Journal of Current Chinese Affairs

China aktuell

Clark, Cal and Tan, Alexander C. (2012),
Political Polarization in Taiwan: A Growing Challenge to Catch-all Parties?, in:
Journal of Current Chinese Affairs, 41, 3, 7–31.
ISSN: 1868-4874 (online), ISSN: 1868-1026 (print)

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GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies, Institute of Asian Studies
in cooperation with the National Institute of Chinese Studies, White Rose East Asia Centre at the Universities of Leeds and Sheffield and Hamburg University Press.

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This Taiwan edition has been published and edited in cooperation with the European Research Center on Contemporary Taiwan (ERCCT) at Eberhard Karls University of Tübingen.

Political Polarization in Taiwan: A Growing Challenge to Catch-all Parties?

Cal CLARK and Alexander C. TAN

Abstract: For the last decade, politics in Taiwan have become increasingly polarized over the national identity issue. Yet, the bitter division between the two major parties is not really reflected in the electorate. We seek to explain this paradox by examining the changing nature of political parties, in particular the growing role of ideological activists in campaigns, the rise of cultural and identity issues, the difficulty for new parties to emerge, the decline of catch-all parties, and the tendency for major parties to engage in cartel activities.

■ Manuscript received 29 January 2012; accepted 28 June 2012

Keywords: Taiwan, cultural issues, Democratic Progressive Party, Downsian theory, Kuomintang, polarization, political parties

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Introduction

There has been increasing interest recently in political polarization in democratic nations. Brady (2008: 1) suggests that polarization simply denotes "a separation of some consequence over some dimension or dimensions", such as race, religion, and/ or language. Separation by and of itself, however, does not tell us much about polarization. What interests us are the political manifestations of the significant social cleavages in a nation. Indeed, Brady (2008: 7) suggests that the political manifestations of polarization can be studied by examining political parties at the level of the electorate, the party elite, and the party in government. Huang (2008: 2) goes further to argue that polarized politics imply "the polarization of political behaviours and attitudes originated from partisan rivalry". Though parties are created to aggregate and represent diverse viewpoints and are in effect organizational expressions of social divisions (Brady and Han 2007; Lipset and Rokkan 1967), the existence of parties and the presence of partisan rivalries are not sufficient to denote polarization. Partisan rivalries can be between a divided elite and electorate who may share some middle ground (unpolarized) or between a divided elite and electorate with no shared middle ground (polarized). To this end, Liao and Yu suggest that

> political polarization usually refers to the process by which political parties go to the extremes along an ideological spectrum; it also refers to the phenomenon in which ideological overlap between the political parties disappears (Liao and Yu 2008: 2).

In this study, we concur with Liao and Yu's suggestion that political polarization occurs when parties accentuate and reinforce the chasm that separates them and then consolidate positions in their respective ideological camps in order to reduce any "middle ground" they may have shared.

During the first decade of the twenty-first century, the major political parties in Taiwan – the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and the Kuomintang (KMT, Guomindang) – have become increasingly polarized in bitter political conflict. This polarization has centred on the strongly interlinked issues of national identity and cross-Strait relations. Questions of national identity concern whether a person believes that their nation of residence is China or Taiwan and consequently whether they want Taiwan to unite with China or be a separate, independent country, both of which contrast with the current diplomatic status quo in which

Taiwan's ultimate international status remains undetermined (Clark and Tan 2012; Makeham and Hsiau 2005; Wachman 1994). However, the sharp and vicious polarization of the political elites does not seem to reflect a similar polarization in the electorate, even though national identity issues are the most important issues in most Taiwanese elections (Hsieh 2009a). This situation challenges the prominent Downsian theory that party positions should reflect the distribution of public opinion and assumes that parties will seek to maximize their vote totals (Downs 1957).

This paper explores this paradox. The first section sketches out the basic theoretical model; the second provides an overview of the growing polarization in Taiwanese politics; and the third presents survey data that cast considerable doubt on whether Taiwanese citizens' public opinion is the driving force behind political polarization. The conclusion then seeks to adduce an explanation for why rational politicians would pursue policies that appear to be irrational for their presumed goals of maximizing electoral support and winning office and argues that the observed trends suggest that the "catch-all parties" that evolved during the postwar era may be now deteriorating under new political and social conditions.

Growing Polarization: A Theoretical Puzzle

The partisan polarization that is widely perceived to be occurring in Taiwanese politics represents something of a theoretical puzzle, as it is unexpected for two, interrelated, reasons: First, the evolution of party systems in the developed world, at least until quite recently, seemingly made such polarization less, not more, likely. Second, polarization is generally expected to be muted in two-party systems, like that of Taiwan.

