Inter-Party Competition in Taiwan since the 1990s

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Despite the change in ruling party in 2000, most of the salient issues of the 1990s remain on the political agenda

Dafydd Fell

- 1 In stark contrast to many other former authoritarian parties, such as in Eastern Europe, Taiwan's Kuomintang (KMT) initially adapted remarkably well to democratic competition. Following the KMT's resounding victory in Taiwan's first full multi-party elections in 1991, it was able to win majorities in a series of elections throughout the 1990s. After ruling Taiwan for over five decades, the KMT finally lost power following its defeat by the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) candidate Chen Shui-bian in the 2000 presidential election. Therefore this date marks the end of the KMT era and the start of the DPP era.
- 2 Was the turnover in ruling parties in 2000 a critical turning point for Taiwan's inter party competition? Or have party trends present in the 1990s continued into the new millennium? To answer these questions I first analyse how the balance of power between the major parties has shifted since 2000. Secondly, evidence from propaganda content analysis is examined to see if the policy content of party competition has changed. In other words the parties' issue emphasis in the final decade of the KMT era (1991-2000) is compared with the first two elections (2001 and 2004) of the subsequent DPP era.
- 3 2000 was a watershed year for the inter-party balance of power. Not only has the KMT's electoral hegemony come to an end, but also inter party competition has become far more complex, as the number of significant political parties has increased. There have been signs of both continuity and change in the policy content of party competition over the last four years. Most of the salient issues of the 1990s remain on the political agenda in the DPP era, in particular Taiwan independence, Taiwan nationalism, democracy and political corruption. However a number of issues have faded from the agenda, such as social welfare, while other issues have risen in salience, especially regarding the economy, government competence, and Taiwan nationalism. Although

there has been talk of polarisation in Taiwanese politics since 2000¹, the trend of convergence that began in the 1990s has continued into the DPP era. While parties appeared relatively distinct on many of the core electoral issues in the 1990s, party lines have become blurred on a number of issues.

The end of KMT hegemony

- 4 Since 2000 there have been three major island-wide national and local level elections. These were the 2001 legislative and municipal executive elections, and the 2004 presidential contest. The results for these elections are displayed below in Table 1. When these election results are compared to those of the 1990s it is clear that inter-party competition has intensified. In addition to the two main parties, there are now two parties on the right of Taiwan's political spectrum, the New Party (NP) and People First Party (PFP), while the Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU) represents the first significant new party on the left².
- 5 Since 2000 the KMT's dominance of elections has come to an end. In terms of vote share the KMT lost to the DPP in all three elections. Also for the first time the KMT lost its majority in the Legislative Yuan, as the DPP became the largest party in that body. When the KMT and PFP came together to create a joint presidential ticket in 2004 of Lien Chan and Soong Chu-yu, they were still defeated by the DPP's Chen Shui-bian. Although the assassination attempt on Chen Shui-bian on the eve of the 2004 presidential election may have brought the DPP some sympathy votes, the shift in voter behaviour patterns in favour of the DPP has been considerable. In almost every county in Taiwan the DPP's vote share increased by over 10%, and this was the first time the DPP had garnered more than 50% of the vote in an island-wide election³.
- 6 Equally worrying for the KMT has been the challenge of the two latest KMT splinter parties, on the right the PFP, and on the left the TSU. With the charismatic Soong Chu-yu at the helm, the PFP's vote share and number of seats have been far higher than the NP at its peak in the mid 1990s. This has meant that competition for pan blue votes is especially intense in multi-member elections⁴. Although most TSU politicians were previously KMT members, the party has allied itself to the ruling DPP. With the former president Lee Teng-hui serving as the TSU's spiritual father, it has been able to attract KMT voters and politicians dissatisfied with the current KMT leadership. In contrast, despite the appearance of the TSU on the left of Taiwanese politics, the DPP's vote share and seats have continued to rise since 2000.

1. Election results since 2000

	☒ % votes		👤 seats			
	2001 Legislative Yuan		2001 Municipal Executive		2004 President	
	☒	👤	☒	👤	☒	👤
KMT	31.28	68	35.15	9	49.89	0
DPP	36.57	72	45.27	9	50.11	1
NP	2.86	1	9.95	1	n/a	n/a
PFP	20.34	46	2.36	2	n/a	n/a
TSU	8.5	13	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Others	9.12	10	7.29	2	n/a	n/a

Source: Election Study Center database, see <http://www2.nccu.edu.tw>
 In 2001 the TSU supported DPP municipal executive candidates.
 In the 2004 presidential election the KMT ticket had a PFP vice presidential candidate and was supported by the NP. The TSU supported the DPP candidate.

- 7 There has been a similar trend away from KMT dominance in the area of party identification since the late 1990s. Table 2 shows the party support levels since 1998. This reveals the shifting political balance of voters' allegiances in Taiwan. Since 1998 the KMT's support level has plummeted. In all four surveys since 2000 the DPP has been the party with the highest support level. Moreover, apart from the 2003 survey, the combined support level of the pan green parties has exceeded that of the pan blue parties. In short, trends in party support levels also increasingly favour the ruling DPP.

2. Party identification trends

	1998	2000	2002	2003	2004
KMT	36.5	17.5	14.5	24	16
DPP	23.6	26.9	33	24	23
NP	n/a	15.6	12.8	17	10
PFP	4.4	1	0.4	0	0
TSU	n/a	n/a	0.9	3	5
Independent	35.6	39	38.5	29	41

Sources: For 1998, 2000 and 2002, see Dafydd Fell, *Party Politics in Taiwan*, London, Routledge, forthcoming. For 2003 and 2004, see TVBS Poll Centre Survey, available at <http://www.tvbs.com.tw>

- 8 How can we explain the pan blue parties declining popularity and electoral fortunes? These are all the more bewildering when we consider that Taiwan experienced its worst ever economic slump in 2001 and President Chen Shui-bian has had consistently

low approval ratings. A May 2004 survey found 58% of respondents dissatisfied with the DPP administration's performance over the last four years⁵.

