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The Paradox of the National Identity Issue in Chen Shui-bian's 2004 Presidential Campaign: Base Constituencies vs. the Moderate Middle*

CAL CLARK

The 2004 presidential election in Taiwan was certainly dramatic: in a bitterly contested race, incumbent President Chen Shui-bian of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) won by the razor-thin margin of 50.1 percent to 49.9 percent. In addition, the issue dynamics of the election took a surprising turn, at least from the perspectives of both political science theory and recent historical trends in Taiwan's electoral politics. Chen Shui-bian clearly centered his campaign on an appeal to Taiwanese nationalism, seemingly giving more importance to activating his base constituency than to appealing to the moderate middle of less ideologically committed voters. This contradicted the normal tendency of politicians and parties to appeal to the median voter which had marked Taiwan politics during the 1990s, when the major parties moved toward the center on

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the inter-linked issues of national identity and cross-Strait relations. There appear to be three possible explanations for Chen Shui-bian's victory. The first is that the outcome was determined by idiosyncratic factors, in particular the failed assassination attempt on President Chen and Vice-President Lu Hsiu-lien on the eve of the election. Second, there is at least some evidence that the growth of a Taiwanese identity has changed both the nature of public opinion on this issue and its political consequences. Finally, President Chen has been fairly skillful in creating strategic ambiguity about his pursuit of Taiwanese nationalism, a skillfulness which almost certainly has helped him at the polls. In combination, these three explanations suggest that appealing to the DPP "base" turned out to be an inspired strategy.

KEYWORDS: **presidential elections; campaign strategy; Chen Shui-bian; national identity; party competition.**

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The 2004 presidential election in Taiwan was certainly dramatic: in a bitterly contested race, incumbent President Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁) of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP; 民主進步黨) won by the razor-thin margin of 50.1 percent to 49.9 percent, following a still unexplained assassination attempt on election eve.[1] In addition, the issue dynamics of the election took a surprising turn, at least from the perspectives of both political science theory and recent historical trends in Taiwan's electoral politics. Chen Shui-bian clearly centered his campaign on an appeal to Taiwanese nationalism, seemingly giving more importance to activating his "base constituency" than to appealing to the "moderate middle" of less ideologically committed voters. This contradicted the normal tendency of politicians and parties to appeal to the median voter[2] which had marked Taiwan politics during the 1990s, when the major parties moved toward the center on the inter-linked issues of national identity and cross-Strait relations.[3]

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[1]Lindy Yeh, "Controversial Victory for Chen," *Taipei Times*, March 21, 2004, 1.

[2]Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (New York: HarperCollins, 1957).

[3]Cal Clark, *Asia Update: The 2000 Taiwan Presidential Elections* (New York: The Asia Society, 2000); Dafydd Fell, "Measurement of Party Position and Party Competition in

This paper explores the puzzle of Chen's successful appeal to Taiwanese nationalism. The first section discusses theoretical expectations about how issues should affect parties' campaign strategies. The second shows how the dynamics of the national identity issue in Taiwan during the 1990s conformed to these predictions. The third part then views the 2004 presidential campaign from the perspective of Chen's position on national identity and cross-Strait relations. The final section considers the reasons for the success of this strategy.

The Electoral Consequences of the Distribution of Public Opinion

Several distinct strands of theory in the political science literature seek to model the relationships among the electoral laws, characteristics of the party systems, and divisions of public opinion on major issues in democracies. One early attempt at such theorizing was Maurice Duverger's formalization of a theorem that describes the impact of the electoral system on the nature of party competition in a nation.[4] According to Duverger, electoral systems in which the winner was determined by plurality or majority (i.e., getting the most votes in a district) should produce two-party systems, while proportional representation (PR) systems would be likely to generate multi-party systems.[5] Yet, despite the logical appeal of this model, exceptions were easy to find.[6] This led such disparate theorists as

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Taiwan," *Issues & Studies* 40, nos. 3/4 (September/December 2004): 101-36; and Shelley Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan: Voting for Democracy* (London: Routledge, 1999).

[4]Maurice Duverger, *Political Parties: Their Origin and Activity in the Modern State* (New York: John Wiley, 1954).

[5]For more sophisticated extensions of this logic, see also Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, 36-50; and Douglas W. Rae, *The Political Consequences of Electoral Laws*, revised edition (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1971).

[6]See William H. Riker, "The Two-Party System and Duverger's Law: An Essay on the History of Political Science," *American Political Science Review* 76 (1982): 753-66; William H. Riker, "Duverger's Law Revisited," in *Electoral Laws and Their Political Consequences*, ed. Bernard Grofman and Arend Lijphart (New York: Agathon Press, 1986), 19-42; and Giovanni Sartori, "The Influence of Electoral Systems: Faulty Laws or Faulty Methods?" ibid., 43-68. For a Taiwan example, see Tun-jen Cheng and Yung-ming Hsu, "The March

Anthony Downs and Giovanni Sartori[7] to add the distribution of public opinion on the major issues in a society as one—if not the only—major influence on the nature of the party system.[8]

Public opinion on a specific issue can have several different distributions. For example, the citizenry may be evenly divided on an issue or, conversely, may overwhelmingly favor one position or another. Similarly, most of the people may have moderate positions or, conversely, be concentrated at the extremes of the ideological spectrum. While theoretically there are numerous possible distributions that a variable might have, table 1 includes four principal types with one of the types—the normal distribution—having two subtypes for the special task of distinguishing between two fundamentally different conditions of public opinion on a specific issue or item. This table is based on two distinctions. The first is the relative number of people in the middle of the ideological spectrum compared to the extremes; the second is the relative number of supporters and opponents of a particular issue.

Popular attitudes on many variables have a distribution that is close to what is called "normal." Most of the citizens are concentrated in the middle of the distribution; there are a clearly declining number of cases as one moves from the middle toward either extreme; and the distribution is symmetrical, with equal numbers associated with the two extremes of the distribution, creating a bell curve. Even when the distribution of public opinion on an issue is fairly normal, though, the substantive implications of the distribution can differ considerably depending on whether the middle

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2000 Election in Historical and Comparative Perspectives: Strategic Voting, the Third Party, and the Non-Duvergerian Outcome," in *Assessing the Lee Teng-hui Legacy in Taiwan's Politics: Democratic Consolidation and External Relations*, ed. Bruce J. Dickson and Chien-min Chao (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2002), 148-71.

[7]Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, 96-141; and Sartori, "The Influence of Electoral Systems," 43-68.

[8]For a much broader model of how "cleavage structures, party systems, and voter alignments" fit together, see Seymour M. Lipset and S. Rokkan, "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments: An Introduction," in *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives*, ed. Seymour M. Lipset and S. Rokkan (New York: Free Press, 1967), 1-64.

