio-demographic background of nominated candidates is the proportion of incumbents nominated. Research in Israel has found that democratizing the candidate selection process tends to favour the nomination of incumbent candidates. From the Taiwanese data there does appear to be a correlation between the introduction of the primaries/survey system and increased nomination rates for both major parties in the post 2000 period. However, research is still required to ascertain whether there is any causation between the two. An examination of the primary records of both KMT and DPP for 2008 shows that a large proportion of primaries were fought between incumbents. The data suggests that in the vast majority of cases where incumbents were challenged by non incumbents, it was the incumbent that triumphed. Nevertheless, there were exceptions. For instance, in the Changhua County 4 KMT primary County Councilor Hsiao Ching-tien defeated incumbent Chen Chao-jung.

Table 12: Proportion of Incumbents nominated for district legislative elections

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KMT</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>53.7</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>81.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPP</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>62.2</td>
<td>63.8</td>
</tr>
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One of the iron rules of nomination is that with the exception of the Scandinavian countries, women have a severe disadvantage in the nomination process. It is for this reason that both parties and states have introduced laws and regulations to promote female nomination. For instance, the British Labour Party has tried “women only” nomination short lists and now Taiwan requires at least 50% female nomination for parties’ proportional representation list of candidates. Pippa Norris notes that Randall (1987) suggests that more centralized nomination will lead to greater female representation as leadership more likely to be well educated and liberal attitudes towards gender equality. Nevertheless, Norris finds a simple correlation between the centralization of the selection process and the gender of candidates proved to be insignificant.

Table 13: Proportion female candidates nominated for district legislative contests
The Taiwanese developments on female nomination are displayed on Table 13. First, this shows that party affiliation appears to be more significant than inclusiveness of nomination, with the KMT consistently nominating more females than the DPP. Both parties show a gradual increase in the proportion of females nominated during the 1990s, reaching a peak in 2001. There does not appear to be any obvious link between use of primaries and females nominated by the KMT, as the key rise is in 1998, prior to primaries. For the DPP there may be a relationship, as a large rise in female nominations coincides with the introduction of the primary/survey system in 1998. The reduction in female nomination for both parties in 2008 suggests that the change in the electoral system may be as important in affecting female nomination rates, as there has been a long-term trend that females in Taiwan are less likely to be nominated in single member district elections. For instance, in the most recent (single member district) local executive election of 2005, out of the 23 districts, the DPP nominated three females and the KMT only one.

### Conclusion

This study has attempted to place the main parties’ nomination processes of 2008 in a comparative context. It has focused on the “how” and the “so what” of the nomination issue, with limited attention to the “why.” First I looked at the patterns of change and continuity in nomination practices during this election. In other words, I showed how though both parties continued to use the member vote/survey weighted primaries extensively, there were significant changes. For the KMT the primary process has became more institutionalized, but it still had the flexibility to conduct the kind of semi-official primaries that enabled nomination disputes with the PFP to be resolved.

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23 When Blue and Green parties are compared over time, there is also a pattern of Blue parties nominating more female candidates than Green parties.
amicably. For the DPP its major shift was the introduction of the “exclude Blues” questions to the survey section. My examination of the controversies during the nomination process reveal that key problems facing the future operation of primaries will be (1) how to avoid manipulation of the survey process by applying for large numbers of temporary telephone numbers, (2) the old question of vote buying and “pocket members” in primaries, (3) whether or not to exclude non-party supporters from the primary survey.

The second half of the paper discussed the consequences of nomination systems. In the conclusion of his groundbreaking volume, Michael Gallagher notes that, “Establishing cause and effect between candidate selection and the composition of parliaments is not easy.” This paper has reached a similar conclusion in the Taiwan case, as there appears to be no clear relationship between type of nomination system and most of the background characteristics of nominated politicians. Even where there appears to be a relationship, such as the disadvantage that females, younger candidates and non-incumbents face have in primaries, there may be other more important factors at work. As Gallagher and Marsh warn, the candidate selection system may just be an intervening variable.

The findings on the consequences of candidate selection systems on both election results and the party system are more encouraging. Rather than just focusing on mass voting behaviour, issue emphasis, or general election campaigning, this study suggests we should also consider the impact of different nomination systems in Taiwan, looking at candidate nomination as an independent variable to help understand election results and party system outcomes. I argue that more authoritarian

nomination systems are more likely to produce rebel candidates and splinter parties. Moreover, the presence of rebel candidates does have a highly damaging impact on election results, particularly in SMD elections. The appearance of such splinter parties is also highly damaging for the original mainstream parties, particularly in MMD elections. In contrast, nomination involving an inclusive selectorate and an institutionalized system limits the number of rebel candidates and helps avoid party splits. Nomination involving more inclusive selectorates and an institutionalized system can actually encourage splinter parties to return to the original party. Therefore treating nomination systems as an independent variable for helping explain election results and developments in the party system is worthy of further research beyond just Taiwan.

This study only offers some preliminary answers to understanding the operation and consequences of different nomination systems. There is huge scope for further research in this area. For instance, I have ignored the potential impact of nomination on parliamentary party cohesion, a subject that has received much attention from nomination studies in other countries. Nevertheless, I hope that this research has gone some way to making the secret garden of Taiwanese politics a little less mysterious.