- 9 A critical factor has been the parties' contrasting electioneering skills. Although the KMT remains by far the richest political party and has more extensive media resources, the DPP has produced higher quality election communication and had more success at media manipulation. In 2001 and 2004 the KMT attempted to focus the campaigns on the DPP's lack of government ability, the failing economy, and attacking Chen Shui-bian. However, in both years the DPP was able to set the electoral agenda on more favourable issues, such as anti corruption, the referendum, and Taiwanese identity.
- 10 The pan blue parties have suffered from leadership problems. The KMT's Lien Chan lacks the charisma of his predecessor Lee Teng-hui, and often appears wooden and uncomfortable in election activities. However, it must be noted that he has shown great survival ability, as despite repeated election disasters in 2000, 2001 and 2004, he has retained his post as KMT chairman. The leader of the PFP Soong Chu-yu is a more electorally savvy politician. He was a highly popular provincial governor in the 1990s and almost won the 2000 presidential election as an independent candidate. Nevertheless he has struggled to find a political role since leaving the provincial government and has fallen in popularity. His declining fortunes were shown when he agreed to serve as the pan blues vice presidential candidate in 2004, and in a recent poll Soong had the lowest approval rate among Taiwan's top ten politicians⁶. The KMT has been unable to make full use of one of its most valuable assets. Surveys show that Taipei Mayor Ma Ying-cheou is Taiwan's most popular politician⁷. If Ma had fronted the KMT ticket in 2004 he would probably have come out victorious and reversed the KMT's long-term decline. Nevertheless his rise to power has been blocked by the reluctance of Lien and Soong to leave the centre stage.
- 11 A critical challenge for the three pan blue parties will be the proposal to merge into a single party. This plan was raised by KMT chairman Lien Chan and is strongly backed by most pan blue voters. Although the proposal would place the NP in a much stronger position in future legislative and presidential contests, it is being blocked by high-ranking politicians in both the PFP and KMT, who fear that a merger may damage their own political careers.

Comparing issue emphasis trends in the KMT and DPP eras

- 12 In order to examine the changing policy content of party competition in the two eras mentioned I have carried out a content analysis of parties' newspaper campaign advertisements. The dataset covers all official party newspaper election advertisements for 11 nationwide elections from 1991 to 2004⁸. Advertisements were collected for the 31 days prior to voting day from the three newspapers with the highest readership: the *Zhongguo shibao* (WWWW, *China Times*), *Lianhe bao* (WWW, *United Daily News*), and *Ziyou shibao* (WWWW, *Liberty Times*). This includes 583 official party ads in the KMT era (1991-2000) and 224 official ads in the DPP era (2001-2004)⁹. Campaign ads were collected for Taiwan's major parties: the KMT, NP and the DPP during the KMT era, and for the KMT, DPP, NP, TSU and PFP in the DPP era. In the analysis all the text was coded except campaign rally announcement and biographical details. This research project follows a revised version of the Manifesto Research Group coding scheme¹⁰.

3. Top twelve issues in the KMT (1991-2000) and DPP (2001-2004) eras

	KMT era	DPP era
1	Political corruption (13.2)	Party positive (14.2)
2	Party: positive (9.5)	Taiwan nationalism (9.9)
3	Taiwan independence: negative (6.8)	Candidate: positive (9.8)
4	Economic growth and prosperity (5.8)	Economic growth and prosperity (7.4)
5	Government ability (4.6)	Diluted Taiwan independence (5.5)
6	Party: negative (4.1)	Democracy (5.3)
7	Democracy (4)	Other parties' lack of government competence (5)
8	Other parties' lack of government competence (3.6)	Political stability (5)
9	Diluted Taiwan independence (3.3)	Political corruption (4.3)
10	Political stability (3.2)	Taiwan independence: negative (3.6)
11	Non economic demographic Party: negative groups (women's issues) (3)	Party: negative (3.5)
12	Peace (2.5)	Peace (3)

Source: Content analysis of 583 official party ads from the KMT, DPP and NP between 1991 and 2000 and 224 official party ads from the KMT, DPP, NP, TSU and PFP in 2001 and 2004.

NB: The numbers in brackets are the average percentage of issue mentions.

Have the main electoral issues changed?

- 13 Table 3 shows the 12 most stressed issues in official party newspaper campaign ads in the KMT and DPP eras. From the KMT era column it is apparent that if the party and candidate categories are excluded, then the most salient issues during the 1990s were political corruption, Taiwan independence, government competence, democracy, women and peace. A glance at the DPP era column shows that there has been a great deal of continuity in the electoral agenda, as the majority of KMT era issues remain in the DPP era top 12. Taiwan independence, government ability, political corruption, democracy and political stability all remain highly salient. However, there are also some significant changes. Firstly, Taiwan nationalism and economic growth and prosperity have appeared on the DPP era agenda, both coming in the top four. This reflects an increasing consensus on stressing love for Taiwan among political groups, but also the increased attention economic issues have received following Taiwan's declining economic performance since 2000. Secondly, the most salient issue in the KMT era, political corruption, has fallen to ninth in the DPP era. Thirdly, while there were more negative references to Taiwan independence during the KMT era, since 2000 this has been reversed, with more positive references to Taiwan independence than negative references in election propaganda.

Have the individual parties top issues changed?