Table 1
Types of Distributions for Public Opinion on an Issue

Type	Characteristics	Implications for Party Competition
Normal Moderate	Normal (bell-shaped) distribution with most people in the middle of the ideological spectrum	"Catch-all" parties will compete for the "moderate middle."[1]
Normal Committed	Normal distribution with mean and median well to one side of the ideological spectrum	Party with position favored by majority will stress issue; other will ignore it.[2]
Flat	Approximately equal numbers at each point along the ideological spectrum	Multiple parties will probably emerge because there are a considerable number of voters at many places along the ideological spectrum;[3] however, if the electoral system produces two-party competition, two "catch-all" parties will compete for the "moderate middle" for reasons similar to the normal moderate distribution.
Polarized	Distribution is bimodal with many at both extremes and few moderates	Ideological parties will emphasize appeals to their base constituencies.[4]
Skewed	A very few extreme attitudes on one end of the scale, while most of the citizens are concentrated at the other end of ideological spectrum	Party with position favored by majority will stress issue; other will ignore it.[5]

Notes:
[1]Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (New York: HarperCollins, 1957), 114-41.

[2]Ian Budge, "Parties, Programs, and Policies: A Comparative and Theoretical Framework," *American Review of Politics* 14 (1993): 695-716.

[3]Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, 114-41.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Budge, "Parties, Programs, and Policies," 695-716.

of the distribution is at the center of the ideological spectrum or lies significantly toward either end. In the first instance, we can consider that public opinion is "normal moderate," while in the second it is "normal committed" to one ideological position or the other. A third type of distribution, like the "normal moderate" one, represents a balance between the two sides

of the ideological spectrum, but the percentages of the population are approximately equal across the entire spectrum, creating a flat distribution rather than a bell curve.

The other two distributions included in table 1 are much different in their format. In a "polarized" distribution, there are a substantial number of cases at both the extremes, while there are relatively few in the middle, creating a U-shaped curve. A polarized distribution is also bimodal in the sense that there are two modes (i.e., the categories with the largest number of cases in them), one at each of the ideological extremes. The final type of distribution is called "skewed." In a skewed distribution, there are a relatively few cases with extreme values at one end of the scale, while most of the cases cluster at the other end of the spectrum.

Political science theories argue that different distributions stimulate very different types of political societies.[9] More particularly, Anthony Downs developed formal "spatial" models of how political parties should act in the face of different types of distributions of public opinion on the leading issue in a polity. That is, the expected positions of political parties were placed on graphs of the distribution of citizens' attitudes on specific issues.[10] Downs' analysis has been extended, in addition, by models that explicitly focus on how multiple issues affect political competition in a society. For example, one extremely important characteristic is whether the major political issues or cleavages in a society overlap or cross-cut in terms of the groups of supporters and opponents for each one.[11] To the model of partisan response to different distributions of public opinion, Ian Budge added the factor or possibility that parties may take positions

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[9] Grofman and Lijphart, *Electoral Laws and Their Political Consequences*; Arend Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1999); Peter Mair, *Party System Change: Approaches and Interpretations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); Giovanni Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976); and Harold L. Wilensky, *Rich Democracies: Political Economy, Public Policy, and Performance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

[10] Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, 114-41.

[11] Douglas W. Rae and Michael Taylor, *The Analysis of Political Cleavages* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1970).

on only selected issues.[12]

The logic of the Downsian approach to spatial analysis is perhaps most clear-cut when citizens' attitudes on the leading issue of the day possess a normal moderate distribution. A good example from Taiwan is how people at the time of the 1996 presidential election viewed the country's ultimate national identity. That is, should Taiwan ultimately become an independent nation, or be unified with China, or maintain the status quo? John Fuh-sheng Hsieh's (謝復生) report of the data from a survey by the Election Study Center of National Chengchi University (國立政治大學選舉研究中心) in figure 1 shows that 53.5 percent of the population chose the status quo, while about 22 percent each advocated either independence or unification (also see table 2 below).[13] In such a situation, it makes sense for two centrist parties to compete for voter allegiances,[14] with one party being pro-independence (the DPP in Taiwan's case) and one being pro-unification (the Kuomintang [KMT; 國民黨] in Taiwan's case). Each party would have an incentive to position itself close to the middle of the political spectrum in order to attract the most votes or the "median voter" (i.e., the voter in the exact middle of the distribution). As long as the party maintained its pro-independence or pro-unification character, more extreme voters would not "jump over" it to support its rival. In contrast, if the party took a more extreme position, it could potentially lose some of the moderates on its side of the issue to a centrist appeal by its rival.

This situation also shows the effect that the electoral system can have on the nature of party competition. If the winner is determined by who gets the most votes, there will probably be only two parties. Any third party (which presumably would appeal to the more extreme voters on one or the

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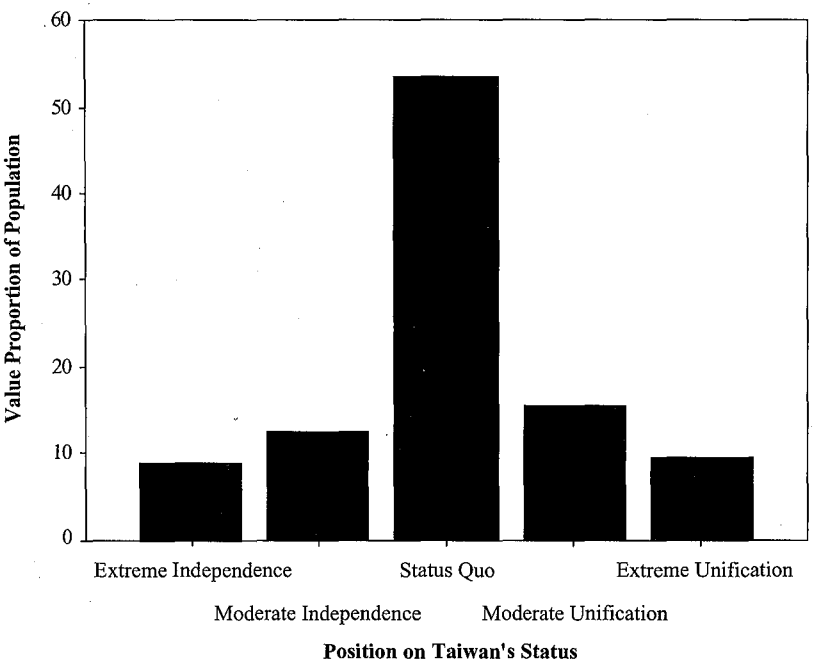
[12] Ian Budge, "Parties, Programs, and Policies: A Comparative and Theoretical Framework," *American Review of Politics* 14 (1993): 695-716. For an application of this approach to Taiwan, see Dafydd Fell, "Party Platform Change in Taiwan's 1990s Elections," *CGOTS Working Papers*, University of Texas at Austin, 2001, www.la.utexas.edu/research/cgots/.

[13] John Fuh-sheng Hsieh, "Whither the Kuomintang?" in Dickson and Chao, *Assessing the Lee Teng-hui Legacy*, 111-29.

[14] Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, 114-41.

Figure 1
Taiwan Attitudes on the National Identity Question, March 1996



Source: John Fuh-sheng Hsieh, "Whither the Kuomintang?" in *Assessing the Lee Teng-hui Legacy in Taiwan's Politics: Democratic Consolidation and External Relations*, ed. Bruce J. Dickson and Chien-min Chao (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2002), 116.

other side of the ideological spectrum) would be quite unattractive even to the voters who agreed with its position, since it would split the vote on their side of the spectrum, thereby almost certainly ensuring victory for the opposition. In contrast, an electoral system based on proportional representation would be quite conducive to the emergence of minor parties at both extreme ends of the spectrum, since they could appeal to the minority of voters who felt that the centrist party on their side of the spectrum had betrayed principles about which they felt very strongly.