There are two primary approaches to conceptualizing the nature of party systems. One focuses on the number and identity of major parties (Downs 1957; Duverger 1959; Sartori 1976). From this perspective, once mass suffrage was achieved in the advanced industrialized nations by the 1920s, the party systems in those countries became remarkably stable (Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Mair 1997). A second interpretive focus, however, suggests fundamental changes in the nature of political parties over the last 150 years (Katz and Mair 1995; Mair 1997). These changes, in particular, should have reduced the likelihood of extreme polarization.

Richard Katz and Peter Mair have developed a model of the evolution of four fundamentally different types of parties (Katz and Mair

1995; Mair 1997). For much of the nineteenth century, when suffrage was quite restrictive, politics were dominated by elite parties of office-holders and notables. Expanding suffrage during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries created the base for mass parties, which represented distinct social groups and dominated democratic politics through the end of World War II. Because of their close ties with specific groups and classes, mass parties focused their electoral efforts on mobilizing the members of the groups that they represented, rather than reaching out to other groups.

Mass parties faced increasing challenges, though, partially as a result of their very success. The old elite parties could not compete with the support of just the social groups that they had represented because these constituencies simply were not large enough. Thus, they had to develop a broader appeal. More importantly, the mass parties representing new political and social groups were ultimately successful in gaining power and implementing broad reforms that helped their previously socially marginalized and politically excluded constituencies. This lessened the demand for and appeal of this type of party; and the postwar economic boom accelerated the process by creating broad middle-class societies in the developed world. This, in turn, led to declining polarization in the electorate – or, what Daniel Bell (1960) termed the "end of ideology".

Political parties responded by transforming themselves into catch-all parties (Kirchheimer 1966) that appealed to political issue position rather than social identity and took moderate positions to appeal to the bulk of the citizenry. In addition, most interest groups expected to work with all of the major parties, rather than regarding one as their exclusive representative. By the 1970s, finally, a new type of cartel party began to emerge in a system in which major parties collaborated to share some governmental resources.

This sequence of party development strongly suggests that political polarization should have decreased markedly over time in most developed democracies. The rise of mass parties greatly increased polarization among parties committed to representing social groups and classes with clashing interests. However, catch-all parties emerged when the polarization within the citizenry declined, and their electoral strategies then reduced the political space available for those with extreme positions and views. Finally, cartel parties reduced the potential for polarization even further by discovering collaborative self-interest among electorally competing parties.

As noted above, not just the nature of parties but the number of major parties is important for defining the nature of a party system. From this perspective, there is a widespread consensus that two-party systems should be associated with low levels of polarization. This is because, with only two major parties, their major competition is for the moderate middle of the ideological spectrum. In the words of Giovanni Sartori (1976: 191), "two-partyism 'works' when the spread of opinion is small and its distribution single-peaked". If public opinion substantially departs from this situation, Sartori argues, another type of party system will almost inevitably emerge.

This reflects one approach to explaining the number of parties by the nature of social cleavages in a society (Hsieh 2009b; Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Sartori 1976), even if there is no real theoretical reason to exclude the possibility that a society today could be divided into two polar and hostile groups, as many were during the era of mass parties. There is another theory, though, that the nature of the electoral system has a major impact on the number of parties – in particular, that single-member districts promote a two-party system, while proportional representation is conducive to a multi-party system (Downs 1957; Duverger 1959; Hsieh 2009b; Rae 1971). This further suggests that a two-party system may somewhat ameliorate sharp social cleavages given how "sticky" political institutions generally are (March and Olsen 1989; Riker 1982).

Sartori (1976) presented a model of the nature of political parties in what he termed "polarized pluralism". In such party systems, centrifugal social cleavages and forces driving the polity apart are more important than centripetal ones binding it together. This results in the existence of an important anti-system party or parties, "irresponsible" opposition and over-promising, and a highly emotional involvement in politics by "true believers". Overall, he terms this an "ideological" approach to politics.

The ideological conflict in the era of mass parties from the late nineteenth century through the middle of the twentieth century was generally based on social class. With the diminishment of class cleavages in the postwar era, there were predictions of "the end of ideology" (Bell 1960), which presumably would reduce political polarization. Yet, by the late twentieth century, there was a rise in what David Leege and his colleagues (2002) have termed "cultural issues", which directly reflect the identities of and allegiances to competing social groups.

