

## Party Platform Change in Taiwan's 1990s Elections\*

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*The year 2001 marked the tenth anniversary of Taiwan's multiparty elections. The 1990 presidential election was the last contest under the old system. The National Assembly elections of 1991 and the forced retirement of the senior parliamentarians elected in mainland China marked the beginning of democratic elections that for the first time had the potential to bring about a change in ruling party. Ten years have passed, offering us a timely opportunity to take stock of the developments in Taiwan's party politics.*

*This paper endeavors to tackle the following five questions: (1) What theoretical framework can be employed to test the developments of Taiwan's political parties? (2) Do Taiwan's parties emphasize issues in electoral campaigns? (3) If they do, which issues dominate the political agenda? (4) Do Taiwan's parties differ in the issues that they stress or "own"? (5) How has party issue emphasis changed over the 1990s?*

*The paper analyzes party change via a content analysis of newspaper advertisements for one month prior to each major election between 1991 and 2000. The coding scheme employed is a revised version of that developed by the Manifesto Research Group (MRG).*

*The results show that, generally speaking, although candidates are heavily stressed in elections, Taiwan's parties also pay considerable attention to issues. The data is supportive of issue ownership theory, as parties*

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*stress favorable issues and ignore or treat perfunctorily unfavorable issues. There has been a degree of movement and convergence on certain issues such as Taiwan independence. On core issues, however, movement has only taken place within ideologically delimited areas, and leapfrogging on core dimensions has either not taken place or been a rare occurrence.*

**KEYWORDS:** party platform change; Taiwan; elections; issue saliency.

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The year 2001 marked the tenth anniversary of Taiwan's multiparty elections. The 1990 presidential election, in which National Assemblymen (frozen in office since the late 1940s) elected the president, was the last contest under the old system. The National Assembly elections of 1991 and the forced retirement of the senior parliamentarians elected in mainland China marked the beginning of democratic elections that for the first time had the potential to bring about a change in ruling party. Ten years have passed, offering us a timely opportunity to take stock of the developments in Taiwan's party politics.

Such a review reveals both signs of change and continuity. Although the former opposition party, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP, 民主進步黨), won the majority of county/city executive posts in 1997, captured the presidency in 2000, and became the largest single party in the Legislative Yuan in 2001, the party has struggled to exceed a bottleneck of approximately one-third of the electorate. John Fuh-sheng Hsieh (謝復生) has argued that if Taiwan's political forces are viewed in terms of pan-Kuomintang (KMT, or Nationalist Party, 國民黨) and pan-DPP groups, there has been considerable stability in the partisan attachment and electoral fortunes of Taiwan's political parties.<sup>1</sup>

The study of democratic political parties has tended to focus on developments in Western Europe and the United States. Only since the

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<sup>1</sup>John Fuh-sheng Hsieh, "Continuity and Change in Taiwan's Party Politics" (Paper presented at the Conference on Local Self-Government in Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, May 1997).

huge expansion in the number of democracies associated with the "third wave" of democratization has the electoral politics of developing countries received serious attention. A common feature of many "third wave" democracies is that their parties have failed to become institutionalized, particularly in terms of their lack of linkage to social cleavages on issues of party identification and clear ideological direction. Parties often are solely the vehicles for gaining office for ambitious politicians; this is illustrated by the fluidity of party mergers and breakups in Japan and South Korea over the 1990s.<sup>2</sup> Although Taiwan's political parties are routinely criticized in the Taiwanese press, research has found that Taiwan's parties are comparatively institutionalized.<sup>3</sup> The 1990s has seen a number of politicians split off from both the KMT and the DPP; prior to the People First Party's (PFP's, 親民黨) success in 2001, however, the splinter parties have fared poorly in elections.<sup>4</sup> The developments following the formation of the opposition alliance of the KMT, the PFP, and the New Party (NP, 新黨) in 2001 lend credence to the view that Taiwanese politics falls into two broad camps.

How can party change be measured? There are numerous methods available to the political scientist. First, the electoral fortunes of parties can be traced, or survey research can be employed, to see how the public's party identification or party images have shifted over a period of time.<sup>5</sup> Much of the work on party change falls into the trap of being impressionistic, however, failing to be backed up by reliable empirical evidence. This paper

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<sup>2</sup>For analysis of the malleability of South Korean political parties, see Ahn Chung-si and Jaung Hoon in Ian Marsh, Jean Blondel, and Takashi Inoguchi, eds., *Democracy, Governance, and Economic Performance: East and South East Asia* (New York: United Nations University, 1999), 142-51.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 337-39.

<sup>4</sup>The PFP's performance in the December 2001 elections contradicts this pattern. The PFP gained forty-six seats in the Legislative Yuan, which is over double the highest the number of seats the NP held at its peak in 1995-98.

<sup>5</sup>For examples of the shifts in the party image of the DPP, see Chen Ming-tong (陳明通), "The DPP's Party Image" (Paper presented at the 1998 Taiwanese Political Science Association Conference, Taipei, December 1998) or You Ying-long (游盈隆), *Minyi yu Taiwan zhengzhi bianqian* (Public opinion and Taiwan's political change) (Taipei: Yuedan, 1996), 65-105.

attempts to employ a theoretical framework originally developed for analyzing parties in Western Europe to view the development of Taiwanese political parties. The author focuses on the changes in party ideology over the last ten years, in particular the core issues that parties have stressed. Election campaigns in developing countries have a reputation for being issueless; developments in the countries most often compared with Taiwan politically—Japan and South Korea—appear to indicate that even after drastic reform to the electoral system, issues play only a secondary role.<sup>6</sup> In a previous work, this author made the claim that issues have mattered in Taiwan's elections in the 1990s;<sup>7</sup> this paper attempts to test this proposition empirically.

This paper endeavors to tackle the following five questions:

1. What theoretical framework can be employed to test the developments of Taiwan's political parties?
2. Do Taiwan's parties emphasize issues in electoral campaigns?
3. If they do, which issues dominate the political agenda?
4. Do Taiwan's parties differ in the issues that they stress or "own"<sup>8</sup>?
5. How has party issue emphasis changed over the 1990s?

### Theoretical Framework

Much of the work on party policy change follows a Downsian tradition, which assumes that parties or politicians are essentially vote-maximizing in their intentions, and will converge on the median voter.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>For the Japanese case, see Hideo Otake, ed., *How Japanese Electoral Reform Boomeranged: Continuity in Japanese Campaigning Style* (Tokyo: Japan Center for International Exchange, 1999).

<sup>7</sup>Dafydd Fell, "The Evolution and Role of Campaign Issues in Taiwan's 1990s Elections," *Asian Journal of Political Science* (Singapore) 9, no. 1 (June 2001): 81-94.

<sup>8</sup>A party "owns" an issue when it dominates the emphasis of the issue during the campaign.

<sup>9</sup>Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (New York: Harper, 1957), 117-18.

This framework assumes one-dimensional political competition, where politicians are essentially vote-seeking and free to make any policy moves in search of their ultimate goal of winning office. In contrast, the issue saliency theory developed by Ian Budge offers an alternative view of party competition.<sup>10</sup> Parties do not necessarily take confrontational stances on the same issues; instead, parties are more likely to "talk past each other" (i.e., are more likely to stress issues that favor their own side and ignore or deal cursorily with issues that would either damage their own position or favor opponent parties). Therefore, in electoral campaigns the key objective of party leaders is to set the political agenda on issues that favor their party or damage their opponents. Most electoral issues tend to be valence rather than confrontation positional issues; parties see the electorate as accepting one stance, and thus rather than arguing against other parties' positions, the tactic is to target other more favorable but related issues. For example, in Britain, the Conservative Party is associated with lower taxes and reducing social welfare provisions, while the Labour Party is seen as raising taxes and preserving the welfare state. However, rather than calling for hospital closures, the Conservatives will call for tax cuts and the Labour Party will emphasize the importance of a welfare system rather than calling for higher taxes. In Taiwan, the KMT has found focusing on stability, attacking Taiwan independence, and stressing the likelihood that Taiwan independence will bring war to be a recipe for electoral victory.

