

The State of Democratic Governance in Taiwan: Partisan-Driven  
Perceptions in Political Turbulence\*

Min-hua Huang  
Department of Political Science, National Taiwan University  
mhhuang5103@ntu.edu.tw

Chang-Yen Tsai  
National Taiwan Normal University  
cyt@ntnu.edu.tw

Yu-tzung Chang  
Department of Political Science, National Taiwan University  
yutzung@ntu.edu.tw

\*Paper prepared for delivery at the Asian Barometer Conference on “The State of Democratic Governance in Asia” organized by Program for East Asia Democratic Studies, Institute for Advanced Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences, NTU, and co-sponsored by the Asia Foundation and Institute of Political Science, Academia Sinica, June 20-21, 2008, Taipei, Taiwan.

\*\* This is only a draft. Please do not quote without authors’ written permission \*\*

## I. Introduction and Summary

Over the last eight years since the first power alternation, Taiwan has gone through a longest period of economic recession and political turbulence. While the pan-blue's decisive victory in the two major national elections in early 2008 has resolved the political stalemate, which was largely resulted from electoral overcompetition and partisan confrontation, the nature of the problem remains the same and still pose a very tough test for the new President Ma Ying-jeou and his government. (Huang and Tsai, 2008) In a nutshell, the focal points of Taiwan politics are economic development, cross-strait relations, political reform, and quality of governance, but the primacy of partisan interest and electoral victory oftentimes twists a major policy issue into a partisan fight and leave no room for rational discussion. Not only political elites were divided nearly along the partisan line, but also the public were split in all of the issue areas according to different partisan stance. Under the divided government in the semi-presidential system, political gridlock always follows intense political struggle and leads to little substantial progress in any of the major policy arenas. (Hwang, 2003)

While the economy started to bounce back since reaching the bottom in 2001, the pace is so slow that it is hardly felt in the general public. The cross-strait relations were also going nowhere, especially after Chen's announcement of his hardliner policy such as "one country on each side"<sup>1</sup> (2002) and "ceasing to function the National Unification Council and ceasing to apply the guideline for national unification"<sup>2</sup> (2006). The agenda of political reform, especially constitutional reform regarding institutional innovation of the governmental and electoral system, stalk most of the time in the political gridlock between the pan-blue legislature and the pan-green presidency. The only achievement is to carry out the electoral reform which changes the SNTV into a SMP system, despite abounding criticisms and dissidence. (Sheng, 2006) During Present Chen's second term, the most striking feature in the society of Taiwan is that the partisan thinking has permeated through the people in all issue areas, particularly with respect to the perception of quality of governance. Divergent perception not just happens to the political sensitive questions such as those asking for evaluation of politicians or political parties, but it also occurs to political non-sensitive questions, for instance, those related to institutional trust and perceived quality of governance in various aspects.(Chu, Huang, Tsai, 2008) Generally speaking, people tend to be

---

<sup>1</sup> Chen publicly announced this new policy on the occasion that he telecommunicated to greet the 29th annual meeting of World Federation of Taiwanese Associations in Tokyo. The most contentious phrase is "Taiwan is an independent nation-state...In short, Taiwan and China standing on opposite side of the Strait, there is one country on each side. This should be clear." The relevant information can be found at the United Daily News website by <http://issue.udn.com/FOCUSNEWS/TWOSIDES/index.htm>. (captured at January 20, 2008)

<sup>2</sup> The Bush administration was once regarded by Taiwan as the most friendly U.S. government to Taiwan in 2001 and 2002. But as Chen put forth a series of policies such as "one country on each side", "referendums, constitution-making, name-rectification", "amending the Taiwanese passport to include "Taiwan"", "the cease to function National Unification Council (NUC) and the cease to apply the guideline set by NUC", the Bush administration has obviously changed their policy toward Chen and viewed many of his policies very disturbing to the cross-strait relationship. See Swaine (2004) and Dumbaugh (2007).

very critical in their assessment of quality of governance, and anyone who wants to interpret the statistics properly in this survey should pay due attention to how people's perception on quality of governance was affected by partisanship.

## **II. Historical Background of Taiwan's Democratization**

For a long time since the end of World War II, Taiwan was under the KMT's authoritarian rule for forty-seven years (1949~1996). While there was very little progress in democratization until the late Chiang Ching-kuo period in mid-1980s, Taiwan has a very efficient government in terms of policy making and economic development. In fact, both Chiang Kai-shek and Chiang Ching-kuo often promoted the virtues of frugality, integrity, and moral righteousness, and they vowed to root up corruption in public. The image of the KMT government in the authoritarian period is very positive regarding the quality of governance and economic performance, although it is no doubt politically quite repressive.

In 1980s, Chiang Ching-kuo started to liberalize the political system. He allowed the formation of the opposition party, Democratic Progressive Party, ended the martial law, and opened up the cross-strait relationship by permitting family visit to mainland China. He also loosened up political control gradually and many political and social organizations were developing thrivingly. After Chiang Ching-kuo died in 1988 and Lee Teng-hui succeeded to power, he speeded up the democratization process by a series of political reform including abolishing the Temporary Provisions Effective During the Period of Communist Rebellion, recovering the democratic function of the government and the society, and opening up the popular election for important political position such as Taipei and Kaohsiung Mayor, Taiwan Provincial Governor, and the President. Lee Teng-hui is also the first popular-elected president in 1996, and that moment becomes the milestone of Taiwan's democratization transition.

During the period of Lee Teng-hui as president, KMT was managed to maintain economic prosperity consistently but many political, social, and economic problems started to emerge and develop. One of the serious problems is corruption, especially the collusion among elected representatives, government officials, and business enterprise. Many corruption scandals were broken out and very few of those suspects were sentenced guilty and had the punishment. Therefore, the public image of the KMT government in this period went sour quickly and became very notorious. In addition, Lee Teng-hui gradually indigenized KMT party and discarded the ideas and policies inherited from the traditional KMT platform. To a large extent people do think the role Lee Teng-hui's played transcend any particular partisan stance and are willing to give him the credit for his effort to achieve Taiwan's democratic transition.

Chen Shui-ban's victory in the 2000 presidential election was unexpected to most of

people in advance and brought fundamental changes to Taiwan's democracy. First of all, his ascendancy to president terminated the KMT's rule over fifty years. Second, Taiwan never experienced a peaceful transition of power under a democratic system before Chen was elected. Third, Chen won the election with 39.3% popular votes, only 2.5% ahead of James Soong's votes. In a semi-presidential system where the president only has less than 40% popular votes and does not have the support of the legislative majority, Chen faced a very tough political environment to work with. In fact, the problem of the minority government to certain extent contributes to the poor performance of his government for the past eight years. But the failure of his presidency cannot be explained solely by the disadvantageous political environment. The critical problem is his lack of political leadership and his unwillingness to share the power with pan-blue legislature

In the beginning of Chen Shui-ban's first term, his popularity at once reached to 80%. He also vowed to adopt the so-called "Middle Line Policy", which is a moderate political platform to bring different partisan interests together. Based on this principle, he appointed Tang Fei, a pre-KMT minister of defense and the chief of the general staff, as the premier to form a coalition government. However, the coalition government only lasted for 5 months and then dissolved, and soon the Fourth Nuclear Power Plant dispute happened and destroyed political trust between the Chen administration and pan-blue politicians. Since then, political confrontation between the Chen administration and the pan-blue legislature never stopped. As the 2004 presidential election was approaching, political antagonism between pan-blue and pan-green gradually built up and reached the culminating point on the eve of the election day when the 319 incident just happened and no one knew how it would affect the presidential election.

Chen again won the presidential election by a very slim margin of 0.2% (50.1% vs. 49.9%), but the electoral process was full of controversy, especially the impact of 319 incident. Pan-blue candidates refused to concede the election and called for the crowd to organize large-scale demonstration protesting the Chen administration rigging the election. Despite the fact that both pan-blue and pan-green agreed to resolve the dispute through the legal system, neither of them satisfied with the judicial system, and particularly the pan-blue camp challenged the police investigation and question the independence of the public prosecutor's office. The pan-blue controlled legislature even established "the 319 Shooting Truth Investigation Special Committee" to seek for their own investigation. In the end pan-blue candidates lost the case and there were still intense mutual distrust and partisan antagonism between both sides throughout Chen's second term as president.