They argue that the cultural issues are so emotional and polarizing because they are based on distinct political groups that feel that their basic identities are reflected in the issues (Leege et al. 2002). Some of these issues (e.g. abortion) involve intense moral questions and, as a consequence, lead to polarization between camps of extremist supporters and opponents. Beyond such effects, these social issues also involve how groups and communities define themselves and view opposing groups who threaten their most cherished and fundamental values.

The escalating polarization in Taiwanese politics represents a theoretical puzzle for two reasons. First, the evolving nature of political parties in the Katz and Mair model (Katz and Mair 1995; Mair 1997) suggests that sharp political polarization should essentially be a thing of the past in many democracies with the fading of class cleavages and ideological politics. Second, the essentially two-party system of Taiwan should be especially resistant to "polarized pluralism" (Sartori 1976). However, the theory of "cultural politics" (Leege et al. 2002) provides an answer to this anomaly since it presumes that "cultural" and "identity" differences can provide sharp ideological divides that are not necessarily related to class cleavages. This suggests that the best strategy to explain considerable polarization in a specific nation is to explicate the basis for its "cultural" divisions. More broadly, the rise of cultural politics also implies that catch-all parties may start to face increasing challenges because their electoral strategy is based on the assumption that voters are moderate and not exclusively loyal to one party.

Taiwan: The Rise, Fall, and Rise of the National Identity Issue

According to numerous scholars, political polarization in Taiwan has increased since its democratization in the early 1990s (Hu and Chu 1996; Huang 2008, 2011; Liao and Yu 2008; Wang 2010). They point to the sharp political rhetoric of the elites and the media as well as the divisions between the elites and activists of the two major parties as evidence of the polarization. Beyond such observations and anecdotal evidence, Liao and Yu (2008) provide convincing evidence of the increasing polarization of the elites in a study of voting behaviour in the Legislative Yuan. In their study, they observe that in the period from 1998 to 2008 voting in the Legislative Yuan intensified along partisan lines (Liao and Yu 2008: 3).

The theoretical discussion in the previous section implies that we should look for sharp cultural divisions in a polity to explain the escalation of polarization in a post-industrial society. In Taiwan, such a division is very easy to discern based on ethnic identification. This is the divide between the so-called "mainlanders" (slightly less than 15 per cent of the population) who evacuated to Taiwan with Chiang Kai-shek (Jiang Jieshi) in the late 1940s and the large majority of much longer-term residents, or "islanders". More specifically, Taiwanese nationalism became increasingly associated with the Minnan majority of about 70 per cent of the population who came to Taiwan from China's Fujian Province (Copper 2010; Lee 2005; Makeham and Hsiau 2005). Taiwan's population is also composed of 15 per cent Hakka and 2 per cent aborigines (Brown 2004; Gold 1986; Lee 2005; Makeham and Hsiau 2005; Wachman 1994). This might suggest that growing polarization in Taiwan has the potential to become institutionalized because it is seemingly rooted in long-term ethnic identities. Yet, ethnicity is clearly not determinate since, for example, the DPP generally can only get little over half of the Minnan vote.

The nature of authoritarian rule on Taiwan at the end of the Chinese Civil War created a bitter legacy of ethnic hostility and tensions that reverberates in the nation's politics even today. Since the evacuation of the Chiang Kai-shek regime to Taiwan in 1949 at the end of the Chinese Civil War, the island has suffered from a clear ethnic cleavage between the mainlanders, who came with Chiang, and the long-time residents of the Taiwan, who also were almost all ethnically Han Chinese. The mainlanders dominated the government and imposed a harsh and repressive rule termed the "White Terror" until the country's democratic transition in the late 1980s and early 1990s. More broadly, especially after the initiation of the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Movement in 1966, the China-centric regime denigrated and discriminated against local culture and dialects by, for example, treating the Mandarin dialect as the official language of government and education, leading to ongoing resentments among the islanders (Cheng 1994; Lee 2005; Lynch 2004; Makeham and Hsiau 2005; Mendel 1970; Phillips 2003; Wachman 1994).

Thus, the question of national identity, even if repressed by martial law, was clearly important to many citizens. Taiwan's democratization, therefore, was widely expected to unleash Taiwanese nationalism on two interlinked but distinct issues: 1) rejection of the mainlander-dominated political regime and 2) growing hostility toward, and the absolute rejec-

tion of, China's claim to sovereignty over Taiwan, which was ironically at least tacitly supported by the KMT policy of "mainland recovery" (Gold 1986; Makeham and Hsiau 2005; Rigger 1999b, 2001; Tu 1998; Wachman 1994).