Saliency theory does allow for party policy movement: parties will adjust policies or the saliency of issues in the hope of improving electoral fortunes. This movement is, however, constrained by party ideology. Party ideology refers to the set of basic core values that are taken as accepted by a political party. There are a number of reasons why this ideology is so binding. First, if a party changes its policies too radically, its image is likely to become indistinguishable from those of other parties. For example, the Japanese Socialist Party's (JSP's) abandonment first of its Marxist ideology and then of its pacifist constitution were major factors in the

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<sup>10</sup>Ian Budge, "Parties, Programs, and Policies: A Comparative and Theoretical Perspective," *The American Review of Politics* 14 (Winter 1993): 695-716.

blurring of party distinctions and the rapid decline of the JSP in the mid-1990s.<sup>11</sup> Second, by changing too much, a party may possibly lose the support of its core supporters and activists. Third, although politicians aim to gain office, for many the goal of gaining office is to implement policy. Lastly, when a party deviates from its core values to an unacceptable degree, this shift is likely to lead to political realignment as politicians and their supporters switch allegiance according to their core values. One example of this is the formation of the Social Democratic Party in Britain in 1983 that was prompted by Labour's rapid shift to the Left. In Taiwan, the decision to form splinter parties—such as the NP and the Taiwan Independence Party (TAIP, 建國黨)—was justified in terms of their original parties' "betrayal" of their national identity ideals. Changing core party principles can prove a painstaking process, even when the positions in question are the equivalent of electoral suicide. Party ideology tends to play a unifying role not only for party elite and activists but also for the party's core supporters. Instances of the difficulty of fundamental ideological change are the decades required for the British Labour Party to abolish the clause in its party charter calling for large-scale nationalization and the numerous failed attempts by reformers in Taiwan's DPP to revise its Taiwan independence clause. In short, party ideology should constrain parties from leapfrogging each other on core political issues. Thus we would not expect the KMT to become more pro-independence than the DPP, nor would the NP likely call for a "Republic of Taiwan."

In addition, this author argues that certain non-core issues offer parties the greatest degree of flexibility. For example, in Taiwan there are issues that are "owned" by neither party, such as democracy, education expansion, or environmental protection; these can be termed "contested issues." Also another area not touched upon by saliency theory is the possibility of borrowing or stealing other party's issues. This has clearly occurred in the Taiwan case, as the KMT has claimed and received credit

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<sup>11</sup>For analysis of the demise of the JSP, see Shinkawa Toshiimitsu, "Where Have the Socialists Gone? The Trajectory and Tragedy of the Japanese Socialist Party" (Paper presented at the American Political Science Association Conference, Boston, August 2000).

for Taiwan's democratization despite the party's authoritarian traditions.<sup>12</sup> In addition, the KMT under Lee Teng-hui (李登輝) has clearly attempted to attract voters with appeals to a Taiwanese identity and has even espoused a diluted form of Taiwan independence. Under Lien Chan (連戰), however, the party has apparently returned to its Chinese identity roots; this is implied by Lien's call for a Chinese Federation in January 2001.<sup>13</sup>

### **Data and the Coding Scheme**

There are numerous potential data that could be employed to test the changes in party policy platforms. The ideal source would be to carry out content analysis on election manifestos. However, all three parties in Taiwan have only issued such documents since 1998.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, this source cannot be employed for the entire period in question. Candidate speeches are another possibility, yet obtaining the transcripts of all the speeches is also not possible. Liu Tsung-wei (劉從韋) has made the first attempt to apply the Manifesto Research Group (MRG) framework<sup>15</sup> to the Taiwan case; he has used the electoral gazettes that are issued to every voter at election time.<sup>16</sup> These gazettes outline the candidate's background, education, and main policy goals. The gazettes have not been used in this research for three reasons. First, they are products of individual candidates, while this analysis focuses on the party as a whole. Second, voters may very well not

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<sup>12</sup>This is revealed by survey research, which shows that respondents view the KMT as having played a greater role in promoting democracy than the DPP. See You, *Minyi yu Taiwan zhengzhi bianqian*, 89.

<sup>13</sup>See *Taipei Times*, January 5, 2001, 1.

<sup>14</sup>Liu Tsung-wei, "Ideology, Strategy, and Party Change in Taiwan from 1989 to 1998" (Paper presented at the 7th Taiwanese Political Science Association Conference, Kaohsiung, December 2000), 4.

<sup>15</sup>The MRG coding scheme was developed by a research group of the European Consortium for Political Research in 1979. This system for content analysis of election manifestos includes fifty-seven basic policy issues. This scheme has been applied to analyze national election manifestos in twenty-five democracies over the 1945-98 period. For details see Ian Budge, Hans Dieter Klingemann, Andrea Volkens, Judith Bara, and Eric Tanenbaum, *Mapping Policy Preferences* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 219-28.

<sup>16</sup>Liu, "Ideology, Strategy, and Party Change," 3-4.



pay much attention to the long list of candidate pledges, as in some cases there are up to thirty candidates in a single multiple member district election. Third, the gazettes for presidential elections do not have a section for policy goals; thus they cannot be used for these elections.

This research thus focuses instead on a content analysis of newspaper campaign advertisements. Such advertisements are relatively easy to obtain, represent the public face of a party rather than of only a single candidate, and receive considerable media attention in Taiwan.<sup>17</sup> In countries where no manifesto is issued, content analysis of election newspaper advertisements offers a valuable alternative. This author collected these advertisements for every national-level election from 1991 to 2000 for the thirty-one days prior to voting day and from the three newspapers with the highest readership: *Zhongguo shibao* (中國時報, China Times), *Lianhe bao* (聯合報, United Daily News), and *Ziyou shibao* (自由時報, Liberty Times).<sup>18</sup> Advertisements were collected for Taiwan's three major parties in the 1990s: the KMT, the DPP, and the NP. In addition, the independent campaigns of Lin Yang-kang (林洋港) and Hao Pei-tsun (郝柏村) in 1996 and James Soong (宋楚瑜) in 2000 also were analyzed.

A total of 1,665 advertisements were collected and a total of 27,834 "quasi sentences"<sup>19</sup> coded. All the texts in the advertisements were analyzed; the only exceptions were candidates' biographical details or details of campaign rally announcements. Three main kinds of advertisements were coded: official party advertisements, candidate advertisements, and

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<sup>17</sup>An example of this was the wide media coverage of Chen Shui-bian's (陳水扁) advertisement showing a picture of his son in army uniform, saying, "Next year he will do military service, his father is Chen Shui-bian." See *Lianhe bao* (United Daily News), March 6, 2000, 7.

<sup>18</sup>These three papers also reflect the main political currents, with *Zhongguo shibao* closer to the mainstream KMT, *Lianhe bao* sympathetic with the non-mainstream KMT and the NP, and *Ziyou shibao* closer to the DPP. This is apparent by the fact that throughout the 1990s the NP and James Soong in 2000 did not have a single advertisement in *Ziyou shibao*, and in the 1991 and 1992 elections *Lianhe bao* was free of DPP advertisements.

<sup>19</sup>A "quasi sentence" is the verbal expression of one political idea or issue. Since one sentence may include a number of arguments, sentences may be divided into quasi sentences that are divided by commas, semicolons, or colons. For details see Budge et al., *Mapping Policy Preferences*, 96-103.



advertisements bought by anonymous or support groups.<sup>20</sup> In this research the author has combined the scores of the three categories into a total proportion of issue emphasis for each party per election. In the first stage, the proportion of issue emphasis for each advertisement is calculated, and then this figure is used to find the proportion of issue emphasis for the party during the entire campaign. This data can offer information on the relative issue emphasis over a single campaign and position or issue emphasis change over the entire decade. In addition, the scores of groups of issues or issue domains can be combined to test in which broad areas parties have the greatest conflict and whether Taiwanese parties follow a Left/Right dimension of conflict.