All in all, Taiwan's democratization is at the crossroad from democratic transition to democratic consolidation. For the past eight years since the first power alternation, Taiwan's democracy was facing many unprecedented problems and the economic recession related to the Nasdaq/IT Bubble and the 911 terrorist attack even complicated the nature of the problem. It is

not just simply the issue of minority government, economic downturn, inferior government performance, poor political leadership, or any disagreement on public policy or cross-strait relationship, but it is a giant conglomerate problem in which all of the above issues are entangled together.

### **III. Socio-Political Profile**

#### Economy and National Welfare

Despite the stagnant number of nominal GDP per capita since 2000, Taiwan's economic performance is comparatively better to most of the surveyed countries in the second-wave ABS. In terms of GDP per capita based purchasing power parity, as can be seen in Table 1, Taiwan ranks the fourth and only slightly falls behind Hong Kong, Japan, and Singapore. The figure is also higher than Korea by the margin of 7367USD, which strongly contradicts the general perception that Korea has doubled its nominal GDP per capita within 8 years since 1998 after the financial crisis and overtakes Taiwan in 2006. The two pieces of information are both correct and careful reading should be noted that Taiwan has a better capacity in controlling commodity price and the inflation rate is much lower, and therefore Taiwan has a higher purchasing power parity estimate of GDP per capita while the measure of nominal GDP per capita is about the same level as Korea.

[Table 1 about here]

The estimate of Gini coefficient measures the degree of income inequality in a society. From 1988 to 2000, Taiwan's gini coefficient slowly climbed from 0.303 to 0.326. The statistics jumped after 2000 and always lingers around 0.34, and specifically the Gini coefficient in 2006 is 0.35. In view of the regional perspective, the level of income inequality in Taiwan is lower than average and approximately comparable to the level of Korea, Mongolia, and Indonesia, which is fairly acceptable. However, the feeling in the Taiwan society that income inequality is worsening may be related to the following facts after power alternation in 2000 such as unemployment rate increasing from 2.99% (2000) to above 4%(2001), a great amount of government expenditure being spent on short-term income subsidy of creating lower-wage jobs, the number of person supported in each household increasing from 1.91 (1999) to 3.43 (2005), and the negative growth of real disposal income. Adding all the information together, income inequality in fact should be greater than the moderate Gini coefficient indicates. Therefore, the national statistics of Gini coefficient in Taiwan might not be able to reflect the perception of the general public.

#### Number of Effective Parties

Taiwan used to have a one-party (KMT) dominated system in the authoritarian era. In 1986, the major opposition party, Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) was founded and able to win large numbers of seats in various national and local elections. Since then, the political landscape of Taiwan politics is composed of the two major parties plus some small parties such as New Party (founded in 1993), Taiwan Independent Party (founded in 1996), People First Party (founded in 2000), and Taiwan Solidarity Union (founded in 2001). Some of these small parties at certain moments were quite powerful and capable in winning substantial numbers of seats. According to the last national election (2004 legislative election) before the time of the fieldwork, the effective number of parties is 3.835. But this figure is probably smaller than 2 in the latest legislative election (2008 legislative election), in which KMT won the election overwhelmingly by 71.7% vs. 23.9% in terms of the seat percentage. Such a dramatic change is related to the effects of the latest electoral reform which adopts the SMP system and also reduces the total seats in half.

### Freedom House Scores

Political environment in Taiwan is very liberal and open to any opinions and criticisms. Although dissatisfaction and complaint about political and civil rights still exist, Taiwan has been rated as free in these two categories for eleven consecutive years since 1996. In 2006, political and civil rights in Taiwan are rated the top score simultaneously for the first time. A careful review of the subscores can find that Taiwan is doing very good in all of the subcategories by expert judgment. Comparing to the freest countries such as Sweden or Switzerland, the only subcategory Taiwan falls behind a little bit is *Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights*, which scores 13 as opposed to the perfect score 16 for the two countries. Other than that, Taiwan has a very close score in electoral process (11 vs. 12), political pluralism and participation (15 vs. 16), functioning of government (10 vs. 12), freedom of expression and belief (16 vs. 16), association and organization rights (11 vs. 12), and rule of law (15 vs. 16).

### World Bank Governance Indicator (WBGI)

Another set of governance indicators developed by the World Bank (WBGI) also corroborates the Freedom House's judgment. Among the four WBGI comparable indicators, Taiwan's scores are all obviously higher than the eleven-country averages. Specifically, the rule of law indicator scores 0.77 and ranks 74.8% percentile, the government effective indicator scores 1.11 and ranks 83.9% percentile, the voice and accountability indicator scores 0.79 and ranks 72.1% percentile, and the control of corruption indicator scores 0.53 and ranks 70.4% percentile. All of the above statistics show a very positive evaluation of quality of democratic governance in Taiwan. In fact, Taiwan has an even better record of WBGI indicators before 2000 except the voice and accountability indicators. Most of the WBGI indicators are near or above

80% percentile before the first power alteration.

#### **IV. The Asian Barometer Survey (ABS) in Taiwan**

The fieldwork of the ABS Taiwan Survey was conducted between January 14 and February 15, 2006. It covers the area of Taiwan Province, including two metropolises -- Taipei City and Kaoshiung City. Data was gathered through face-to-face interviews of voting-age adults (20 years old and above), who had registered in the household system in Taiwan Province. The baseline information and addresses were drawn from the household information compiled by the Ministry of Interior and excluded residents in military organizations, hospitals, medical care centers, schools, vocational training centers, dormitories, detention centers, and prisons. The sampling method applied to the Survey involves two sets of samples; one is the main sample that was selected according to cluster analysis and PPS. The other is an extension sample that compensated for the unsuccessful cases in the main sample to fulfill the required number of cases that can fully represent the population. In order to secure the reliability and validity of the responses, one fifth of interviewees were selected for a re-test. Systematic sampling was applied in the sampling procedure for the re-test to draw out the interviewees from each SSU.<sup>3</sup> The procedure of pre-test was also carried out to evaluate the face validity of the questionnaire design before the fieldwork.

So far most the indicators related to quality of governance are developed through expert judgment or applying mixed methods, but none of them is probabilistic and representative national samples. One disadvantage of using such indicators for inference is that people might not have the same perception as those experts or non-random respondents do, and thus a huge gap could exist between the so-called objective and subjective measurement of quality of governance. Nevertheless, it is the voters of the democratic system who make the final judgment of whether the government delivers good quality of governance. Therefore, we need to apply survey data to evaluate the quality of governance through respondents' subjective perceptions. In this regard, the ABS Taiwan survey offer a valuable source of data since it contains several batteries of items tapping into different dimensions of quality of governance, which are developed from the framework of Diamond and Morlino (2005).

##### **A. Rule of Law**

###### Law-abiding Government

---

<sup>3</sup> It was required that the re-test should be conducted according to the respondent sequence arranged by the systematic sampling. However, considering that interviewees might refuse to be interviewed again, the interviewers were allowed to take the next respondent on the list to complete the required number of re-tests.

One of the key features in a democracy is whether the government officials abide by the law to exercise their power. This is a concept of limited government which protects people's rights from any illegal infringement by those who have the power. In ABS second-wave survey, there are two questions measuring the dimension of law-abiding government:

- 1) Our current courts always punish the guilty even if they are high-ranking officials. (II-Q104)
- 2) How often do national government officials abide by the law? (II-Q113)

As can be seen in Table 2, 6.1% and 37.6% of the respondents strongly agree or somewhat agree the statements that our current courts always punish the guilty even if they are high-ranking officials. Those who somewhat disagree or strongly disagree is 42.0% and 9.5%, and the number in sum is slightly higher than those who strongly agree or somewhat agree. However, it is striking that Taiwan is ranked very well by Freedom House and World Bank but domestically early half of the respondents do not think the government abiding by the law.