- 14 The next question examined is how have the major individual parties changed their issue emphasis priorities since the change in ruling parties. To answer this question Tables 4-6 show the top ten issues in the KMT and DPP eras for the KMT, DPP and NP respectively. From Table 4 we can see that government competence, and economic growth and prosperity have been core issues for the KMT in both eras. However, there is also considerable change. Firstly, since 2000 the party has given greater attention to

economic issues. Secondly, the KMT has shifted its national identity position, as while Taiwan independence has been dropped, the party has been at pains to stress its love for Taiwan. Therefore, we see the appearance of Taiwan nationalism in the KMT's top ten since 2000. Also significant has been the KMT's increasing appeals to professional groups such as civil servants, teachers and the police. These groups were traditionally the KMT's "iron voters", but with the strong competition for pan blue votes, the KMT has had to emphasise itself as being best able to protect their interests. The final new trend has been the appearance of multi-culturalism in the KMT's post 2000 top ten, reflecting its increasing appeals for ethnic reconciliation and accusations that the DPP has incited ethnic antagonism. For instance, in 2004 the KMT proposed passing an "Anti Ethnic Hatred Law"¹¹.

4. Top ten issues for the KMT

	KMT era (1991-2000)	DPP era (2001-2004)
1	Government ability	Other parties lack of government competence
2	Other parties lack of government competence	Economic growth and prosperity
3	Taiwan independence: negative	Party: negative
4	Political stability	Party: positive
5	Party: positive	Candidate: negative
6	Economic growth and prosperity	Taiwan nationalism
7	Candidate: negative	Middle class and professional groups
8	Law and order	Multi-culturalism
9	Political corruption	Political corruption
10	Party: negative	Military: positive

Source: Content analysis of 261 official KMT party ads between 1991 and 2000 and 134 official party ads in 2001 and 2004.

- ¹⁵ Table 5 compares the top issues stressed by the DPP in the KMT and DPP eras. In both eras the DPP has paid heavy attention to national identity issues, political corruption and democracy. However, in the area of national identity, the party has clearly moderated, by dropping the more radical pure Taiwan independence, giving less emphasis to diluted Taiwan independence, and raising the salience of the more electorally acceptable Taiwanese identity¹². Another interesting change is that now the DPP is in power it has attempted to steal the KMT's old issue of political stability, with the issue coming eighth in the DPP's top ten since 2000.

5. Top ten issues for the DPP

	KMT era (1991-2000)	DPP era (2001-2004)
1	Political corruption	Taiwan nationalism
2	Party: positive	Democracy
3	Diluted Taiwan independence	Political corruption
4	Non economic demographic groups (women's issues)	Political stability
5	Democracy	Candidate: positive
6	Party: negative	Diluted Taiwan independence
7	Pure Taiwan independence	Party: positive
8	Freedom and human rights	Economic growth and prosperity
9	Taiwan nationalism	Party: negative
10	Social welfare	Non economic demographic groups (women's issues)

Source: Content analysis of 236 official DPP party ads between 1991 and 2000 and 52 official party ads in 2001 and 2004.

6. Top ten issues for the NP

	KMT era (1991-2000)	DPP era (2001-2004)
1	Party: positive	Party positive
2	Taiwan independence: negative	Taiwan independence: negative
3	Political corruption	Foreign special relationships: positive (relations with the Mainland)
4	Candidate: negative	Candidate: negative
5	Peace	Chinese nationalism
6	Democracy	Social harmony
7	Chinese nationalism	Party: negative
8	Party: negative	Other parties' lack of government competence
9	Foreign special relationships: positive (relations with the Mainland)	Political corruption
10	Education expansion	Political stability

Source: Content analysis of 86 official NP party ads between 1991 and 2000 and 7 official party ads in 2001.

- 16 From Table 6 we can see that the NP has the highest degree of continuity. In the DPP era, the NP is even more focused on opposing Taiwan independence, and promoting

Chinese nationalism and improved relations with the PRC. During the 1990s the NP's main non-national identity appeal was clean government, however, since 2000 the political corruption issue has become relegated to only ninth in its top ten.

Do the parties still own the core electoral issues?

7. Issue overlap on official newspaper advertisement issue top ten in the KMT era (1991-2000)

Only KMT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political stability Government competence Other parties' lack of government competence Economic growth and prosperity Law and order
Only DPP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pure Taiwan independence Diluted Taiwan independence Freedom and human right Welfare state expansion Taiwan nationalism Non economic demographic groups
Only NP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foreign special relationships: positive (relations with the Mainland) Peace Education expansion Chinese nationalism
KMT and DPP	
KMT and NP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taiwan independence: negative Candidate negative
DPP and NP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Democracy
All three parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political corruption Party positive Party negative

Source: Content analysis of 583 official party ads for the KMT, DPP and NP.

- 17 My previous research found that during the 1990s the three main parties in Taiwan were talking past each other. In other words they followed a pattern of stressing different issues, concentrating on favoured issues and ignoring damaging issues¹³. This is apparent in Table 7, which shows issue overlap on official party newspaper advertisement issue top tens for the main parties in the KMT era. Other than party: positive and negative, the only issue category in all three parties' top tens is political corruption. However, the KMT's level of emphasis on this issue was consistently lower than both the DPP and NP in this era, and surveys show the public associates the KMT with corruption, and the DPP and NP with clean governance¹⁴. In terms of issues, the DPP and KMT have little in common; even the KMT and NP only share opposition to Taiwan independence. In contrast, the lists of exclusively owned issues are far longer. The DPP dominated the national identity issues of Taiwan independence: positive Taiwan nationalism, along with freedom and human rights, and democracy. This is understandable as for many DPP politicians the key objectives of democratisation were ethnic justice and Taiwanese self-determination. Women's issues and welfare state expansion received greater DPP emphasis from the mid-1990s as the party sought new issues to win elections. The KMT, on the other hand, controlled the main economic issues, political stability, law and order, and government competence. This KMT ownership of government competence, the economy, and stability is not surprising considering that the KMT was the ruling party in Taiwan from 1945-2000. Moreover, the KMT like conservative parties worldwide stressed law and order, placing

considerable emphasis on criminal cases involving DPP members and DPP violence¹⁵. Like the DPP, the NP has also been a national identity-orientated party, and has therefore dominated calls for better relations with mainland China, for more attention to Chinese nationalism, and of warnings of the dangers of war with China.