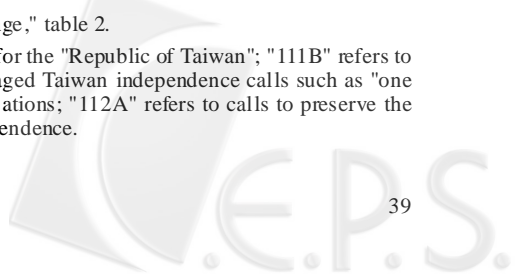
The coding scheme used in this research project follows the basic structure of the MRG coding scheme, with the additional categories adopted by Liu Tsung-wei.<sup>21</sup> A list of the categories and domains employed in this project is presented in table 1. The main difference is that this paper subdivides the category "political authority" (305) into "political stability" (305A), "government competence" (305B), and "other parties' lack of government competence" (305C). Also "Taiwan independence positive" (111) and "Taiwan independence negative" (112) have been subdivided to include "pure Taiwan independence" (111A), "diluted Taiwan independence" (111B), "anti-Taiwan independence and preserve the ROC" (112A), and "Chinese unification" (112B).<sup>22</sup> There are also five new categories to capture references to parties and candidates; these are designated as Domain 9. The advantage of using the MRG coding scheme is that this scheme has been used comprehensively in fifty-one countries over the postwar period and proved robust enough to be applicable to varying political systems. Therefore, this coding scheme also offers the potential of cross-national

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<sup>20</sup>Although these advertisements are anonymous or taken out in the name of obscure groups, in 95 percent of the cases the political inclination of the advertisement is obvious. Of course, determining whether the party center funded the advertisements is more difficult.

<sup>21</sup>See Liu, "Ideology, Strategy, and Party Change," table 2.

<sup>22</sup>"111A" refers to calls for a new constitution for the "Republic of Taiwan"; "111B" refers to mentions of opposing unification or repackaged Taiwan independence calls such as "one Taiwan, one China" or joining the United Nations; "112A" refers to calls to preserve the Republic of China and oppose Taiwan independence.



**Table 1**  
**Coding Scheme\***

<b>Domain 1: <i>External Relations</i></b>	
101: Foreign Special Relationships: Positive	109: Internationalism: Negative
102: Foreign Special Relationships: Negative	110: European Community: Negative
103: Anti-Imperialism	<b>111: <i>Taiwan Independence Positive</i></b>
104: Military: Positive	<b>111A: <i>Pure Taiwan Independence</i></b>
105: Military: Negative	<b>111B: <i>Diluted Taiwan Independence</i></b>
106: Peace	<b>112: <i>Taiwan Independence Negative</i></b>
107: Internationalism: Positive	<b>112A: <i>Taiwan Independence Negative</i></b>
108: European Community: Positive	<b>112B: <i>Chinese Unification</i></b>
<b>Domain 2: <i>Freedom and Democracy</i></b>	
<b>201: Freedom and Human Rights</b>	203: Constitutionalism: Positive
<b>202: Democracy</b>	204: Constitutionalism: Negative
<b>Domain 3: <i>Political System</i></b>	
301: Decentralization: Positive	<b>305: Political Authority</b>
302: Decentralization: Negative	<b>305A: <i>Political Stability</i></b>
303: Government and Administrative Efficiency	<b>305B: <i>Party Government Competence</i></b>
<b>304: Political Corruption</b>	<b>305C: <i>Other Parties' Lack of Government Competence</i></b>
<b>Domain 4: <i>Economy</i></b>	
401: Free Enterprise	410: Productivity
402: Incentives	<b>411: Technology and Infrastructure</b>
403: Market Regulation	412: Controlled Economy
404: Economic Planning	413: Nationalization
405: Corporatism	414: Economic Orthodoxy
406: Protectionism: Positive	415: Marxist Analysis
407: Protectionism: Negative	416: Anti-Growth Economy
408: Economic Goals	<b>420: Economic Growth and Prosperity</b>
409: Keynesian Demand Management	
<b>Domain 5: <i>Welfare and Quality of Life</i></b>	
501: Environmental Protection	505: Welfare State Limitation
502: Culture	506: Education Expansion
503: Social Justice	507: Education Limitation
<b>504: Welfare State Expansion</b>	
<b>Domain 6: <i>Fabric of Society</i></b>	
<b>601: National Way of Life: Positive</b>	605: Law and Order
<b>601T: <i>Taiwan Nationalism</i></b>	606: Social Harmony
602: National Way of Life: Negative	<b>607: Multiculturalism: Positive</b>
603: Traditional Morality: Positive	608: Multiculturalism: Negative
604: Traditional Morality: Negative	

Table 1 (Continued)

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<b>Domain 7: Social Groups</b>	
701: Labor Groups	704: Middle Class and Professional Groups
702: Labor Groups: Negative	705: Underprivileged and Minority Groups
703: Agriculture and Farmers	706: Noneconomic Demographic Groups

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<b>Domain 9: Candidate and Party</b>	
<u>901: Candidate: Positive</u>	<u>904: Party: Negative</u>
<u>902: Candidate: Negative</u>	<u>904V: Party Negative: Violence</u>
<b>903: Party: Positive</b>	

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\*Note that new categories introduced by Liu Tsung-wei are in italics, while categories this author has added are underlined. Only those additional categories that reached top ten status have been included in the table. In addition, the author has put categories featuring prominently in this paper in bold letters.

**Sources:** Ian Budge, Hans Dieter Klingemann, Andrea Volkens, Judith Bara, and Eric Tanenbaum, *Mapping Policy Preferences* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 219-28; Liu Tsung-wei, "Ideology, Strategy, and Party Change in Taiwan from 1989 to 1998" (Paper presented at the 7th Taiwanese Political Science Association Conference, Kaohsiung, December 2000), 32.

comparison. In contrast, previous studies analyzing the content of political advertising in Taiwan<sup>23</sup> have had two major drawbacks: first, they have tended to focus solely on single campaigns and, more importantly, each uses a completely different coding scheme.<sup>24</sup>

### Do the Parties Stress Issues?

Table 2 compares the DPP, KMT, and NP on three aspects: (1) the top ten issues according to their proportion of being mentioned over the decade, (2) the top ten issues according to their frequency of appearance on each election's top ten list, and (3) the top ten issue domains for the decade.

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<sup>23</sup>For an example of a single campaign project see Cheng Tzu-long (鄭自隆), "An Analysis of Party Newspaper Advertisements and Media Policy During the 1995 Legislative Yuan Election," *Xuanju yanjiu* (Journal of Electoral Studies) (Taipei) 3, no. 2 (November 1996): 1-32.

<sup>24</sup>For example, Chen Yiyan (陳義彥) and Chen Shimin (陳世敏), *Content Analysis of Newspaper Reports and Advertisements during the 1989 Elections* (Taipei: Chang Yung-Fa Foundation/Institute for National Policy Research, 1990).

**Table 2**  
**Top Issues and Top Domains for the Three Major Parties**

	Issue proportion KMT	Issue proportion DPP	Issue proportion NP	Top ten issues freq. KMT	Top ten issues freq. DPP	Top ten issues freq. NP	Domain Table KMT	Domain Table DPP	Domain Table NP
1	901 (15.31)	304 (15.62)	903 (15.4)	1 901 X9	304 X9	903 X7	1 Domain 9	Domain 9	Domain 9
2	902 (9.43)	901 (14.24)	000 (12.35)	2 000 X8	901 X9	000 X6	2 Domain 3	Domain 3	Domain 3
3	000 (9.14)	000 (11.42)	902 (10.67)	3 305A X7	000 X9	304 X6	3 Domain 1	Domain 1	Domain 1
4	305C (5.36)	111B (5.57)	901 (10.43)	4 305B X7	601T X8	901 X6	4 Domain 0	Domain 0	Domain 0
5	304 (5.35)	902 (5.54)	304 (9)	5 902 X7	902 X7	112A X4	5 Domain 4	Domain 6	Domain 6
6	112A (3.73)	601T (5.44)	112A (7.26)	6 112A X6	111B X5	902 X4	6 Domain 6	Domain 2	Domain 5
7	305B (3.61)	111A (4.93)	106 (3.69)	7 304 X6	903 X5	106 X2	7 Domain 5	Domain 5	Domain 7
8	305A (3.58)	903 (2.56)	305A (2.84)	8 305C X5	904 X5	501 X2	8 Domain 7	Domain 7	Domain 2
9	411 (2.77)	904 (2.48)	501 (1.74)	9 411 X4	201 X4	504 X2	9 Domain 2	Domain 4	Domain 4
10	202 (2.17)	504 (2.45)	904 (1.23)	10 420 X4	504 X4	605 X2			
11				11 605 X4	305B X4	904 X2			