As sketched in the third column in table 1, the different distributions of public opinion possess very different implications for the nature of party

competition in a society. As argued above, Downs' model predicts that a normal moderate distribution of public opinion is conducive to the creation of two catch-all or centrist parties that compete for the moderate middle of the electorate. In contrast, if public opinion is polarized between strong supporters and opponents of a position (e.g., independence and unification in figure 1), there probably will be two highly ideological parties, representing each of the extreme positions, since moving toward the middle will not attract very many more votes and might alienate the highly committed adherents of the party's constituency base.[15] Downs also argues that a flat distribution of public opinion should produce a multi-party system since there are a substantial number of voters at multiple points along the ideological system. However, if electoral laws shape the party system into a two-party competition, a flat distribution would probably operate similarly to the normal moderate one. The other two distributions included in table 1, the normal committed and skewed ones, both create situations in which sizeable majorities favor one position and oppose the other. Here, the logic of Ian Budge should come into effect.[16] The party or parties that take the position favored by the majority will stress the issue, while the party or parties that have positions opposed by a majority of citizens will ignore and try to de-emphasize the issue.

The National Identity Issue in Taiwan

The issues of national identity on Taiwan and cross-Strait relations between China and Taiwan are closely intertwined in Taiwan's politics today in a manner that produces an ideologically ironic political cleavage. After fifty years as a Japanese colony (1895-1945), Taiwan was returned to Chiang Kai-shek's (蔣介石) Republic of China (ROC) at the end of World War II. The ensuing military rule of Taiwan by Chiang's KMT in

[15]Ibid.

[16]Budge, "Parties, Programs, and Policies," 695-716.

the late 1940s was quite harsh and repressive, culminating in the tragedy of the February 28th (or 2-28) Incident (二二八事件) of 1947 in which a limited popular uprising brought a massive retaliation that resulted in an estimated 10,000 to 20,000 deaths, mostly by execution. Consequently, many "islanders" (i.e., long-time residents of Taiwan) became quite alienated from the KMT regime that was dominated by mainlanders (i.e., Chinese who had come to Taiwan with Chiang Kai-shek in the late 1940s). Although both the mainlanders and almost all the islanders were and are Han (漢族) Chinese, the legacy of 2-28 and the composition of the top levels of the KMT party-state generated significant tensions between the 15 percent mainlander minority and many islanders. The islanders, in turn, are divided between Hoklo (福佬) or Taiwanese (65 percent of the population) and Hakka (客家人; 15 percent of the population) depending on their origins in China, with under 5 percent of Taiwan's citizens being non-Han aborigines.[17]

By the 1970s and 1980s, the KMT's one-China policy was seen by many advocates of democratization as legitimating authoritarian rule by preventing the people of Taiwan from directly choosing their top government officials. Thus, the opposition (which was primarily led by islander intellectuals) came to be associated with Taiwan independence; and, indeed, support for independence was added to the DPP's charter in 1991 (before then direct calls for independence risked arrest under sedition laws). Still, the major objective of the DPP appeared to be ending the authoritarian rule of the mainlander-dominated regime on Taiwan rather than changing the relationship between China and Taiwan, probably because at that time Taiwan's incorporation into the PRC was "unthinkable" to almost all politicians on Taiwan.[18] Conversely, the chief (and perhaps

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[17] Melissa J. Brown, *Is Taiwan Chinese? The Impact of Culture, Power, and Migration on Changing Identities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Thomas B. Gold, *State and Society in the Taiwan Miracle* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1986); and Alan M. Wachman, *Taiwan: National Identity and Democratization* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1994).

[18] Shelley Rigger, *From Opposition to Power: Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 2001); and Wachman, *Taiwan: National Identity and Democratization*, 128-62.

only) advocates of unification were old guard KMT leaders (who presumably did not want a direct incorporation into the PRC but hoped for reunification with a post-communist China). The PRC for its part looked across the Taiwan Strait and by the early 1990s had turned the old adage "the enemy of my enemy is my friend" on its head. Rather the enemy (the DPP) of the CCP's old enemy (the KMT) was so obnoxious that the anti-communist KMT now appeared to be a "friend" in Taiwan.

Democratization brought the national identity issue into direct play in Taiwan politics since the KMT regime could no longer use authoritarian controls to repress challenges to its one-China policy. Indeed, many feared that this issue could lead to extreme polarization and even civil war in Taiwan. At the onset of democratization, both the DPP and the KMT bet heavily on the national identity issue. By incorporating Taiwan independence into its party charter in 1991, the DPP, in effect, bet that the party could ride into power on the islander nationalism that it felt would be unleashed by democratization. Conversely, the KMT bet that the general citizenry was grateful for Taiwan's rapid economic development and would spurn the DPP's call for independence for fear of radical upheaval that might threaten the island's prosperous society. In effect, both parties predicted that beliefs about national identity in Taiwan had a skewed or normal committed distribution, and they placed their bets on which side of the spectrum contained the majority of voters.

The work of John Fuh-sheng Hsieh on public opinion and voting in Taiwan demonstrates that the two parties picked the right issue on which to stake their bets, because the national identity issue has been the key factor shaping electoral behavior in the country since democratization. As would be expected, there is a considerable correlation between ethnicity and position on national identity, but Hsieh's sophisticated statistical analysis indicates that position on this issue is much more important than ethnicity per se in explaining the vote of Taiwan's citizens.[19] Table 2

[19] See John Fuh-sheng Hsieh, "Continuity and Change in Taiwan's Electoral Politics," in *How Asia Votes*, ed. John Fuh-sheng Hsieh and David Newman (New York: Chatham House, 2002), 32-49; Hsieh, "Whither the Kuomintang?", 111-29; John Fuh-sheng Hsieh, "The

Table 2
Attitudes in the 1990s toward Ultimate Goal for Cross-Strait Relations (%)

	December 1992	January 1995	March 1996	January 1999	June 2000
Extreme independence	6.2	6.6	9.1	12.9	6.2
Moderate independence	6.3	8.6	12.4	14.8	15.3
Status quo	30.6	51.1	53.5	43.5	46.0
Moderate unification	30.1	20.7	15.4	17.4	22.4
Extreme unification	26.9	12.9	9.7	11.4	10.1

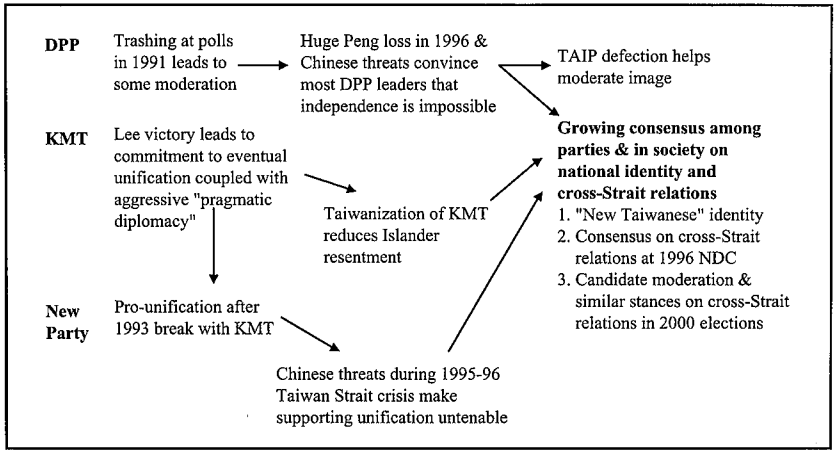
Source: John Fuh-sheng Hsieh, "Whither the Kuomintang?" in *Assessing the Lee Teng-hui Legacy in Taiwan's Politics: Democratic Consolidation and External Relations*, ed. Bruce J. Dickson and Chien-min Chao (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2002), 116.