8. Issue overlap on official newspaper advertisement issue top ten in the DPP era (2001-2004)

Only KMT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Middle class and professional groups • Multi-culturalism • Military positive
Only DPP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diluted Taiwan independence • Non economic demographic groups (mostly women's issues) • Candidate positive • Democracy
Only NP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foreign special relationships: positive (relations with the Mainland) • Peace • Chinese nationalism • Taiwan independence: negative • Social harmony
KMT and DPP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic growth and prosperity • Taiwan nationalism
KMT and NP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidate: negative • Other parties lack of government competence
PDP and NP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political stability
All three parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political corruption • Party positive • Party negative

Source: Content analysis of 193 official party ads for the KMT, DPP and NP.

- 18 The overlap on official newspaper advertisement issue top tens in the DPP era is shown in Table 8. The NP appears little changed, retaining its opposition to Taiwan independence, calls for better relations with the mainland and promotion of Chinese nationalism, while the DPP continues to stress diluted Taiwan independence and women's issues. However, there are also numerous signs of change. Firstly, the lists of owned issues are much shorter for both the KMT and the DPP since 2000. While the KMT owned six issues and the DPP five in the 1990s, since 2000 this has been reduced to only three for both parties. Secondly, some owned issues are now contested. For example, since the change in ruling party, the KMT has joined the DPP in stressing Taiwanese identity. In short, Table 8 shows that since the change in government, the distinction between party lines has become more blurred than during the 1990s.

Party change on single-issue spectrums

- 19 This section examines the policy content of party competition in greater detail by tracking emphasis on the seven core political issue spectrums that featured prominently in Taiwan's elections before and after the change in ruling parties. I am interested to see whether the parties have shown significant changes on single issues since 2000, and if they are converging or becoming more polarised.

Social welfare

9. Social welfare issue emphasis

- 20 Social welfare is without doubt the least salient of the individual issues examined here. Nevertheless, this article will track party movement on this issue because a previous content analysis of legislator policy proposals found welfare state expansion the issue for candidates of all parties that was most stressed between 1989 and 1998¹⁶.
- 21 Figure 9 shows that the welfare issue was dominated by the DPP in most elections during the 1990s. The KMT and NP tended to be far more conservative on welfare issues. While the NP condemned “free-spending social welfare”¹⁷, KMT candidates often called for welfare restraint, cautioning against welfare “free lunches”¹⁸. The most controversial welfare issue during this period was the DPP’s call for universal pensions; this was a central DPP demand in the 1993, 1994 and 2000 campaigns¹⁹. This policy was strongly opposed by most KMT and NP party leaders, who claimed this would bankrupt the treasury and mocked the DPP for its failure to deliver its pensions pledges after winning local elections²⁰. The gap between the parties over this issue can be seen from KMT legislator Apollo Chen’s comment in 2001, “Looking back over the last ten years, if there is one issue that the DPP controlled, then it is the pensions issue”²¹.
- 22 The post changeover period shows much change on the welfare issue, for while in the KMT era the parties were polarised on the pensions issue, in the post-changeover DPP era consensus has been reached. From Figure 9 we can see that in the elections of 2001 and 2004 all the major parties have de-emphasised the welfare issue²². In May 2002 cross-party support enabled legislation to be finally passed to fulfil the DPP’s promise of universal pensions of NT\$3,000 a month²³. During the 1990s the KMT’s Lien Chan and Soong Chu-yu had a record of strong opposition to universal pensions, however, it appears that the KMT party headquarters has finally accepted this policy. As in the 2004 presidential campaign the KMT actually tried to outbid the DPP on pensions, with a pledge of NT\$8,900 per month pensions²⁴. Though the parties had quite distinct positions and emphasis on social welfare during the 1990s KMT era, there has been a de-emphasis and convergence on the DPP’s positions on issues such as pensions since the change of ruling party.

Political corruption

10. Issue emphasis of political corruption

- 23 My content analysis of newspaper election ads in the 1990s has shown that political corruption was the political issue most stressed during the KMT era²⁵, challenging the common claim that the most salient issue in Taiwanese politics is national identity²⁶.
- 24 Figure 10 plots the major parties' stress on the corruption question between 1991 and 2004²⁷. This shows that political corruption was dominated by the DPP and to a lesser extent the NP in almost every election in the KMT era. In contrast, the KMT appears to have tried to avoid the issue. During the KMT era the KMT's corrupt image stuck firmly in the public consciousness²⁸. As a former KMT Propaganda Chief admitted, "It's the KMT's greatest burden, and it can't get rid of it"²⁹. In contrast, opinion polls showed both the NP and DPP had a reputation for promoting clean government³⁰. During the 1990s the parties held quite distinct positions on political corruption. The DPP and NP regularly called for radical anti-corruption reforms, to counter, e.g. vote-buying, KMT party assets and contract corruption. In contrast, the KMT had narrower definitions on what constitutes corruption. Moreover, since it was reliant on vote-buying and the profits from its party businesses in election campaigns, it was highly reluctant to tackle the issue.
- 25 This trend of DPP issue ownership even continued in the first post-turnover election in 2001. The KMT only leapfrogged the DPP on political corruption in 2004, as it accused the DPP presidential candidate Chen Shui-bian of a number of donation scandals and his wife of stock market insider trading. For example, a full-page KMT ad showed the photographs of a number of financial scandal figures with Chen Shui-bian and the slogan, "Enough (stock market) speculation? Taiwanese are not idiots, Taiwanese can also get angry!"³¹ However, it is unclear whether the KMT will be able to steal this issue, as in 2004 the DPP still made KMT black gold a slogan issue in a number of its ads, for instance, the slogan, "Resolutely Oppose a Black Gold Restoration!"³² Moreover, the KMT originally planned to make political corruption the theme of its largest pre-election nationwide rally on March 13th 2004, but after concern that such a theme would backfire the party changed the rally theme to, "Change the President, Save Taiwan"³³. In terms of actual positions, there are clear limits on convergence. Although the KMT has promised on a number of occasions to dismantle its business empire³⁴, little progress has been made, as it is uncertain if the party can survive electorally without its assets.
- 26 To sum up, the parties showed quite distinct patterns of emphasis on the corruption issue until 2004, with anti-corruption dominated by the DPP. Although the KMT's 2004