000: Meaningless Sentences

106: Peace

111A: Pure Taiwan Independence

111B: Diluted Taiwan Independence

112A: Taiwan Independence Negative

201: Freedom &amp; Human Rights

202: Democracy

304: Political Corruption

305A: Political Stability

305B: Party Government Competence

305C: Other Parties' Lack of Government Competence

411: Technology &amp; Infrastructure

420: Economic Growth &amp; Prosperity

501: Environmental Protection

504: Welfare State Expansion

601T: Taiwan Nationalism

605: Law &amp; Order

901: Candidate Positive

902: Candidate Negative

903: Party Positive

904: Party Negative

The results in table 2 are encouraging for the first research question, in that the revised MRG coding scheme is applicable to the Taiwanese data. The coding scheme is applicable to almost 90 percent of "quasi sentences" for all three parties over the 1990s. The NP has the highest rate of references in the uncategorizable category (000) (12.35 percent), while the KMT has the lowest rate (9.14 percent). The domain figures seem to imply that there is some truth in the claim that Taiwanese elections are candidate-centered, as Domain 9 figures top for all three parties, and "candidate positive" (901) and "candidate negative" (902) are the top two issues for the KMT. However, for the NP and to a lesser extent the DPP, high "party positive" (903) scores affect their high Domain 9 scores. For all three parties, issue domain scores account for approximately 60 percent of "quasi sentences"; therefore, we can conclude that although candidates are important in Taiwanese elections, parties and politicians in Taiwan do stress issues in election campaigns.

### **Do the Parties Differ on Issues?**

The similarity in top five domains of the three parties seems to imply that Taiwan's parties are focusing on the same issues. However, a different picture is found upon closer examination of table 2. First, on Domain 3 ("political system"), the KMT particularly stresses the categories of "political stability" (305A), "government competence" (305B), and "other parties' lack of government competence" (305C). Even though the KMT does mention "political corruption" (304) in some elections, the party does so in a fundamentally different way. KMT references to political corruption focus on abuse of power by DPP power-holders. However, such attacks steer clear of certain sub-issues, particularly vote buying, "golden ox" (金牛, *jinniu*) candidates,<sup>25</sup> the term "*heijin*"<sup>26</sup> (黑金, or "black and

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<sup>25</sup>This refers to candidates of extreme wealth and business connections that allegedly became the mainstay of KMT nominations from the early 1990s.

<sup>26</sup>"*Heijin*" is the most commonly used term to cover the whole realm of "money politics."

gold"), and the KMT's vast party assets. The DPP and NP both focus their attention on all aspects of the "money politics" issue. Also, in the third most-mentioned domain, Domain 1 ("external relations"), the NP and KMT stress "Taiwan independence negative" (112A) while the DPP stresses "diluted Taiwan independence" (111B). Another clear difference is that the KMT places far more emphasis on the "economy" (Domain 4), while this issue tends to be ignored by the other two parties, coming last on both parties' domain tables.

One other significant piece of information is the number of top ten issues over the decade for each party. A party that has a more stable ideology and electoral formula is likely to focus on fewer issues. Of the three significant parties, the DPP has the lowest number of top ten issues (twenty-three), followed by the KMT (with twenty-five out of nine elections). The party that is the most changeable appears to be the NP (twenty-eight top ten issues over only seven elections). Clearly the party has struggled to find issues to attract new supporters.

Table 3 offers further evidence of issue ownership. This table shows which issues from the major parties' top ten lists overlap and which ones are exclusively stressed by one party. Other than "candidate positive" (901) and "candidate negative" (902), the only issue in the top ten of all three parties is "political corruption" (304). As mentioned above, however, the KMT's sub-issue content of "political corruption" (304) is quite distinct from both the DPP and the NP. In terms of issues, the DPP and the KMT appear to have little in common, sharing only the performance issue of "government competence" (305B). The KMT and the NP both share a concern for opposing "Taiwan independence" (112A), "political stability" (305A), and "law and order" (605). Conservative parties worldwide tend to stress "law and order" (605), being included in the MRG's list of Right-wing issues.<sup>27</sup> The British Conservative Party has, for instance, long cultivated an image of being tough on crime, while painting the Labour Party as being soft on criminals. In Taiwan, the KMT has placed considerable

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<sup>27</sup>Budge et al., *Mapping Policy Preferences*, 22.



**Table 3**  
**Party Issue Overlap on Total Advertisement Top Tens**  
**(Including the proportion and frequency top tens)**

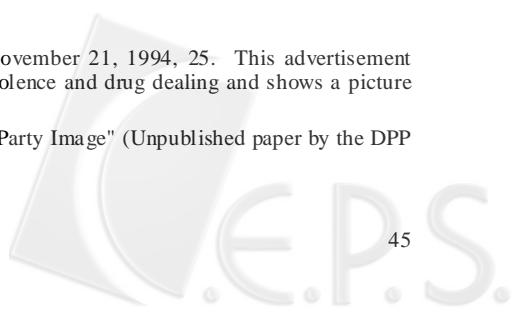
Only KMT	411, 420, 202
Only DPP	111A, 111B, 201, 601T
Only NP	106, 501
KMT & DPP	305B
KMT & NP	112A, 305A, 605
DPP & NP	504, 903, 904
All three parties	000, 304, 901, 902
000: Meaningless Sentences	411: Technology & Infrastructure
106: Peace	420: Economic Growth & Prosperity
111A: Pure Taiwan Independence	501: Environmental Protection
111B: Diluted Taiwan Independence	504: Welfare State Expansion
112A: Taiwan Independence Negative	601T: Taiwan Nationalism
201: Freedom & Human Rights	605: Law & Order
202: Democracy	901: Candidate Positive
304: Political Corruption	902: Candidate Negative
305A: Political Stability	903: Party Positive
305B: Party Government Competence	904: Party Negative

emphasis on a number of criminal cases involving DPP representatives, and also attacked the DPP for engaging in violence.<sup>28</sup> This seems to have had much success, as voters viewed the DPP as a violent party until the late 1990s.<sup>29</sup> Apart from the two party-centered issues, the DPP and the NP share "welfare state expansion" (504), although this was only a top ten issue for the NP twice, compared with five times for the DPP. The main area in which the two parties have common ground is attacking the KMT's record of political corruption (304).

Issue ownership is particularly apparent for the DPP and KMT. The DPP has dominated the national identity issues of "pure Taiwan independ-

<sup>28</sup>See KMT advertisement in *Lianhe bao*, November 21, 1994, 25. This advertisement attacks the DPP for its record of inciting violence and drug dealing and shows a picture of a DPP campaign truck in a riot.

<sup>29</sup>The 11th National Public Opinion Survey: Party Image" (Unpublished paper by the DPP Survey Research Department, 1999), 5.



ence" (111A), "diluted Taiwan independence" (111B), and "Taiwan nationalism" (601T), along with "freedom and human rights" (201). This is understandable as the motivation for many DPP members to participate in politics is a sense of Taiwanese nationalism and a desire to preserve the de facto independence of Taiwan, although for many the ultimate goal is a "Republic of Taiwan." The KMT, on the other hand, controls the two main economic categories of "technology and infrastructure" (411) and "economic growth and prosperity" (420); this reflects the KMT's confidence in handling the economy, particularly stressed since the successful withstanding of the 1997 Asian financial crisis.<sup>30</sup> In addition, the KMT has made more promises for large-scale technical or infrastructure projects.<sup>31</sup> A surprising result that would disappoint democracy activists is that in some elections the KMT appears to "own" "democracy" (202). This is an example of a party hijacking an issue, and was particularly prevalent for the KMT in 1991, 1995, and 1996.