shows the distribution of attitudes in Taiwan during the 1990s on the island's ultimate national identity—that is, whether the island should seek Taiwan independence, unification with China, or a preservation of the indeterminate status quo. At the beginning of democratization, the DPP's bet was clearly wrong; and the KMT's bet was correct since the distribution of attitudes was skewed, with a fairly large majority (57 percent) favoring unification in December 1992. Yet, by March 1996, following Chinese intimidation aimed at the 1995 and 1996 elections, the distribution had become almost moderate normal, with a majority of 53.5 percent favoring the status quo and minorities of just over 20 percent each supporting either independence or unification (also see fig. 1 above). Furthermore, this distribution changed only marginally through the 2000 presidential election. Thus, since most citizens came to prefer the uncertain status quo to either independence or unification, both parties came under pressure to change their bets on the two extreme positions.[20]

March Surprise: Taiwan's Presidential Election of 2004" (Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the American Association for Chinese Studies, College of William and Mary, 2004); and John Fuh-sheng Hsieh and Emerson M.S. Niou, "Salient Issues in Taiwan's Electoral Politics," *Electoral Studies* 15, no. 2 (1996): 51-70.

[20] Chia-lung Lin, "National Identity and Taiwan Security," in *Taiwan's National Security:*

Figure 2
How Democratization Moderated the National Identity Cleavage



Indeed, this set off the political dynamics in the mid-1990s sketched in figure 2 that brought both the KMT and the DPP toward the center of the spectrum on the national identity issue, just as the Downsian model predicts.[21] The KMT was the first to change its stance significantly. As long as mainlanders controlled the top levels of the party and state, the KMT unwaveringly proclaimed a commitment to "one China." After Lee Teng-hui (李登輝) became president and party chairman following Chiang Ching-kuo's (蔣經國) death, politics within the KMT shifted considerably to a struggle between Lee and his followers (who came to be called the Mainstream faction, 主流派) and a group of opponents (the Anti-Mainstream faction, 非主流派) which was primarily composed of older main-

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Dilemmas and Opportunities, ed. Alexander C. Tan, Steve Chan, and Calvin Jillson (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2001), 60-83; Shelley Rigger, "Is Taiwan Independence *Passé*? Public Opinion, Party Platforms, and National Identity in Taiwan," in *The ROC on the Threshold of the 21st Century: A Paradigm Reexamined*, ed. Chien-min Chao and Cal Clark (Baltimore: School of Law's Series in Contemporary Asian Studies, 1999), 47-70; and T.Y. Wang, "'One China, One Taiwan:' An Analysis of the Democratic Progressive Party's China Policy," in *Taiwan in Perspective*, ed. Wei-chin Lee (Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 2000), 159-82.

[21]Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, 114-41.

landers in the government, party, and military. As Lee consolidated his power, he not so subtly pushed the KMT's position on national identity in a new direction. Lee, in fact, managed to straddle the national identity issue quite astutely, implicitly portraying himself as a moderate between the pro-independence DPP and the pro-unification Anti-Mainstream KMT and (after 1993) the New Party (NP; 新黨), which split from the KMT. While retaining a commitment to unification with China in the indefinite future, he aggressively began to pursue the pragmatic diplomacy of trying to improve Taiwan's international status. For example, in 1993 he co-opted a popular issue from the DPP by launching a campaign to rejoin the United Nations—which the KMT had strongly opposed up to then.[22]

For its part, the DPP began to moderate its position on Taiwan independence in the early 1990s after the inclusion of a pro-independence plank in the party charter cost it significantly at the polls for 1991 National Assembly (國民大會) elections. This trend was intensified by the 1996 presidential election in which the combination of Chinese intimidation and the poor showing of the DPP's pro-independence candidate Peng Ming-min (彭明敏) seemingly convinced the DPP that Taiwan independence was an unrealistic goal. Consequently, the DPP downplayed Taiwan independence without renouncing it; for example, the DPP argued that Taiwan already was an independent nation, so any further action on the matter was unnecessary. Indeed, the evident desire of most DPP politicians to move toward a more centrist view on national identity caused several leaders and groups to defect from the DPP and to form the Taiwan Independence Party (TAIP; 建國黨), claiming that the DPP had forsaken its major issue and thereby helping to moderate the image of the DPP.[23]

By the mid-1990s, the extremes of unification and independence were represented unambiguously only by two minor parties—the NP and the TAIP. The electoral performance of these parties in the late 1990s

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[22]Linda Chao and Ramon H. Myers, *The First Chinese Democracy: Political Life in the Republic of China* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); and Steve J. Hood, *The Kuomintang and the Democratization of Taiwan* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1997).

[23]Rigger, *From Opposition to Power*, 120-36.

showed that association with either of these extremes was far from popular. The TAIP never received more than 1 to 2 percent of the vote; and support for the NP dropped precipitously in the late 1990s from almost 15 percent to less than 5 percent as its initial image of supporting reform and clean politics faded and it became identified as a pro-unification party. Again, this is exactly what Downs' model implies for a normal moderate distribution of public opinion: a little space, but not much, for new parties at the extremes of the ideological spectrum.

The result in the late 1990s was the growth of a consensus among both the population and the major parties on national identity and cross-Strait relations, as shown in the bottom right portion of figure 2. First, in terms of national identity, Lee Teng-hui's concept of a "New Taiwanese" identity that was open to both islanders and mainlanders alike proved to be very popular across the political spectrum.[24] Second, one remarkable outcome of the 1996 National Development Conference (國發會) was the three-party consensus that emerged among the DPP, KMT, and even the NP on cross-Strait relations, despite bitter partisan hostilities on other issues. This consensus supported regarding Taiwan as a sovereign state and aggressively seeking to improve Taiwan's international status, while paying verbal allegiance to unification as a goal for the indefinite future.[25] Third, the growing moderation on cross-Strait relations and national identity carried over to the 2000 presidential campaign. While the candidates certainly criticized each other (and especially caricatures of each other), they all really advocated moderate positions of toning down hostilities with Beijing, while strongly defending Taiwan's existing sovereignty; their positions differed from one another much more in phraseology than substance.[26]

The macro political analysis in figure 2 of the evolution of Taiwan's politics after democratization is also confirmed by Dafydd Fell's empirical

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[24]Brown, *Is Taiwan Chinese?* 7-14; and Rigger, "Is Taiwan Independence *Passé*?" 47-70.

[25]Tun-jen Cheng, "Taiwan in 1996: From Euphoria to Melodrama," *Asian Survey* 37 (1997): 43-51.