campaign may have blurred party lines on corruption, the DPP still feels this is one of their favourable issues.

Taiwan independence versus Chinese unification

11. Issue emphasis of Taiwan independence versus Chinese unification

- 27 The Taiwan independence versus Chinese unification question is widely regarded as the most divisive issue in Taiwanese politics and as one upon which Taiwan's parties take the most polarised positions³⁵. The independence versus unification spectrum is often referred to in Taiwan as the "*TongDu*" (WW) question, at the centre of which is maintaining the status quo in cross-Straits relations. Public opinion has become more moderate on this issue, as while only 28% preferred the status quo in 1990, this had risen to 50.5% in 2002. Public opinion has been very cautious about embracing the more radical solutions to the cross-Straits question, with a significant reduction in support for unification from 51% in 1990 to only 15.1% in 2002, and only a limited rise in support for Taiwan independence from 4% in 1990 to 19.7% in 2002³⁶.
- 28 The Taiwan independence scores shown in Figure 11 are reached by subtracting the proportion of issue mentions for Taiwan independence: negative; for Taiwan independence: positive. Therefore, a positive score represents support for Taiwan independence, while a negative score represents an anti-Taiwan independence stance. Figure 3 shows Taiwan independence is completely dominated by the DPP, while the NP and KMT share anti-Taiwan independence. Throughout the 1990s, there is not a single case of the DPP and KMT leapfrogging each other on Taiwan independence. The only time in the 1990s that the KMT had a positive score on this spectrum was in 1996 (4.4), which was related to former president Lee Teng-hui's strong stand towards China's military threats.
- 29 Have the parties converged on the national identity question? It appears that the DPP has definitely moderated its stance, as though it stressed pure Taiwan independence in 1991 and to a lesser extent in 1992, since the early 1990s the DPP has not openly called for the declaration of a "Republic of Taiwan." Even in the DPP candidate Peng Ming-min's 1996 presidential campaign, diluted Taiwan independence scored far higher than pure Taiwan independence. The DPP has also downplayed the issue, while the KMT has seen the issue as a vote winner, even in local-level executive contests. The KMT's constant message was the terror equation "voting DPP = Taiwan independence = PRC invasion = destruction"³⁷. As would be expected, there is some overlap between the NP

and the KMT and in the 2000 campaign the NP's high score of -75 implies an increased emphasis on opposing Taiwan independence. In fact, the KMT has also made some movement towards the centre of the national identity spectrum particularly during Lee Teng-hui's 1996 presidential bid and it appears that the PRC's accusations of Lee's Taiwan independence intentions were not entirely without basis. Nevertheless, on core ideological issues movement is constrained, the KMT could only move so far in the Taiwan independence direction. For instance, the KMT's 2000 presidential campaign could not have been more different than four years earlier, with "Taiwan independence negative" heavily stressed. In fact that year the KMT TV ad that had the most TV play was the "Off to War Ad". This showed a group of youngsters singing, "I'm off to war, I'm off to war, because of A-bian's one sentence advocating Taiwan independence, I'm off to war"³⁸. In fact following their parties' defeat a number of KMT politicians blamed this ad for its loss of voters to both the DPP and Soong Chu-yu³⁹.

- 30 Since the DPP came to power in 2000 the KMT's predictions of cross-Strait war have not yet materialised, therefore, the KMT is no longer able to use its terror equation. Figure 3 also shows a number of significant trends on the Taiwan independence issue since the change in ruling parties. The arrival of the two new parties in the 2001 Legislative Yuan elections has further complicated political competition on this debate. While the TSU has staked a pro-independence position to the left of the DPP, Soong Chu-yu's PFP has kept a relatively ambiguous stance. Both the NP in 2001 and the DPP in 2004 have reaffirmed anti-independence and Taiwanese self-determination stances respectively. In fact in 2001 the NP actually took its most extreme position to date when it proposed a variation of the People's Republic of China's "One Country Two Systems"⁴⁰. The KMT's position since Lien Chan became party Chair has shown some signs of taking a more pro-unification stance. For instance, Lien has proposed unification under a Confederation System⁴¹ and has called on the DPP administration to accept the "One China Principle". However, the Confederation System has faced stiff opposition within his own party, and the proposal has not become official KMT policy. As KMT legislator Chen Hung-chi stated, "I opposed it. It will make people think we're more pro-unification"⁴². The KMT has had to adjust its policies in the light of moderate Taiwanese public opinion. As the KMT's Chang Jung-kung commented in 2001, "We know that Taiwan's public is afraid of unification"⁴³. Therefore it is not surprising that Figure 11 shows in 2004 that the KMT ran its least anti-Taiwan independence campaign since 1996 and that the party stopped mentioning the "One China Principle" in the campaign.
- 31 In short, compared to the highly polarised state of parties on the "TongDu" issue in the early 1990s, the parties moved towards a moderate centre in the mid- to late 1990s, and this convergent process has continued in the DPP era. However, the identity components of parties' ideology and issue preferences of their supporters have ensured the parties remain moderately differentiated.