At the beginning of the 1990s, it seemed as if the opposition DPP and the ruling KMT had placed opposing bets on how the citizens of Taiwan would respond to this issue. The DPP bet that the end of authoritarian controls would bring forth more expression of islander resentments and that the DPP, as the champion of Taiwanese nationalism, would win over more voters. For example, the DPP added a section on support for Taiwanese independence to its charter in 1991. Conversely, the KMT bet that the satisfaction of the general population with the prosperity created by Taiwan's "economic miracle" would make them supportive of the political status quo both domestically and in cross-Strait relations with China. That is, the KMT believed it would continue to receive electoral majorities and that the population would continue to support unification with China at an indefinite point in the future (Clark 2002).

Political forces soon began to push both parties away from these stark alternatives. In the KMT, islander Lee Teng-hui (Li Denghui) – who succeeded Chiang Kai-shek's son, Chiang Ching-kuo (Jiang Jingguo), as president of Taiwan after the latter's death in 1988 – responded to this opportunity with what appeared to be inspired statesmanship on the national identity question. As Lee consolidated his power, he not-so-subtly pushed the KMT's position on cross-Strait relations in a new direction. Lee, in fact, managed to straddle the national identity issue quite astutely, implicitly portraying himself as a moderate, somewhere between the pro-independence DPP and the pro-unification members of the KMT, who tended to be mainlanders. While pledging his commitment to eventual unification with China, he aggressively began to pursue the "pragmatic diplomacy" of trying to upgrade Taiwan's international status. For example, in 1993 he co-opted a popular issue from the DPP by launching a campaign to join the United Nations, which the KMT had strongly opposed up to then (Cabestan 1998; Chao 2002; Lasater 2000; Sutter and Johnson 1994). Furthermore, the victory of Lee's "mainstream" faction clearly promoted the "Taiwanization" of the party, which made it hard to blame the contemporary KMT for the repression of the "old" KMT. Consistent with the view that the old KMT had been rejected, he formally apologized in 1995 for the massacre

of thousands of Taiwanese by nationalist troops in the spring of 1947, the "February 28th" or "2-2-8 Incident" (Chao and Myers 1998; Hood 1997).

For its part, the DPP began to moderate its position on Taiwanese independence in the early 1990s after its inclusion of a pro-independence plank in the party charter cost the DPP a significant number of votes in the 1991 elections. In particular, Chinese military threats during the 1996 presidential elections and the woeful showing of the pro-independence DPP candidate evidently convinced most of the party's leaders that Taiwanese independence was simply unfeasible. Consequently, the DPP began to downplay independence without ever formally renouncing it. For example, some (but far from all) DPP leaders began to argue that Taiwan already was an independent country, so there was no need for a formal declaration of independence (Rigger 2001; Wang 2000).

Taiwan's political dynamics in the late 1990s, therefore, suggested that partisan differences over national identity were narrowing and losing their intensity. For example, this growing moderation on national identity and cross-Strait relations carried over into the extremely competitive presidential campaign of 2000. Although the three major candidates certainly criticized each other, they all advocated the moderate position of toning down hostilities with Beijing, while protecting Taiwan's sovereignty (Clark and Tan 2012; Fell 2005; Rigger 1999a).

However, a re-escalation soon erupted following the dramatic victory of the DPP's Chen Shui-bian (Chen Shuibian) in the 2000 presidential election, which he won with just under 40 per cent of the vote in what was basically a three-way race – though there were a couple of minor candidates – with the KMT's Lien Chan (Lian Zhan) and with James Soong (Song Chuyu), who ran as an independent after failing to get on the KMT ticket. Two distinct types of issues were involved in this polarization: The first was an ongoing struggle over the "localization", or *bentuhua* (本土化), of the country's politics and culture, for which the Chen administration consistently advocated. The second involved cross-Strait relations with the People's Republic of China and was more episodic; here, Chen Shui-bian's policies were far from consistent.

Domestically, Chen displayed a strong commitment to pursuing *bentuhua* to create a "Taiwan-centric paradigm" for the nation (Hsiau 2005; Jacobs 2005). This, in turn, stimulated substantial opposition and pushback from the old-guard KMT (Wang 2005). The administration used its executive power to promote what it called a "Taiwanese subjec-

tivity" that certainly was aimed at its base constituency. Wei-chin Lee (2005), for example, argues that Chen promoted a Cultural Reconstruction Movement that included such initiatives as changing the name of many agencies and organizations to stress "Taiwan", promoting islander dialects in language policy, revising the official policy toward the mass media to reverse the previous KMT domination of outlets (including the encouragement of underground radio stations), and changing the focus from Chinese to Taiwanese history in education policy. Daniel Lynch (2004), for example, concluded that Chen and his "Green" bloc (named for the primary color of the DPP flag) were trying to create a new nation rooted in Taiwanese history and culture.