Since the above findings are based on the combined totals for the entire decade, they may obscure differences during individual elections. Therefore, helpful is to compare the top ten issues for the KMT and DPP for the first and last elections: the 1991 National Assembly and 2000 presidential contests. The results are displayed in table 4. In 1991 the two parties were at their most polarized state in the decade, with the top ten tables only reflecting one issue in common: "candidate positive" (901). The DPP exhibited its strongest position in the decade on "pure Taiwan independence" (111A), while the KMT demonstrated its second strongest position on "Taiwan independence negative" (112A). In 2000 there was more overlap in top ten issues and borrowing of other parties' issues—for example, "economic growth and prosperity" (420) and "political stability" (305A) were in the DPP's top ten, while "Taiwan nationalism" (601T) was in the KMT's top ten. However, closer examination reveals considerable differences. First, although appearing in both top tens, "political corrup-

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<sup>30</sup>See KMT advertisement in *Lianhe bao*, November 24, 1998, 1.

<sup>31</sup>See KMT legislator Wang Jin-pyng's (王金平) advertisement in *Zhongguo shibao* (China Times), November 2, 1995, 47.



**Table 4**  
**Comparing Elections: The Earliest (1991) and Latest (2000)**

	1991 KMT top ten issues (34 ads)	2000 KMT top ten issues (209 ads)	1991 DPP top ten issues (91 ads)	2000 DPP top ten issues (94 ads)
1	901 (22.01)	902 (17.29)	111A (33.63)	304 (22.86)
2	305B (10.06)	000 (10.22)	202 (14.17)	000 (10.22)
3	000 (8.7)	305C (9.05)	901 (12.25)	901 (9.77)
4	112A (7.65)	901 (7.94)	000 (11.03)	504 (8.83)
5	204 (6.7)	305B (7.03)	201 (9.25)	601T (8.14)
6	420 (5.59)	304 (6.14)	904 (4.65)	111B (6.2)
7	305A (5.4)	112A (3.63)	111B (4.21)	420 (4.02)
8	202 (4.69)	601T (3.36)	304 (1.94)	902 (3.54)
9	904 (3.72)	305A (3.26)	903 (1.86)	305A (3.37)
10	305C (2.94)	420 (2.97)	601T (0.88)	202 (3.09)
000: Meaningless Sentences		305B: Party Government Competence		
111A: Pure Taiwan Independence		305C: Other Parties' Lack of Government Competence		
111B: Diluted Taiwan Independence		420: Economic Growth & Prosperity		
112A: Taiwan Independence Negative		504: Welfare State Expansion		
201: Freedom & Human Rights		601T: Taiwan Nationalism		
202: Democracy		901: Candidate Positive		
204: Constitutionalism Negative		902: Candidate Negative		
304: Political Corruption		903: Party Positive		
305A: Political Stability		904: Party Negative		

tion" (304) was the dominant issue for the DPP, with 22.86 percent of issue references; the KMT, however, used "political corruption" (304) for only 6.14 percent of issue mentions, concentrated early in the campaign to attack independent candidate James Soong for financial irregularities while he was a high-ranking KMT member.<sup>32</sup> In addition, the DPP placed far greater emphasis on such Taiwan identity issues as "Taiwan nationalism" (601T, 8.14 percent) and "diluted Taiwan independence" (111B, 6.2 percent), and again placed heavy stress on "welfare state expansion" (504, 8.83 percent). Likewise, the KMT stressed its core issues of "political authority" (305A, 3.26 percent; 305B, 7.03 percent; 305C, 9.05 percent), the "economy"

<sup>32</sup>One example is the KMT's attack on James Soong's role in the Xingpiao scandal (興票案). See *Ziyou shibao*, February 17, 2000, 5.



**Table 5**  
**Issues in KMT and DPP SMD and MMD Top Tens**

Issues in MMD and SMD for Both	901, 000, 304
Only SMD	902, 305C, 607, 112A
Only MMD	903, 204, 111A, 202, 503, 408
Only DPP SMD	607
Only DPP MMD	111A, 503, 903
Only KMT SMD	305C, 112A
KMT MMD	204, 408
Only DPP	601T, 111A, 111B, 201, 706, 503, 607, 903
Only KMT	204, 408, 411, 112A, 606, 305A, 501, 305C, 904V
Both Parties	901, 000, 304, 902, 504, 305B, 904, 202

000: Meaningless Sentences	501: Environmental Protection
111A: Pure Taiwan Independence	503: Social Justice
111B: Diluted Taiwan Independence	504: Welfare State Expansion
112A: Taiwan Independence Negative	601T: Taiwan Nationalism
201: Freedom & Human Rights	606: Social Harmony
202: Democracy	607: Multiculturalism Positive
204: Constitutionalism Negative	706: Noneconomic Demographic Groups
304: Political Corruption	901: Candidate Positive
305A: Political Stability	902: Candidate Negative
305B: Party Government Competence	903: Party Positive
305C: Other Parties' Lack of Government Competence	904: Party Negative
408: Economic Goals	904V: Party Negative: Violence
411: Technology & Infrastructure	

(Domain 4, 6.15 percent), and "Taiwan independence negative" (112A, 3.63 percent).

This research compares across different levels of elections and electoral systems. Therefore, the findings could possibly be different for single-member districts (SMD) that are used for executive post elections and multiple-member districts (MMD) that are used for Legislative Yuan and National Assembly contests. Table 5 thus compares the top ten issues for SMD and MMD candidate advertisements. Some differences are apparent. For example, DPP candidates appear more extreme on national identity issues such as "pure Taiwan independence" (111A), "diluted Taiwan independence" (111B), and "Taiwan nationalism" (601T) in MMD contests. This corresponds with the findings of previous studies that

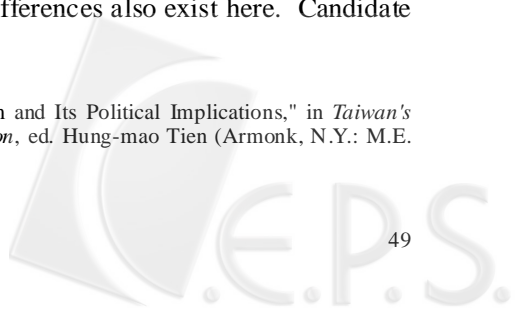
**Table 6**  
**Party Issue Overlap on Candidate and Official Advertisement Totals**

Only KMT	305C, 420, 411, 904V
Only DPP	111A, 111B, 201, 706, 601T
Only NP	101, 106, 502, 601, 705, 303, 607
KMT & DPP	605, 504, 202
KMT & NP	112A, 305A, 501
DPP & NP	503
All Three Parties	000, 304, 305B, 901, 902, 903, 904
000: Meaningless Sentences	501: Environmental Protection
101: Foreign Special Relationship Positive	502: Culture
106: Peace	503: Social Justice
111A: Pure Taiwan Independence	504: Welfare State Expansion
111B: Diluted Taiwan Independence	601: National Way of Life Positive
112A: Taiwan Independence Negative	601T: Taiwan Nationalism
201: Freedom & Human Rights	605: Law & Order
202: Democracy	607: Multiculturalism Positive
303: Government & Administrative Efficiency	705: Underprivileged and Minority Groups
304: Political Coorruption	706: Noneconomic Demographic Groups
305A: Political Stability	901: Candidate Positive
305B: Party Government Competence	902: Candidate Negative
305C: Other Parties' Lack of Government Competence	903: Party Positive
411: Technology & Infrastructure	904: Party Negative
420: Economic Growth & Prosperity	904V: Party Negative: Violence

Taiwan's single nontransferable MMD electoral system affords more space for extreme politicians.<sup>33</sup> However, the data shows that the differences between parties cut across electoral systems. Again, the DPP focused on Taiwan identity issues (111 and 601T) and human rights (201), while the KMT dominated the economy (Domain 4), "Taiwan independence negative" (112A), and "political authority" sub-issues (305A, 305B, and 305C).

Comparisons between the top ten issues for candidate and official advertisements are made in table 6. Differences also exist here. Candidate

<sup>33</sup>John Fuh-sheng Hsieh, "The SNTV System and Its Political Implications," in *Taiwan's Electoral Politics and Democratic Transition*, ed. Hung-mao Tien (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1996), 193-212.



advertisements, for instance, are more likely to stress "candidate positive" (901). However, there are far more similarities, with both official and candidate advertisements for all three parties stressing their distinct core issues.

In short, where the parties do concentrate on similar domains, there are clear differences in the actual issues stressed. Even where there is overlap, a more detailed examination finds the emphasis is on contrasting sub-issues. These findings hold across different electoral systems, levels of elections, and for both official and candidate advertisements. It appears that the parties really are "talking past each other."