[Table 2 about here]

Another measure further confirms this perception. When respondents are asked "how often do national government officials abide by the law" directly, only 2.3% and 34.3% answer "always" and "most of the time". On the other hand, those who answer "sometimes" or "rarely" is 32.6% and 24.1%, which means more than half of the people do give a negative evaluation in terms of law-abiding government to the Chen administration.

During President Chen's second term, his government was criticized by not being able to punish the high-ranking officials who violate the law. As a matter of fact, not just the government officials, Chen's close friends, subordinates, family members, his wife and even himself were all involved with some corruption scandals such as "Illegal Political Donation from Chen Yu-hao" (involved with Present Chen and the First Lady Wu, March 2004), "Vultures Fund Scandal" (involved with Council for Economic Planning and Development Committee Chief Li Chin-cheng, January 2005), "the Electronic Toll Collection (ETC) Scandal" (involved with the Minister of Transportation and Communication Lin Ling-san, April 2005), "the Foreign Worker Riot and the KRTC Scandal"(involved with Presidential Office deputy secretary-general Chen Che-nan, August 2005), etc.

### Controlling Corruption

Control of corruption is highly related to the concept of law-abiding government. As mentioned above, the Chen administration started to run into a series of political scandals after his reelection in 2004, and most of them are related to corruption rather than simply abusing of

power or violating the law. Therefore, it would be appealing to see how people evaluate whether the government did well in controlling corruption. In ABS second-wave survey, there are two questions measuring this dimension:

- 1) How widespread do you think corruption and bribe-taking are in your local/municipal government? (I-Q114 ) (II-Q117)
- 2) How widespread do you think corruption and bribe-taking are in the national government? (I-Q115 ) (II-Q118)

As can be seen in Table 3, more than half of the people in both of 2001 and 2006 surveys think most officials or everyone is corrupt, and the conclusion applies to both local and national governments. In fact, very little change in the distribution of two questions for the both surveys, and only less than 30% of the respondents believe that corruption is not critical. This result indicates that people do perceive corruption is a general problem for all levels of governments.

[Table 3 about here]

Nevertheless, when the respondents are asked whether the government is actually working on solving the corruption problem, they tend to give an encouraging answer that they do think political corruption to certain level is under control or at least the government has put a lot of efforts to crack down corruption and root out bribes. For the both waves of ABS surveys, there is one particular but different question tapping into this attitude.

- 3) Corruption in politics and government is under control (I-Q108, the first wave)
- 4) In your opinion, is the government working to crackdown corruption and root out bribes? (II Q120, the second wave)

As can be seen in Table 4, in the first wave of the survey, there are 9.3% and 34.9% of the respondents who think corruption in politics and government is under control and much better than the past regime under the martial law. 24.2% think it is much same, and only 21% think it is somewhat or much worse. Also, a similar positive evaluation can be found in the second-wave survey. 7.9% and 55.1% agree that the government is doing its best or at least doing something to crack down corruption and root out bribes, only 21.9% and 8.9% think the government is not do much or nothing.

[Table 4 about here]

In sum, people perceive corruption a serious problem in reality but they are willing to give credit to the government efforts, but not the result. When comparing to the measurement of

WBGi control of corruption indicator, it is the statistics of “attempt” rather than “result” in the ABS survey that match WBGi rating. It might reflect a thought that people do believe corruption is an ingrained problem that might happen anyway regardless who is in power, and thus they are willing to encourage any effort to work on that problem even though the result might not be successful.

## **B. Competition**

One possible drawback of democracy is that the election does not offer real choices between different parties or candidates. In other words, people are not satisfactory with the quality of all the parties or candidates and believe little difference will be made regardless who wins the election. This attitude is an important cause of political apathy and might lead to alienation from participating in politics. In the second wave of ABS survey, there is a specific question measuring this attitude:

- 1) How often do you think our elections offer the voters a real choice between different parties/candidates? (II-Q114)

As can be seen in Table 5a, most of the respondents are positive that the election can offer real choices. 9.9% think “always”, 41.3% think “most of the time”, 29.6% think “sometimes” and all of the three answers in sum are counted 80.3%. Only 12.9% tend to give a negative answer. If we cross-tabulate with partisanship, there is no significant difference between those who feel closer to a particular party and those who don’t. A slight difference is that the Don’t Know/Not Available answer has 6% more for those who don’t have partisanship and it is about the same amount of reduction for the answers of “most of the time”. The above finding indicates people are quite optimistic about the recruiting mechanism of elections under democracy.

[Table 5a about here]

Procedural justice is another defining feature of a democratic system. Among many possible indicators that can evaluate procedural justice, equal access to the mass media during the election period is an important sign showing whether different parties or candidates have equal ground at a minimal sense for running the campaign. In the second-wave of ABS survey, we apply the following question to measure equal access to the mass media:

- 2) Political parties or candidates in our country have equal access to the mass media during the election period. (II-Q105)

The result is presented in Table 5b. Generally, people agree the statement that political

parties or candidates have equal access to the mass media during the election period. Specifically 4.9% and 56.6% of the respondents strongly agree or somewhat agree. Those who don't agree are only 29.9% in total. In addition, if we cross-tabulate with the voting choice in the 2004 president election, the result does not change and a similar conclusion can be also applied to the winning or losing side.

[Table 5b about here]

Chen's reelection for his second term of presidency is full of controversy. Not only he won by a very slim margin, there were many incidents during the campaign process that provoked mutual distrust with respect to the concern of free and fairness of the election. For many pan-blue supporters, they believed that President Chen took advantage of his administrative power to play many election tricks during the campaign process and thus made the 2004 presidential election on the verge of unfair election. They suspected not only the central election committee involved, but also the whole government institutions, such as the National Security Bureau, the courts, and the military, all cooperate with Chen to execute his election tricks and the happening of the 319 incident has explained everything.

Does this perception really exist in people's mind? We can delve into this question by cross-tabulate how respondentse rate the freeness and fairness of the presidential election and their voting choice as Table 5c shows.

[Table 5c about here]

3) On the whole, how would you rate the freeness and fairness of the last national election?  
(II-Q43)

As can be seen, if we do not distinguish the respondent's voting choice, there are slightly more people who give positive evaluation toward the freeness and fairness of the election. 16.0% think the election completely free, 30.7% think the election free and fair but with minor problems, and the sum of both figures is a little bit higher than the sum of those who think the election having major problems (15.7%) or not free and fair (25.6%). However, polarized perceptions ostensibly exist in different groups of people based on partisanship. Just as we have mentioned before, 73.5% of those who support for President Chen rate the election free and fair, but only 21.8% of the people who support pan-blue presidential candidate think so. This result suggests that people's perception about the freeness and fairness of the election is highly dependent on their partisanship. Therefore, perception about other aspects of quality of governance may be also highly influenced by the partisanship as well.

## C. Participation

Political participation usually reflects how important the citizen view politics and are willing to bear the opportunity cost to cast a ballot. Here we ask the respondent whether their participated in three kinds of activities in the last national elections: voting, attending a campaign meeting or rally, and persuading others to vote for a certain candidate and party.

### Electoral Participation

- 1) In talking to people about elections, we often find that a lot of people were not able to vote because they were away from home, they were sick or they just didn't have time. How about you? Did you vote in the election [the most recent national election, parliamentary or presidential] held in [year]? (IQ-27 and II-Q38)
- 2) Thinking about the national election in [year], did you attend a campaign meeting or rally? (I-Q29 and II-Q 40)
- 3) Thinking about the national election in [year], did you try to persuade others to vote for a certain candidate or party? (I-Q30 and II Q-41)

As can be seen in Table 6a, if we compare the level of participation in the first and second-wave surveys, the figures are slightly higher in 2006 than 2001 with a very small margin of 6.6% and 5.2% for the percentage of casting a ballot and persuading others. In terms of attending a campaign or rally, the difference is too small (0.6%) and statistically it is not significant. So there is not much difference in terms of the level of political participation. If we cross-tabulate the three measures of participation with two basic demographic variables education and gender (see Table 6b), again we find very little difference for males and females in terms of level of participation, but education indeed affects participation quite obviously. Generally, the higher the education, the lower the voting rate. With regard to attending a campaign or rally, people with a high school education are the most active group among all, and people with an education in primary school or no education are apparently less active to persuade others to vote for a certain candidate or party.