Relations with China were much more volatile, despite Chen Shui-bian's image as a zealot in promoting the declaration of *de jure* Taiwanese independence, which very probably would have resulted in military action by the PRC. Chen's pushing the envelope on the independence issue commenced in the summer of 2002 when he proclaimed his view that there was "one country on each side of the Taiwan Strait", provoking significant unhappiness in both Beijing and Washington. After that, he periodically set off contretemps with Beijing and Washington until he left office in 2008, as he challenged China's "red lines" on Taiwanese independence by, for example, proposing or holding referenda on issues that might affect Taiwan's international status and by advocating fundamental changes to the country's constitution. Yet, there were also signs of pragmatism in Chen's policies toward cross-Strait relations. He was fairly conciliatory toward an unresponsive PRC for his first two years in office and in early 2005 negotiated a "Ten-Point Consensus" with James Soong, who was widely perceived to be pro-China. More broadly, he followed a pattern of first being aggressive toward China during electoral campaigns in order to appeal to the "Deep Green" Taiwanese nationalists and then taking a much more conciliatory tone after the election was over, suggesting that he saw the DPP as a mass party. Indeed, he became consistently pro-independence only in 2006, when burgeoning scandals deprived him of support from almost everybody except the Deep Greens (Clark 2006; Clark and Tan 2012).

For their part, the KMT and its "Blue" coalition (named for one of the colors in the KMT flag) returned to a much more "China-centric" stance after Lee Teng-hui left the party following its defeat in the 2000 presidential election. According to the model developed by Wu Yu-shan (2011), this represented a direct response to the party's electoral situa-

tion. During elections, Wu argues that the KMT acts like a catch-all party and appeals to the median voter with centrist policies. Between elections when the party is out of power (as it was from 2000 to 2008), in contrast, it focuses its appeals on keeping the support of the pro-China "Deep Blues", while acting in a more pragmatic or "realist" manner when it controls the government.

By the middle of the first decade of the twenty-first century, therefore, a harsh and viciously divisive debate over cross-Strait relations and national identity had come to dominate Taiwanese politics. The Greens argued that they must "stand up for Taiwan" and accused the Blues of selling Taiwan out to China. In stark contrast, the Blues contended that the Greens were needlessly provocative and that a more accommodating policy could defuse the threat from China. Taken to the extreme (which they often were), these positions implied that for Taiwan and its statehood, one side was the saviour and the other the destroyer. Unfortunately, both critiques seem to have had some merit. President Chen's periodic appeals to his pro-independence "base constituency" for primarily domestic purposes infuriated China and at times strained relations with the United States, thereby threatening to undermine Taiwan's position in the Taibei–Beijing–Washington "triangle". Conversely, the Blue attempts to "do business" with Beijing undermined Chen's ability to deal with China, and there were even fairly credible rumours that Blue leaders had urged both the PRC and the US to "get tough" with the Chen administration, which might have created a security threat to Taiwan by undermining its duly elected government (Clark 2006; Hickey 2006; Rigger 2005).

The Disconnect between Party Polarization and the Distribution of Public Opinion

Based on the seminal work of Anthony Downs in his *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (1957), many scholars assume that the activity and nature of political parties in democratic nations are strongly conditioned by the distribution of public opinion. Public opinion on a specific issue can have numerous possible distributions. Two are particularly relevant for our analysis here. Popular attitudes on many issues have a distribution that is close to what is called "normal". Most of the citizens are concentrated in the middle of the distribution; there is a clearly declining number of cases as one moves from the middle toward either extreme, and

the distribution is symmetric in that equal numbers are associated with the two extremes of the distribution, creating a bell curve. In stark contrast, a "polarized" distribution has 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", with one mode at each end of the ideological spectrum.

Overall, as summarized in Table 1, political attitudes in combination might form one of five different types of distributions, assuming a polity with two major parties. The first two are easy to understand: If most citizens favoured the positions of one specific party (DPP or KMT), then we would have a partisan public dominated by that party (A or B). The third option is that there would be a polarized public if a fairly even balance existed between the strong supporters of Party A and B on most issues. A fourth possibility is that the general citizenry is not happy with either extreme and instead takes a position in the middle of the ideological spectrum on most issues. In this case, we would say that the nature of public opinion indicates a moderate public. The final possibility is that the public favours Party A on a considerable number of issues, but also supports Party B on many others. This would constitute a split public.