Having proved that Taiwan's political parties evolved differently over the 1990s, the next step is to see whether the parties have actually changed. A common claim is that Taiwan's parties have converged on the center, particularly in regard to the national identity question. However, this argument needs to be tested empirically. In addition, the author will examine the party changes on the following dimensions: "political corruption" (304), "welfare state expansion" (504), and the Left/Right question. The goal is to determine if the parties are clearly distinguishable (in that they do not leapfrog each other on the core issue areas) and if they are converging or diverging.

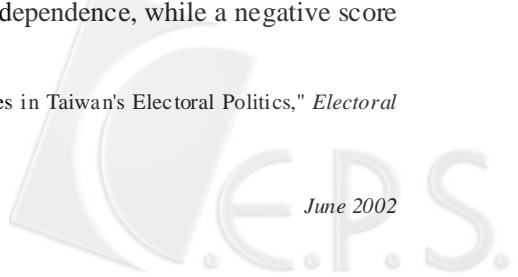
### **Platform Changes in the 1990s**

#### *National Identity*

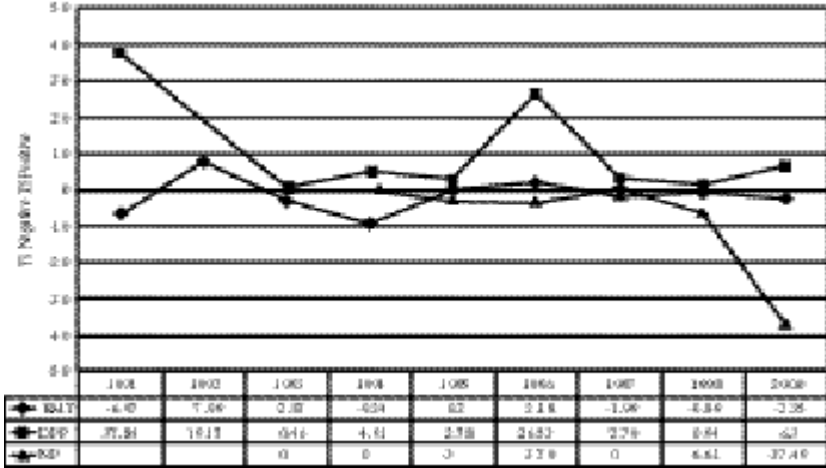
National identity is widely regarded as the most divisive issue in Taiwanese politics and one on which Taiwan's parties take polarized positions.<sup>34</sup> The figures for Taiwan independence are reached by subtracting the scores for "Taiwan independence negative" (112A and 112B) from "Taiwan independence positive" (111A and 111B). Therefore, a positive score represents support for Taiwan independence, while a negative score

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<sup>34</sup>John Hsieh and Emerson Niou, "Salient Issues in Taiwan's Electoral Politics," *Electoral Studies* 15 (1996): 219-35.



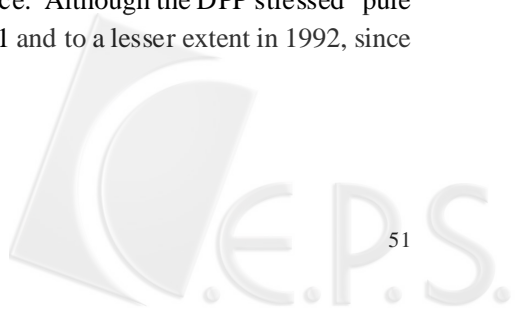
**Figure 1**  
**Taiwan Independence**



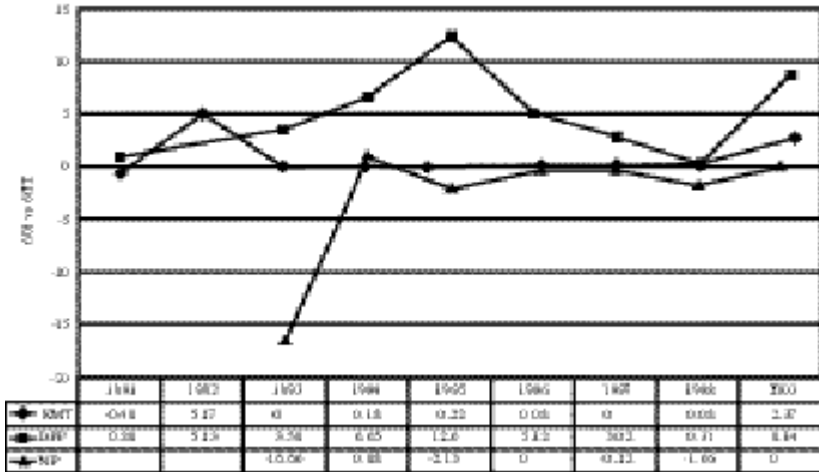
represents an anti-Taiwan independence stance. The main parties' movements on the Taiwan independence issue are shown in figure 1 and scores on "national way of life" (601) vs. "Taiwan nationalism" (601T) in figure 2. Other than in 1992 and 1996, "diluted Taiwan independence" (111B) has been completely dominated by the DPP, while the NP and KMT share "anti-Taiwan independence" (112A). Throughout the 1990s, there is not a single case of the DPP and KMT leapfrogging each other on the Taiwan independence issue; the same is also true of the nationalism issue of "national way of life positive" (601) and "Taiwan nationalism" (601T). The only exception is the KMT's high "Taiwan nationalism" score in 1992, which is probably due to a series of advertisements by the KMT's Taiwan-first "Wisdom Club" (集思會) faction.<sup>35</sup>

Have the parties converged on the national identity question? The DPP has definitely moderated its stance. Although the DPP stressed "pure Taiwan independence" (111A) in 1991 and to a lesser extent in 1992, since

<sup>35</sup>See *Ziyou shibao*, November 18, 1992, 1.



**Figure 2**  
**Taiwan Nationalism**



the mid-1990s the party has not openly called for the declaration of a "Republic of Taiwan." Even in Peng Ming-min's (彭明敏) 1996 presidential campaign, "diluted Taiwan independence" (111B) scored far higher than "pure Taiwan independence" (111A). Additionally, the DPP has downplayed the issue, while the KMT has seen the issue as a vote winner, even in local-level county/city executive contests. This can be seen in the fact that the KMT has placed more stress on the national identity question than has the DPP in six out of the nine elections in question: the KMT's constant message has been "voting DPP = Taiwan independence = PRC invasion = destruction."<sup>36</sup> As would be expected, there is some overlap between the NP and the KMT, and in the last campaign the NP's high score of -37.49 implies an increased stress on opposing Taiwan independence. However, important is to note that although the KMT and NP are theoretically pro-unification parties, neither party has openly called for unification in more than 0.26 percent of "quasi sentences" in any one year. In fact, the KMT

<sup>36</sup>See KMT advertisement in *Zhongguo shibao*, November 30, 1995, 1. On occasions the KMT advertisements have added the NP to this campaign equation.

has also made some movement toward the center of the national identity spectrum, particularly during Lee Teng-hui's 1996 presidential bid. In 1996 the KMT scored +2.18, suggesting that the PRC's accusations of Lee's Taiwan independence intentions were not entirely without basis. A sign of this KMT change is that in the 1990s "diluted Taiwan independence" (111B) came 11th, not even making the KMT's top ten. Clearly, the KMT saw an opportunity to undercut DPP support among those with Taiwanese identity, although the Nationalist Party also tried to avoid alienating its traditional voter base. Nevertheless, as movement on core ideological issues has been constrained, the KMT could only move so far in the Taiwan independence direction. Under Lien Chan, the party seems to be attempting to appeal to its traditional supporters and please the PRC. First, in the 2000 campaign "Taiwan independence negative" (112A) was heavily stressed, and since defeat in the presidential election Lien has proposed a Chinese Federation.<sup>37</sup> In addition, the KMT employed Chinese nationalist symbols such as Chiang Ching-kuo (蔣經國) and Sun Yat-sen (孫逸仙) in its television advertisements in the runup to the 2001 Legislative Yuan elections.