Taiwanese nationalism

12. Issue emphasis of Taiwan nationalism

- 32 The debates over Chinese or Taiwanese identity, Taiwanese or Chinese nationalism have been a regular feature of Taiwanese electoral campaigns since the late 1980s. This is a field where Taiwanese public opinion has changed even more drastically than on the “*TongDu*” spectrum. As late as 1989 52% of respondents identified themselves as Chinese, 16% saw themselves as Taiwanese and 26% identified as both Chinese and Taiwanese. However, by 2001 only 7.9% identified themselves as Chinese, 37.9% identified as Taiwanese, and 50.7% saw themselves as both⁴⁴.
- 33 Figure 12 shows the main parties’ stress on Taiwanese or Chinese nationalism between 1991 and 2004. The Taiwan nationalism independence scores shown in Figure 12 were reached by subtracting the proportion of issue mentions for Taiwan nationalism from Chinese nationalism. Therefore, a positive score represents support for Taiwan nationalism, while a negative score represents a Chinese nationalist stance. In the 1990s the DPP tended to use Taiwanese identity most in its propaganda, at times even accusing the KMT of planning to betray Taiwan to the PRC⁴⁵, while the NP was the most likely to stress Chinese nationalist symbols such as Sun Yat-sen⁴⁶. In contrast, the KMT tried to take a middle route of dual identity that would not upset its diverse support base. An example of this message was in the 1994 newspaper ad slogan, “We’re all Taiwanese, even more we’re Chinese”⁴⁷. However, in the late 1990s the KMT began to make more Taiwanese identity appeals, for instance a 2000 KMT ad carried the Taiwanese language slogan, “Who loves Taiwan more than I?”⁴⁸.
- 34 Since the change in ruling parties there have been claims that under Lien Chan the KMT has returned to a more sinocentric image⁴⁹. The KMT employed Chinese nationalist symbols such as Chiang Ching-kuo in its television advertisements in the run-up to the 2001 legislative elections. The KMT appeared to have given up its Taiwan identity appeals, as according to former KMT legislator Lin Yu-hsiang, “It’s impossible for us to attract those strong localised votes”⁵⁰. However, Figure 4 shows some important trends regarding Taiwan nationalism in the DPP era. Firstly, the issue has risen in salience since the 2000 presidential election, with the DPP and KMT, and both new parties heavily stressing Taiwan identity in the DPP era elections. It appears that there is now consensus among all major parties on stressing Taiwanese identity and love for Taiwan. For instance, during the 2004 campaign the KMT and PFP made much of their candidates’ kissing of the ground to express their true love of Taiwan⁵¹. In fact, since the KMT’s defeat in 2004 there have even been proposals to change the official title from the Chinese KMT to the Taiwan KMT⁵². Finally, Figure 12 shows that since

coming to power both the DPP and its ally the TSU have actually increased their emphasis of Taiwanese identity. This is an issue that the DPP sees as its greatest vote-winner in the DPP era and thus it has attempted to keep it at the top of the electoral agenda. The DPP's February 28th 2004 Hand-in-Hand Rally was a key example of their project of equating the DPP with love for Taiwan⁵³.

- 35 Although since the mid-1990s there has been a degree of convergence on identity issues, with parties following public opinion by making Taiwan identity appeals, the strength of Chinese and Taiwanese nationalism in the pan blue and green camps have kept the parties apart on this issue. Even though the KMT is at pains to stress its love for Taiwan, this is still viewed as a DPP-owned issue. In fact the DPP's success at keeping Taiwanese identity at the centre of the 2004 electoral agenda was a critical factor in its narrow victory.

Government ability

- 36 Government competence is without doubt the clearest case of issue ownership in this study. Figure 13 shows that in election propaganda the issue has been completely dominated by the KMT in both the KMT and DPP eras, with no cases of leapfrogging. Since the KMT fell from power it has reminded voters of its own excellent government record, but also condemned the DPP administration as totally incompetent and lacking in government achievements. For instance, a KMT 2004 ad asked, "Why did the DPP legislator Chang Chun-hung openly criticise the Chen Shui-bian government as having no achievements to show after four years in office?"⁵⁴. In contrast, after four years in power, neither the DPP nor its ally the TSU have made much attempt to challenge these KMT attacks, preferring instead to move the agenda on to more favourable identity issues.

Political stability

- 37 Like government ability, Figure 14 shows that the KMT dominated the political stability issue throughout the KMT era. A common KMT theme was that the DPP was a source of instability, and stability could only be preserved by continued KMT administration. For instance, a 1991 KMT newspaper ad described the election as a choice between stability or disorder⁵⁵. On the whole the DPP and NP tended to steer clear of the issue. However, the post changeover trends shown in Figure 14 are quite different. The KMT has abandoned the issue since losing power, with the DPP and its ally the TSU giving the issue much attention in the 2001 Legislative Yuan elections. In fact, in the DPP era, the parties' roles have been completely reversed, as now it is the DPP accusing the KMT of creating instability. This image was reinforced by cases of electoral violence by KMT supporters following defeat in 2000 and 2004 and the political tensions resulting from the KMT campaign to impeach the DPP president in late 2000.