[26]Clark, *Asia Update*, 14-17.

Table 3
DPP and KMT Scores on Fell's Index of Support for "Taiwan Independence"

Year	DPP	KMT
1991	37.84	–6.97
1992	19.17	7.99
1993	0.46	–2.87
1994	4.91	–9.24
1995	2.78	0.20
1996	26.53	2.18
1997	2.79	–1.99
1998	0.94	–0.89
2000	6.30	–2.35

Source: Dafydd Fell, "Party Platform Change in Taiwan's 1990s Elections," *CGOTS Working Papers*, University of Texas at Austin, 2001, figure 1. www.la.utexas.edu/research/cgots/.

study of campaign advertising in elections during the 1990s.[27] Fell coded political newspaper advertisements during campaigns between 1991 and 2000, recording the number of "quasi sentences" devoted to particular themes. For example, themes concerning national identity included: Pure Taiwan Independence, Diluted Taiwan Independence, Taiwan Independence Negative, Chinese Unification, and Taiwan Nationalism. Table 3 presents his summary scores for the DPP and KMT on Taiwan independence for all the elections in his study. Again, his data demonstrate a convergence toward the middle for both major parties in Taiwan after the early 1990s, with the notable exception of Peng Ming-min's presidential campaign for the DPP in 1996. Several of his more specific findings are also consistent with the Downsian model. For example, DPP candidates tended to take more extreme positions in races for multi-member districts, where the logic of the electoral system overrides that of the distribution of public opinion because only fairly small minorities are needed to win. The KMT followed the logic of Budge's model by emphasizing Taiwan

[27] Fell, "Party Platform Change in Taiwan's 1990s Elections," 1-26.

independence more than the DPP in most elections due to the opposition to independence by substantial majorities throughout the 1990s (see table 2 above).

President Chen's "Taiwan, Yes! China, No!" Campaign

President Chen Shui-bian and his pan-Green (泛綠) coalition of the DPP and the Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU, 台灣團結聯盟, a new party founded in 2001 essentially by Lee Teng-hui after Lien Chan [連戰] forced him out of the chairmanship of the KMT) ran a campaign in the 2004 presidential elections that appealed strongly to Taiwanese nationalism. Jacques deLisle termed it the "Taiwan Yes! China No!" campaign after one of its central themes and slogans.[28] This campaign emphasis raises two analytic questions. First, why, given the general futility of past campaigns that emphasized Taiwanese nationalism, did Chen stake his presidency upon such a strategy? Second, why did the campaign succeed when the distribution of public opinion on national identity and cross-Strait relations implied, at least according to conventional political science theory, that its principal theme was a losing one?

That Chen would stress "Taiwan, Yes!" is at least mildly surprising. In the past, not just the DPP but Chen himself had moved away from Taiwanese nationalism and support for Taiwan independence. Shelley Rigger noted, for example, that Chen had supported Taiwan independence when he ran for the legislature in a multi-member district where Taiwan's electoral system of the "single nontransferable vote" means that a fairly small percentage of the voters can elect a candidate, thereby encouraging radical stances.[29] In contrast, when Chen ran for mayor of Taipei in 1994 and 1998 and for president in 2000, he took much more measured positions on cross-

[28]Jacques deLisle, "The Aftermath of Taiwan's Presidential Election: A Symposium Report," Philadelphia: Foreign Policy Research Institute, 2004, www.fpri.org.

[29]Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 44, 72; and Rigger, *From Opposition to Power*, 131-36.

Strait relations. Thus, he had earlier seemingly embraced the assumptions that public opinion on national identity had a normal moderate distribution and that, consequently, winning the election depended on winning over the moderate middle of the citizenry.

The explanation for Chen's campaign strategy needs to follow a two-stage process. At the first stage, one should ask whether Chen and the pan-Greens would be expected to follow a business-as-usual campaign, or whether they would be aggressive and challenging. The answer to this question, in the abstract, rests on where a candidate stands in a race. Candidates with a significant lead are not likely to challenge the status quo for fear of alienating current supporters. Conversely, those who are behind need to be aggressive and to "shake up the pot" in the hope of changing the dynamics of the election. Unfortunately for Chen, he clearly trailed in the polls by ten percentage points or more as the campaign got started in earnest in the fall of 2003.[30] Thus, he almost certainly needed to adopt a strategy that would change people's minds. Finding a new issue to emphasize is one of the few means of doing this.

Thus, it was certainly not surprising that Chen would seek to redefine the nature of the presidential campaign. That he picked the strategy of appealing to Taiwanese nationalism might seem unexpected because of its lack of efficacy in Taiwan politics in the past. A little thought, however, suggests that he had few other alternatives. First, the normal resort to "attack politics" by the trailing candidate was not much of an option because, given the continuing vitriol that marks Taiwan's politics, it was hard to imagine how either side could get much more negative. Second, there were few other issues at play in Taiwan politics. Class-based divisions have never been very important in Taiwan, and the pan-Blue (泛藍) and pan-Green forces did not differ much on economic strategy. Up through the early 1990s, the DPP (as well as reformers within the KMT) had been able to appeal to the citizenry with policies for promoting and completing Tai-

[30] deLisle, "The Aftermath of Taiwan's Presidential Election"; and Shelley Rigger, "Taiwan in 2003: Plenty of Clouds, Few Silver Linings," *Asian Survey* 44 (2004): 182-87.

wan's democratization, but the achievement of full democracy had made this issue fairly moot. Finally, in the late 1990s the DPP had benefited from popular revulsion against the gross political corruption that exists on the island—the so-called "black gold politics" (黑金政治). Four years of a DPP administration, however, had reduced the efficacy of tearing into the KMT on this issue.[31]

Moreover, Chen Shui-bian's ability to stake out a position on the nationality and cross-Strait relations issues was fairly limited. The pan-Blue alliance of the KMT and the People First Party (PFP, 親民黨, a new party started in 2000 by James Soong 宋楚瑜) was highly critical of Chen for provoking unnecessary tensions with the PRC and argued that, if elected, the team of Lien and Soong could restore tranquility across the Taiwan Strait, thereby probably preemptively attracting the middle of the spectrum. The evolution of Chen's policy toward China also made it hard for him to move toward the middle. Initially, he sought to reassure Beijing with the "five no's" in his inaugural speech, promising that he would not do anything to change Taiwan's status unless the PRC intervened militarily. China responded with studied contempt to Chen's conciliatory approach. Beijing quickly switched its primary demand from Taiwan's not declaring independence to Taiwan's accepting the one-China principle, a certain deal-breaker. After two years of frustration, Chen took a much sharper position on cross-Strait relations in the summer of 2002, advancing a theory that "one country on each side of the Taiwan Strait" existed, provoking significant unhappiness in both Beijing and Washington. Moreover, when this potential crisis faded, the PRC announced in 2003 that no progress would be made on establishing the "three links" between Taiwan and China until after the election—a fairly transparent method of endorsing the pan-Blue ticket by denying President Chen the opportunity

[31] These issue dynamics are discussed in much more detail by Cal Clark, "Democratization and the Evolving Nature of Parties, Issues, and Constituencies in the ROC," in *Taiwan's Modernization in Global Perspective*, ed. Peter C.Y. Chow (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2002), 135-59; and Fell, "Measurement of Party Position and Party Competition in Taiwan," 101-36.