### *Political Corruption*

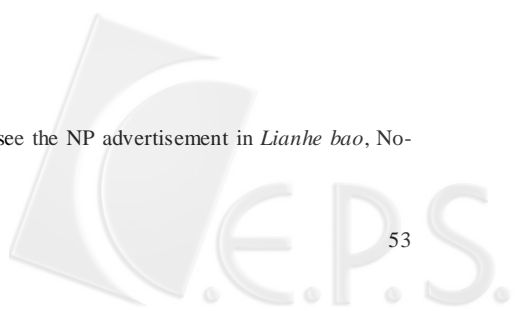
The issue of money politics has risen to prominence since the 1992 Legislative Yuan elections, and has been a central plank in every DPP platform since (except in 1996). Hsu Shu-fen (許淑芬), the deputy director of the DPP's Policy Research and Coordination Committee, has described the issue as the "KMT's Achilles heel."<sup>38</sup> The NP has also stressed the issue; according to the party's founding members, dissatisfaction with the KMT's corruption was one of the contributing factors to their decision to form the NP.<sup>39</sup> The changes in party emphasis on the political corruption issue are shown in figure 3. As would be expected, there is some overlap between

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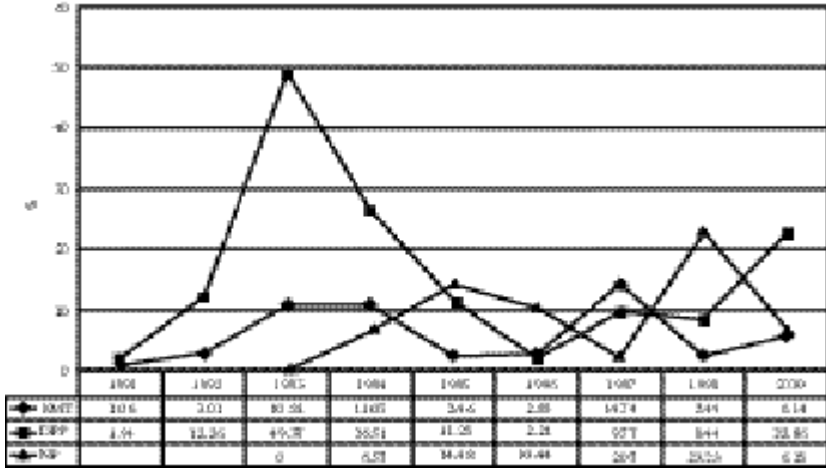
<sup>37</sup>See note 13 above.

<sup>38</sup>Personal interview, April 12, 2000.

<sup>39</sup>For Wang Chien-hsuan's (王建煊) version, see the NP advertisement in *Lianhe bao*, November 16, 1994, 4.



**Figure 3**  
**Political Corruption**

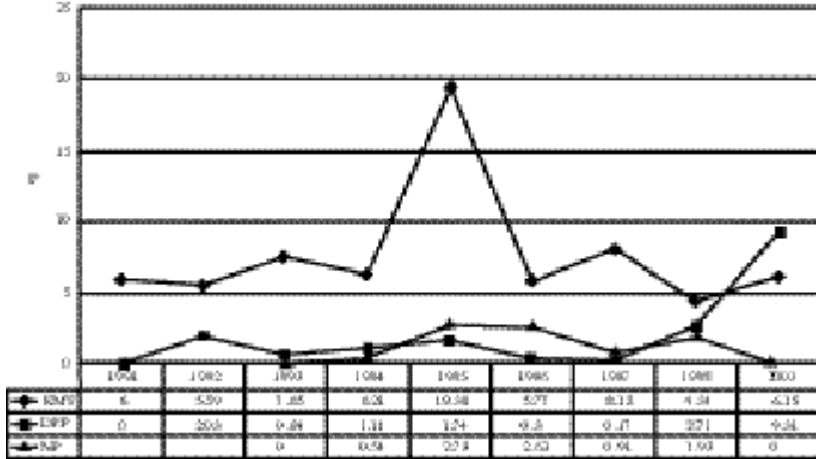


the DPP and the NP on the issue, while the KMT only leapfrogged the DPP in 1996 and 1997. This is due to Peng Ming-min's independence-oriented campaign in 1996, while in 1997, although the DPP did stress clean government, the KMT focused heavy attacks on corruption in DPP-controlled county governments, particularly in Kaohsiung County (高雄縣).<sup>40</sup> The two opposition parties have had considerable success in placing the political corruption issue on the election agenda; this is especially remarkable when the KMT's control of much of the media is taken into account. This has forced the KMT to respond to the issue. However, as mentioned earlier, in terms of the "political corruption" (304) sub-issues the parties are still "talking past each other." Although this author does not yet have the data on issue emphasis in the 2001 elections, Minister of Justice Chen Ding-nan's (陳定南) campaign against vote buying and the attempt to imprison notorious legislator Lo Fu-chu (羅福助) imply that the DPP still regards political corruption attacks as its own issue.

<sup>40</sup>In one KMT candidate's advertisement, for example, the DPP Kaohsiung County Magistrate Yu Cheng-hsien's (余政憲) wife is nicknamed "Red Envelope Lien" (紅包蓮).



**Figure 4**  
**Economic Domain 400**

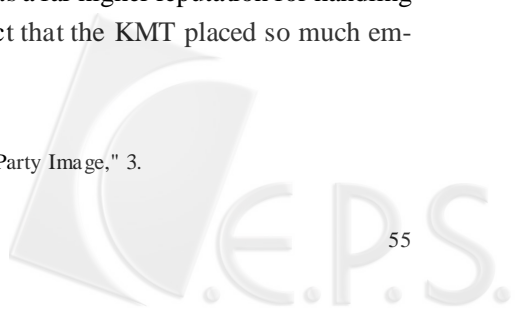


*The Economy Dimension*

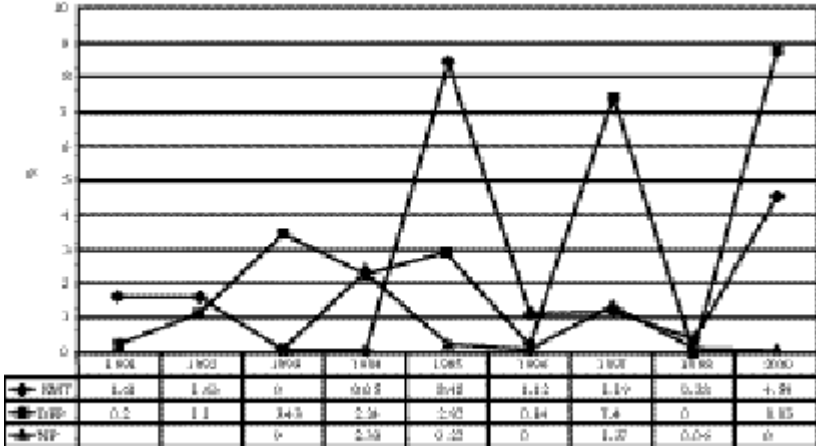
The results for party change in the economic domain are shown in figure 4. A comparison of party stress on economic issues shows a clear pattern of the area being dominated by the KMT. For much of the decade both the DPP and the NP have shown little or no interest in the economy during election time. An interesting phenomenon, though, is the sole case of DPP/KMT leapfrogging, which occurred in the 2000 election, whereby the DPP exhibited a greater degree of stress on Domain 4 (economy) than the KMT. Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁) used the slogan "All People's Government, Stability and Make a Fortune" (全民政府，安定賺錢).<sup>41</sup> Since being defeated in the 2000 election, both the KMT and PFP leaders have relentlessly criticized the DPP government on the daily TV call-in shows for the new ruling party's failure to solve unemployment and sluggish growth. Findings have shown that the KMT has a far higher reputation for handling the economy than the DPP.<sup>42</sup> The fact that the KMT placed so much em-

<sup>41</sup>See *Zhongguo shibao*, March 21, 2000, 33.

<sup>42</sup>"The 11th National Public Opinion Survey: Party Image," 3.