Table 1: Possible Structures of Public Opinion

Type	Defining Characteristic
Partisan, A	Most people favour Party A on most issues.
Partisan, B	Most people favour Party B on most issues.
Polarized	A fairly even balance exists between strong supporters of Party A and Party B on most issues.
Moderate	Most people are in the middle of the ideological spectrum on most issues.
Split	A substantial number of Party A's positions are supported by a strong majority, but so are a substantial number of Party B's.

Source: Compilation by the authors.

The strong partisan polarization among elites in Taiwan implies that we should expect a polarized distribution of public opinion in the general citizenry as well. This section, therefore, examines data on how citizens feel about the polarizing issue. The evidence from Taiwan is clear-cut. On the central issues of national identity and cross-Strait relations, the

distribution of public opinion is either normal or possesses a large "moderate middle" rather than being polarized. Consequently, citizens' political views are not the primary driving force behind party polarization in Taiwan.

The polarization over national identity and cross-Strait relations in the elite discourse and party competition in Taiwan would strongly suggest that such polarization also exists among the general electorate for one of two reasons: Either 1) the elites responded to a sharp polarization in public opinion or 2) the citizenry became more polarized once the elite debate brought the issue to the centre of Taiwan's politics. If neither of these conditions existed and a majority of Taiwanese were in the "moderate middle", the major parties would have a strong incentive to moderate their policies or risk punishment at the polls (Downs 1957; Sartori 1976).

Table 2: Ethnic Identification of Taiwan's Citizens (in per cent)

	Taiwanese	Both	Chinese
1992	20	52	28
1996	24	56	20
2000	39	47	14
2004	43	51	6
2008	51	45	4
2010	55	42	3

Source: Election Study Center 1992, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2008, 2010.

A variety of public opinion data cast doubt upon the image of a polarized electorate, however. In particular, many Taiwanese citizens possess a complex identity that includes both Taiwanese and Chinese components, and many are wary of taking extreme positions on cross-Strait relations (Brown 2004; Rigger 1999a; Wachman 1994). For the last two decades, public opinion surveys have asked whether people identify themselves as Chinese, Taiwanese, or a combination of both. Table 2 shows that national identity clearly possessed a normal distribution in 1992 as just over half the population (52 per cent) expressed a dual identity, while those who self-identified as Chinese slightly outnumbered those who self-identified as Taiwanese (28 per cent to 20 per cent).

However, this changed dramatically in just eight years: In 2000, almost half the population (47 per cent) still had a dual identification, but self-identified Taiwanese outnumbered self-identified Chinese 39 per cent to 14 per cent. The Chen Shui-bian years continued this trend as Taiwanese identification grew from 39 per cent to 51 per cent between 2000 and 2005, while Chinese identification collapsed further to just 4 per cent. Finally, the percentage of self-identified Taiwanese continued to increase, reaching 55 per cent of the population during the first two years of the Ma administration.

These data certainly show that the "China-centred paradigm" is a thing of the past in Taiwan, as by 2010 (or even 2000) the number self-identifying as only Chinese in Taiwan had become minuscule. Wang and Chang (2005) show that this trend was pronounced even among mainlanders, as evidenced by the data in Table 3. Among mainlanders, the percentage of those who self-identified as Chinese fell by almost half, from 57 per cent to 29 per cent between just 1994 and 2000, and then fell by nearly half again to 16 per cent by 2004. Even before the sharp polarization of the 2000s, therefore, the Deep Blues were a decided minority of an already small minority of the overall population, and the decline in Chinese self-identification among mainlanders continued apace during the first Chen administration despite his escalating appeals to Taiwanese nationalism. Chiang Kai-shek's Chinese Cultural Renaissance Movement was surely dead and buried. Yet, just as surely, the trend toward Taiwanese self-identification resulted from far more than Chen Shui-bian's *bentuhua* campaign; it represented a long-term secular trend that both preceded and succeeded the DPP administration.

Table 3: Ethnic Identification of Mainlanders (in per cent)

	Taiwanese	Both	Chinese
1994	5	38	57
1996	8	49	43
2000	11	60	29
2004	15	69	16

Source: Wang and Chang 2005: 49.

Evaluating the degree of polarization versus moderation concerning the "Taiwan-centric paradigm" is a little more problematic and ambiguous,

though. By 2000, the distribution of opinion on national identity was no longer normal, as Taiwanese self-identifiers greatly outnumbered Chinese ones. Over the next ten years, furthermore, the number of Taiwanese identifiers grew substantially, in 2008 surpassing those who thought of themselves as both Taiwanese and Chinese, and in 2010 attaining a marked lead over dual identifiers of 55 per cent to 42 per cent. These data, therefore, support two quite different interpretations.