to claim a diplomatic success.[32]

More fundamentally, a strong position on national identity and cross-Strait relations was demanded by the pan-Green camp's base constituency. Thus, backing off Chen's previous positions would undoubtedly have alienated his strongest supporters. At a time when he already trailed in the polls, he certainly needed more, not less, enthusiasm and activity from his existing supporters. In addition, the changing nature of Taiwan's party system after the 2000 presidential election put greater pressure on the DPP to press the cause of Taiwanese nationalism. In the late 1990s, as noted in the previous section, the extreme position on this issue was represented by the TAIP, which was so electorally inconsequential that it represented no threat to the DPP. The formation of the TSU in 2000, however, created a considerably more powerful party. For example, the TSU received 8 percent of the vote in the 2001 Legislative Yuan (立法院) elections, and Lee Teng-hui proved to be no easy collaborator with Chen and the DPP.[33]

One early indicator that Chen Shui-bian would stress Taiwanese nationalism in his campaign was his determination to hold a referendum on policy toward China simultaneously with the presidential election. The DPP had initially advocated a referendum on Taiwan independence in the early 1990s. Thus, the idea of adopting legislation to allow referenda and of holding referenda strongly appeals to the DPP base, raises consternation in Beijing, and is viewed with some suspicion in Washington as potentially destabilizing cross-Strait relations. Referenda, of course, can be held on many issues that have nothing to do with Taiwan independence and the island's status and sovereignty (e.g., a township referendum that was held on whether it should get a freeway exit). Indeed, when Chen began to

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[32]John F. Copper, *Taiwan's 2000 Presidential and Vice Presidential Election: Consolidating Democracy and Creating a New Era of Politics* (Baltimore: University of Maryland, School of Law's Series in Contemporary Asian Studies, 2000); Shelley Rigger, "Taiwan in 2002: Another Year of Political Droughts and Typhoons," *Asian Survey* 43 (2003): 41-48; and Rigger, "Taiwan in 2003," 182-87.

[33]Cal Clark, "Lee Teng-hui and the Emergence of a Competitive Party System in Taiwan," in *Sayonara to the Lee Teng-hui Era: Politics in Taiwan, 1988-2000*, ed. Wei-chin Lee and T.Y. Wang (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 2003), 91-112; and Rigger, "Taiwan in 2002."

push for a referendum law in 2003 with the goal of holding a referendum simultaneously with the presidential election, he took more than a little care to choose issues that did not involve a direct change in Taiwan's status or declaration of independence (e.g., whether Taiwan should be granted membership in the World Health Organization, an issue which appealed to the presumably large majority of citizens who were frustrated and angered over the PRC's ability to deny Taiwan status and "face" in international affairs). Still, it was widely, if not universally, assumed that Chen's strong push for a referendum was politically motivated in terms of the upcoming election.[34] Shelley Rigger explicitly argues for such reasoning:

> The theory is that referendums, especially symbolic ones like that on the WHO, will help the DPP politically by mobilizing the party base and perhaps even exciting patriotic emotions that will draw votes beyond the DPP's traditional supporters. Holding the referendum together with the presidential election would allow enthusiasm for the referendum to spill over into the presidential race.[35]

Perhaps the high point of the pan-Green campaign was the "2-28 Hand-in-Hand" rally which was held "to protest China's military threats and to give the world a clear message that the people of Taiwan want peace, not war."[36] The rally involved a human chain of an estimated two million people that stretched from the north to the south of Taiwan, with Chen Shui-bian and Lee Teng-hui clasping each other's hands in Miaoli County (苗栗縣). The huge turnout certainly proved the rally to be a tremendous success in igniting pan-Green supporters. It also was highly symbolic. It was held at 2:28 p.m. on February 28th, thereby commemorating the tragedy of 2-28. In addition, it was modeled on a 1989 human chain in what were then the Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania of

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[34] John F. Copper, *Taiwan's 2004 Presidential and Vice Presidential Election: Democracy's Consolidation or Devolution?* (Baltimore: University of Maryland, School of Law's Series in Contemporary Asian Studies, 2004); Mikael Mattlin, "Referendum as a Form of *Zaoshi*: The Instrumental Domestic Political Functions of Taiwan's Referendum Ploy," *Issues & Studies* 40, no. 2 (June 2004): 155-85; Gary Rawnsley, "The Day after the Night Before: Thoughts on the 2004 Presidential Election," Nottingham, UK: Institute for National Policy Research, *Taiwan Perspective e-Paper*, 2004, www.tp.org.tw; and Rigger, "Taiwan in 2003."

[35] Rigger, "Taiwan in 2003," 186.

[36] Yun-ping Chang, "Two Million Rally for Peace," *Taipei Times*, February 29, 2004, 1.

the Soviet Union, protesting the Soviet occupation of what are now three independent nations.[37] The implicit call for "ethnic justice" internally and independence from China externally, therefore, was far from subtle.

Why the Success of "Taiwan, Yes!"?

President Chen Shui-bian's victory over the ticket of Lien Chan and James Soong represented a marked improvement over his first victory in 2000, when he won with just under 40 percent of the vote in a three-way race with Lien and Soong. Thus, he increased his support by eleven percentage points from 39 percent to 50 percent for an impressive jump of 28 percent (i.e., 11 percent/39 percent), thereby at least temporarily giving the DPP and the pan-Green coalition the status of a majority party bloc. Chen's victory is all the more remarkable because his first term was marked by economic slowdown, continuing tensions with China, political gridlock, and in the spring of 2003 a frightening outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) that both showed the government's lack of administrative competence and underlined its lack of diplomatic status (in this case, membership in the WHO). Indeed, Shelley Rigger described Taiwan in 2003 as having "plenty of clouds, few silver linings"—a situation that is usually quite dangerous for incumbents.[38]

As argued in the previous section, the implied logic behind the DPP and Chen Shui-bian's "Taiwan Yes!" campaign becomes quite understandable when Taiwan's political realities in 2003-2004 are taken into consideration. Its success would still appear to be more than a little problematic, however, especially given Taiwan's recent political history, when perceived advocacy of either independence or unification has been punished at the polls. This section examines three possible explanations for Chen Shui-bian's victory. The first is that the outcome was determined

[37] Ibid., and Copper, *Taiwan's 2004 Presidential and Vice Presidential Election*, 35-37.
[38] Rigger, "Taiwan in 2003," 182.

by idiosyncratic factors, in particular the failed assassination attempt on President Chen and Vice-President Lu Hsiu-lien (呂秀蓮) on the eve of the election. Second, there is at least some evidence that the growth of a Taiwanese identity has changed both the nature of public opinion on this issue and its political consequences. Finally, President Chen has been fairly skillful in creating strategic ambiguity about his pursuit of Taiwanese nationalism, a skillfulness which almost certainly has helped him at the polls. In combination, these three explanations suggest that appealing to the DPP base turned out to be an inspired strategy.