[Table 6a about here]

[Table 6b about here]

In democracy, the interest in politics indicates a sense of citizen duty to care about public affairs. Nevertheless, in traditional Chinese culture or under KMT authoritarian regime, interest in politics for ordinary people was not encouraged and even regarded a negative character such as being a radical political activist. Therefore, many people in Taiwan still tend to avoid being labeled as having interest in politics. In the two waves of ABS surveys, political interest is

measure with two questions:

### Political Interest

- 1) How interested would you say you are in politics? (I-Q56 and II-Q49 )
- 2) How often do you follow news about politics and government? (I-Q57 and II-Q50)

As can be seen in Table 7a, only 5.4% and 23.7% in 2001 and 4.6% and 27.7% in 2006 would say they are very interested or somewhat interested in politics, but 70.3% in 2001 and 66.6% in 2006 express they are not very interested or even no interested at all. No significant difference exists for the results of the surveys in 2001 and 2006.

[Table 7a about here]

However, when they are asked how often they follow news about politics and government, 44.8% and 12.9% in 2001 follow news about politics and government everyday or several times a week, and we can derive similar figures in 2006 in which 40.3% follows news everyday and 13.5% several times a week. Again, there is little difference for both waves of surveys. The above findings indicate that most of people do care about politics but they hesitate or are unwilling to admit their interest in politics. Cultural factors play heavily for the underestimate of interest of politics measurement, specifically with the question directly asking how interested they are in politics.

### Political Efficacy

Political efficacy is about the degree people recognize they have enough capacity to understand politics and engage in political affairs. As mentioned before, the traditional culture and authoritarian history in the past all discourage people participating in politics. In the two waves of ABS surveys, there are two questions with different directions of wording to tap into this concept as follow:

- (1) I think I have the ability to participate in politics. (I-Q126 and II-Q127)
- (2) Sometimes politics and government seems so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what is going on. (I-Q127 and II-Q128)

As can be seen in Table 7b, when respondents are asked whether they think they have the ability to participate in politics, only 30.0% in 2001 and 35.0% in 2006 said they strongly agree or somewhat agree the statement, and 61.6% in 2001 and 60.1% in 2006 somewhat disagree or strongly disagree. This result shows a consistent low level of political efficacy in both waves of surveys. When we reversed the wording and asked whether politics and government seems so

complicated that they can't really understand what is going on, we have similar measurement results indicating low political efficacy. 71.5% in 2001 and 73.4% in 2006 strongly agree or somewhat agree this statement that they can't really understand politics, and only 23.6% in 2001 and 23.8% in 2006 strongly disagree or somewhat disagree. Again, the finding is consistent and robust.

[Table 7b about here]

If we cross-tabulate with gender and education, we can find both factors are associated with the measure of political efficacy. As can be seen in Table 7c, 39.0% and 28.2% of the males show positive responses with regard to the two questions of political efficacy, and both figures are higher than females by 8.0% and 9.0% respectively. However, if we counted the percentage of those who give positive response to both questions, the margin reduces to 4.3% (15.8% vs. 11.5%) and that the figure is apparently very low for a democracy such as Taiwan. With regard to education, two conclusions can be drawn immediately from the cross-table. First, the higher the education, the stronger the political efficacy. Second, given on the same level of education, the question applying positive wording of political efficacy has the higher measurement than the one using negative wording. However, it may not be necessary caused by the different wording style, and perhaps this could be related to people's different perception about the two questions. We need further research on cognitive testing to solve the problem.

[Table 7c about here]

Accountability is the central concept of democracy in that there should be some mechanisms to ensure the government's responsibility from the people as well as from the institutional check. Vertical accountability measures whether people think they are capable of holding the government responsible. Horizontal accountability, on the other hand, measures whether people think institutional check can hold the government responsible.

#### **D. Vertical Accountability**

- 1) People have the power to change a government they don't like. (II-Q103)
- 2) Between elections, the people have no way of holding the government responsible for its actions. (II-Q106)
- 3) How often do government officials withhold important information from the public view? (II-Q112)

As can be seen in Table 8, there are three questions in the second-wave of ABS surveys measuring vertical accountability. 59.4% strongly agree or somewhat agree that they have the

power to change a government they don't like, but only 33.4% strongly disagree or somewhat disagree that people have no way of holding the government responsible for its actions between elections. Here we found great difference in measurement when difference wording styles are applied. As to the question of how often government officials withhold important information from the public view, 48.6% answer "always" or "most of the time", and only 42.0% answer "sometime" or "rarely". If we adjust the coding scheme and unify into a positive measure of vertical accountability, the three questions obviously have different approval rate as 59.4%, 33.4%, and 42.0%, which may reflect the level of difficulty for each survey items. But the latter two measurements are actually a little bit lower, and it may be related to people's experiences under Chen's reign for the last eight years.

[Table 8 about here]

### **E. Horizontal Accountability**

- 1) When the government breaks the laws, there is nothing the legal system can do. (II-Q107)
- 2) To what extent is the legislature capable of keeping the government in check? (II-Q115)

As can be seen in Table 9, when horizontal accountability is concerned, only 37.9% strongly disagree or somewhat disagree that there is nothing the legal system can do when the government breaks the law, but 54.9% strongly agree or somewhat agree and that shows a low level of accountability people perceive. However, when respondents are asked to what extent the legislature is capable of keeping the government in check, 51.1% think the legislature are very capable or capable, and only 40.4% think the legislature not capable or not at all capable. Here we find the two measurements are seemingly contradictory. Nevertheless, the legislature for the past eight years under the divided government was the main arena for political confrontation between pan-blue and pan-green. It is very likely that respondents perceive the question about institutional check of the legislative in a degrading sense instead of being a neutral term. Besides, the two questions are associated with different institutional system. The former is related to institutional check from the judicial system and the latter from the legislature. The two different institutions in fact perform very differently.

[Table 9 about here]

The last essential concept we haven't discussed is provision of political goods, which is very important for people in democracy to evaluate the quality of governance. In the following there are three dimensional measures for this concept: freedom, equality, and responsiveness.

## **F. Freedom**

- 1) People are free to speak what they think without fear. (I-Q105 and II Q110 )
- 2) People can join any organization they like without fear. (I-Q113 and II Q111)

As can be seen in Table 10, respondents are very positive toward the degree of freedom in the Taiwan Society. In the 2001 survey, 77.0% and 74.5% think the current regime is much better or somewhat better than the past regime under the martial law in terms of speaking without fear and joining organization without fear. In the 2006 survey, 73.0% and 76.9% strongly agree or somewhat agree that people are free to speak without fear or can join any organization without fear. While there is slightly wording difference for the two questions in 2001 and 2006, the number of negative evaluation is always under one fourth. It shows people are quite satisfactory with the freedom in Taiwan.

[Table 10 about here]

## **G. Equality**

- 1) Everyone is treated equally by the government. (II-Q108)

As to equality, when people are asked whether everyone is treated equally by the government (see Table 11a), 54.1% disagree with this statement and only 42.6% agree. If we further explore whether this attitude is related to subjective social status, we find those who have “quite high” subjective social status are a little bit more negative toward the statement. But among those who identified themselves in the middle or lower social status, no significant difference can be concluded. This finding to a large extent maybe related to Chen’s redistributive policy to favor senior farmers by increasing the monthly payment of the welfare pension, but he claimed the money should come from cutting the retirement benefit of civil and military servants, who usually identify themselves as upper middle class.

[Table 11a about here]

- 2) People have basic necessities like food, clothes, and shelter. (II-Q109)

Another question of equality is asking respondents whether they agree people have basic necessities food, clothes, and shelter. As can be seen in Table 11b, 63.6% agree and 34.4% disagree, by which the approval rate is not very high in terms of economic affluence in Taiwan. When we also explore its relationship with subjective social status, we find a similar distribution of the answers for those who agree and disagree. In other words, no correlation can be concluded.