Economic issues

- 38 It is often assumed that economic issues have little impact on the voting behaviour of Taiwanese, as Taiwanese have long been accustomed to high growth rates, low inflation and almost no unemployment. However, the importance of economic issues is likely to have risen since the economy began to slow in the mid-1990s⁵⁶.

13. Issue emphasis of government ability

14. Issue emphasis of political stability

15. Emphasis of economic issues

- 39 Figure 15 shows that the KMT dominated economic issues in the 1990s, as it attempted to take credit for high economic growth rates and warned that a DPP victory would lead to a stock market crash and economic recession⁵⁷. In contrast, neither the DPP nor the NP showed much interest in economic matters during the 1990s. As a result, other than in 2000 there were no cases of any parties leapfrogging the KMT on the economy in either the KMT or DPP eras.

- 40 As in 2001 Taiwan went into recession experiencing negative growth of -2.2%⁵⁸ and record unemployment of 5.17%⁵⁹. In both 2001 and 2004 the KMT made the DPP's failures of economic management core themes in its election campaigns. For instance, in 2001 the KMT issued a number of article style ads, which compared the DPP's disastrous economic management with the KMT's successful economic record⁶⁰ and also held nationwide pre-election rallies focusing on unemployment⁶¹. Similarly, in 2004 the KMT made promises of economic solutions, such as a 5% economic growth rate, unemployment below 4%, and a balanced budget within six years⁶².
- 41 In 2001 when the economy was at its lowest point, the KMT gave record attention to economic issues, however the ploy did not pay off, with the DPP becoming the largest political party in the Legislative Yuan and the KMT suffering one of its worst ever defeats. In another sign that the KMT was less confident over the impact of economic issues, we can see in Figure 7 that compared with 2001, the party reduced its stress on the economy in 2004. The DPP on the other hand appears little changed from its opposition days, as it clearly prefers to shift the electoral agenda onto identity issues. In fact in my 2001 interviews DPP politicians often pointed out that their economic policies were little different from the KMT's. The lack of economic policy differences is apparent from the cross-party Economic Development Advisory Conference held in August 2001, in which the parties were able to reach a consensus on almost all economic questions under discussion⁶³.
- 42 The KMT's defeat in the 2000 presidential election has heralded a new era in Taiwan's party politics, as its electoral hegemony has clearly come to an end. Unlike in elections in many other new democracies, Taiwanese elections have involved intense debate over policy matters. The parties have offered voters quite distinct policy packages and issue identities, enabling voters to choose parties that match their issue preferences. Although there have been some changes in the policy content of party competition in Taiwan, there are more signs of continuity over the last four years. The core electoral issues of the 1990s remain firmly on the political agenda in the DPP era. The post-election violence in the spring of 2004 has given the impression of party polarisation. Nevertheless, this study has argued that the trend towards policy moderation and convergence that began in the mid-1990s has continued into the DPP era. However, there are limits to convergence as differences in party image and ideology have prevented the parties merging into indistinguishable catch-all parties.

NOTES

1. For example see Edward Friedman, "Paranoia, Polarization, and Suicide: Interpreting Taiwan's 2004 Presidential Election, *SOAS Taiwan Studies Working Papers Series*, available at www.soas.ac.uk/taiwanstudies

2. In Taiwanese politics the left refers to support for Taiwanese independence and identity, while the right means support for unification with China and Chinese nationalism.

3. The exact figures were 50.11% for the DPP's Chen Shui-bian and 49.89% for the KMT's Lien Chan. See *Zhongguo shibao* (China Times), March 21st 2004, A1.
4. The "pan blue camp" refers to the KMT and its splinter parties the NP and PFP, while the pan green is the DPP and TSU.
5. See TVBS Poll Centre Survey, available at http://www.tvbs.com.tw/FILE_DB/files/osaka/200405/osaka-20040510181636.pdf, accessed on August 4th 2004.
6. See TVBS Poll Centre Survey.
7. See TVBS Poll Centre Survey.
8. The election years covered are 1991 National Assembly, 1992 Legislative, 1993 Municipal Executive, 1994 Provincial Governor & Municipal Executive, 1995 Legislative, 1996 Presidential & National Assembly, 1997 Municipal Executive, 1998 Legislative & Municipal Executive, 2000 Presidential, 2001 Legislative & Municipal Executive, 2004 Presidential.
9. Official ads refers to ads produced or financed by the party head office and in presidential elections the official candidates' campaign headquarters. This study excludes ads placed by individual candidates, support groups or anonymous sources. The statistics in this study can be compared with those in a previous study that combined official, candidate, support group and anonymous ads into total scores. See Dafydd Fell, "Party Change in Taiwan's 1990s Elections," *Issues and Studies* 38, No. 2 2002, pp. 81-94.
10. See Ian Budge, Hans Dieter Klingemann, Andrea Volkens, Judith Bara and Eric Tanenbaum, *Mapping Policy Preferences: Estimates for Parties, Electors, and Governments 1945-1998*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001.
11. See KMT manifesto newspaper ad, *China Times*, March 11th A11.
12. Pure Taiwan independence includes sub-issues such as calls for Taiwan independence, a Republic of Taiwan, a new Taiwan Constitution and the Taiwan Independence Clause, while diluted Taiwan independence includes opposition to unification and promotion of Taiwanese self-determination.
13. Dafydd Fell, "Party Change in Taiwan's 1990s Elections," *Issues and Studies* 38, No. 2, 2002, pp. 81-94.
14. "11th National Public Opinion Survey: Party Image", unpublished paper by the DPP Survey Research Department, 1999, 4.
15. For example see the KMT advertisement in the *Lianhe bao* (United Daily News), November 21st 1994, p. 25. This shows a picture of a DPP campaign truck in a riot and attacks the DPP for its record of inciting violence. While many KMT ads in the 1990s reminded voters of the case of the DPP Pingtung politician sentenced to death for selling drugs. See *Ziyou shibao* (Liberty Times), November 11th 1997, p. 7.
16. Liu Tsung-wei's study also used a revised MRG coding scheme to carry out content analysis of the candidate policy proposal section of Legislative Yuan election gazettes, that are issued to every voter. See Liu Tsung-wei, "Ideology, Strategy, and Party Change in Taiwan from 1989 to 1998." Paper presented at the Seventh Taiwanese Political Science Association Conference, Gaoxiong, December 2000.
17. *China Times*, November 5th 1993, p. 2.
18. *Minzhong ribao* (Commons Daily), March 10th 2000, p. 4.
19. See *China Times*, October 28th 1993, p. 2.
20. See *China Times*, November 25th 1994, pp. 1-2.
21. Apollo Chen, interview by the author, Taipei, September 28th 2001.