Almost all elections, of course, are affected by idiosyncratic factors. In Taiwan's 2004 presidential campaign, for example, Chen Shui-bian almost certainly gained at least a few votes because he is a far more charismatic and attractive figure than his rival for the presidency, Lien Chan, a fact which was widely perceived to have worked to his advantage in the two televised debates. The major idiosyncratic factor was the botched and still unexplained assassination attempt on Chen and Lu in Tainan (台南) the day before the election, which almost certainly helped the pan-Green ticket by generating a sympathy vote. Tracking polls gave the pan-Blue candidates a seemingly comfortable lead of 10.5 percentage points on March 18th, but it dropped precipitously to 1.6 percentage points the next day.[39] Thus, the assassination attempt may well have played a key role in Chen's re-election.

Second, the attitudes of Taiwan's citizens may be shifting in the direction of Taiwanese nationalism. Not only did Chen Shui-bian win re-election, but public opinion on national identity in Taiwan was seemingly redefined considerably closer to the pan-Green position. Support for this conclusion does not come just from the supporters of Chen and Lee Teng-hui, but is strongly validated by the actions and words of the pan-Blue leadership. For example, during their final massive campaign rallies, both Lien Chan and James Soong kissed the ground in Taipei and Taichung respectively to demonstrate their devotion and loyalty to

[39] Hsieh, "The March Surprise," 1-2.

Taiwan,[40] and Lien Chan was quoted as saying, "There is one state on each side of the Taiwan Strait,"[41] thereby echoing what was seen as a provocative argument by Chen Shui-bian.

It is striking and perhaps surprising that the pan-Blue bloc, with its ostensibly moderate position on cross-Strait relations, would be put on the defensive on this issue. One reason for this defensiveness is China's insistence that Taiwan accept the one-China principle, which made it very hard for the Lien-Soong ticket to articulate a policy toward the PRC. Given the obvious danger to Taiwan's sovereignty that would accompany acquiescence to China's demand, the KMT-PFP alliance could not really propose an explicit policy for negotiating with China. Rather, their campaign theme of "Change the President, Save Taiwan" appealed to Taiwanese nationalism only in a backhanded way by suggesting that Chen's policy was endangering Taiwan by unduly provoking the PRC. Such an indirect approach is rarely very effective in the heat of a political campaign. Indeed, Chen and the Green coalition effectively set the campaign agenda until early March when Chen Yu-hao (陳由豪), the former chairman of the Tuntex Group (東帝士集團), charged Chen Shui-bian and his wife Wu Shu-chen (吳淑珍) with hiding much of a huge campaign donation that he had made. The ensuing scandal captured the headlines during the last week of the campaign and put the DPP on the defensive on an issue (black gold politics) that usually works in its favor.[42]

Moreover, national identity is obviously more complex than a position on whether Taiwan should seek independence or unification. Clearly, many of Taiwan's citizens possess a complex identity that includes both Taiwanese and Chinese components.[43] In the early 1990s, for instance, there was an approximate balance between Chinese and Taiwanese identi-

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[40] Tai-lin Huang, "Saturday's Massive March Fills Pan-Blue Sails," *Taipei Times*, March 15, 2004, 3.

[41] Rawnsley, "The Day after the Night Before."

[42] Copper, *Taiwan's 2004 Presidential and Vice Presidential Election*, 45-47.

[43] Brown, *Is Taiwan Chinese?* 211-50; Rigger, "Is Taiwan Independence *Passé*?" 47-70; and Wachman, *Taiwan: National Identity and Democratization*, 56-124.

Table 4
Ratio of Taiwanese to Chinese Identity (%)

	Taiwanese identity	Double identity	Chinese identity	No response
1994	29	43	24	4
1995	29	46	21	4
1997	34	48	14	4
1998	44	42	10	3
2000	50	39	8	3

Source: Szu-yin Ho and I-chou Liu, "The Taiwanese/Chinese Identity of the Taiwan People in the 1990s," in *Sayonara to the Lee Teng-hui Era: Politics in Taiwan, 1988-2000*, ed. Wei-chin Lee and T.Y. Wang (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 2003), 154.

fiers, similar to the balance between supporters of independence and unification. However, Ho and Liu's data in table 4 show that over the 1990s this identification changed, as there was a fairly dramatic rise in Taiwanese identification as well as a corresponding drop in Chinese identification. Ho and Liu attribute this change, at least in part, to events during the 1990s which made China appear threatening to Taiwan, such as the Qiandaohu Incident (千島湖事件) in 1994, the Taiwan Strait crisis of 1995-96, and Chinese threats in 1999.[44] Thus, in less than a decade, the distribution of this attitude was transformed from normal moderate to strongly skewed in the direction of Taiwanese identification. These data led Ho and Liu to the following conclusion that predicted the 2004 election almost perfectly:

> In terms of electioneering, once Taiwanese identity becomes the "median voter position," the party that can best claim the position will have a natural electoral advantage. Of course, we do not mean that the identity issue is the sole determinant of election results; elections are indeed concerned with many issues. We do suggest that, given the current trend in Taiwan people's identity, the DPP should have the upper hand in Taiwan's national-level elections, and, since the identity issue is political in nature, any stern comments or behavior from the PRC regarding Taiwan's elections is likely to work in favor of the party that advocates the Taiwan-first values the most, that is, the party that most wants to claim the "median voter" position.[45]

[44]Szu-yin Ho and I-chou Liu, "The Taiwanese/Chinese Identity of the Taiwan People in the 1990s," in Lee and Wang, *Sayonara to the Lee Teng-hui Era*, 149-83.

[45]Ibid., 179.

Table 5
Indications of a Continuing "Moderate Middle" on Cross-Strait Relations in 2004

Cross-Strait Relations*	
Eventual unification	7% to 23%
Indefinite status quo	42% to 66%
Eventual independent Taiwan	15% to 28%
National Identity#	
Taiwanese identity	41.5%
Double identity	48.6%
Chinese identity	9.9%

*Result from seventy-six opinion polls in early 2004.

#From poll conducted by the Election Study Center of National Chengchi University in 2004.

Sources: Gary Rawnsley, "The Day after the Night Before: Thoughts on the 2004 Presidential Election," Nottingham, UK: Institute for National Policy Research, 2004, *Taiwan Perspective e-Paper*. www.tp.org.tw; and "Polls Indicated Few Want Status Quo Changed," *Taiwan Update*, February 27, 2004, 4.

In essence, using the theoretical terms about the distribution of public opinion on an issue,[46] the attitudes of Taiwan's citizens toward national identity may have been transformed from a normal moderate to a skewed distribution that favors the pan-Green position. This, in turn, explains why a "Taiwan Yes!" campaign that might have been perceived as too extremist in the past was so successful. As indicated in table 1 above, for example, when public opinion is skewed on an issue, the party whose position represents the median voter (the pan-Green coalition in this case) should make the issue a campaign priority, while the party whose position is far less favored (the pan-Blue coalition in this case) should ignore and downplay the issue. This appears to be quite consistent with what occurred during the 2004 presidential campaign.