[Table 11b about here]

## **H. Responsiveness**

- 1) How well do you think the government responds to what people want? (II-Q116)
- 2) How likely is it that the government will solve the most important problem you identified within the next five years? (II-Q102a)

Lastly, two questions of responsiveness measure the overall evaluation of quality of governance. As can be seen in Table 12, when respondents are asked how well they think the government responds to what people want, only 35.8% said the government very responsive or largely responsive, but 59.2% give the negative answers of not very responsive or not responsive at all. Obviously people are not very positive toward the overall quality of governance. If we cross-tabulate this question with the one asking people how likely the government will solve the most important problem within the next five years, we can a clear relationship that people tend to give a positive evaluation toward the problem-solving ability if they think the government responsible, and for those who are negative in government responsiveness, they tend to be more pessimistic about the government's problem-solving ability within the next five years

[Table 12 about here]

## **I. Partisan-Laden Perception of Quality of Governance**

As we have mentioned, intense partisan confrontation prevented the Chen administration from accomplishing many policy goals and therefore people tend to have a critical evaluation toward the quality of governance. In order to have an overall assessment on this issue, we conduct a cross-tabulation analysis for each of the items we examined above and see whether people's perception on quality of governance is strongly partisan-laden.

As can be seen in Table 13, we can easily found that the phenomenon of partisan-laden perception does exist in many of the questions related to quality of governance. Generally, pan-green always have a higher approval rate for those questions wording in a positive way of quality assessment. For example, 38.1% thinks the government did well to respond to what people want, but that figure surges to 52.5% for the pan-green voters and plummet to 24.4% for the pan-blue voters. Also in terms of the assessment about law-abiding government, pan-green voters have an around or above 50% approval rate in both questions, but the numbers are down to 30% for the pan-blue voters. If we adopt the criterion of 15% difference between pan-blue's and pan-green's approval rate to define partisan laden perception, such a phenomenon happens in eight of the eleven dimensions of quality assessment we discussed above. Therefore, the overall approval rate can be very deceiving since pan-blue and pan-green voters' opinion might be very polarized and no one can tell this phenomenon. Given this reason, we caution anyone who wants to use the second-wave Taiwan data, especially regarding the battery of quality of governance,

that they should be extremely careful about interpreting the statistics without taking partisanship into consideration.

[Table 13 about here]

## **J. A Summary of Quality Assessment**

A summary of different dimensions of quality assessment with regard to democratic governance is illustrated in Chart 1 by the mean scores. The detail of scaling for each variable can be found in appendix A. All the scales are standardized with the range of -1 to 1. As can be seen, people's subjective perception in Taiwan shows only the dimension of freedom has a better quality assessment. But in terms of responsiveness, political efficacy, electoral participation, and law-abiding government, apparently people give a quite negative evaluation. For the rest of other dimensions such as equality, vertical and horizontal accountability, political interest, competition, and controlling corruption, the result of quality assessment is at best mediocre. The overall picture indicates the public were quite critical and pessimistic about the current state and prospect of governance capability for the Chen administration in 2006. Indeed, most of the public opinion survey at the moment came up with a similar conclusion.<sup>4</sup>

[Chart 1 about here]

## **K. Quality of Governance and Regime Legitimacy**

We apply regression analyses to explore whether regime legitimacy would be affected by the subjective assessment of quality of governance. Four dependent variables are applied to measure regime legitimacy: satisfaction with democracy, support for democracy, detachment from authoritarianism, and diffuse regime support. The detail of variable construction can be found in appendix A. Regarding explanatory variables, we include 11 variables that measure for the different dimensions of quality of governance discussed earlier. Besides, we add two more variables which measure people's subjective evaluation of the country's overall economic condition and personal economic condition.

Table 14 presents the results of the four regression analyses. The dependent variable of the first regression is satisfaction with democracy. Since all of the scales have been standardized, we can compare the magnitude of each factor's influence by the beta-coefficients. As can be seen, among the thirteenth explanatory variables selected into the model, only three variables in the

---

<sup>4</sup> According to TVBS poll results, Chen's approval rate (satisfaction) has been down to 10% in the December 2005, one month before the ABS survey began. The report can be download from [http://www.gclub.com.tw/FILE\\_DB/DL\\_DB/yijung/200512/yijung-20051216190351.pdf](http://www.gclub.com.tw/FILE_DB/DL_DB/yijung/200512/yijung-20051216190351.pdf).

category of political participation do not have explanatory power. For the rest variables, the findings show that the better the quality assessment, the higher the satisfaction with democracy. With regard to the magnitude of influence, there is not much difference except slightly lower beta for freedom and personal economic condition.

Our second dependent variable is support for democracy. There are several changes of the results. First, while electoral participation is not significant, political interest and political efficacy do have explanatory power on the level of support for democracy, and political interest is even the strongest predictor. Second, equality does not explain the level of support for democracy. This indicates that the short-term dissatisfaction with a given government does not reduce the faith in democracy as a favorable political system. Third, there is great variation of relative magnitude for the beta coefficient of competition from the strongest predictor explaining satisfaction with democracy to the weakest predictor for support for democracy. A plausible explanation is that people might not be satisfied with the procedural justice in a democracy, but that condition only has a quite limited impact on the support for democracy as opposed to other factors.

The next regression analysis is about the explanation for detachment from authoritarianism. The result is strikingly different from the previous two models. The most obvious difference is that the more critical the subjective assessment, the stronger the detachment from authoritarianism. For example, we can find a negative beta coefficient on law-abiding government, competition, equality and responsiveness. Also, various predictors of quality assessment lose the explanatory power such as controlling corruption, vertical accountability, horizontal accountability, freedom, the country's economic condition, suggesting that detachment from authoritarianism is a much tenacious value gradually shaped in the process of life experience during the authoritarianism period. Therefore, it is less likely being affected by the short-term quality assessment. At last we find political interest and political efficacy are the two consistent predictors that can explain both support for democracy and detachment from authoritarianism.

The final dependent variable is diffuse support regime support which measures the degree of faithfulness to the current regime. As can be seen, the whole results of beta coefficients are very similar to those in the model explaining satisfaction with democracy. Not just the level of significance is almost the same, and the distribution of beta coefficient's magnitude is very alike. This finding suggests that the measurement of satisfaction with democracy is highly correlated to that of diffuse regime support, at least in the Taiwanese context. Given our understanding of political situation at the time of survey, we find the meanings of the two questions are indeed quite possibly perceived as the same one: both could be thought as asking respondents how much they support the Chen Sui-ban government.

## V. Conclusion

Three major findings can be concluded from the survey. First, most of the indicators that reflect people's subjective assessment of quality of governance are obviously lower than those measured by international organization with the method of expert judgment. It shows that people in Taiwan are more critical toward how democracy works, but the reality might not look so bad in terms of the comparative perspective in East Asia. However, there is no denying that the gap does exist between the subjective and objective measures of quality of governance in Taiwan.

Second, there is another gap existed for the subjective quality assessment between the pan-blue and pan-green voters. For many survey results we presented in this paper, the overall statistics are quite misleading if we do not subdivided the sample into the pan-blue and pan-green parts. This finding pinpoints the general feeling in the Taiwan society for the past eight years that partisan interest is more important than any other social value, even the truth. Cognitive polarization is dangerous because people only see what they choose to see and hear what they choose to hear. However, the decisive victory of pan-blue and Ma Ying-jeou in the legislative and president elections in early 2008 seem to end this phenomenon. It is very interesting to see whether this would narrow the gap of the subjective quality assessment between the two political camps.

Third, our regression analyses on the four measures of regime legitimacy conclude that subjective quality assessment does have a strong influence on the level of support for democracy. Except electoral participation, most of the indicators of quality assessment are consistently significant predictors. From the difference of beta-variation patterns, we found satisfaction with democracy and diffuse regime support nearly have the same regression results, suggesting both measurements are closely related and might reflect the same meaning. On the other hand, support for democracy and detachment from authoritarianism have very different results and strong evidence shows the two concepts should be conflated.<sup>5</sup> We need more research to explore the meanings of the two measures and see why and how they tap into different concepts.