22. Both the TSU and PFP ignored social welfare in their election propaganda in 2001, therefore their data has not been included in Figure 9.
23. See www.taipeitimes.com/news/2002/05/11/0000135552
24. See *China Times*, March 1st 2004, A11.
25. See Table 3.
26. John Hsieh and Emerson Niou, "Issues in Taiwan's Electoral Politics", paper presented at the American Political Science Association Conference, New York, September 1994, p. 2
27. Both the TSU and PFP ignored political corruption in their election propaganda in 2001, therefore their data has not been included in Figure 10.
28. Opinion surveys in the 1990s show that the most common reason for voters disliking the KMT was its reputation for links to corruption. See DPP Survey Research Department, 11th National Opinion Survey: Party Image", pp. 4-5.
29. Former KMT Party Propaganda Chief, interview by author, Taipei, October 19th 2001.
30. DPP surveys in the late 1990s found that one of the principal reasons voters liked the NP and DPP as they viewed these parties as being "clean." See DPP Survey Research Department, 11th National Opinion Survey: Party Image", pp. 4-5.
31. *China Times*, March 19th 2004, p. A9.
32. See *China Times*, March 18th 2004, A11.
33. *China Times*, March 11th 2004, A10
34. In a 2000 KMT TV election ad Lien Chan promised to end KMT involvement in profit-making businesses.
35. John Hsieh and Emerson Niou, "Salient Issues in Taiwan's Electoral Politics," *Electoral Studies* 15, 1996, pp. 219-235.
36. For details see the Mainland Affairs Council website at www.mac.gov.tw
37. See KMT ad in *China Times*, November 30th 1995, 1. On occasions the KMT advertisements have added the NP to this campaign equation.
38. A-Bian is the DPP politician Chen Shui-bian's nickname.
39. For example the point was made by a former KMT Propaganda Chief, Huang Hui-chen, interview by author, Taipei, September 26th 2001.
40. The NP's model was called, "One Country Three Systems".
41. See *Taipei Times*, January 5th 2001, p. 1.
42. Chen Hung-chi, interview by author, Taipei, September 7th 2001.
43. Chang Jung-kung, interview by author, Taipei, October 25th 2001.
44. Dafydd Fell, *Party Politics in Taiwan*, London, Routledge, forthcoming.
45. For example, see the DPP's Chang Chun-hung's ad slogan "Denounce the Betray Taiwan Family of Lee Huan" (Lee was the former KMT ROC Premier) *Liberty Times*, December 9th 1992, p. 6.
46. See *China Times*, November 10th 1993, p. 1.
47. See *United Daily News*, December 1st 1994, p. 1.
48. See *United Daily News*, March 9th 2000, p. 16.
49. Peter Moody, "Recovering the Mainland: The Change in Direction of the KMT Since 2000", paper presented at the American Political Science Association Conference, Boston, September 2002.
50. Lin Yu-hsiang, interview by author, Taipei, October 4th 2001
51. *China Times*, March 15th 2004, p. A5.

52. Hong Yu-chin creates a storm, suggesting changing to the Taiwan KMT. See *China Times*, April 8th 2004, from China Times Internet Database
 53. This was one of the DPP's keynote campaign events in 2004. It involved a human chain from the far north to the far south of Taiwan to show solidarity in the face of the mainland's missile threat.
 54. *China Times*, March 4th 2004, p. A1.
 55. *China Times*, December 20th 1991, p. 1.
 56. John Hsieh, Dean Lacy and Emerson Niou, "Economic Voting in the 1994 Taiwan Elections", *American Asian Review*, 1996.
 57. *United Daily News*, March 16th 2000, p. 27.
 58. <http://investintaiwan.nat.gov.tw/moea-web/Climate/EcoIndicators/GDPgrowth.htm>
 59. <http://investintaiwan.nat.gov.tw/moea-web/Climate/EcoIndicators/Unemploy.htm>
 60. *China Times*, November 23rd 2001, p. 16.
 61. www.taipeitimes.com/news/2001/11/09/story/0000111026
 62. *China Times*, March 1st 2004, p. A11.
 63. <http://www.taipeitimes/News/front/archives/2001/08/27/100298>
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RÉSUMÉS

This paper compares the state of party competition before and after the change of ruling party in Taiwan in 2000. First the balance of power between Taiwan's main political parties is discussed—the KMT's electoral hegemony has come to an end, the DPP has won two presidential elections and become Taiwan's largest parliamentary party. However, there is much continuity in Taiwan's party politics, with the same two parties electorally dominant today as at the outset of multi-party elections in the late 1980s.

The second part of the article analyses election propaganda to consider how the policy content of party competition has changed and proposes that there have been more signs of continuity than change in party issue emphasis over the last four years.