This argument about the political consequences of attitude change almost certainly possesses considerable validity. However, the public opinion data from 2004 in table 5 also indicate that strong evidence of a

[46]Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, 96-141.

moderate middle on cross-Strait relations and on national identity can be found as well. The top half of the table reports the results of seventy-six private polls summarized in an analysis by the Mainland Affairs Council (大陸事務委員會), which differ little in the relative support for independence, unification, or the status quo from the data for the 1990s in table 2 above. One government poll (not included in this compilation) even found 80 percent support for the status quo.[47] Thus, public opinion on Taiwan clearly follows a normal moderate pattern on this issue. The bottom half of the table reports the answers to questions on national identity from the same series of polls used by Ho and Liu in table 4. In 2004, national identity was strongly skewed toward a Taiwanese identity. Still, the percentage of the population identifying as Taiwanese dropped from 50 percent in 2000 (see table 4) to 41.5 percent in 2004—which would seem to be incompatible with the theory of escalating pressures from the general citizenry for Taiwanese nationalism. In fact, many observers have noted the continuing popularity of the "New Taiwanese" identity which is open to all citizens regardless of ethnic origin.[48]

Even if a shift in public opinion did not drive a corresponding policy shift toward Taiwanese nationalism, Taiwan's citizens are far from indifferent about their country's lack of status in international affairs. Indeed, the popular consensus on cross-Strait relations can be summarized by the two not entirely consistent policy prescriptions: (1) support Taiwan's complete sovereignty and autonomy from the PRC, including improving Taiwan's status in world affairs, and (2) avoid picking fights with China, including not directly challenging the PRC's sovereignty claims over Taiwan.[49] As Rigger noted, there certainly appeared to be growing frustration across the political spectrum with Taiwan's lack of international status and treatment by the PRC as the election approached.[50] In short, the moderate

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[47]"Polls Indicated Few Want Status Quo Changed," *Taiwan Update*, February 27, 2004, 4.

[48]Brown, *Is Taiwan Chinese?* 7-14; Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 148-77; and Rawnsley, "The Day after the Night Before."

[49]Clark, *Asia Update*, 9-12.

[50]Rigger, "Taiwan in 2003," 182-87.

middle in Taiwan almost certainly does not hesitate to affirm "Taiwan, Yes!"

This brings us to a third explanation for Chen Shui-bian's victory: the pan-Green coalition and Chen in particular have proved far more adept than the pan-Blue coalition in framing issues. Specifically, Chen's appeals to Taiwanese nationalism can be interpreted as constituting strategic ambiguity in the sense that the relationship between his policy and Taiwan independence remains somewhat ambiguous. This ambiguity has had several advantages. First, in terms of domestic politics, it has allowed him to appeal to both the pan-Green's base constituency, which strongly supports independence, and to broader segments of the public who do not necessarily favor independence. Internationally, strategic ambiguity allows Chen to take some initiatives that raise hackles in Beijing and, to a lesser extent, Washington, while claiming that they do not violate the PRC's demands that Taiwan not declare independence. The success here is harder to evaluate. On the one hand, Chen's policies have not provoked a major crisis or military confrontation; on the other, cross-Strait tensions have certainly risen considerably in the last several years.

Two distinct dimensions of Chen's strategic ambiguity can be discerned. First, he has taken different positions at different times, making a determination of what his actual policy goals are rather difficult. As noted in the last section, for example, his emphasis on Taiwan independence in his campaigns varied substantially depending on the nature of the office he was seeking,[51] and, as president, his policy toward China changed considerably from his initially conciliatory approach midway through his first term.[52] This facet of strategic ambiguity on cross-Strait relations continued apace after the election. In a March 29th interview with the *Washington Post*, Chen sounded quite confrontational toward China, stirring an adverse reaction from both Beijing and Washington. In contrast, his inauguration

[51] Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, 44, 172; and Rigger, *From Opposition to Power*, 131-36.

[52] Rigger, "New Crisis in the Taiwan Strait"; Rigger, "Taiwan in 2002"; and Rigger, "Taiwan in 2003."

speech of May 20th was quite moderate and conciliatory.[53] In terms of domestic policy, Chen seemed fairly aggressive in promoting what Wei-chin Lee has called a "cultural revolution" in favor of the native Taiwanese during his first term.[54] Yet, here too, he moved in a more conciliatory direction after the election, as when he sponsored the Conference on Ethnic and Cultural Development in October.[55]

A second form of Chen Shui-bian's policy of strategic ambiguity is to make different policy appeals on the same issue to disparate constituencies. This is well illustrated by his use of the referendum issue during the 2004 presidential campaign. Chen Shui-bian's advocacy of a referendum turned out to have two quite distinct and separate appeals. It certainly appealed to supporters of Taiwan independence among the pan-Green forces. It also had wide support among the general public who rejected independence as too radical and provocative, presumably because referenda were seen as a way of surmounting the ongoing gridlock in Taiwan's politics. Consequently, the politics of the referendum issue during 2003-2004 turned out to be quite convoluted. The legislative enactment involved at least a three-sided struggle among Chen, more radical pan-Green advocates of using the referendum to achieve Taiwan independence, and the narrow pan-Blue majority in the Legislative Yuan who initially opposed passing a referendum law but came to support the idea when its strong popular support became apparent. Ironically, Chen ultimately used a referendum law that was passed by the reluctant pan-Blue forces to hold referenda on two issues—whether Taiwan should build up its military in the face of the growing threat from China, and whether Taiwan should negotiate with China.[56] On

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[53]Copper, *Taiwan's 2004 Presidential and Vice Presidential Election*, 62-70.

[54]Wei-chin Lee, "Taiwan's 'Cultural Revolution': Identity Politics and Collective Action since 2000" (Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, 2004). The revised version of this paper, entitled "Taiwan's Cultural Reconstruction Movement: Identity Politics and Collective Action since 2000," also appears in this issue.

[55]Riat Fang, "Conference Explores Paths to Ethnic Harmony," *Taiwan Journal*, October 29, 2004, 2.

[56]The subjects of the referenda that Chen wanted to hold changed considerably over time.

the day of election, a pan-Blue boycott resulted in only 45 percent of the electorate voting on these two issues, causing the referendum to fail despite winning the overwhelming support of the votes cast, because the total fell short of the 50 percent necessary for passage.[57]

Chen Shui-bian, in sum, won re-election by pursuing a strategy of activating and mobilizing his base constituency rather than seeking to attract the moderate middle. In this, he was similar to President George W. Bush in the United States, who won re-election by explicating mobilizing social conservatives. In America, it is fairly clear that Bush's base provided his margin of victory.[58] In Taiwan, as summarized in this section, the situation is a little less clear since the sympathy vote from the assassination attempt and Chen's ability to broaden his appeal through strategic ambiguity very probably contributed to his victory as well. Still, the results are not what would have been expected either from political science theory about the necessity of appealing to the median voter or from previous campaigns in Taiwan's short democratic history.

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[57] See note 1 above; Copper, *Taiwan's 2004 Presidential and Vice Presidential Election*, 48; Jih-wen Lin, "Taiwan's Referendum Act and the Stability of the Status Quo," *Issues & Studies* 40, no. 2 (June 2004): 119-53; Rawnsley, "The Day after the Night Before"; Rigger, "New Crisis in the Taiwan Strait"; and Rigger, "Taiwan in 2003."

[58] Todd S. Purdum, "Electoral Affirmation of Shared Values Provides Bush a Majority," *New York Times*, November 4, 2004, www.nytimes.com.

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