On the one hand, there clearly was a massive shift toward Taiwanese self-identification, which is consistent with the argument that Chen Shui-bian was able to create a new nation rooted in Taiwanese history and culture (Ho and Liu 2003; Lynch 2004; Shen and Wu 2008). This was expressed during the 2004 campaign, not just by the supporters of Chen; rather, it could also be seen in the actions and words of the Pan-Blue leadership. For example, during their final, massive campaign rallies the KMT presidential and vice-presidential candidates Lien Chan and James Soong kissed the ground in Taibei and Taizhong, respectively, to demonstrate their devotion and loyalty to Taiwan, and Lien Chan was quoted as saying, "There is one state on each side of the Taiwan Strait," thereby echoing what was seen as a provocative argument by Chen Shui-bian (de Lisle 2004; Rawnsley 2004).

On the other hand, the presence of a strong minority who profess a dual identity is inconsistent with the image of the new totally Taiwanese nation that was supposedly created by what Wei-chin Lee (2005) termed Chen's "Cultural Reconstruction Movement". This can also be seen in how the public views the best options for Taiwan's international status:

- Taiwanese independence,
- the current status quo of an uncertain sovereignty, or
- unification with the PRC.

Table 4 demonstrates that over the last two decades, marked majorities of approximately 60 per cent have supported the diplomatic status quo, ambiguous and even ridiculous as it may be. This distribution is not fully normal, though, because the two extremes are not balanced. In particular, between 1994 and 2010 the relative support for independence and unification flip-flopped from 14 per cent vs. 25 per cent to 24 per cent vs. 12 per cent. Still, since the Taiwan-centric paradigm advocates independence, popular opinion does indeed appear to be dominated by the moderate middle.

Table 4: Preference for Taiwan's International Status (in per cent)

	Independence	Status Quo	Unification
1994	14	61	25
1996	17	56	27
2000	18	59	23
2004	24	61	15
2008	26	63	11
2010	24	64	12

Source: Election Study Center 1994, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2008, 2010.

This strong and continuing support for the status quo in Taiwan's international status is especially striking because, as Rigger (2004) has noted, growing frustration across the political spectrum with Taiwan's lack of international status and treatment by the PRC is very easy to discern. The dangers of the two extremes are so pronounced that the current situation, though not particularly satisfactory, is accepted as tolerable. In short, the "moderate middle" in Taiwan almost certainly does not have any hesitation in affirming "Taiwan, Yes!" – a slogan put forth by Chen Shui-bian during his 2004 presidential campaign (de Lisle 2004). However, its Taiwan-centric allegiances fall considerably short of what the Deep Greens consider to be necessary for a Taiwanese nation. For example, Shelley Rigger, in her interviews with young people (2011) found that even the phrase "Love Taiwan" was viewed with suspicion because it had become so politicized. Thus, Chen's Cultural Reconstruction Movement may have overreached, just as Chiang Kai-shek's Chinese Cultural Renaissance Movement did.

A Growing Challenge to Catch-all Parties?

The central empirical finding of this study is that elite polarization over national identity exists in Taiwan, despite the absence of such polarization among the general citizenry. Similarly, Liao and Yu (2008) concluded that elite polarization does not seem to be reflected in the electorate at large, in contrast to Downsian theory, which leads us to expect the congruence of voter and elite positions. More broadly, Brady (2008) suggests that the connection between citizens and party elites is im-

portant when studying polarization. For Brady (2008: 37), a polarized citizenry will ultimately lead to a polarized elite, but this does not work vice versa, which is exactly the situation that currently exists in Taiwan.

So what are we able to infer from the above discussion pertaining to the development and nature of Taiwan's political parties? Downsian theory is based upon two eminently reasonable assumptions: First, politicians want to win office both for the sake of their own careers and to implement their desired policies. Second, they therefore respond to the distribution of public opinion in a polity by tailoring their appeals to maximize their electoral support. From this perspective, the disconnect between public opinion and strong party polarization in Taiwan creates a theoretical puzzle. Norman Schofield and Gary Miller (2007) present an answer to this seeming paradox with their argument that political leaders must both motivate the support of activists who are much more ideological than the general public and balance groups with significantly different political values. Moreover, one would presume that many politicians have fairly strong policy preferences, as well.

The Schofield-Miller model provides a welcome stride beyond conventional Downsian analysis. However, it still leaves one question unanswered: Why don't voters punish a party that moves too far away from their preferences, or support a new party if all of the existing ones forsake the median voter? This is especially puzzling if we assume the prevalence both of catch-all parties that are not very distinct from one another ideologically and of moderate voters (consumers) who flit between them at the polls.