---

<sup>5</sup> Another paper in this conference also reaches the same conclusion. See Chu and Huang (2008).

## References

- Chu, Yun-han, Huang, Min-Hua, and Tsai, Chang-yen. 2008. Polarized Politics, Quality of Governance and Support for Democracy in Taiwan: A View from Asian Barometer. paper presented in the International Conference on “Democratic Consolidation in Taiwan”, Center on Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law (CDDRL), Stanford University, May 30-31, 2008, San Francisco, California, United States.
- Chu, Yun-han and Huang, Min-Hua. 2008. A Synthetic Analysis of Sources of Democratic Legitimacy. paper presented in the Asian Barometer Workshop on “Why Asians Support Democracy and Why Not”, Academia Sinica, June 22-23, 2008, Taipei, Taiwan.
- Diamond, Larry and Morlino, Leonardo. 2005. “Introduction” in Larry Diamond and Leonardo Morlino eds. *Assessing Quality of Democracy*. Baltimore : Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. x-xxxiv.
- Dumbaugh, Kerry. 2007. Underlying Strains in Taiwan-U.S. Political Relations, *CRS Report for Congress*, pp.7-13.
- Huang, Min-Hua, and Tsai, Chang-Yen Tsai. 2008. Polarized Politics and Evaluation of the Quality of Democracy in Taiwan: An Empirical Assessment. paper presented at the International Conference on “Polarized Politics in a Comparative Perspectives— America, South Korea, and Taiwan”, January 26, 2008, Taipei, Taiwan.
- Hwang, Shiow-Duan. 2003. The Predicament of Minority Government in the Legislative Yuan. *Taiwanese Political Science Review*, 7(2): 3-49.
- Swaine, Michael . 2004. Trouble in Taiwan, *Foreign Affairs* (Mar/Apr).
- Sheng, Emile C. J. 2006. A Discussion of the Potential Influences of a Mixed-Member Electoral System on Taiwanese Partisan. *Taiwan Democracy Quarterly*, 3(2): 63-86.

## Appendix A Variable Construction

1. A composite index of *law-abiding government*: create a nine-point scale (+4 thru -4) by adding up II-Q104 (coding +2 for “strongly agree,” +1 somewhat agree, -1 “somewhat disagree”, -2 “strongly disagree”, and 0 for DK/NA) and II-Q113 (coding +2 “always”, +1.”most of the time”, -1“sometimes”, -2 “rarely”, and 0 for DK/NA). Convert this scale to standardized -1.0~1.0 scale by dividing the raw score with 4.
2. A composite index of *controlling corruption*: create a 13-point scale (+6~-6) by adding up II-Q117 (coding +2 for “Hardly anyone is involved”, +1 “Not a lot of officials are corrupt, -1 “Most officials are corrupt” and -2 “Almost everyone is corrupt, and coding 0 for DK/NA), II-Q118 (same as before), and II-Q120 (coding +2 for “It is doing its best”, etc.). Convert this scale to standardized -1.0~1.0 scale by dividing the raw score with 6.
3. A composite index of *competition*: create a 13-point scale (+6~-6) by adding up II-Q105 (coding +2 for “Strongly agree”, etc.), II-Q114 (coding +2 for “Always”, etc.) and II-Q43 (coding +2 for “Complete free and fair”, etc.). Convert this scale to standardized -1.0~1.0 scale by dividing the raw score with 6.
4. A composite index of *electoral participation*: create a four-point scale (+3 to 0) by adding up II-Q38, II-Q40 and II-Q41 (coding 1 for “Yes and 0 for all other answers). Convert this scale to standardized -1.0~1.0 scale by subtracting it by 1.5 and then dividing the result with 1.5.
5. A composite index of *political interest*: create a nine-point scale (+4 thru -4) by adding up II-Q104 (coding +2 for “Very interested”, +1 “Somewhat interested”, -1 “not very interested”, -2 “not at all interested, and coding 0 for DK/NA) and II-Q50 (coding +2 for “Everyday”, +1 for “several times a week” or “twice or once a week”, -1 for “not even once a week,” -2 “practically never”, and 0 for DK/NA). Convert this scale to standardized -1.0~1.0 scale by dividing the raw score with 4.
6. Create a composite index of political efficacy by constructing a nine-point scale (+4 thru -4) by adding up II-Q127 (coding +2 for “strongly agree,” +1 somewhat agree, -1 “somewhat disagree”, -2 “strongly disagree”, and 0 for DK/NA) and II-Q128 (coding -2 for “strongly agree,” -1 somewhat agree, +1 “somewhat disagree”, +2 “strongly disagree”, and 0 for DK/NA). Convert this scale to standardized -1.0~1.0 scale by dividing the raw score with 4.
7. A composite index of *vertical accountability*: create a 13-point scale (+6~-6) by adding up II-Q 103 (coding +2 for “Strongly agree”, etc.) II-Q106 (coding -2 for “Strongly agree”, -1 for “somewhat agree”, +1 for “somewhat disagree”, +2 for “Strongly disagree”, and 0 for DK/NA) and II-Q112 (coding -2 for “Always”, -1 for “most of the time”, +1 for “sometimes”, +2 for “rarely”, and 0 for DK/NA). Convert this scale to standardized -1.0~1.0 scale by dividing the raw score with 6.
8. A composite index of *horizontal accountability*: create a nine-point scale (+4 thru -4) by adding up II-Q107 (coding -2 for “Strongly agree”, -1 for “somewhat agree”, +1 for

“somewhat disagree”, +2 for “Strongly disagree”, and 0 for DK/NA) and II-Q115 (coding +2 for “Very capable”, +1 for “Capable”, -1 for “Not capable”, -2 for “Not at all capable”, and 0 for DK/AS). Convert this scale to standardized -1.0~1.0 scale by dividing the raw score with 4.

9. A composite index of *freedom*: create a nine-point scale (+4 thru -4) by adding up II-Q110 (coding +2 for “Strongly agree,” etc.) and II-Q111 (coding +2 for “Strongly agree,” etc.). Convert this scale to standardized -1.0~1.0 scale by dividing the raw score with 4.
10. A composite index of *equality*: create a nine-point scale (+4 thru -4) by adding up II-Q108 (coding +2 for “Strongly agree,” etc.) and II-Q109 (coding +2 for “Strongly agree,” etc.). Convert this scale to standardized -1.0~1.0 scale by dividing the raw score with 4.
11. A composite index of *responsiveness*: create a nine-point scale (+4 thru -4) by adding up II-Q116 (coding +2 for “Very responsive”, etc.) and II-Q102a (coding +2 for “Very likely”, etc.). Convert this scale to standardized -1.0~1.0 scale by dividing the raw score with 4.
12. Satisfaction with democracy (II-Q93): Use a +2~-2 scale with DK/NA being recoded as 0.
13. Index of support for democracy: create a 5~0 scale based on the total number of positive answers to II-Q97 (any point equal or above 6 is counted as a positive answer), II-Q98 (any point equal or above 6 is counted as a positive answer), II-Q121, II-Q122 and II-Q123.
14. Index of objection to non-democratic alternative: create a 3~0 scale based on the total number of objection (disapproval) to II-Q124, II-Q125 and II-Q126.
15. Diffuse regime support: II-Q129, “Whatever its faults may be, our form of government is still the best for us”. [This indicator is especially important for non-democratic regime such as China, Vietnam and Cambodia and semi-democratic regimes such as Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia.]