**Figure 5**  
**Social Welfare 504**

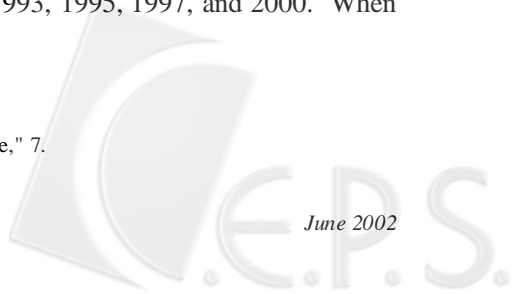


phasis on its previous record of economic management in the 2001 elections reflects its goal of regaining dominance on economic issues.

*Social Welfare*

In the 1980s and 1990s, the U.S. Republican Party and the British Conservative Party campaigned on platforms of welfare state retrenchment. However, in Taiwan not a single advertisement has called for reducing the scope of social welfare. In fact, research by Liu Tsung-wei has found that "welfare state expansion" (504) was a top ten issue for all major Taiwanese parties<sup>43</sup> throughout the 1990s. The results for change in the social welfare dimension are displayed in figure 5. Although like Liu, this author finds cross-party support for social welfare (504), this paper has identified a lower level of support for social welfare expansion. "Welfare state expansion" (504) was only a top ten issue for the KMT in 1995, while the issue was in the DPP's top ten in 1993, 1995, 1997, and 2000. When

<sup>43</sup>See Liu, "Ideology, Strategy, and Party Change," 7.



the proportion of "quasi sentences" in each election was considered, there is no clear pattern of support for the welfare state, and there are a number of cases of leapfrogging. At election time all parties in Taiwan are pro-welfare state; for example, in 2000 the KMT placed a series of advertisements praising Lien Chan for his ability to pass the "Universal Health Insurance" scheme,<sup>44</sup> while the DPP proposed its "333 Welfare Program" of NT\$3,000 pensions, free medical care for those three and under, and a three percent mortgage interest rate for first-time house buyers.<sup>45</sup> However, there appears to be a gap between the election commitments and actual behavior in the legislature. For instance, since Chen Shui-bian was elected, the KMT has blocked Chen's attempts to introduce his "333 Welfare Program." In sum, although the DPP has placed more emphasis on the issue of social welfare and is acknowledged as more pro-welfare in surveys,<sup>46</sup> the KMT's introduction of the national health insurance scheme and pledges for unemployment insurance and pensions have made the issue a contested one and "owned" by neither party in entirety.

### *The Left/Right Dimension*

One of the major findings of the MRG project was the dominance of the Left/Right dimension of party conflict in most of the countries examined in their initial project publication.<sup>47</sup> However, Taiwanese political observers often note or lament Taiwan's lack of a class-based political cleavage.<sup>48</sup> Therefore, necessary is to compare the proportion of issue mentions of MRG Left/Right categories. The results are obtained by subtracting the total Right score for each election from the Left score. A positive score denotes a Left-wing position, while a negative score a Right po-

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<sup>44</sup>See *Zhongguo shibao*, March 4, 2000, 10.

<sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*, March 2, 2000, 16.

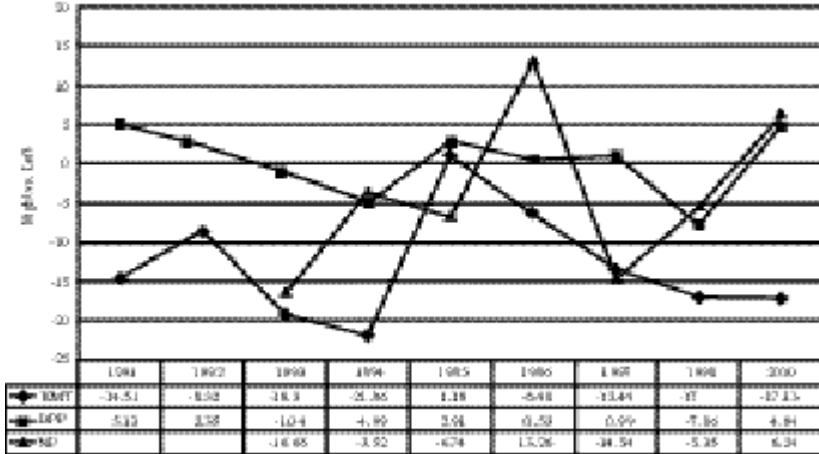
<sup>46</sup>The 1999 DPP party image survey (cited in note 29 above) found that 32.9 percent felt the DPP better able to handle the social welfare issue, compared to 20.7 percent for the KMT.

<sup>47</sup>Ian Budge, David Robertson, and D.J. Hearl, eds., *Ideology Strategy and Party Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 392-99.

<sup>48</sup>Editorial, *Taipei Times*, April 17, 2002, available at <[www.taipetimes.com/news/2002/04/17/0000132193](http://www.taipetimes.com/news/2002/04/17/0000132193)>.



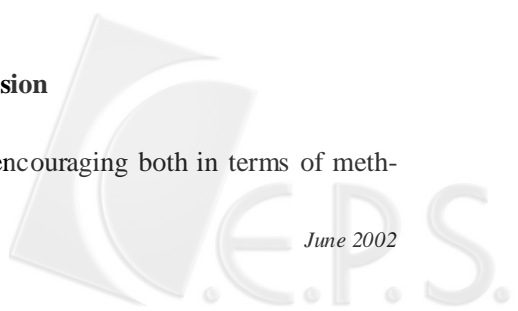
**Figure 6**  
**Left/Right Dimension**



sition. The results of this test are displayed in figure 6. The results imply that the KMT and NP are Right-wing parties while the DPP is Left-wing and there are no cases of DPP and KMT leapfrogging. However, caution should be taken with these results. First, in most years the Left economic categories (403, 404, 406, 412, and 413), labor groups (701), Right-wing economic issues (401, 402, 407, and 414), and "welfare state limitation" (505) categories score zero for all parties. As a result, one or two issue scores heavily influence the total scores; for the KMT this is particularly true of "political authority" (305) and "law and order" (605) on the Right, while for the DPP this is true of "welfare state expansion" (504) and "democracy" (202) on the Left. Also this author views "freedom and human rights" (201) as a Left-wing issue in most developing countries, as the opposition parties have struggled long and hard to gain human rights.

### Conclusion

The results of this research are encouraging both in terms of meth-



odological and theoretical issues, showing that the issue saliency approach is appropriate for studying Taiwanese party politics, particularly in the cases of the DPP and KMT. The results for the NP are more erratic, although this may be due to the small sample of NP advertisements in three of the seven elections the party contested. First, the revised MRG coding scheme has shown a high degree of applicability to the Taiwanese data and there is clearly also potential for using newspaper advertisements as an alternative source for plotting party platform change, particularly where manifestos are not regularly issued. In addition, the data shows that although candidates are heavily stressed in campaigns, Taiwan's parties also pay considerable attention to issues. Third, Taiwan's parties do stress different issues, stressing favorable issues that they "own" and ignoring or treating perfunctorily unfavorable issues. Even where the parties stress the same issues—such as "political corruption" (304), they concentrate on different sub-issues. The data does show a degree of movement and convergence on certain issues such as Taiwan independence. The DPP has moved away from calls for a "Republic of Taiwan" since 1991 and played down its nationalist rhetoric, while the KMT took up an increasingly "Taiwan first" position under the leadership of Lee Teng-hui. However, it should be reiterated that for both parties movement on core issues is only within ideologically delimited areas. In fact, on the core dimensions of Taiwan independence, political corruption, and the economy (even, surprisingly, the Left/Right dimension), leapfrogging has either not occurred or been a rare occurrence. On issues not "owned" by any party, parties clearly have the potential for the greatest flexibility and the KMT has successfully "stolen" the "democracy" issue (202) on a number of occasions and also taken the sting out of the "welfare state expansion" (504) issue.

Finally, helpful is to pose a number of areas for future research. First, these findings should also be compared with data for TV election advertisements and elite interviews. In addition, useful would be to see how the results compare with changes in voters' party images over the decade. For example, is there a longtime lag between party shifts and changes in party images? Also, will the general pattern of issue emphasis followed during the first decade of democratic multiparty elections change following the

turnover of power to the DPP? Finally, elite interviews also offer another area for future research, in particular how politicians view the changes in their parties' positions and how they explain the factors leading to changes in party position. These are all promising areas for future research.