Growing party polarization, therefore, raises the question of whether the era of catch-all parties is fading. This could be occurring for several reasons: First, new cultural issues could have created staunch constituencies, such as economic cleavages did during the era of mass parties. Second, the "stickiness" of political institutions (March and Olsen 1989) might account for the "freezing" of party systems over the last 80 years (Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Mair 1997), making the advent of new parties difficult and giving the existing major parties significant leeway to move away from the median voter. Third, most voters could develop strong enough attachments to a party or strong enough aversions to its rivals to make the risk of defection fairly small.

Taiwan provides a good case study of this challenge to catch-all parties. Taiwan's two-party system appears quite stable despite some periodic, though short-lived, successes of third parties; and each of the major

parties has now attracted the support of 40 per cent or more of the electorate (Clark and Tan 2012). Thus, party leaders have the leeway and perhaps the incentive to transfer their parties back from catch-all to mass parties. This process can be seen in Taiwan, although it is by no means complete.

There also is good reason to view cultural issues as important. The national identity question is certainly a cultural issue that has been quite important, if not central, in recent Taiwanese politics; and it is rooted in a major ethnic division (Clark and Tan 2012; Hsieh 2009a; Makeham and Hsiau 2005; Wachman 1994). Party leaders certainly have the potential, therefore, to follow the "mass" strategy of appealing to the strong opinions of fairly well-defined cultural groups. The Taiwanese situation has been somewhat more ambiguous, especially during the Chen Shui-bian era where both the DPP and KMT acted as mass parties by focusing their appeals about national identity upon their base constituencies much of the time. Yet, as discussed in the second section, these initiatives (even those by the supposed independence zealot, Chen) appeared strategic in the sense that appeals to Chinese and Taiwanese nationalism were turned on and off depending upon the political situation (Clark and Tan 2012; Wu 2011). This pattern continued after the KMT's Ma Ying-jeou (Ma Yingjiu) was elected president in 2008. Initially, there was a fierce partisan struggle over Ma's rapprochement with China, but national identity and cross-Strait relations played only a minor role in the local elections in December 2010. Moreover, recent elections have served both parties well, as the KMT won decisively in 2008, and the DPP rebounded sharply in 2009 and 2010 (Copper 2011; Gold 2010; Rigger 2010; Tien and Tung 2011). This roller coaster continued over the first half of 2012. In the January elections, President Ma won re-election and the KMT retained its parliamentary majorities, both by solid, but reduced, margins. However, Ma almost immediately lost significant popularity, apparently mainly due to controversy over his relations with China (Copper 2012; Lowther 2012). Consequently, the nature of Taiwan's parties still remains to be determined.

A broader theoretical explanation for this may lie in the conclusion drawn by Katz and Mair (1995) that many party systems are increasingly becoming cartels. While both mass and catch-all parties serve as links between civil society and the state, this role is substantially different in a cartel party system. In the cartel party stage, parties act as brokers between the state and civil society but at the same time ensure their own

survival by enhancing their "capacity to resist challenges from newly mobilized alternatives" (Katz and Mair 1995: 16). In the case of Taiwan, this is evidenced by how the dominant parties "stack the odds" against challenger parties in both their election systems and legislative operations (Clark and Tan 2012). This implies that the stickiness of political institutions and the freezing of party alternatives prevent newly mobilized parties from making effective challenges to the existing major parties.

A cartel party system, though, does not mean that electoral competition necessarily ends. If the major parties retain catch-all characteristics, they may use "competing claims to efficient management" to appeal to the voter (Katz and Mair 1995: 19), which is consistent with Downsian logic. Yet, while a cartel party system as envisaged by Katz and Mair (1995) involves collusion between the dominant parties to ensure their own organizational survival and self-interest, this does not necessarily mandate a particular form of party organization. In other words, the existence of a cartel party system does not exclude the possibility that political parties are organized like the mass parties of the past, where parties primarily appealed to fairly "exclusive constituencies" (Katz and Mair 1995: 19). A primary implication of the parallel existence of mass party organization within a cartel party system is that party competition is undertaken through mobilization of activists by emphasizing "polarized" positions. Voters, on the other hand, are left without alternatives because members of the cartel party system effectively choke off the ability of challenger parties to survive. Following this logic, then, mass parties in a cartel system have more ability to move away from median voter preferences without costly repercussions because voters have no other realistic voting choices and are, therefore, unable to punish them.

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