Table 1 Key Statistics for ABS Survey Countries

	GDP per capita (PPP) in 2006	Gini Co-Efficient (latest available)	Freedom House Political Right Score in 2006	Freedom House Civil Liberty Score in 2006	WBGI Rule of Law indicator in 2006	WBGI Government Effectiveness indicator in 2006	WBGI Voice and Accountability Indicator in 2006	WBGI Control of corruption Indicator in 2006
Japan	31865.98	25	1	2	1.40	1.29	0.91	1.31
Hong Kong	35395.66	43	5	2	1.45	1.76	0.55	1.71
Korea	21876.57	32	1	2	0.72	1.05	0.71	0.31
China	8004.14	47	7	6	-0.40	-0.01	-1.66	-0.53
Mongolia	2321.79	33	2	2	-0.32	-0.46	0.10	-0.54
Philippines	5159.91	45	3	3	-0.48	-0.01	-0.18	-0.69
Taiwan	29243.75	35	1	1	0.77	1.11	0.79	0.53
Thailand	8876.73	42	3	3	0.03	0.29	-0.50	-0.26
Indonesia	4752.88	34	2	3	-0.82	-0.38	-0.25	-0.77
Singapore	29742.85	42	5	4	1.82	2.20	-0.07	2.30
Vietnam	3255.30	37	7	5	-0.43	-0.37	-1.45	-0.66
Cambodia	2533.71	42	3	3	-1.11	-1.01	-0.98	-1.19
Malaysia	11914.52	49	4	4	0.58	1.02	-0.34	0.38
Average of East Asia	14995.68	38.92	3.38	3.08	0.25	0.50	-0.18	0.15

Table 2. Evaluation of Law-Abiding Government: Taiwan

(Percent of total sample)

Items	2006 Survey				
Our current courts always punish the guilty even if they are high-ranking officials.	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	DK/NA
Percent	6.1	37.6	42.0	9.5	4.8
How often do national government officials abide by the law?	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Rarely	DK/NA
Percent	2.3	34.3	32.6	24.1	6.6
N=1587					

Table 3. Perception of Political Corruption  
at National and Local Levels: Taiwan in 2001 and 2006

(Percent of total sample)

Level of Government	2001 Survey		2006 Survey	
	National Government	Local Government	National Government	Local Government
Hardly anyone is involved	1.8	1.6	2.7	3.5
Not a lot of officials are involved	24.3	22.5	25.9	26.7
Most officials are corrupt	43.1	51.8	48.1	51.8
Almost everyone is corrupt	5.7	5.9	10.0	7.4
Don't know/no answer	25.2	18.2	13.3	10.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	N=1415		N=1587	

Table 4. Perception of Controlling Political Corruption

(Percent of total sample)

**2001 Survey**

Comparing the current regime with the past regime under the Martial Law

Corruption in politics and government is under control.	Much better than Before	Somewhat Better	Much the Same	Somewhat Worse	Much Worse	DK/NA
Percent	9.3	34.9	24.2	12.5	8.5	10.6

N=1415

**2006 Survey**

In your opinion, is the government

working to crackdown corruption and root out bribes?

It is doing its best	It is doing something	It is not doing much	It is doing nothing	DK/NA	
Percent	7.9	55.1	21.9	8.9	6.2

Percent

N=1587

Table 5a. Partisanship and Quality of Electoral Choice: Taiwan 2006 Survey

		Quality of Electoral Choice					
		How often do you think our elections offer the voters a real choice between different parties/candidates?					
Partisanship		Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Rarely	DK/NA	Total
Among the political parties listed here, which party if any do you feel closest to?	Feel close to a particular party	9.8	44.5	29.0	13.3	3.5	949 (59.8%)
	Do not feel close to any party	10.6	37.3	30.5	12.4	9.1	573 (36.1%)
	DK/NA	4.6	30.8	29.2	12.3	23.1	65 (4.1%)
	Total	157 (9.9%)	656 (41.3%)	469 (29.6%)	205 (12.9%)	100 (6.3%)	1587 (100%)

N=1587

Table 5b. Partisan Choice and Perception of Media Access: Taiwan 2006 Survey

Partisan Choice		Equal Access to Media					Total
		Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	DK/NA	
Vote choice in the 2004 presidential election	Voted for the winning camp	5.2	57.8	23.7	2.5	10.8	519 (32.7%)
	Voted for the losing camp	3.5	56.4	32.4	3.5	4.2	518 (32.6%)
	Did not vote	7.5	58.7	26.4	1.5	6.0	201 (12.7%)
	DK/NA	5.2	53.9	26.9	0.6	13.5	349 (22.0%)
	Total	78 (4.9%)	898 (56.6%)	438 (27.6%)	36 (2.3%)	137 (8.6%)	1587 (100%)

N=1587

Table 5c. Partisan Choice and Perception of Fairness: Taiwan 2006 Survey

		Free and Fair Election					
		On the whole, how would you rate the freeness and fairness of the last national election?					
Partisan Choice		Completely Free and Fair	Free and fair, but with minor problems	Free and fair, with major problems	Not free and fair	DK/NA	Total
Vote choice in the 2004 presidential election	Voted for the winning camp	35.5	38.0	11.2	5.6	9.8	519 (32.7%)
	Voted for the losing camp	4.2	17.6	19.5	52.7	6.0	518 (32.6%)
	Did not vote	7.5	34.3	19.9	21.9	16.4	201 (12.7%)
	DK/NA	9.5	37.5	14.3	17.5	21.2	349 (22.0%)
	Total	254 (16.0%)	488 (30.7%)	249 (15.7%)	407 (25.6%)	189 (11.9%)	1587 (100%)

N=1587

Table 6a. Level of Electoral Participation  
Taiwan in 2001 and 2006

(Percent of total sample)

	<b>2001 Survey</b>	<b>2006 Survey</b>
<b>Electoral Participation</b>		
Voted in the last parliamentary election	89.3	82.6
Attended rallies during the last election	12.8	13.4
Persuaded other to vote for a particular candidate or party in the last election	21.3	16.1
Did all of the above	6.7	6.2
	N=1415	N=1587

Table 6b. Demographic Background and Electoral Participation: Taiwan 2006 Survey

	Demographic Background							Total
	Gender		Education					
Electoral Participation	Male	Female	College or above	High School	Junior High School	Primary School	Little or No Education	
Voted in the last national election	81.8	83.4	73.9	86.0	81.9	92.8	90.7	82.6
Attended rallies during the last election	15.2	11.6	11.8	16.2	12.4	14.1	10.3	13.4
Persuaded other to vote for a particular candidate or party in the last election	17.4	14.8	18.4	20.3	13.0	10.1	7.2	16.1
Did all of the above	6.8	5.6	6.1	8.8	4.7	4.7	2.1	6.2
N=1587								100%

Table 7a. Level of Political Interest: Taiwan in 2001 and 2006

(Percent of total sample)

1. How interested would you say you are in politics?						
	Very interested	Somewhat interested	Not very interested	Not at all interested	DK/NA	
<b>2001 Survey (N=1415)</b>	5.4	23.7	49.0	21.3	0.6	
<b>2006 Survey (N=1587)</b>	4.6	27.7	39.6	27.0	1.1	
2. How often do you follow news about politics and government?						
	Everyday	Several times a week	Once or twice a week	Not even once a week	Practically never	DK/NA
<b>2001 Survey (N=1415)</b>	44.8	12.9	13.1	20.1	8.8	0.3
<b>2006 Survey (N=1587)</b>	40.3	13.5	17.9	7.9	19.5	0.9

Table 7b. Level of Political Efficacy: Taiwan in 2001 and 2006

(Percent of total sample)

1. I think I have the ability to participate in politics.					
	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	DK/NA
<b>2001 Survey (N=1415)</b>	1.98	28.06	52.23	9.40	8.34
<b>2006 Survey (N=1587)</b>	2.14	32.89	50.47	9.64	4.85
2. Sometimes politics and government seems so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what is going on.					
	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	DK/NA
<b>2001 Survey (N=1415)</b>	1.77	21.84	62.40	9.05	4.95
<b>2006 Survey (N=1587)</b>	1.89	21.87	63.01	10.40	2.84

Table 7c. Demographic Background and Political Efficacy: Taiwan 2006 Survey

Percent of People with Efficacy								
	Demographic Background							Total
	Gender		Education					
Political Efficacy	Male	Female	College or above	High School	Junior High School	Primary School	Little or No Education	
I think I have the ability to participate in politics.	39.02	31.01	47.30	37.16	26.94	20.29	11.34	35.03
Sometimes politics and government seems so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what is going on.	28.23	19.24	38.09	21.40	14.51	11.23	4.12	23.76
Both	15.81	11.52	24.52	11.94	5.70	4.35	0.0	13.67
N=1587								100%

Table 8. Evaluation of Vertical Accountability: Taiwan in 2006

(Percent of total sample)

<b>Items</b>					
1. People have the power to change a government they don't like	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	DK/NA
Percent	6.1	53.3	31.4	3.3	5.9
2. Between elections, the people have no way of holding the government responsible for its actions.	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	DK/NA
Percent	6.7	54.3	30.7	2.6	5.6
3. How often do government officials withhold important information from the public view?	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Rarely	DK/NA
Percent	13.7	34.9	35.2	6.9	9.3
N=1587					

Table 9. Evaluation of Horizontal Accountability: Taiwan in 2006

(Percent of total sample)					
Items					
1. When the government breaks the laws, there is nothing the legal system can do.	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	DK/NA
	Percent	6.6	48.3	35.2	2.7
2. To what extent is the legislature capable of keeping the government in check?	Very capable	Capable	Not capable	Not at all capable	DK/NA
	Percent	4.1	47.0	34.9	5.5
N=1587					

Table 10. Evaluation of Freedom under Current Regime

(Percent of total sample)

<b>2001 Survey</b>	Comparing the current regime with the past regime under the Martial Law					
	Much better than Before	Somewhat Better	Much the Same	Somewhat Worse	Much Worse	DK/NA
2. Everyone is free to say what they think.	40.4	36.6	9.6	5.5	2.4	5.5
You can join any organization you like.	32.9	41.6	10.4	2.2	0.7	12.2
N=1415						
<b>2006 Survey</b>	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	DK/NA	
1. People are free to speak what they think without fear.	8.9	64.1	22.1	1.8	3.0	
2. People can join any organization they like without fear.	9.6	67.2	17.7	1.1	4.3	
N=1587						

Table 11a. Social Status and Equal Treatment: Taiwan 2006 Survey

		Subjective Social Status						Total
		Very high (9~10)	Quite high (7~8)	Middle (5~6)	Quite low (3~4)	Very low (1~2)	DK/NA	
		People sometimes think of the social status of their families in terms of being high or low. Imagine a ladder with 10 steps. At step one stand the lowest status and step 10 stand the highest. Where would you place your family on the following scale?						
Equal Treatment		Very high (9~10)	Quite high (7~8)	Middle (5~6)	Quite low (3~4)	Very low (1~2)	DK/NA	Total
Everyone is treated equally by the government.	Agree	5.8	19.7	54.3	11.5	3.8	4.9	676 (42.6%)
	Disagree	2.9	24.9	53.8	9.9	4.3	4.1	858 (54.1%)
	DK/NA	9.4	3.8	49.1	7.5	3.8	26.4	53 (3.3%)
	Total	69 (4.3%)	349 (22.0%)	855 (53.9%)	167 (10.5%)	65 (4.1%)	82 (5.2%)	1587 (100%)

N=1587

Table 11b. Social Status and Basic Needs: Taiwan 2006 Survey

Basic Needs		Subjective Social Status						Total
		Very high (9~10)	Quite high (7~8)	Middle (5~6)	Quite low (3~4)	Very low (1~2)	DK/NA	
People have basic necessities like food, clothes, and shelter.	Agree	5.1	21.5	54.5	10.5	3.5	5.0	1010 (63.6%)
	Disagree	2.9	23.8	52.9	11.2	5.5	3.7	546 (34.4%)
	DK/NA	3.2	6.5	51.6	0.0	0.0	38.7	31 (2.0%)
Total		69 (4.3%)	349 (22.0%)	855 (53.9%)	167 (10.5%)	65 (4.1%)	82 (5.2%)	1587 (100%)

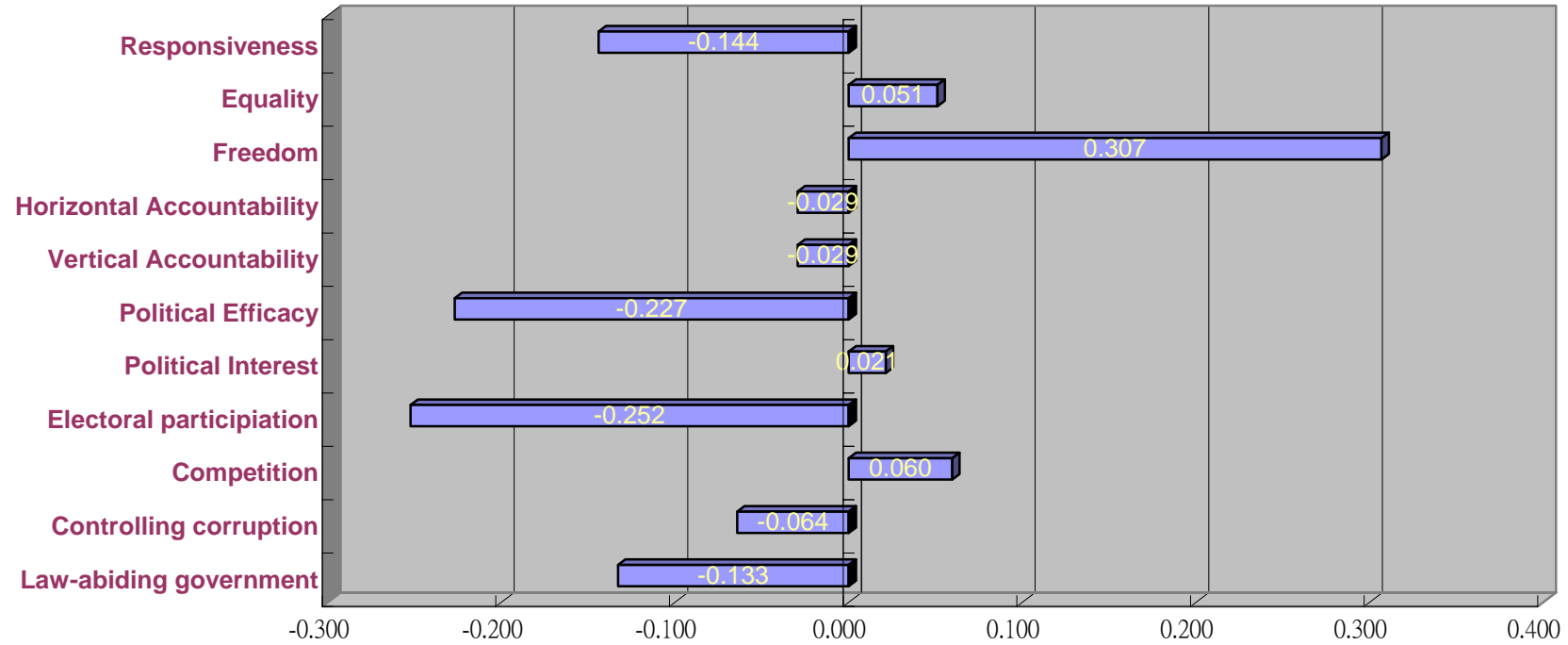
N=1587

Table 12. Evaluation of System Responsiveness: Taiwan in 2006

		Percent					
Items	How likely is it that the government will solve the most important problem you identified within the next five years?						
	Very likely	Likely	Not very likely	Not at all likely	DK/NA	Total	
How well do you think the government responds to what people want?	Very responsive	8.3	30.6	30.6	5.6	25.0	36 (2.3%)
	Largely responsive	2.4	37.9	33.7	5.6	20.3	531 (33.5%)
	Not very responsive	2.6	24.4	48.0	9.2	15.8	771 (48.6%)
	Not responsive at all	3.0	14.9	39.3	22.0	20.8	168 (10.6%)
	DK/NA	1.2	12.3	16.0	6.2	64.2	81 (5.1%)
	Total	42 (2.6%)	435 (27.4%)	639 (40.3%)	145 (9.1%)	326 (20.5%)	1587 (100%)

N=1587

# Chart I: Summary of Quality Assessment: Taiwan in 2006



Note: Political Participation is a behavioral measure and may not be comparable to other indicators.